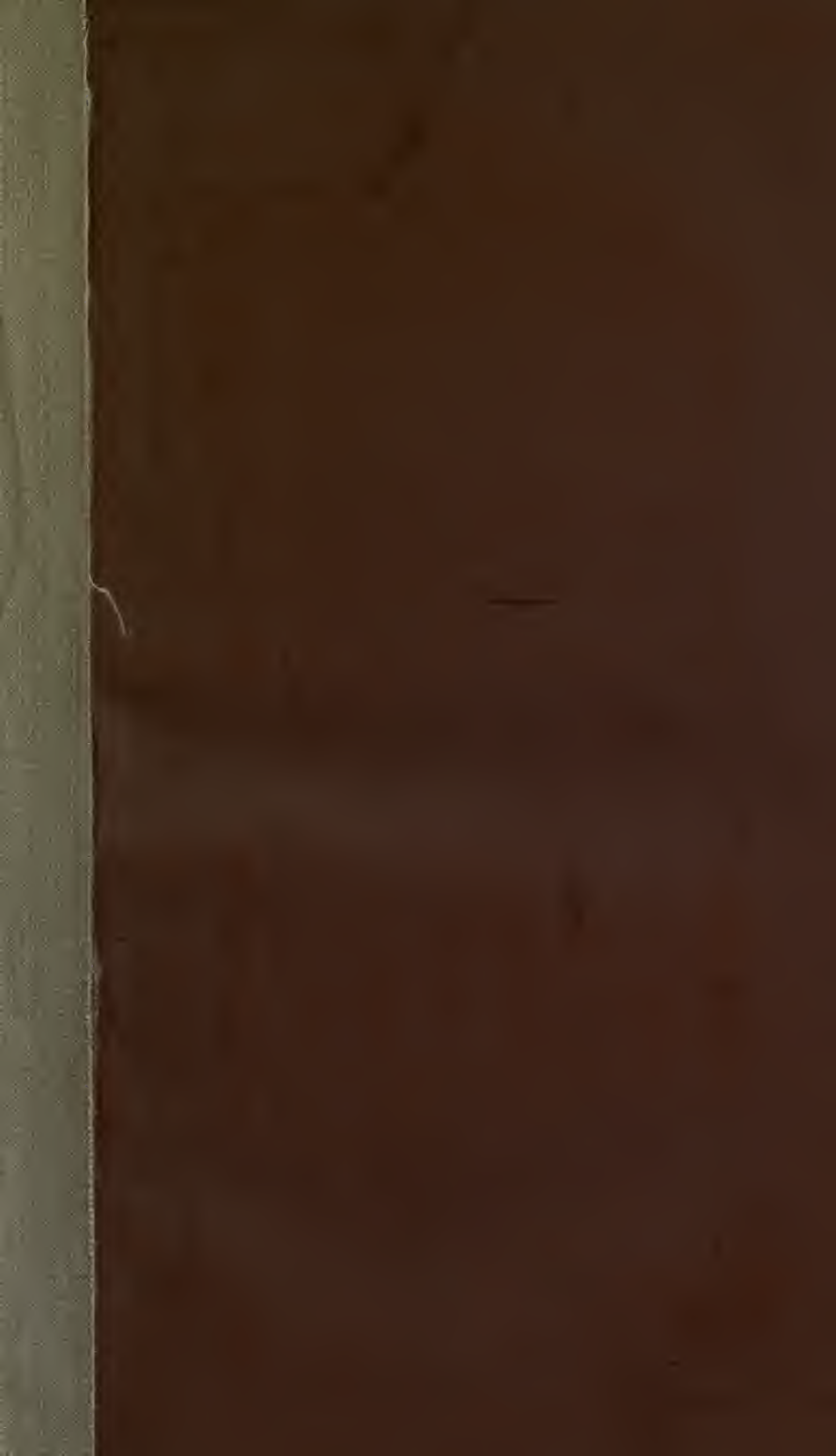


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ENGLISH MONASTICISM.





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ENGLISH MONASTICISM:

Its Rise and Influence.

BY

O'DELL TRAVERS HILL, F.R.G.S.



London :

JACKSON, WALFORD, AND HODDER,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXVII.

1867

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PREFACE.

THIS work is not an endeavour to delineate the history of monasticism in England, but to examine it under its two great phases, the Benedictine and Franciscan, and to trace the influence it exerted upon the art, literature, and social life of the country during its development.

The career of Glastonbury Abbey; the oldest monastery in England, is selected, to be described collaterally with this investigation, in order that a picture may be given of the interior life of the cloister, with its glories and its sorrows, as it was played out in that celebrated institution.

A complete history of the monastic orders in England would be a great acquisition to literature. This want, felt by Coleridge, who advised Southey to write such a work, still exists; and should the effort to trace a few results of monasticism upon English life and culture only induce some one with sufficient leisure and ability to undertake the more important task, the author will not have laboured in vain.

As regards my own investigation, I may here take the opportunity of mentioning that it has already

appeared in the pages of the "Dublin University Magazine," from which it has been carefully condensed and revised. I may also present my thanks to certain gentlemen for their kindness in affording me at the outset the most valuable help of a word of direction. I am indebted to Sir Frederick Madden, late of the MSS. department of the British Museum, for assistance in examining the illuminated MSS. of the Harleian and Cottonian collections; and to Mr. Duffus Hardy, of the Public Record Office, for much useful information. My thanks are also due to the Court of Governors of Sion College, for the use of their most valuable ecclesiastical library, and to the Rev. W. H. Milman, the librarian, for his kind attentions. It is no small privilege to sit in the same room where Fuller laboured, and use the same books he used when writing his celebrated "Church History."

I may also mention the great assistance I have received from the researches of Mr. Thomas Wright, who, though personally unknown to me, has proved a valuable helper. The labours of the antiquary are seldom estimated at their true value, often contemned; but it is from those labours alone that the historian can infuse life into his creation. It is after all the antiquary, with his garments, utensils, dress, and *débris* of an extinct existence, who makes the dead dry facts of history start into real life, clad in the flesh and inspired with the breath of vitality, like the bones in the valley of the prophet's vision.

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ENGLISH MONASTICISM:

ITS RISE AND INFLUENCE.

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CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

ONE of the most subtle operations of time is the tendency it has to transform the facts of one age into the phantasies of another, and to cause the dreams of the past to become the realities of the present. Far away in the remote distance of history, when a lonely monk in his cell mused of vessels going without sails and carriages without horses, it was a dream—a mere dream, produced probably by a brain disordered by over study, long vigils, and frequent fasts; but that dream of the thirteenth century has become the most incontrovertible fact of the nineteenth, a fact to whose influence all other, hitherto immovable facts, are giving way, even the great one, the impregnability of the Englishman's castle; for we find that before the obstinate march of one of these railway facts a thousand Englishmen's castles fall prostrate, and a thousand Englishmen are evicted, their avocations broken up, and themselves turned out upon the world as a new order of beings—outcasts with compensation. So with science; a man illuminates the darkness of a

remote age by asserting that the sun was immovable, and that, contrary to the belief of the majority, it was the world that moved, and the phantasy had well nigh cost him his life ; but a timely recantation of a dream so pernicious, although the indignant protest, "*E pure si muove*" was appended, saved the rash philosopher. It was a dream, a dangerous, delusive dream, but it is now the fundamental principle of astronomy. There are few things more sublime than that recantation of the great Galileo ; he felt that his living body would be of more service to the world than his charred bones, therefore he signed the recantation ; and conscious that all bulls, canons, and infallible doctrines could not affect the truth, he added the grim satire, "*E pure si muove.*" The heretic had recanted, but the philosopher was saved, and the world still moved on. The monastic life, so commonly regarded in these later times as a phantasy, was once a fact, a great universal fact ; it was a fact for twelve or thirteen centuries ; and when we remember that it extended its influence from the sunny heights of Palestine, across Europe, to the wild, bleak shores of western Ireland, that it did more in the world for the formation and embellishment of modern civilization than all the governments and systems of life that accompanied it in its course ; that the best portions of ancient literature, the materials of history, the secrets of art, are the pearls torn from its treasure-house, we may form some idea of what a fact the monastic life must have been at one time, and may venture to assert that the history of that phase of existence, as in frock and cowl it prayed, and watched, and fasted ; as in its quiet cloisters it studied, and copied, and laboured ; as outside its walls it mingled its influence with the web of human destiny, and as in

process of time, becoming wealthy and powerful, it degenerated, and went the way of all human things—this mighty influence in the world lost its vitality and its substance, and became what it is now—a shadow ; we say that the history of the development of this extinct world, however defective the execution of that history may be, will include in its review some of the most interesting portions of our national career, will furnish a clue to many of the mazes of historical speculation, or at least may be suggestive to some more able intellect of a course of investigation which has been very little followed, and a mine of truth which to a great extent still remains intact.

One of the most firmly-rooted prejudices of modern times is that of obstinately and unreasonably condemning the whole monastic system as a life of laziness and sensuality. That these vices were prevalent in the monasteries of England at the period of the Reformation there can be no doubt, even allowing for a little pious exaggeration on the part of interested investigators ; but to suppose that they were always the concomitants of a phase of life which had flourished for so many centuries, and had produced some of the most distinguished and noble names in history, is unjust and unreasonable. The very nature and instinct of Protestantism forbids all sympathy with the monastery as a religious institution ; it belonged to an age when religion was contemplative, but the nature of the present is such that its religion, like itself, must be active and vital. Still less sympathy does it show for that other form of monastic life—the convent. It has ever been a stumbling-block to the Protestant mind, more especially to that of the English fold, that a Church which boasts of its unbroken descent from a

married Apostle should insist upon having a celibate priesthood, and having that celibate priesthood, should find it necessary to maintain large establishments of unmarried female devotees, shut out from all communication with the external world as rigidly as the inmates of an eastern harem.

However, setting aside this morbid dislike of Englishmen for female conventual establishments, with which we shall have but little to do, still our objection to the monastic life generally ought not to hinder us from awarding to it the meed of praise justly due to it, not only as a social institution, admirably adapted to the wants of the period in which it existed, but due also to the work which it silently accomplished during that long syncope of European history, the Dark Ages. At a time when laws were badly administered, and the country often torn by internal contentions, and always subject to the violence of marauders, it was absolutely necessary that there should be some asylum for those thoughtful, retiring spirits who, unable or unwilling to take part in the turmoil of the times, were exposed to all its dangerous vicissitudes. In an age, too, when the country possessed no literature the contemplative and the learned had no other means of existence than by retiring to the cloister, safe out of the reach of the jealous superstition of ignorance and the wanton barbarity of uncouth violence. The monastery then was the natural home of these beings—the deserted, the oppressed, the meek spirit who had been beaten in the world's conflict, the untimely born son of genius, the scholar, the devotee, all found a safe shelter and a genial abode behind the friendly walls of these cities of refuge. There, too, lay garnered up, as a priceless hoard for future ages, the sacred oracles of Chris-

tianity, and the rescued treasures of ancient lore, there science laboured at her mystic problems, and there poetry, painting, and music were developed and perpetuated; in fine, all that the world holds as most excellent, all that goes towards the foundation and adornment of modern society, treasured up in the monastery as in an ark, rode in safety over the dark flood of that mediæval deluge until the waters subsided, and a new world appearing from its depths, violent hands were laid upon those costly treasures which were torn from their hiding-places, and freely scattered abroad, whilst the representatives of those men who, in silence, and with prayer, had amassed and cherished them, were branded as useless idlers, their homes broken up, and themselves dispersed, with no mercy for their errors, and no gratitude for their labours, to seek the scanty charities of a hostile world.

Besides being the cradle of art and science, the monastery was a great and most efficient engine for the dispensation of public charity. At its refectory kitchen the poor were always cheerfully welcomed, generously treated, and periodically relieved; in fine, the care of the poor was not only regarded as a solemn duty, but was undertaken with the most cheerful devotion and the most unremitting zeal. They were not treated like an unsightly social disease, which was to be cured if possible, but at any rate kept out of sight; they were not handed over to the tender sympathies of paid relieving officers, nor dealt with by the merciless laws of statistics, but they were treated gently and kindly in the spirit of the Great Master, who, when on earth, bestowed upon them the larger share of His sympathy, who, in the tenderness of His pity, dignified poverty and sanctified charity when He

declared that—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." Whatever may have been the vices of the monastic system, or the errors of its ritual, its untiring charity was its great redeeming virtue.

It will not perhaps be an unfitting introduction to our investigation into the rise and influence of this system upon our national life if we resuscitate from the grave of the past one of these great monasteries, the oldest and most powerful which sprung up in our country, and which, compared with others at the time when they fell before the great religious convulsion of the sixteenth century, had, in the midst of general corruption, maintained its purity, and suffered less from its own vices than from the degeneracy of the system to which it belonged, and of which it was the most distinguished ornament. We shall endeavour first to portray the monastery as it was in all its glory, to pass through its portals, to enter reverently into its magnificent church, to listen to its gorgeous music, to watch its processions, to wander through its cloisters, to visit its domestic domains, to penetrate into the mysteries of its refectory, the ascetic simplicity of its dormitory, the industry of its school-house and fraternity, the stores of its treasury, the still richer stores of its library, the immortal labours of its Scriptorium, where they worked for so many centuries, uncheered and unrewarded, for a thankless posterity, who shrink even now from doing them justice; we shall visit the gloomy splendours of its crypt, wander through its grounds, and marvel at its strange magnificence. After having thus gazed, as it were, upon the machine itself in motion, we shall perhaps be the better enabled subsequently to comprehend the nature and value of its work.

In the early part of the sixteenth century the ancient Abbey of Glastonbury was in the plenitude of its magnificence and power. It had been the cynosure for the devotees of all nations, who for nearly eleven centuries flocked in crowds to its fane, to worship at its altars, to adore its relics, to drink in health at its sacred well, and to gaze in wrapt wonder at its holy thorn. And even now, in these later days, though time has wasted it, though fierce fanaticism has played its cannon upon it, though ruthless Vandalism in blind ignorance has despoiled many of its beauties, it still stands proud in its ruined grandeur, defiant alike of the ravages of decay, the devastation of the iconoclast, and the wantonness of the ignorant. Although not a single picture, but only an inventorial description, is extant of this largest abbey in the kingdom, yet, standing amidst its silent ruins, the imagination can form some faint idea of what it must have been when its aisles were vocal with the chant of its many-voiced choir, when gorgeous processions moved grandly through its cloisters, and when its altars, its chapels, its windows, its pillars, were all decorated with the myriad splendours of monastic art. Passing in at the great western entrance, through a lodge kept by a grave lay-brother, we find ourselves in a little world, shut up by a high wall which swept round its domains, enclosing an area of more than sixty acres. The eye is arrested at once by a majestic pile of building, stretching itself out in the shape of an immense cross, from the centre of whose transept there rises a high tower. The exterior of this building is profusely decorated with all the weird embellishments of mediæval art. There, in sculptured niche, stands the devout monarch, sceptred and crowned; the templar

knight, who had fallen under an oriental sun fighting for the cross ; the mitred abbot, with his crozier ; the saint, with his emblem ; the martyr, with his palm ; scenes from Sacred Writ ; the Apostles, the Evangelists ; petrified allegories and sculptured story ; and then, clustering around and intertwining itself with all these scenes and representations of the world of man, were ornamental devices culled from the world of nature. A splendid monument of the genius of those mediæval times whose mighty cathedrals stand before us now like massive poems or graven history, where men may read, as it were from a sculptured page, the chivalrous doings of departed heroes, the long tale of the history of the Church—of her woes, her triumphs, her martyrs, and her saints—a deathless picture of actual existence, as though some heaven-sent spirit had come upon the earth, and with a magic stroke petrified into the graphic stillness of stone a whole world of life and living things.

Turning from the contemplation of this external grandeur, we come to a structure which forms the extreme west of the abbey—a chapel dedicated to St. Joseph of Arimathea. The entrance on the north side is a masterpiece of art, being a portal consisting of four semicircular arches, receding and diminishing as they recede into the body of the wall, the four fasciæ profusely decorated with sculptured representations of personages and scenes, varied by running patterns of tendrils, leaves, and other natural objects. The first thing that strikes the attention upon entering is the beautiful tripartite-mullioned window at the western extremity, with its semicircular head ; opposite, at the eastern end, another, corresponding in size and decoration, throws its light upon the altar. On both the

north and south sides of the church are four uniform windows, rising loftily till their summits nearly touch the vaulting; underneath these are four sculptured arches, the panelling between them adorned with painted representations of the sun, moon, stars, and all the host of heaven; the flooring was a tessellated pavement of encaustic tiles, each bearing a heraldic device, or some allegorical or historical subject. Beneath this tessellated pavement is a spacious crypt, 89 feet in length, 20 feet in width, and 10 feet high, provided with an altar, and when used for service, illuminated by lamps suspended from the ceiling. St. Joseph's Chapel, however, with its softly-coloured light, its glittering panels, its resplendent altars, and its elegant proportions, is a beautiful creation; but only a foretaste or a prelude of that full glare of splendour which bursts upon the view on ascending the flight of steps leading from its lower level up to the nave of the great abbey church itself, which was dedicated to St. Mary. Arrived at that point, the spectator gazes upon a long vista of some four hundred feet, including the nave and choir; passing up through the nave, which has a double line of arches, whose pillars are profusely sculptured, we come to the central point in the transept, where there are four magnificent Gothic arches, which for imposing grandeur could scarcely be equalled in the world, mounting up to the height of one hundred feet, upon which rested the great tower of the church. A portion of one of these arches still exists, and though broken retains its original grandeur. In the transept running north and south from this point, are four beautifully-decorated chapels, St. Mary's, in the north aisle; St. Andrew's, in the south; Our Lady of Loretto's, on the north side of the nave; and at the

south angle that of the Holy Sepulchre ; another stood just behind the tower, dedicated to St. Edgar : in each of these are altars richly adorned with glittering appointments, and beautiful glass windows, stained with the figures of their patron saints, the Apostles, scriptural scenes or episodes from the hagiology of the church ; then, running in a straight line with the nave, completing the gigantic parallelogram, is the choir where the Divine office is daily performed.

The body is divided into stalls and seats for the abbot, the officers, and monks. At the eastern extremity stands the high altar, with its profusion of decorative splendour, whilst over it is an immense stained-glass window, with semicircular top, which pours down upon the altar, and in fact bathes the whole choir, when viewed from a distance, in a sea of softened many-coloured light. The flooring of the great church, like that of St. Joseph's, is composed of encaustic Norman tiles, inscribed with Scripture sentences, heraldic devices, and names of kings and benefactors. Underneath the great church is the crypt—a dark vault divided into three compartments by two rows of strong massive pillars, into which, having descended from the church, the spectator enters ; the light of his torch is thrown back, from a hundred different points like the eyes of serpents glittering through the darkness, reflected from the bright gold and silver nails and decorations of the coffins that lie piled on all sides, and whose ominous shapes can be just faintly distinguished.

This is the weird world, which exerts a mysterious influence over the hearts of the most thoughtless—the silent world of death in life—and piled up around are the remains of whole generations long extinct, of races

of canonized saints, pious kings, devout queens, mitred abbots, bishops, nobles who gave all their wealth to lie here, knights who braved the dangers of foreign climes, the power of the stealthy pestilence and the scimitar of the wild Saracen, that they might one day come back and lay their bones in this holy spot. There were the gilded coffins of renowned abbots whose names were a mighty power in the world when they lived, and whose thoughts are still read with delight by the votaries of another creed—the silver crosiers of bishops, the purple cloth of royalty, and the crimson of the noble—all slumbering and smouldering in the dense obscurity of the tomb, but flashing up to the light once more in a temporary brilliancy, like the last ball-room effort of some aged beauty—the aristocracy of death, the coquetry of human vanity, strong even in human corruption.

Reascending from this gloomy cavern to the glories of the great church, we wander amongst its aisles, and as we gaze upon the splendours of its choir, we reflect that in this gorgeous temple, embellished by everything that art and science could contribute, and sanctified by the presence of its holy altar, with its consecrated Host, its cherished receptacle of saintly relics, and its sublime mysteries, did these devout men, seven times a day, for centuries, assemble for prayer and worship. As soon as the clock had tolled out the hour of midnight, when all the rest of the world was rocked in slumber, they arose, and flocked in silence to the church, where they remained in prayer and praise until the first faint streaks of dawn began to chase away the constellations of the night, and then, at stated intervals through the rest of the day, the appointed services were carried on, so that the greater portion of their lives was spent in this choir, whose very walls

were vocal with psalmody and prayer. It was a grand offering to the Almighty of human work and human life. In that temple was gathered as a rich oblation everything that the united labour of ages could create and collect; strong hands had dug out its foundations in the bowels of the earth, had hewn stubborn rocks into huge masses, and piled them up high in the heavens, had fashioned them into pillars and arches, myriads of busy fingers had laboured for ages at its decoration until every column, every cornice, and every angle bore traces of patient toil; the painter, the sculptor, the poet, had all contributed to its embellishment: strength created it, genius beautified it, and the ever-ascending incense of human contrition, human adoration, and human prayer completed the gorgeous sacrifice which those devotees of mediæval times offered up in honour of Him whose mysterious presence they venerated as the actual and real inhabitant of their Holy of Holies.

Retracing our steps once more to the nave, we turn to take a lingering glance at the scene: and here the full beauty and magnificence of the edifice bursts upon the view; the eye wanders through a perfect stony forest, whose stately trees, taken at some moment when their tops, bending towards each other and interlacing themselves, had been petrified into the natural beauty of the Gothic arch; here and there were secluded spots where the prismatic light from painted windows danced about the pillars like straggling sunbeams through the thick foliage of a forest glade. The clusters of pillars resembled the gnarled bark of old forest-trees, and the grouped ornaments of their capitols were the points where the trunk itself spread off into limbs and branches; there were groves and

labyrinths running far away into the interior of this sculptured wood, and towering high in the centre were those four kings of the forest, whose tops met far up in the heavens—the true heart of the scene from which everything diverged, and with which everything was in keeping. Then, as the spectator stands, lost in the grandeur of the spectacle, gazing in wrapt wonder at the sky-painted ceiling, or at some fantastic gnarled head grinning at him from a shady nook, the passing whim of some mediæval brain—a faint sigh, as of a distant wind, steals along those stony glades, gradually increasing in volume, until presently the full, rich tones of the choir burst forth, the organ peals out its melodious thunder, and every arch and every pillar vibrates with undulations of harmonious sound, just as in the storm-shaken forest every mighty denizen bends his massive branches to the fierce tempest wind, and intones his deep response to the wild music of the storm. Before the power of that music-tempest everything bowed, and as the strains of some Gregorian chant or the dirge-like melody of some penitential psalm filled the whole building with its pathos, every figure seemed to be invested with life, the mysterious harmony between the building and its uses was manifested, the painted figures on the windows appeared to join in the strain, a celestial chorus of Apostles, martyrs, and saints; the statues in their niches threw back the melody; the figures reclining on the tombs seemed to raise their clasped hands in silent response to its power, as though moved in their stony slumber by a dream of solemn sounds; the grotesque figures on the pillars and in nooks and corners chaunted the dissonant chords, which brought out more boldly the general harmony; every arch, with its entwined

branches and sculptured foliage, shook with the stormy melody : all was instinct with sympathetic life until the fury of the tempest dying away in fitful gusts, the last breeze was wafted, the painted forms became dumb, the statues and images grew rigid, the foliage was still, all the sympathetic vitality faded away, and the sacred grove fell into its silent magnificence.

Attached to the great church were two offices—the sacristy and church treasury. In the former were kept the sacred vestments, chalices, etc., in use daily ; and in the latter were kept all the valuables, such as sacred relics, jewels and plate not in use, with mitres, crosiers, cruces, and pectorals ; there was also a confessional for those who wished to use it before going to the altar. The care of these two offices was committed to a monk elected by the abbot, who was called the sacrist. Coming out of the church we arrive at the cloisters, a square place, surrounded by a corridor of pillars, and in the centre of the enclosure was a flower-garden—this was the place where the monks were accustomed to assemble at certain hours to walk up and down. In one of the alleys of the cloister stood the chapter-house, which, as it was the scene of the most important events in their monotonous lives, deserves a description. In this spot the abbots and officers of the monastery were elected, all the business of the house as a body was discussed, faults were openly confessed, openly re-proved, and in certain cases corporal punishment was awarded in the presence of the abbot and whole convent upon some incorrigible offender, so that, besides being an assembling room, it was a court of complaint and correction. One brother could accuse another openly, when the matter was gone into, and justice done. In all conventual institutions it was a

weekly custom, and in some a daily one, to assemble in the chapter-house after one of the morning services (generally after primes), when a sentence from the rule was read, a psalm sung, and business attended to. It was also an envied burying-place; and the Reader, as he stood at his desk in the chapter-house of Glastonbury Abbey, stood over the body of Abbot Chinnock, who himself perfected its building, which was commenced in 1303 by Abbot Fromond. In the interior, which was lit up by a magnificent stained-glass window, there were three rows of stone benches one above another. On the floor there was a reading-desk and bench apart; in a platform raised above the other seats was the abbot's renowned elbow-chair, which extraordinary piece of monastic workmanship excited so much curiosity at the Great Exhibition of 1851. In the middle of the hall was a platform called the Judgment, being the spot where corporal punishment when necessary was inflicted; and towering above all was a crucifix, to remind the brethren of the sufferings of Christ. In another alley of the cloisters stood the fraternity, or apartment for the novices, which had its own refectory, common room, lavatory and dormitory, and was governed by one of the priors. Ascending the staircase, we come to a gallery in which are the library, the wardrobe, the common house, and the common treasury. The library was the first in England, filled with choice and valuable books, which had been given to the monastery from time to time in its history by kings, scholars, and devotees of all classes; many also were transcribed by the monks. During the twelfth century, although even then of great renown in the world, it was considerably augmented by Henricus Blessensis, or Henry of Blois

(nephew of Henry I. and brother of Stephen), who was abbot. This royal scholar had more books transcribed during his abbacy than any of his predecessors. A list is still extant—"De Libris quos Henricus fecit transcribere," in which are to be found such works as Pliny "De Naturali Historia," a book in great favour at that time; "Origines super Epistolas Pauli ad Romanos," "Vitæ Cæsarum," "Augustinus de Trinitate," etc.

Here, too, as in every monastic library in the kingdom, was that old favourite of conventual life, and still favourite with many a lonely student, "Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ," written, like Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress;" Grotius' "Commentary," Cervantes' "Don Quixote," Sir Walter Raleigh's "History of the World," Voltaire's "Henriade," and many a great work from the grim solitude of a prison cell, cherished, too, as the link which connected the modern Latinists with those of the classic age. Housed up in that lonely corner of the island, the Glastonbury library was the storehouse of all the learning of the times; and as devotees bent their steps from all climes towards the Glastonbury relics and the Glastonbury shrine, so did the devotees of genius lovingly wander to the Glastonbury library. Leland, the old gossiping antiquarian, has testified to its glory, and given us an amusing account of the reverential awe with which he visited it not long before the fatal dissolution of the monastery. In the preliminary observations to his "Collectanea de Rebus Britannicis,"* he has put the following upon record:—"Eram aliquot ab hinc annis Glessoburgi Somurotrigum ubi antiquissimum simul et

* Collect. Reb. Brit. vi., page 87, Hearne's edition.

famosissimum est totius insulæ nostræ cœnobium, animumque longo studiorum labore fessum, favente Ricardo Whitingo,* ejusdem loci Abbate, recreabam donec novus quidam cum legendi tum discendi ardor me inflammaret. Supervenit autem ardor ille citius opinione; itaque statim me contuli ad bibliothecam non omnibus perviam ut sacras sanctæ vetustatis reliquias quarum tantus ibi numerus quantus nullo alio facile Britanniæ loco diligentissime evolverem. Vix certo limen intraveram cum antiquissimorum librorum vel solus conspectus, religionem nescio an stuporem, animo incuteret meo, eaque de causa pedem paululum sistebam. Deinde salutato loci numine per dies aliquot omnes forulos curiosissime excussi."

But attached to the library was a department common to all the Benedictine monasteries, where, during long centuries of ignorance, the materials of modern education were preserved and perpetuated; this office was called the scriptorium, or domus antiquariorum. Here were assembled for daily labour a class of monks selected for their superior scholarship and writing ability; they were divided into two classes, the antiquarii and the librarii: the former were occupied in making copies of valuable old books, and the latter were engaged in transcribing new ones, and works of an inferior order. The books they copied were the Scriptures, always in process of copying; missals, books for the service of the church, works on theology, and any of the classics that fell into their hands. St. David, the patron saint of Wales, is said to have devoted much time to this work, and at the period of his death had begun to transcribe the Gospel of St.

* Richard Whiting, the last abbot.

John in letters of gold with his own hand.* The instruments used in the work of the scriptorium were pens, chalk, pumice-stone for rubbing the parchment smooth; penknives, and knives for making erasures, an awl to make dots, a ruler and inkstand. The greatest care was taken by the transcriber, the writing was always beautifully clear, omissions were most scrupulously noted in the margins, and all interlineations were mentioned and acknowledged. In an old manuscript belonging to the Carmelites the scribe adds, "I have signed it with the sign following, and made a certain interlineation, which says, '*redis*,' and another, which says, '*ordinis*,' and another, which says, '*ordini*,' and another, which says, '*circa*.'" So great was the care they took to preserve the text accurately, and free from interpolations. In these secluded studies sprung up that art, the most charming which the middle ages have handed down to us, the art of illumination, so vainly imitated by the artists of the present day, not from want of genius, but from want of something almost indescribable in the conception and execution, a tone and preservation of colour, and especially of the gilding, which was essentially peculiar to the old monks, who must have possessed some secret both of combination and fixing of colours, which has been lost with them. This elaborate illumination was devoted to religious books, psalms, missals, and prayer-books; in other works the first letters of chapters were beautifully illuminated, and other leading letters in a lesser degree. The scribe generally left spaces for these, as that was the duty of another; in the spaces were what were called "leading letters,"

* Giraldus Cambren. in vitâ Davidis, Angl. Sac., ii. 635.

written small to guide the illuminator; these guide-letters may still be detected in some books. So great was the love of this art, that when printing displaced the labours of the scribe, it was customary for a long time to have the leading letters left blank for illumination. Such were the peculiar labours of the scriptorium, and to encourage those who dedicated their time to it a special benediction was attached to the office, and posterity, when satirizing the monastic life, with its many superstitions and possible vices, would do well to remember that the elegance of the satire may be traced back again to these labours, which are the materials for the education and refinement of modern thought; we got our Bible from them, we got our classics from them, and had not such ruthless vandalism been exercised by those over zealous men who effected their dispersion, it is more than probable that the learned world would not have had to lament over the lost Decades of Livy. It is the peculiarity of ignorance to be barbarous. There is very little difference between the feeling which prompted a Caliph Omar to burn the Alexandrian Library, or a Totila to destroy the achievements of Roman art; and the feeling had only degenerated into the barbarity, without the bravery, when it revived again in the person of our arch-iconoclast, Cromwell, of church devastating memory, who, however great his love of piety may have been, must have had a thorough hatred of architecture.

The care of the library and the scriptorium was intrusted to the librarian. The next department in the gallery was the lavatory, fitted up with all the appliances for washing; and adjoining this room was one arranged for shaving, a duty to which the monks paid

strict attention, more especially to preserve the tonsure. The next room was the wardrobe, where their articles of clothing and bedding were stored, and in an inner chamber was the tailory, where a number of lay brethren, with a vocation for that useful craft, were continually at work, making and repairing the clothes of the community. These two rooms and the lavatory were in charge of the camerarius, or chamberlain. The last abbot who sat in the chair of Glastonbury was, as we shall see, elevated from this humble position to that princely dignity. The common room was the next office, and this was fitted up with benches and tables for the general use of the monks; a fire was also kept burning in the winter, the only one allowed for general purposes. The last chamber in the corridor was the common treasury, a strong receptacle for ready money belonging to the monastery, charters, registers, books, and accounts of the abbey, all stored up in iron chests. In addition to being the strong room of the abbey it had another important use. In those uncertain times it was the custom for both the nobles and gentry to send their deeds, family papers, and sometimes their plate and money, to the nearest monastery, where, by permission of the abbot, they were intrusted to the care of the treasurer for greater security; in the wildest hour, when the castle was given up to fire and sword, the abbey was always held in reverence; for, independently of its sacred character, it was endeared to the people by the free-handed charity of its almonry and refectory kitchen.

Retracing our steps along the corridor, and ascending another flight of stairs, we come to the dormitory, or dortoir, a large passage with cells on either side; each monk had a separate chamber, very small, in which

there was a window, but no chimney, a narrow bedstead, furnished with a straw bed, a mattress, a bolster of straw, a coarse blanket, and a rug; by the bedside was a prie-Dieu, or desk, with a crucifix upon it, to kneel at for the last and private devotions; another desk and table, with shelves and drawers for books and papers; in the middle was a cresset, or stone-lantern, with a lamp in it to give them light when they arose in the middle of the night to go to matins; this department also was under the care of the chamberlain. One more chamber was called the infirmary, where the sick were immediately removed, and treated with the greatest attention; this was in the charge of an officer called the infirmarius. We now descend these two flights of stairs, issue from the cloisters, and bending our steps to the south-west, we come to the great hall or refectory, where the whole convent assembled at meals. At Glastonbury there were seven long tables, around which, and adjoining the walls, were benches for the monks. The table at the upper end was for the abbot, the priors, and other heads, the two next for the priests, the two next for such as were in orders, but not priests, and such as intended to enter into orders, the lower table on the right hand of the abbot was for such as were to take orders whom the other two middle tables could not hold, and the lower table on the left of the abbot was reserved for the lay brethren. In a convenient place was a pulpit, where one of the monks, at the appointment of the abbot, read portions of the Old and New Testament in Latin every day during dinner and supper. The routine of dinner; as indeed the routine of all their meals, was ordered by a system of etiquette as stringent as that which prevails in the poorest and smallest German court of the present day.

The sub-prior, who generally presided at the table, or some one appointed by him, rang the bell; the monks, having previously performed their ablutions in the lavatory, then came into the great hall, and bowing to the high table, stood in their places till the sub-prior came, when they resumed their seats; a psalm was sung, and a short service followed by way of grace. The sub-prior then gave the benediction, and at the end they uncovered the food, the sub-prior beginning; the soup was then handed round, and the dinner proceeded; if anything was wanted it was brought by the cellarer, or one of his assistants, who attended, when both the bringer and receiver bowed. As soon as the meal was finished the cellarer collected the spoons; and so stringent was the etiquette, that if the abbot dined with the household (which he did occasionally) he was compelled to carry the abbot's spoon in his right hand and the others in his left; when all was removed the sub-prior ordered the reading to conclude by a "Tu autem," and the reply of "Deo gratias," the reader then bowed, the remaining food was covered, the bell was rung, the monks arose, a verse of a psalm was sung, when they bowed and retired two by two, singing the Miserere.

A little further towards the south stood the guest-house, where all visitors, from prince to peasant, were received by the hospitaller with a kiss of peace, and entertained. They were allowed to stay two days and two nights; on the third day after dinner they were expected to depart, but if not convenient they could procure an extension of their stay by application to the abbot. This hospitality, so generously accorded, was often abused by sons of donors and descendants of benefactors, who saddled themselves and their retinues

upon the monasteries frequently, and for a period commensurate with the patience of the abbot; and to so great an extent did this evil grow that statutes were enacted to relieve the abbeys so oppressed. Not far from the refectory, towards the west, stood the abbot's private apartments, and still further to the west the great kitchen, which was one of the wonders of the day; its capacity may be imagined when we reflect that it had frequently to provide dinner for four or five hundred guests; but the arrangements and service of the kitchen deserve notice. Every monk had to serve as hebdomadary, or dispenser, whose duty it was to appoint what food was to be dressed, and to keep the accounts for the week. Upon taking office he was compelled to wash the feet of the brethren, and upon yielding it up to the new hebdomadary he was obliged to see that all the utensils were clean. St. Benedict strictly enjoined this rule upon them, in order that as Christ, their Lord, washed the feet of His disciples, they might wash each other's feet, and wait upon each other's wants. The Glastonbury kitchen is the only building which still remains entire; it was built wholly of stone, for the better security from fire; on the outside it is a four-square, and on the inside an eight-square figure; it had four hearths, was twenty feet in height to the roof, which ran up in a figure of eight triangles; from the top hung suspended a huge lantern.* Attached to the kitchen was the almonry, or eleemosynarium, where on Wednesdays and Fridays the poor people of Glastonbury and its neighbourhood were liberally relieved. This duty was committed to a grave

* Strange vicissitudes of kitchens—in 1667 this Glastonbury Abbey kitchen was hired by the Quakers as a meeting-house; in the fulness of time where monasticism cooked its mutton Quakerdom sat in triumph.

monk, who was called the almoner, or eleemosynarius, and who had to inquire after the poor and sick. No abbots in the kingdom were more liberal in the discharge of these two duties of their office, hospitality and almsgiving, than the abbots of Glastonbury. It was not an unusual thing for them to entertain 500 guests at a sitting, some of whom were of the first rank in the country, and the loose charge of riotous feasting which has been thoughtlessly made against the monastic life by hostile historians becomes modified when we recollect that in that age there were scarcely any wayside inns in the country, and all men, when travelling, halted at the monastery, and looked for refreshment and shelter as a matter of right; neither had that glorious system of union workhouses been thought of, and therefore the sick and the poor fell at once to the care of the monastery, where they were cheerfully relieved and tenderly treated. Last, but not least, was the department for boys—another little detached community, with its own school-room, dormitory, refectory, hall, etc. One of the monks presided over them. They were taught Christian doctrine, music, grammar, and if any showed capacity, the subjects necessary for the university. They were maintained free, and had to officiate in the church as choristers; a system in vogue almost to the letter up to the very present moment. William of Malmesbury records that in the churchyard of Glastonbury Abbey stood some very ancient pyramids close to the sarcophagus of King Arthur. The tallest was nearest the church, twenty-six feet in height, consisting of five stories, or courses; in the upper course was the figure of a bishop, in the second of a king, with this inscription—HER. SEXI. and BLISVVERH. In the third the names

WEMCRESTE, BANTOMP, WENETHEGN. In the fourth—HATE, WVLFREDE, and EANFLEDE. In the fifth, and last, the figure of an abbot, with the following inscription :—LOGVVOR, WESLIELAS and BREGDENE, SVVELVVS HVVINGENDES AND BERNE. The other pyramid was eighteen feet in height, and consisted of four stories, whereon were inscribed in large letters HEDDE Episcopus BREGORRED and BEORVVALDE. William of Malmesbury could give no satisfactory solution to the meaning of these inscriptions beyond the suggestion that the word BREGDENE must have meant a place then called “Brentacnolle,” which now exists under the name of Brent Knowle, and that BEORWALDE was Beorwald, the abbot after Hemigselus. He concludes his speculation, however, with the sentence—“Quid hæc significant non temere diffinio, sed ex suspicione colligo eorum interius in cavatis lapidibus contineri ossa quorum exterius leguntur nomina.”*

The man who ruled over this miniature world, with a state little short of royalty, was endowed with proportionate dignities; being a member of the Upper House of Convocation and a parliamentary Baron, he sat robed and mitred amongst the peers of the country; in addition to his residence at the abbey he had four or five rural retreats at easy distances from it, with parks, gardens, fisheries, and every luxury; his household was a sort of court, where the sons of noblemen and gentlemen were sent to be trained and educated. When at home he royally entertained his 300 guests, and when he went abroad he was attended by a guard of 100 men. Up to the year 1154 he ranked also as First Abbot of England, and took precedence of all

* Guliel. Malms. Hist. Glaston.

others; but Adrian the Fourth, the only Englishman who ever ascended the Papal chair, bestowed that honour upon the Abbot of St. Alban's, where he had received his education. The church, and different offices which clustered round it, formed a kingdom, over which he ruled with absolute power. This description of the buildings and adjuncts of the abbey may not be inaptly closed by giving a sketch of the outline of a monastic day, which will assist the reader to form a clearer idea of the monastic life. At two in the morning the bell tolled for matins, when every monk arose, and after performing his private devotions, hastened to the church, and took his seat. When all were assembled, fifteen psalms were sung, then came the Nocturn, and more psalms; a short interval ensued, during which the chanter, choir, and those who needed it, had permission to retire for a short time if they wished; then followed lauds, which were generally finished by six a.m., when the bell rang for prime; when this was finished the monks continued reading till seven o'clock, when the bell was rung, and they returned to put on their day clothes. Afterwards, the whole convent having performed their ablutions and broken their fast, proceeded again to the church, and the bell was rung for tierce at nine o'clock. After tierce came the morning mass, and as soon as that was over they marched in procession to the chapter-house for business and correction of faults. This ceremony over, the monks worked or read till Sext, twelve a.m., which service concluded they dined, then followed the hour's sleep in their clothes in the dormitory, unless any of them preferred reading. Nones commenced at three p.m., first vespers at four, then work or reading till second vespers at seven, afterwards reading till

collation, then came the service of complin, confession of sins, evening prayers, and retirement to rest about nine p.m.

That was the life pursued at Glastonbury Abbey, according to the Benedictine rule, from the time of its establishment there until the dissolution of the monastery, nearly ten centuries. With our modern training and predilections, it is a marvel to us that men could be found willing to submit to such a monotonous career—ten hours a day spent in the church, beginning in the middle of the night, winter and summer. We wonder did it ever flash through any monkish brain, when its owner drew his cowl more closely round him, as through sleet and snow, or rain, with the keen winter wind howling through the damp cold cloisters, he bent his way to the church for matins, that, even after all this self-torture, this tyranny over the poor weak body, heaven might be lost at last; or when, as years rolled on, and the unvarying round of daily actions in a scene which never changed began to tell upon the mind, when they had sung the psalter through until every word came to the lips with the faultless exactitude of a machine, when every stone and pillar, when even the very magnificence of the place glared at them with a painful monotony, did any one soft and gentle nature, not yet dulled by its influence, any heart not yet paralyzed out of all human affection, ever dream of the boisterous life going on outside their gloomy walls, where their fellows worked and laboured, struggled and won, were soothed by the sweet companionship of woman, and reposed their wearied age upon the love of children, and dreaming of this life, with all its natural vicissitudes shut out to them for ever, did they bury their wan faces in their hands, and

let the salt tears roll down the coarse serge of their penitential dress? Is it unnatural to suppose that such thoughts often crossed the mind of many a human being who had bound himself by the most solemn ties to that hopeless, changeless life? And yet the monastery was always full. We read of no breaking up of institutions for want of devotees, and we are driven to the conclusion that in the age when the monastic life was in its power and purity these men could have been actuated by none other than the motive of strong religious fervour—a fervour of which we in modern times have neither conception nor example.

The operation of the influence of that life upon the history of these islands can only be contemplated by watching it in the various phases of its action upon the politics, literature, and art by which it was surrounded, and for that purpose we have selected this oldest and grandest specimen of English monasticism, so faintly described, the mother church of our country, in whose career, so brilliant, so varied, and so tragically ended, we hope to be able to show wherein was the glory, the weakness, and the ruin of the system, as it rose, flourished, and fell in England.

CHAPTER II.

The Planting of the Cross.*

A. D. LXIII.—DXCV.

APOSTOLIC descent has always been the boast of the Roman Catholic Church, and forfeiture of the apostolic birthright the reproach she has invariably heaped upon those who have separated themselves from her communion. It has never been admitted in Romish History that other Churches might claim a similar apostolic descent with herself—a claim we shall endeavour to substantiate for our National or Anglican establishment before we cross the threshold of the first rude edifice consecrated to God in these dominions, the first phase of Glastonbury Abbey. All Romish history attributes the planting of Christianity in this kingdom to monastic missions, but we shall show that the first planting of the Cross in England took place long before the monastic orders were established—far back in the earliest age of apostolic simplicity, and by virtue of this we shall claim as the admission of an historical truth that when in the sixteenth century the English Church joined the general religious

* *Authorities* — Baron. Ann. Malmshur: Hist. Glaston.—Johan. Martyr.—Broughton Monasticon—Glaston. Gildas Hist. et Excid. Justin Martyr—Tertullian—Irenæus Brit.—Athanasius Opera, Benedictine Edition—Butler's Lives of the Saints—Anglia Sacra—Acta Sanctorum — Samme's Antiquities — Jerome — Theodorus—Nicephorus Zosimus. Hist. Ecc. — Freculphus — Guliel.

uprising it was not the creation of a new and apostate communion, but the breaking away from one which had become corrupt and lost its apostolic savour, and a return to its original purer prototype.

The only materials for the history of England, up to the eleventh or twelfth century, are the chronicles kept by the monks; and if we discard them, or once admit that their authors were men capable of inventing falsehoods and recording them as facts, there must be an end to the history of our country up to these periods. No one else could write in those times but the monks, and they certainly discharged their duties as historians in a most industrious manner. It was a fortunate thing for posterity that they did turn their attention to writing history—they might have employed their time in transcribing legends and miracles which, however firmly they believed, would have scarcely survived to our times; and all the early annals of our country would have been lost, but they seem to have been impelled to the work by some instinctive idea that it was one of their greatest duties to posterity. Any one who has gone over that monotonous expanse, and waded through the troubled ocean of monastic Latin, knows how those chronicles are charged with fable, legend, and miracle; but still, divesting them of these legendary additions and interpolations by men who conscientiously believed in them, we come upon a basis or groundwork of event, the very woof of history itself, and we find that all these chronicles, written at different times, in different places, and by different men, who had no possible means of intercommunication, agree as regards this line of event, and therefore are entitled to be received as authentic, with as much reason as any collected human testimony can have.

It is not necessary because William of Malmesbury tells us that St. Patrick performed certain miracles, and had certain visions which we hesitate to accept, that we must abandon the idea of the existence of such a person as a myth—nor is it necessary because Mabillon tells us that St. Benedict chaunted psalms in his mother's womb that we should forego the fact of St. Benedict's existence; these things are the mere surrounding illustrations, the personal comments, and personal convictions of the author, his own individuality, but the chain of historical event lies underneath, unaffected by it in the least degree.

The neglect of the early history of nations is one of the greatest errors of historians, and the prime cause of history being written only in accordance with passion and prejudice. Just as in the life of a man, it is the first early acts he performs, and the first associations he makes as he sets out upon the world, which tinge his whole career and often determine its character—so with the life of nations, it is the early history, the youth of the kingdom, which gives us the key to the character of that kingdom's maturity; and if we wantonly neglect to search for and acquire some knowledge of these early periods of national history, or possessing that knowledge, discard it wholly from us as useless and unauthentic, then we are driven to substitute our own theories, and History becomes not an examination into the causes of a nation's greatness, and the delineation of its development, but degenerates into the character of a commentary by a prejudiced critic. The history of the early period of England's youth is doubly important, it is important for the consideration already mentioned, and it is important as regards the character of her Church, and the attitude

which it assumed in the sixteenth century. There are two channels through which rival historians trace its apostolic origin, the one through its earliest foundation, and the other through the Augustinian mission some centuries later. Now, as we have said, upon the choice we make of these two channels depends entirely the aspect of the Reformation as regards the country, its religious history and character : if we persist in tracing the apostolic descent through the Augustinian mission, then the Reformation, as it was worked in our Church in the sixteenth century, when we broke away from the Roman communion, whatever the error of that communion may have been, was none other than an apostasy from the Mother Church—a rebellious child breaking away from its parent ; but if we trace it from the original preaching of Christianity in these islands, and the Church which even the opponents of this theory admit to have been in existence long before St. Augustine's arrival, the whole aspect of the Reformation is changed ; it is no longer an apostasy, but a return—no longer a Revolt of heretics, but a mighty Repentance of the Faithful who had wandered from the Shepherd, but were making their way back. It was the return of a Prodigal Church which had left its Father's house and gone into a far country, which had spent its substance in riotous living, which had been dead in the trespasses of worldly glory, and in the sins of ceremonial form, but was alive again in its original simplicity ; which had been lost in monotonous rites and pompous ceremonies, in false gods and pagan worship, but was found once more sorrowing and repentant, yet hopeful and strong in the Reformed Faith of a glorious Protestantism.

As a preliminary to our investigation into the

question as to who was the apostolic founder of the Anglican Church, we shall endeavour to elucidate a fact which is often overlooked by historians, although it is supported by the united testimony of both Protestant and Catholic authorities, that before there was a Christian missionary or a Christian Church in Britain, there were many Christian Britons at Rome. At the time when St. Peter was in that city an intercommunication of a frequent and friendly nature had been established between the Romans and their British dependencies. It was the custom for the British kings who ruled under the Roman Viceroys to send their sons to Rome for education, the sons of nobles soon followed, and to that extent that a mansion was established there for them, and a tax of one penny levied upon every house in England for its support. There were also through the whole time of the Roman dominion in this country nobles resident at Rome as hostages; and it has been estimated that at the time of Peter's preaching there were no less than a hundred converts, Britons and others, who were in the habit of assembling at a certain house for prayer and worship. This house belonged to a British lady, Claudia, and her husband, Pudens; there was also one Eubulus, called by the annalists of the time Socer Pudentis, being the father of Claudia. In this house, and entertained by Claudia and Pudens, lived St. Peter, by whom they had been converted to Christianity, with many of their friends and acquaintances. Few things are clearer than this, that St. Peter, when in Rome, was the guest of this British lady, Claudia. In Baronius' Annotations* there is this passage: "Ma-

* Baronii Annot. Martyrol., St. Pudens.

jorum firma traditione præscriptum est domum Pudentis Romæ fuisse primum Hospitium S. Petri Principis Apostolorum, illicque primum Christianos convenisse ad synaxim coactam ecclesiam, vetussumque omnium Titulum Pudentis nomine appellatum qui item et pastoris nomine dictus reperitur.”

This household consisted of Claudia and Pudens, their daughters Pudentiana and Praxedes, and their son Novatus. These children, after the death of Pudens in Cappadocia, lived with their mother in Umbria, where they still entertained the saints. There were also Eubulus, the father-in-law of Pudens (Socer Pudentis), Linus, a visitor, who afterwards succeeded Peter, and, as we have said, St. Peter himself. Nearly all these persons are mentioned by St. Paul, who must have known them well and entertained a great respect for them, in fact they appear to have been known to others of the apostles, but in any case there is this British woman Claudia's name mentioned in the New Testament as one of the first Christians. In the Second Epistle to Timothy, which was written from Rome when Paul was again brought before Nero, at the conclusion he says, “Do thy diligence to come before the winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens and Linus and Claudia, and all the brethren.” The four principal persons in the house are mentioned by name. In addition to this testimony we have that of a heathen poet and therefore an indifferent party. Claudia was not only a Christian but a great scholar—a thing of itself sufficient to make her an object of notice, being a Briton. She was extremely fond of Martial's poetry, and it was through her sending portions of his epigrams to her friends in Britain that his works became known here, a fact which he himself

acknowledges in the third epigram of the eleventh book, in the line—

“Dicitur et nostros cantare Britannia versus;”

and in the same book, No. 53, writes a complete epigram to her honour, in which he tells her that though she was born of blue-dyed Britons yet she had a Roman soul :—

“Claudia ceruleis cum sit Rufina Britannis
 Edita quam Latiae pectora gentis habet !
 Quale decus formæ ! Romanam credere matres,
 Italides possunt Atthides esse suam.
 Di bene, quod sancto peperit fecundia marito,
 Quod sperat generos quodque puella nurus
 Sic placeat superis ut conjugæ gaudeat uno
 Et semper natis gaudeat illa tribus.”*

It is clear from these facts that there were British Christians at Rome in the time of St. Peter, recognised and mentioned by St. Paul himself, and the probability is a reasonable one, that those converts, living under the apostolic influence and in apostolic communion, increased in number. But now we come to the evidence in proof of the fact that the Britons living at home were also brought to a knowledge of the faith in the earliest times and by the apostles themselves ; that evidence is strangely emphatic, and is recorded by men whose works, next to the Scriptures, have been regarded with the greatest reverence.

In the early part of the second century, that is, a little more than a hundred years after our Saviour's crucifixion, Justin Martyr declared that in every country known to the Romans there were professors of Christianity, or, as he emphatically expressed it, by

* That is, Pudentiana, Praxedes, and Novatus, already mentioned.

whatever name they were called, whether they rode in chariots, or were houseless, or kept cattle in sheds, there was no race of men amongst whom there were not prayers offered in the name of a crucified Jesus, and praises to the Father and maker of all things (“*δια τοῦ ὀνοματος τοῦ σταυρωθεντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαι, και εὐχαριστιαι τῷ Πατρι και ποιητῇ τῶν ὄλων γινονται*”).* Irenæus, a contemporary, confirms this also, in a statement he makes to the effect that the Church was scattered by *the apostles, or their disciples*, all through the habitable world (a phrase often used as synonymous with the Roman empire), even to the very extremities of the earth, taking with it the faith in one God, Father, Ruler, and Maker of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is therein.†

Then, still more pointedly, in another place he speaks of the *Celts* as being converted.‡ If any doubt should remain as to the early conversion of these islands to the Christian faith, the testimony of Tertullian, another writer in the same century, ought to be sufficient to remove it. He speaks of districts in Britain, which, though inaccessible to the Romans, were yet subdued to Christ—“*Britanniorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita.*”§ Then comes Eusebius, in the fourth century, who declares positively that the British Isles were converted by some of the apostles, who had

* St. Justin Martyr, cum Tryphone Judæo. Dial, Lon. Ed., p. 388.

† Ἡ μὲν γὰρ Ἐκκλησια και περ καθ ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἕως περατων τῆς γῆς διεσπαρμένη παρα δε τῶν Αποστολων και τῶν ἐκείνων μαθητῶν παραλαβοῦσα την εἰς ἓνα θεον πατερα παντοκρατορα τον πεποιηκοτα τον οὐρανον και την γην και τας θαλασ-

σας και παντα τα ἐν αυτοῖς, πιστιν. —Iren. adv. Hæres., lib. i. c. 2.

‡ Και ὄντε αι ἐν Γερμανιας ἰδρυναι ἐκκλησιαι ἄλλως πεπιστευκασιν ἢ ἄλλως παραδιδοασιν, ὄντε εν ταῖς Ἰβηριας, ὄντε ἐν κελτοῖς.—Iren. adv. Hæres., cap. iii. p. 52.

§ Tertull. adv. Judæos, p. 189, Ed. 1664.

crossed over the ocean for that purpose (“Ἐπεροῦς ὑπερ τοῦ Ὠκεανου παρελθειν ἐπὶ τὰς καλουμένας Βριττανικὰς νῆσους.”)

To this testimony of the Fathers of the Church, we add, finally, that of Gildas, the Father of British History, who, writing in the sixth century, beautifully intimates that the Sun of Righteousness beamed upon these remote islands, ice-bound in paganism, in the very earliest ages of the Church, and before the defeat of the Britons under Boadicea. The passage, which occurs in his writings “*De Excidio Britanniaë*,” is as follows:—“*Interea glaciali frigore rigent insulæ quæ velut longiore terrarum secessu. Soli visibili non est proxima, verus ille non de firmamento solum temporali sed de summa etiam cœlorum arce tempora cuncta excedente universo orbi præfulgidum sui lumen ostendens, Christus suos radios, id est sua præcepta, indulget tempore ut scimus summo Tiberii Cæsaris quo absque ullo impedimento ejus propagabatur religio.*”* Last of all, there is the reiteration of this evidence in the latter end of the sixth century, by Pope Gregory and St. Augustine, who testify to the fact that a long-established Church had existed in Britain, with bishops and ecclesiastical officers complete. † It appears that the very circumstance of the existence of this British Church, established in the country for centuries, rendered the

* To this we may add the testimony of Constantine the Great, who recognised the Church of Britain as an organized and established institution as early as 325, so completely organized and of such standing as to be quoted by him as an authority on a point of Church discipline. The passage is in a letter addressed by him to the Churches of the

Empire after the Council of Nice. He urges upon them the necessity of union upon the time of celebration of the Paschal Feast, and he mentions the Church of Britain as an example of orthodoxy in this matter.—Socrates Eccl. His., lib. i. c. 9.

† Appendix i.

mission of St. Augustine an embarrassing one; so that, in addition to the natural trepidation which he felt at the thought of going amongst a lot of half-savage people, who might probably sacrifice him to their fury, he felt, also, that he was bound on a mission to a country which had a Christian Church and Christian bishops of its own. Failing, then, in his endeavour to persuade Gregory to abandon the undertaking, and allow them to return home, he writes to him for information as to the way in which he was to regard these British bishops:—"De episcopis qualiter cum suis clericis conversentur." The reply of Gregory was characteristic of a man who was endowed with far more of the true mission spirit than his emissary. He advised him to make common cause with them, and to treat them and behave towards them with the same brotherly feeling as was the rule amongst the early Fathers of the Church—advice most unpalatable to the haughty monk, and, as we shall in its proper order have to show, not respected:—"Fraternitas tua monasterii regulis erudita seorsum fieri non debet a clericis suis in *Ecclesia Anglorum* quæ auctore Deo nuper adhuc ad fidem adducta est, in quibus conversationem instituere, quæ initio nascentis ecclesiæ fuit patribus nostris, in quibus nullus eorum ex his quæ possidebant aliquid suum esse dicebat, sed erant eis omnia communia."

It must not be supposed for an instant that we have, in the above quotations, exhausted the evidence as to the great fact of the direct apostolic conversion of these islands. Much, very much more might have been brought forward; but we have contented ourselves with giving a specimen of each class, and some of the most important. We have seen the testimony of St. Paul himself to the existence of a Christian British lady

and her husband at Rome, intimately associated with and known to other apostles, and we have adduced the collateral testimony of the pagan poet, Martial, to her existence and British birth. We have also seen the united assertions of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian, men who had conversed with the disciples of those apostles, and who were now taking their place in the world, that these islands had received a knowledge of Christianity from direct apostolic preaching. Then, added to this, we have the historic chain carried down by the works of the first British historian, Gildas, and the existence of a complete and organized Church confirmed by the scruples of Augustine, and considerations for his own dignity, and the noble, unselfish advice sent him by Gregory.

And now, though it is not vitally important that we should know to which of the apostles belongs the honour of first planting the cross of Christ in Britain, nor can we know to an absolute certainty, still it is impossible to pass over the subject without some attention.

There can be no doubt that the plot of marshy land known to the ancient Britons by the name of Ynswitryn, or Avalonia, and subsequently called by the Saxons Glassenberg, or Glastonbury, was the spot where, in the first century of the Christian era, was erected the first English temple of the Christian faith. However contradictory the ancient chroniclers are as to who was the planter, all unite in fixing upon this spot for the planting. They are also unanimous as to the apostolic character of the planter; but from the mazes of monkish legends, black letter chronicles, and ecclesiastical records, three theories are compiled, each pointing to a different apostle as the first Christian missionary to the British



isles—the one, founded only upon conjecture strangely emphatic, in some degree supported by contemporary history, but in no degree by the history of England, points to the Apostle Paul; the other, founded wholly upon conjecture, and totally unsupported by history, save that of two doubtful writers, claims the honour for Saint Simon; and the last, sadly clouded by legend, but receiving some faint confirmation in the antiquities of the country, is that which fixes upon Saint Philip as the apostolic instigator, and Saint Joseph of Arimathea as the actual missionary, who, in the midst of the darkness of paganism, first planted on the marshy isle of Avalon the cross of Christ.

As regards the theory of the Apostle Paul's visit, the conjectural arguments in its favour are somewhat like these. There is no account extant of the way in which he spent the last seven or eight years of his life. We follow him up to the moment of his imprisonment at Rome, consequent upon his appeal to Cæsar; but from the time of his release until his subsequent re-appearance and execution in that city, there is a sudden chasm in his history, to bridge over which the theory of his mission to England is set up. From his own words we may gather the fact that he did not return eastwards; nay, more, that he had some intention of going in a contrary direction, even before his arrest at Jerusalem. This intention is all the more feasible, from the facts that there were others at work in various parts of the east, and that he had already been everywhere in that direction. Whether these considerations suggested to him the idea of prosecuting his mission in other countries or not, the one truth is evident, that before going to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and therefore before his appeal to Cæsar, he had resolved

upon leaving the scene of his labours. In the twentieth chapter of the Acts, we read that when he arrived at Miletus, on his way to Jerusalem, he sent to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, to come to him, and receive his last charge. Then ensued that pathetic parting scene, so graphically described, when, after recapitulating the vicissitudes of his devoted career, he told them—“And now, behold I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. And when he had spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all; and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.” No trace can be found of his ever having visited the east after this. Had he done so, it is but fair to suppose that some record of such a visit would have been preserved, because he would have been sure to make his presence known to the Ephesians, to whom he was much attached. However, the missionary plans of the apostle, whatever they may have been, were interrupted by his arrest and appeal to Rome; but upon his release, the Pauline theorists say he carried them out by preaching the Gospel through the western countries of Europe, even as far as the British Isles. Clemens Romanus, a contemporary, tells us, that after undergoing many sufferings, he preached through the whole world, and in so doing, went to the uttermost parts of the west.* St. Jerome

* Δια ζῆλον ὁ Παυλος εὐπομνης αὐτου κλεος ἔλαβεν, δικαιοσυνην βραβειον ἀπεσχευ, ἑπτακις δεσμα διδαξας ὄλον τον κοσμον και ἐπι το φορεσας, ραβδευθεις, λιθασθεις, τερμα της δυσσεως ἔλθων. — St. κηρυξ γενομενος ἐν τη ἀνατολη και Clemens ad Cor. ἐν τη δυσσει το γενναιον της πιστεως

says, that he imitated the sun in going from one ocean to the other, and that his labours extended to the western parts.* By such expression Britain was generally understood. So Catullus, addressing Cæsar, speaks of this country in the line—

“Fuisti in ultima Occidentis insula.”—*CARMINA* xxix.

Theodoret says that Saint Paul brought salvation to the islands of the ocean,† and in another of his works he mentions the Britons among the converts of the apostles.‡

There is a great deal of plausibility in this theory. The British Isles were governed by Roman viceroys; St. Paul would have heard of them at Rome, because, as we have already seen, they were beginning to be known at that time, and talked about as a new province in the empire. Nothing would be more natural than that Paul, in his untiring zeal, should resolve on carrying the light of Christianity to this youngest and most remote of the Roman dependencies; but that he ever did set a foot on British soil is more than doubtful, from the fact that in the traditions of the times, in the annals of the country, or in her antiquities, there is not one grain of evidence in support of the theory, which rests upon the vague conjectures of foreign historians.

* Qui (Paulus) vocatus a Domino effusus est super faciem universæ terræ, ut prædicaret Evangelium de Hierosolymis usque ad Illyricum, et ædificaret non super alterius fundamentum, ubi jam fuerat prædicatum, sed usque ad Hispanos tenderet, et a Mari Rubro imo ab oceano usque ad oceanum curreret, imitans Dominum suum et solem justitiæ. Hieron. in Amos., lib. ii. c. 5.

Ut Evangelium Christi in occidentis quosque partibus prædicaret.

—Hieron. Catal. Scrip. Eccl. vol. i. col. 349.

† Και εἰς τὰς Σπανίας ἀφικετο καὶ ταῖς ἐν τῷ πελαγεὶ διακειμεναῖς νησίαις τὴν ὠφελειαν προσηνεγκε.—Theod. Interp. in Psalm 186.

‡ Και Βρετταννοὺς * * * * * καὶ ἀπαξ ἀπλῶς πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ γένος ἀνθρώπων δαμασθαι τοῦ σταυρωθέντος τοὺς νομοὺς ἀνεπεισαν.—Theod. Sermo, I. de Legibus.

In the annals of no British king is there any mention of such a visit, nor is there in the records of the Roman government; and this omission, at a time when intercourse between the country and her subjugator was becoming intimate and regular, and when the viceroys of the empire were in continual communication with head-quarters upon the internal affairs of the new possessions, would have been very improbable, had such a visit by the renowned Apostle of the Gentiles been made.

The second theory, which claims the honour for St. Simon, is based solely upon a passage which occurs in Nicephorus, lib. ii., c. 40, where he says that Simon, "who was born in Cana of Galilee, and for his zeal called Zelotes, travelled through Egypt, Africa, Mauritania, and Lybia, preaching; then to the Occidental Seas, and the isles called Britain." Again, in lib. iii. c. 1, he says that when the apostles were dispersed, they divided the provinces of the earth among them by lot, and these islands fell to that of St. Simon. This theory is only supported by Dorotheus, no other mention of it is made anywhere, neither is there any corroborative evidence in the history of the country.

We come then to the third and last theory, that which points to St. Philip as the apostle who sent St. Joseph of Arimathea into Britain as the missionary of the Gospel.

Soon after the Resurrection of Christ, the number of disciples professing his doctrines and baptized in his name began to increase daily, when the Jewish High Priest, incited to the act by the Scribes and Pharisees, and in fact by the whole of Jewry, who had by this time recovered from the consternation caused by that un-

just execution, resolved upon taking stringent measures to exterminate if possible the wide-spreading heresy. The first Christian persecution was thus inaugurated, and St. Stephen received the honour of being the first Christian martyr. Appointed by the apostles as one of the seven deacons whose names are mentioned in Acts vi. 5, to assist them in their ministrations, he soon distinguished himself above his brethren, and did, as we are told, "great wonders and miracles among the people." This distinction of the earnest deacon drew upon the young Church the jealous attention of the Jews, who at once urged the High Priest to action, when Stephen was arrested and dragged before the council. Then was inaugurated the prototype of inquisitorial examination, and for the first time in the history of the Church the terrible alternative was forced upon a poor bewildered soul of recanting its faith or yielding up its life. The persecution at Jerusalem continued, and nearly all the followers of Christ were expelled the city. At this time there can be no question that some such division of the earth as is mentioned by contemporary historians was made amongst them, and the tradition is that it was in consequence of such a division according to Freculphus* that St. Philip having come to the land of the Franks (*regionem Francorum adiens*) converted many and baptized them: then wishing to publish still further the Gospel of Christ, he selected twelve of his followers, placed Joseph of Arimathea over them as chief, and laying his hands upon them, dismissed them with apostolic solemnity, to publish the Gospel in Britain, then just assuming an importance in the economy of the Roman world. The Sanctus Graal, an old Welsh authority, says that they

* Freculph. Hist., lib. ii., c. 4.

landed on the shores of Wales, and the king of the province put them in prison for attempting to preach : upon their release they wandered into Britain and sought an interview with the King Arviragus, who then ruled under the Roman Viceroy.* Arviragus reigned from A.D. 45 to 73. The period assigned to the visit of Joseph of Arimathea is by some stated to be 53, by others 63, and by others 71, but all fix it in the reign of this monarch. The result of their interview was more favourable. Arviragus being a pagan, refused his consent to their preaching, and would not interfere with the traditions of his people, but as they had come from afar and appeared to be of modest habit of life, he gave them a certain island surrounded with marshes called by the inhabitants Ynswitrin or Avalonia, subsequently Glassenberg or Glastonbury. Upon this marshy island they built the first Christian Church in the kingdom. A rude oratory made of wicker wands twisted together with a sloping roof of straw and rushes, it was 60 feet in length, 20 in breadth, and was shaped something like a cattle-shed.† Clustered around this humble work of their hands, they dwelt in huts and caves, spending the time not occupied in the services of the Church in prayer and preaching to the heathen, many of whom they converted. Arviragus, pleased with the quiet simplicity of their lives, gave them each one hide of land, upon the

* There can be little doubt that such a monarch existed at the time, though this has been denied ; but he is mentioned by Juvenal in his iv. Satire, v. 127.

Regem aliquem capies rut
de temone Britanno,
Excidet Arviragus.

† Sketches of this old Mother Church of England may be seen in Samme's Antiquities, p. 213, and in Hearne's edition of John of Glastonbury's History.

produce of which they lived. This is supposed to be the origin of the Twelve Hides of Glastonbury, a title preserved to the present day. If true, the fabulous revenues of our National Church may be traced back in an unbroken line to this first simple state grant, this gift of twelve hides of marshy, wet, useless land to the poor Christian strangers by that tolerant pagan prince. The cross was planted, the church was founded, and when, five centuries later, St. Augustine came to England, he found on the Isle of Avalon, at Glassenberg or Glastonbury, a compact renowned body of Christians dwelling there active and prosperous. But we must not anticipate. History mentions little of the young colony after the death of Arviragus, but fortunately sufficient to preserve the clue. That monarch, after an unsuccessful attempt to throw off the Roman yoke, made peace with his victors and died. Marius, his son, succeeded, still paying the tribute to Rome, but with murmuring; he reigned from the year 73 to 124, and was succeeded by his son Coilus or Coel, who had been sent to Rome to be educated, as were many of the sons of kings and nobles at that time; he returning to his wild island home with Roman associations and Roman ideas paid the tribute when he became king with willingness.

These two monarchs, each in turn, confirmed the grant of land to the Avalonian Christians, and by the time that Lucius, the son of Coilus, ascended the throne in the year 179 A.D., they must have made great progress in their mission, for we find Lucius converted to Christianity, and two Christian courtiers about his person, Eluanus Avalonius, or Eluan of Avalon, and Medwinus Belgæ, or Medwin of Wells. At this point in the legendary history of the primitive

English Church, an event occurred which materially influenced her subsequent career and fixed her destiny for fourteen centuries; that event was the first communication made by a British king to a Roman pontiff, and the first laying of pontifical hands upon an English Church—a grasp firmly maintained for those fourteen centuries, and only shaken off in the struggle which ensued at the time of the Reformation. The incidents, as gathered from various sources, are as follow:—King Lucius was a Christian, and being anxious that his subjects should be instructed in the new religion, and that a code of laws should be compiled for his kingdom based upon the Roman system, sent the two courtiers, already mentioned, to Eleutherius, the then Pope (13th from Peter), imploring him to send with the Roman laws missionaries to preach the Gospel to his subjects. The result of this was the writing of the following letter by Eleutherius, Pope of Rome, to Lucius, King of the Britons, of which, as it was the very first ecclesiastical communication addressed from Rome to this country, we give a translation. The letter itself was brought by two missionaries, Faganus and Diruvianus, who formally baptized Lucius, took possession of the Church at Avalon, and with that cheerful alacrity which characterized the Saxon division of the country into Saxon kingdoms, proceeded at once to appoint bishops. To this day an old church is standing at Dunster in Somerset, called St. Diruvian, from the name of one of these two missionaries of Eleutherius.

“POPE ELEUTHERIUS TO LUCIUS KING OF THE BRITONS.”

“You required that we should send you the Roman and Imperial laws, that you might use them in your kingdom of Britain, but those laws we may disprove, but not the laws of God. *You have received*

lately through God's goodness in your kingdom the faith and law of Christ; you have there in your kingdom both Testaments; out of them, by God's grace and the advice of your realm, take a law, and thereby patiently govern your kingdom. You are the Vicar of God in your kingdom; according to the Kingly Prophet, 'The earth is the Lord's, and his fulness is the whole world and all that dwell therein.' And again: 'Thou shalt love righteousness and hate iniquity, wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' They are the King's children—Christian nations and people of your kingdom that live and exist under your protection and peace, according to the Scripture, 'As a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.' The people and nations of the kingdom of Britain are yours. Such as are divided you should gather them together to the law of Christ, his holy Church to peace and concord, and cherish, maintain, protect, govern and defend them from the injurious, malicious, and their enemies. Woe be to that kingdom whose king is a child, and the princes eat early in the morning. I do not call a king a child for his youth or minority, but for his folly, iniquity, and madness. According to the Kingly Prophet, 'The bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not outlive half their days.' By eating we shall understand gluttony; by gluttony luxury; by luxury all filth, wickedness, and mischief; according to King Solomon, 'Wisdom will not enter into the spiteful soul, nor inhabit in a body subject to sin.' A king has his name of governing not of his kingdom. You will be king so long as you rule well, otherwise you will not be so named, but lose that name, which God forbid. God grant that you may so rule your realm of Britain that you may reign with Him everlastingly, whose Vicar you are in the said kingdom. To whom with the Father, etc., etc."

At this point it would be well to recollect that King Lucius must have been contemporary with Justin Martyr and Irenæus, and only one generation removed from Tertullian, the testimony of which three writers we have already quoted to the fact of a Christian Church being in existence in England about this time. It has been objected that this letter must be spurious, not having been discovered till nearly a thousand years after the death of Eleutherius; and probably it is, but it does not affect the fact, that missionaries were sent

here from some cause. In the absence of proof as to a document being spurious, it is but fair to admit collateral testimony, and let it have due weight in its favour. One thing it would be well to remember in historical investigation, that in cases where writers so authoritatively declare this and that to be spurious and unauthentic, the reason of their rejecting such a document is generally far more apparent than the reason why it should have been forged at all. It has become convenient to some historians of the nineteenth century to brand a considerable amount of documentary ecclesiastical evidence as forgeries, which at the time of its creation would have answered no purpose, and would in all probability have failed as such.

When the two delegates, Faganus and Diruvianus,* arrived from Rome with the pontifical communication, they penetrated into the country, preaching and baptizing the inhabitants as they went. They were soon informed that Christianity had already been preached in the south-western portions of the country by other missionaries who had retired to Ynswitrin or Avalonia, where they lived and died, and where a church had been erected. They then pushed on for this Holy Isle, as it was even then called, and about the year 183, arrived there, and found the rude rush-covered church, which, we are told, in after years received the familiar name of "Ealdechirche," the old church. Here also they discovered many evidences of a Christian colony; for although Christianity had spread through the neighbouring districts, and even to the court itself, the "Ealdechirche" had been deserted as its devotees died off. Guided in their researches by

* The reception of the Roman Missionaries is confirmed by Bede.

the two Christian courtiers—one of whom, Eluan, was a native of the island—the Roman delegates took possession of the spot, built another oratory of stone to St. Peter and St. Paul, and also the church at the top of the Tor Hill adjoining, dedicated to St. Michael. Here they settled and lived for nine years, when, in memory of the first twelve, they chose twelve of their company to dwell in the island, in little cells apart, but to meet daily in the church for public worship. They also obtained from King Lucius a confirmation of their title to the island for themselves and their successors. It appears, that from this time there was a succession of twelve men always engaged in worship at the church, and living round it until the coming of the Irish apostle in the early part of the fifth century.

The confirmation of this settling by the Roman delegates is preserved still in the charter of Glastonbury Abbey, given by Henry II., in which he says that he diligently perused all the privileges and charters, not only of William I., William II., and Henry I., but of his predecessors of more ancient times, those of Edgar, Edmund, Edward, Elfred, Bringwalthus, Kentwyn, Baldred, and Ina, concerning the House of Glastonbury, and found that in some of these charters it is called the Mother of Saints, in others the Grave of Saints, and that the church was originally built by the very disciples of Christ themselves, and dedicated to our Lord, as the first place which he chose to himself in this realm. The little band of Christians established there by the Roman delegates pursued their devotions in the safe enjoyment of the privileges which had been confirmed to them, and these rules and privileges they handed down to their successors, who increased and diminished with varied fortunes until the fourth century,

when the settlement acquired a widespread reputation for sanctity, and was visited by pilgrims and others from afar—a circumstance which, at the opening of the fifth century (430 A.D.), attracted the attention of St. Patrick, and led him to undertake a pilgrimage to her shrines. During the two centuries which followed, from the settlement of the Roman delegates up to the arrival of St. Patrick, scarcely anything is known of the doings at Avalonia; and indeed the materials for the history of the country itself during this period are very scanty, having probably been lost in the wars and persecutions which swept over its bosom. It is probable that the very remote and secluded position of the Avalonian settlement preserved it from the destruction which fell upon many a church during those times. We shall endeavour, therefore, to fill up this gap, by tracing the outline of two of the principal events which occurred in these two centuries—the Diocletian persecution, and the Pelagian heresy, one of which produced the first English martyr, and the other the first English heretic. It is clear that Christianity must have made rapid progress in these islands; for in the second century we find bishops established in various parts, churches springing up everywhere, and houses of learning attracting attention; besides, at the opening of the third century, as we shall presently see, the successors of those very bishops began to take part in the councils of the Church.

On the 17th September, 284, Diocletian was elevated to the Imperial throne by the voice of the army. Soon after his elevation, he took as a partner in his imperial dignity, and for his greater imperial protection, Maximian, a celebrated military commander. The character of Diocletian was merciful and gentle; that

of Maximian bloodthirsty and relentless. For the sake of still greater safety, these two chose two other generals, to share the empire with equal power, and to one of these generals, Galerius, the Church of Christ is indebted for a merciless persecution, which threatened to exterminate it in its infancy from the face of the earth. Born and bred a pagan, he hated the then spreading Christians with all the virulence of pagan fanaticism, and resolved on persuading Diocletian to commence a persecution against them. For a long time Diocletian nobly hesitated, until, by false charges and false incendiarisms, Galerius succeeded in rousing the populace, when, in self-defence, Diocletian yielded his unwilling consent, and on the 23rd February, 303, a persecution of the most relentless character was commenced. Orders were sent to the governor of every province in the Roman empire to give up the Christians to the pagan priests and magistrates, who, unless they offered to the gods, were to deal with them as they chose. In due course, those orders were sent to Constantius,* the Roman viceroy in Britain, who had hitherto treated the Christians in his power with great kindness and consideration; but his orders being imperative, the little scruples which a humane pagan might have against sacrificing a Christian were soon overcome, and in Britain the work of blood commenced. For nine years that persecution raged, when, as Gildas graphically writes, " All the copies of the Scriptures which could be found were burned in

* We have already referred to Constantine's testimony as to the complete establishment of the British Church. Constantius was his father, and when he was Emperor, Constantine left the East

by stealth and went to Britain to consult his father upon political matters. In this way he might have had ocular demonstration of the fact.—Zosimus, lib. ii., c. 8.

the streets, and the chosen pastors of God's flock butchered, together with their innocent sheep, in order that not a vestige of the Christian religion, if possible, might remain in any province. What disgraceful flights then took place; what slaughter and death, inflicted by way of punishment in divers shapes; and, on the contrary, what glorious crowns of martyrdom then were won; what raving fury was displayed by the persecutors, and what patience on the part of sorrowing saints, Ecclesiastical History informs us; for the whole Church were crowding in a body, to leave behind them the dark things of this world, and to make the best of their way to the happy mansions of heaven, as to their natural home."*

When this persecution broke out, there lived at Verulam one Alban, a pagan, and born of pagan parents. He, however, did not refuse to shelter a poor proscribed Christian priest, Amphibalus by name, who during his stay managed to convert his protector to the perilous faith of Christ. In a short time the retreat of the priest was discovered, and measures taken to capture him. Alban, however, resolved upon saving his guest, and dressing himself in Amphibalus' clothes, he was dragged before the Roman governor, when the deception was soon discovered, and he was commanded to offer to the gods, or share the fate intended for the priest. He refused, and was condemned to the torture by scourging, but this failing to break his determination, he was led out to a hill overlooking the town, and decapitated. Thus did the first of that goodly band of English witnesses to the faith win the golden crown, and take his elevated place hard by the

* Gild. Historia, c. I, Sheldonian Edition.

throne of God itself, on the martyr-seats of heaven. The Abbey of St. Albans stood on the spot where this execution took place. Amphibalus escaped only to fall into the hands of the pagans at a later time, when he suffered martyrdom also at Rudburn, three miles from Verulam. Julius and Aaron, two other Christians, fell in this persecution, and besides these four, no other name has been handed down to posterity of its many victims.

The elevation of Constantius, in the year 313, to the throne, put an end to the persecution. The poor Christians living in caves and forests, who had not died from starvation, or been dragged from their hiding-place by their foes, now began to come out once more to the light of day. Churches were rebuilt, and new foundations laid, when the conversion of Constantine, the successor and son of Constantius, to the Christian religion, brought its followers for the first time into imperial favour, and gathered them from the secret places of the earth, beaten by persecution and wasted by famine, into the ample folds of imperial protection. At this time the British Church began to take part in ecclesiastical councils. In the year 314,* a council was held at Arles, the decrees of which were signed by three British bishops—Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelphius of the third province, called *Britannia Secunda*. These three were the selected representatives of all the other bishops in Britain. In fact, from the earliest period a succession of bishops had been established. One thing comes out clearly from these early councils, that at that time the dogma of Papal Supremacy was unknown and

* Appendix ii.

unthought of. The Council of Arles was convened by the advice of the Emperor; and if the Pope were invited to take part in the proceedings, which appears from the letter addressed to him by the council, he was invited as a bishop, in the same manner as any other bishop present. The language of the synodical letter addressed to him is not that of subordinates to a principal, but of equals to an equal, informing him of matters done by them in the business in which he had been prevented from taking part. It tells him of the canons they had passed by common consent, and conveyed copies of them to him, that he might divulge them, in common with other bishops; and so far from recognising any authority on his part, they address him as their "dear Brother of Rome," expressing their wish that he had been with them, and lamenting the cause which deprived them of his presence. It is clear that the Supremacy of the Pope was not dreamt of in this first great Council of the Western Church. Ten or eleven years after this assembly, a heresy broke out in the Church, which threatened to undermine its foundations. Arius propounded his pernicious doctrines, and many of the bishops caught the contamination. The Emperor endeavoured to heal the division by his own exertions. A letter was written to the Bishop of Alexandria, and another to Arius himself, but to no purpose as regards the latter, whom the Bishop of Alexandria excommunicated, when, finding that ineffectual, a General Council of the whole Church was convened, and sat at Nice, where the clear definitions of the belief of the Christian Church were emphatically declared. There can be no doubt that British bishops were present at this celebrated council, as representatives of their brethren at home, for we are

told by Eusebius that Constantine wished to assemble as many bishops as possible from all the provinces, so as to stamp this definition of what Christianity was with something like conclusiveness and determination. To this end summonses were sent throughout the empire, demanding the presence of representative bishops, and that there should be no excuse on the plea of distance, all expenses of travelling and entertainment were defrayed by the empire. As in the Council of Arles, so in this of Nice, there is striking evidence that at this time the Pope had no spiritual supremacy beyond his own diocese, was regarded in the same way as any other bishop, and obeyed the laws imposed upon the Church by councils convened at certain times, and composed of representative bishops of the whole communion. One of the canons passed at Nice confined the liberty of final appeal to provincial synods, and provided that no person who had been excommunicated by one bishop, should be received into communion by another, and that provincial synods should be held twice a year—in Lent and Autumn. In matters of faith, or upon extraordinary emergencies, at the imperial summons, or by the consent of Christian princes, a General Council of the whole Church might be convened; but in ordinary matters the provincial synod had the final decision. By the side of this, let us place the solemn confirmations of the authority of this Council of Nice, made by Pope Leo, who said—“ Though the number of bishops be never so great that give their consent to any alteration in the Nicene canons, they signify nothing, and cannot bind;” again, “ The privileges of Churches, which were begun by the canons of the holy Fathers, and confirmed by the Council of Nice, can neither be destroyed by wicked

usurpation, nor dissolved by the humour of change and novelty." How, then, did that wondrous theory of Papal Supremacy spring up ; that power which in later times humbled the proudest monarchs of the earth at its feet, and spread desolation and woe in far distant lands, by the mere word of its displeasure. The rise and progress of that power, in direct opposition to the decree of Nice, and therefore by usurpation alone, what it did in the world, and what it led to, is the burden of some centuries of the history of every European nation. After the Council of Nice came that of Sardica, in the year 347 A.D., at which also British bishops were present. Again, in the year 359, another council was summoned, and sat at Ariminium, whose definitions were subscribed to by British bishops in favour of Arianism, which, although, so solemnly denounced at Nice, insinuated its way, and infected many Churches all over the Continent, and reached even to these islands. It is, however, suggested that this concession was wrung from them by the Emperor, through terror of his displeasure, as indeed a similar concession had been from the rest ; and this appears the more reasonable from the fact that after his death the Western Churches, by means of assemblies of the different bishops, readopted the Nicene faith. Hilary expressly declares that the Gallican Churches met by representatives at Paris, renounced the decisions of the Ariminian Council, and returned to the Nicene creed. The same, or a similar thing, must have been done in Britain, for Athanasius, in Jovian's time, bears testimony that the British Churches held the Nicene faith.*

* Ταυτη συμψηφοι τυγχανουσι πασαι αι κατα τοπον εκκλησαι αι τε κατα Σπανιαν και Βρεττανιαν.—S. Athan. I., p. 309.

At length, however, as the fifth century opened, a terrible heresy sprang up in the Church—a heresy more formidable than any other, a heresy which had followers in the sixteenth century, which is even denounced by name in the Ninth Article of our own Church, and which lingers about in the world still. As this great schism was caused by a native of Britain, it would be interesting perhaps to inquire a little into the matter.

Pelagius lived at the opening of the 5th century, and when the last days of its predecessor were waning was a monk in the monastery of Bangor or Banchor—it is impossible to tell which: Bangor in Wales, or Banchor near Carrickfergus, in Ireland. Three countries claim this great heresiarch as their own—Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. The claim of the latter rests upon no other foundation than that Bangor in North Wales, was the monastery whence he issued; the claim of Scotland rests upon a virulent passage in Jerome, which is capable of other interpretation as we shall see. It is, however, fortified by one fact, that Pelagius, after he went to Rome, never returned to his country—a peculiarity attributed by malicious critics to the Scots of modern times. We fear Ireland must have him. The fact of the monastery of Banchor being a distinguished one at that time favours the supposition. When in Rome, too, he fell in with Celestius, a celebrated Irishman, who became his colleague; and the passage in Jerome, advanced by those who claim him for Scotland, proves him rather to be an Irishman than a Scot. It is a fair specimen of the theological vituperation then in vogue. Jerome describes Celestius as a “great corpulent barking dog, fitter to kick with his heels than bite

with his teeth," and dismisses him as a blockhead—"Scotorum pultibus prægravatus;" and upon the translation of that sentence the dispute turns. The free meaning is, that he was "inflated with the opinions" of his master (Irish or Scotch). The poetic expression has been rendered "inflated with Scotch pottage;" and that looks very like the true rendering until we remember that in those early ages Ireland was called Scotia, and the Irish at home and the Irish emigrants who peopled Scotland, and took Christianity there, were called by one name, Scoti; so that this passage may also be fairly rendered "inflated with Irish flummery;" and for this reason, as well as the close friendship between him and his Irish colleague, we fear that Ireland was the country, and Banchor near Carrickfergus, the monastery whence issued the first great heresiarch of the British Church. He was noted for his eloquence, another indication of his race, and up to the time when the Church began to tremble at his doctrines, was esteemed as an ornament and model of piety. It appears that, like many other scholars in those days, he had gone to Rome, where, taking up his residence, he fell in with Celestius, and the two became bosom friends. They then made the acquaintance of Rufinus, who had just returned from the east, imbued with the doctrines of Origen; from him they soon learned to doubt the doctrine of Original Sin, and then advanced to the denial of the necessity of the operation of Divine Grace upon the soul to enable it to fulfil the will of God. These opinions were at first cautiously spread about until gradually they became a formidable heresy in the Church. It is said that they were infused amongst the British clergy by Agricola, son of

Severianus, a Gallic bishop. The leaders of the Ecclesiastics appear to have been very little tainted with these doctrines; but finding them spread in spite of remonstrance and entreaty, they sent for assistance to the Church of Gaul, and in reply there came two bishops, Germanus of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes, who by dint of argument and kindness inclined the refractory to listen to reason; and ultimately, at a council held at Verulam, won over the Pelagians, settled the dispute and returned, A. D. 429. Scarcely were these two good bishops settled down in their Gallican dioceses when the taint appeared more virulently than before. Again their assistance was sought, when Germanus once more came to Britain, bringing with him, however, Severus, Bishop of Treves, and as preaching, reasoning, threats were all in vain, Germanus advised the adoption of vigorous measures, and by virtue of the edict of Valentinian, the Pelagians were banished (A. D. 447). It was crushed for a considerable period, but the taint was ineradicable, for it appeared from time to time and flourished in another sect, called the Semi-Pelagians, at the time of the Reformation; and even at the settling of the English Prayer Book, where, as we have hinted, it is solemnly said, "Original sin standeth not in the *following* of Adam (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk)". Scarcely had this heresy broken out in Britain when the Romans, recalled by troubles at home, withdrew their legions from a country then just beginning to flourish under their dominion. The Picts and Scots overran the north—destroyed crops, burnt villages, and slaughtered the people. The abject Britons appealed in terror to their old rulers, and besought them if they did not wish to see a Roman province

become the prey of savages, to send help. Although involved in the first ominous struggles with her own savage foes, the Roman Empire sent her legions once more to the defence of her old subjects, when having beaten their enemies out of the country they advised the islanders to build a wall between the two seas, which they did, but built it only of earth. As soon as the Roman soldiers were gone another irruption was made, followed by another earnest appeal to Rome: once more a legion was spared from the imperial army, and once more the Picts and Scots were routed. The Romans then assured the Britons that they could help them no longer, but as a last assistance built a strong stone wall across the island, gave them patterns for arms, advised them to defend themselves like men, and took their leave.* It is evident from this that there must have been a strong inclination on the part of the Romans to save this British province—twice in the midst of their own troubles, when the Goth and the Vandal were raging before their walls, and the shadows of their own ruin were closing in upon them, did they send troops to this far distant colony. But another destiny was reserved to both—Rome was to fall, and Britain, after being for a time the sport of her northern foes, was to come into the hands of a people whose language and character when blended with their own and again fused with the original elements, centuries later, after the Norman inoculation, were to form a new race in the world, whose extent of dominion and weight of power have never been equalled.

Shortly after the abandonment of Britain by the Romans, Glastonbury Abbey emerged from its obscurity

* Bede Eccl. Hist. lib. i. c. 12.

and took up that prominent position in the ecclesiastical history of the country which it maintained to the end of its career. The event which brought it then prominently into notice was the advent of St. Patrick, who is generally acknowledged to have been its first regular abbot. Although the early life of St. Patrick is involved in almost impenetrable mystery, yet the leading events of that life, such as his Irish mission and establishment of monastic rules at Glastonbury, are beyond all question, and supported by contemporary history.

Some writers say he was born in France and went to Rome from one of the French schools; then from Rome to Ireland, where he spent the rest of his life, died, and was buried. One thing is certain, that as a young man he was the disciple of that Germanus, the Bishop of Auxerre, who came to Britain to quell the Pelagian heresy. That is maintained in the accounts of the heresy itself, the life of Germanus, and is further supported by the testimony of John of Glastonbury's records, whose version of the career of St. Patrick, has an air of probability about it; that version is as follows:—St. Patrick was born in the North of Britain (his knowledge of the Celtic language seems to favour this); his father's name was Caliphurnus, that of his mother Conchessa. During the incursions made by the Picts and Scots into Britain, he fell into their hands and was sold into captivity, out of which he escaped to Britain, and devoted his time to prayer and study (probably found his way into some monastery, where he was sheltered like many a fugitive in those times); then he was discovered by Germanus, who travelled through the country after the settlement of the first Pelagian council. With him he went to France, and

when his studies were completed, to Rome, during the Papacy of Celestine, who sent him as a missionary to Ireland, where he laboured for many years, travelled through the whole of the country and established many churches. Then when things were tolerably settled there, in the spirit of the age having heard of the renown of the Avalonian establishment, he set out on a pilgrimage towards its shrine. He arrived at Glastonbury, according to the records, in the year 430.*

It appears that these brethren adhered to the old custom established by the two Roman delegates of dwelling in separate cells around, in the neighbourhood of the church, but St. Patrick induced them to eat, drink, and sleep under one roof; and when he had succeeded in bringing them to this monastic manner, the brethren showed him some writings of Faganus and Diruvianus, which contained an account of their coming, and of the gift of land, etc. Then, after a short time, "taking brother Wellias with me, we ascend with great difficulty the hill which rose in the island" (Tor Hill). When they reached the top, they found the old dilapidated oratory, in which they discovered another writing, nearly consumed, containing an account of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the things done by Faganus and Diruvianus, at the end of which they found a statement to the effect that these two delegates had built the oratory to the honour of St. Michael the Archangel. He then arranged that two brethren should be always kept there, and two of his Irish companions—Arnulphus and Ogmar—were the first appointed. In the year 493 St. Patrick died;

* Appendix iii.

and it is still an unsettled question whether he was buried at Glastonbury or at his church in Ireland. The Glastonbury records number him amongst their buried saints; but we should always bear in mind that, in those days, when miracles were supposed to be wrought with any portion of a person's body who had died in the odour of sanctity, it was not unusual for those valued remains to be scattered and cherished in separate monasteries. The dispute which took place in the sixteenth century between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Abbot Beere, of Glastonbury, as to the actual burying place of St. Dunstan, proves this, for the abbot satisfactorily established his claim as far as a certain portion of St. Dunstan's remains were concerned, and conceded the rest to the see of Canterbury. It may then be possible that St. Patrick returned to Ireland, died, and was buried there, according to the Irish version, which we are inclined to accept as the accurate one; but at the same time it is also probable that some of his remains were cherished at Glastonbury, of which he was Abbot, just as we have seen was the case with St. Dunstan. The return of St. Patrick to Ireland receives a probability from the fact that Benignus, whom he had appointed as his representative during his absence, also found his way to Glastonbury in or about the year 480, when St. Patrick might have returned; and the probability is increased when we find that, after his death, St. Benignus appears as the next abbot.* Meantime, the affairs of the country, which lay far out beyond the peaceful walls of Avalonia, had undergone a great

* The neighbourhood of Glastonbury bears evidence to the present day of this Irish settlement by the Irish names of some of its suburbs—names mentioned in the very earliest records, and still preserved.

change. The Saxons, invited by the Britons to assist them against their old foes, first drove them out of the country, and then banded with them against the Britons for the possession of that country itself. A continued struggle ensued, and their power gradually increasing, paganism once more threatened to take its stand in Christianized Britain. The Christians were again persecuted, churches were destroyed, books and ecclesiastical documents burned, and every atrocity was shown to the poor Britons by a people who had violated their hospitality and abused their trust.

At the opening of the sixth century, however, the monastery at Avalonia received another distinction in the arrival of Gildas, who, being the father of British history, and a man of great talent, deserves prominent notice. He was the son of a Scotian king, by name Kan, and was devoted by his parents to the study of letters from an early age. For this purpose they sent him to Gaul, where he remained seven years, and soon afterwards began to be talked of in the world as a renowned scholar. Although sought after in all quarters, he resolved upon leading an ascetic life, and we are told that whilst doing so, he fasted and prayed assiduously, wore a hair shirt, ate barley bread mingled with cinders, drank nothing but water, slept very little, and always lay upon the stones, wore only one robe, and in fact did all those very objectionable things which in those days were the unclean preliminaries to canonization, and probably gave rise to the expression, "the *odour* of sanctity." He next appears as a preacher, travelling all through Britain, and telling the tale of Christ's wanderings and sufferings to thousands of upturned eager faces, by the way side, in meadows, on hill tops—anywhere he could draw poor benighted

paganism together, and bring it under the influence of Gospel truth. Like his Great Master, he wandered through the country, braved all the perils of those barbarous times, having neither purse nor scrip with him, now taking shelter under a herdsman's hut, and partaking of his coarse fare, now knocking wearily at the door of some friendly monastery, just as the last service in the church was over, the bell ringing, and the monks clustering round the goodly cheer of the refectory supper. But at that early time there were but few such monasteries in the kingdom, and the poor, hungry disciple wandering through the wilds of Britain, footsore and weary, as did He through the hostile cities and dreary deserts of Palestine, like Him also, often had not "where to lay his head." He was a true apostle; for we are told the people followed him in crowds, to listen to the strange tidings of his mission, and he became the greatest preacher in all Britain, which, judging from his works, we can easily imagine to be true. He must have preached the Gospel in a manner calculated to impress a rude and unsophisticated people, and to win their hearts. There is an apostolic fervour about his works which imparts character to them prominent above all the monastic writing of the times; he was a man who must have spoken out hard, merciless truths, and driven them well into those untutored brains. After travelling through Britain, he is said to have gone to Ireland, where he converted many, when a domestic incident recalled him.

Hueil, his brother, was given to a different course of life, and used to make inroads into the territory of the Britons, set fire to villages, and slaughter the people. King Arthur is said to have pursued this marauder, and slain him, which when Gildas heard he grieved

sorely, returned to Britain and had an interview with the great king, who repented of the deed, and implored forgiveness of the sorrowing apostle. Gildas, after this, resolved upon giving up preaching, and leading the life of a hermit, which he did on a remote and lonely island, probably in what is now called the Bristol Channel; for, being molested by pirates, he left it, made his way to Glastonbury, where he was received by the abbot with great respect, and where he wrote his history "De Regibus Britannix." The longing for absolute seclusion again came over him, and he left the monastery, and dwelt alone in its vicinity; but by-and-by, growing old, and being conscious that his end was approaching, he sent for the abbot, and begged that he might be buried in the old monastery, which was done; and John of Glastonbury tells us that a parish church in his day stood upon the very spot where he, whose name it bore, had lived as an anchorite.

Some few years after the death of this saint, David, archbishop of Menevia, made a pilgrimage to Avalon, accompanied by several of his bishops, ostensibly for the purpose of rebuilding and rededicating the monastery, but was deterred from doing so by a circumstance we shall narrate. The hagiological version runs thus:—That St. David and his auxiliary bishops appeared at Glastonbury Abbey as pilgrims, and after examining the church and place generally, proposed to rebuild it, and dedicate it afresh, but after a while St. David appeared one morning before the brethren, with his hand punctured, and on being asked the reason, told them that the night before he had seen a vision in which the Lord himself had appeared to him, dissuaded him from his intention, and punctured his hand as a sign. We trust it will not be thought impious if we venture to

suggest another version. It would not be altogether impossible that the monks already in possession of the church at Avalonia might have regarded the arrival of this worthy saint, with his tribe of bishops, as an invasion, rather than a visit, and might possibly have shown some symptom of unwillingness to have their house and church rebuilt over their heads, and rededicated for them by a stranger, who would, of course, claim the honour and glory of the deed. St. David would soon perceive this unwillingness, and to cover his retreat with dignity, might have had this remarkable vision. No one can read the lives of those extraordinary men whose names figure in the calendar without being struck at the extraordinary readiness with which a vision appeared, or the marvellous convenience with which an accident occurred, to assist a saint out of a compromising position. St. Dunstan was once opposing a whole council upon some point, and although none supported him, yet determined to carry his point. A picture of our Saviour hung in the room, and at a certain opportune moment a voice was heard coming from the picture, just as St. Dunstan had concluded to the intent that it was his wish it should be so; the council overawed at once by the miraculous interposition, fell on their knees, and yielded the point immediately. From this circumstance, and one or two others in the life of St. Dunstan, in which a voice had come to his assistance in emergencies, it has actually been advanced by unbelieving moderns that he must have been skilled in ventriloquism.

There can be no doubt that these men were shining lights in their day, that they were devoted to the Church and its welfare, and to those objects they sacrificed all others, and were prepared to sacrifice life itself. We should remember also that they had to deal with a

barbarous, pagan people, grossly ignorant, and sunk in all the blind obstinacy which accompanies that state of degradation. If they were to be brought to a knowledge of the truth, it was necessary literally to drag them out of the darkness in which they grovelled; and no doubt these great men often made use of the superstition by which they were surrounded to effect by terror the good they could never hope to accomplish by reason. But to return to St. David. During his stay, the numbers increased so rapidly that he added a chapel to the east side, and consecrated it to the Virgin; and lest the place should be forgotten, there was a pillar erected in a line drawn through the two eastern corners of the church to the south, which line divided the chapel from it. This story, engraven almost verbatim on a brass plate, fastened to a pillar in the Abbey church, was visible even in the time of Henry VIII. As the circumstance is remarkable, we give the translation of the inscription.

“In the 31st year after the Passion of our Lord, twelve holy men, chief amongst whom was Joseph of Arimathea, constructed in this place the first church in the kingdom, dedicated it to Christ in honour of his mother, and as a place for their burial; St. David, Archbishop of Menevia, bearing witness, to whom, being anxious to rededicate that church, the Lord appeared in a dream, dissuaded him, and as a sign that He himself had consecrated it, pierced the hand of the Bishop with his finger, which was visible next day to many. Afterwards, this Bishop, under the guidance of the Lord, and as the numbers were increasing, added a certain chapel at the east side of the church, which was consecrated in honour of the Blessed Virgin, the altar of which he adorned with an inestimable sapphire in memory of the deed; and lest the position or extent of the church should be lost by such additions, this column is erected in a line with the two eastern angles of the church towards the south, cutting off the said chapel from it. The length of it from that line towards the west was forty feet, the breadth twenty-six feet, the distance of the centre of this column from the middle point between the said two angles, forty-eight feet.”—[For the original, see Samme's Antiquities, 1676.]

After this, St. David returned to his see, and died ; but in accordance with the custom already alluded to, some of his relics were removed to Glastonbury Abbey in the reign of Edgar. After many battles with the Saxons, attended with varied fortunes, King Arthur, about twelve years from the visit of St. David, was wounded in an engagement, which took place in the neighbourhood of Glastonbury Abbey. Thither he was carried, and attended to with the greatest care, but to no purpose ; in the shelter of the monastery he died ; and the monks, for fear of the Saxons, buried him very deep in the earth ; and when his Queen Guinever died, her remains were consigned to the same spot. A stone was placed over them at the depth of seven feet, whilst King Arthur lay nine feet lower. Upon this stone was placed a leaden cross bearing the following inscription : —“ Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthurus in insula Avaloniæ cum Guinevera uxore sua secunda.” This leaden cross was subsequently discovered.*

Cerdicus then reigned over the west Saxons, and was succeeded by his son Kinricus, who reigned twenty-seven years ; then followed his son Caulinus, who reigned thirty-three years, and was succeeded by his nephew Celricus ; this brings the history down to the end of the sixth century, to the year 595, when Ethelbert was Bretwalda, or dominant King of Kent, into whose dominions came the Augustinian mission, which gave a new impulse to the already organized Church in the kingdom, and whose leader established for the first time at Glastonbury Abbey a modified form of the Benedictine rule.

* Appendix iv.

CHAPTER III.

St. Benedict and the Benedictines.*

A. D. CCCCLXXX.—DXLIII.

AS Glastonbury Abbey was one of the chief ornaments of the Benedictine Order, as that order was one of the greatest influences, next to Christianity itself, ever brought to bear upon humanity, as the founder of that order and sole compiler of the rule upon which it was based must have been a legislator, a leader, a great, wise, and good man, such as the world seldom sees, one who, unaided, without example or precedent, compiled a code which has ruled millions of beings and made them a motive power in the history of humanity; as the work done by that order has left traces in every country in Europe—lives and acts now in the literature, arts, sciences, and social life of nearly every civilized community—it becomes imperatively necessary that we should at this point investigate these three matters—the man, the rule, and the work. The man, St. Benedict, from whose brain issued the idea of monastic organization, the rule by which it was worked, which contains a system of legislation as comprehensive as the gradually compiled laws of centuries of growth; and the work done by those who were subject to its power, fol-

* *Authorites*—Acta Sanctorum —Dugdale—Martene de Antiq. :
—Butler's Lives of the Saints— Eccles. Ritibus et de Consuet. :
Gregory's Works—Mabillon Acta Monachorum—Calmet : on Bened.
Sanct. : Ordin. Bened. :—Zeigel- Rule.
bauer Hist. Rei Liter :—Fosbrooke

lowed out its spirit ; lived under its influence, and carried it into every country where the Gospel was preached.

Far away in olden times, at the close of the fifth century, when the gorgeous splendour of the Roman day was waning and the shades of that long, dark night of the middle ages were closing in upon the earth ; just at that period when, as if impelled by some instinct or led by some mysterious hand, there came pouring down from the wilds of Scandinavia hordes of ferocious barbarians who threatened, as they rolled on like a dark flood, to obliterate all traces of civilization in Europe—when the martial spirit of the Roman was rapidly degenerating into the venal valour of the mercenary—when the Western Empire had fallen, after being the tragic theatre of scenes to which there is no parallel in the history of mankind—when men, aghast at human crime and writhing under the persecutions of those whom history has branded as the “Scourge of God,” sought in vain for some shelter against their kind—when human nature, after that struggle between refined corruption and barbarian ruthlessness, lay awaiting the night of troubles which was to fall upon it as a long penance for human crime—just at this critical period in the world’s history appeared the man who was destined to rescue from the general destruction of Roman life the elements of a future civilization ; to provide an asylum to which art might flee with her choicest treasures, where science might labour in safety, where learning might perpetuate and multiply its stores, where the oracles of religion might rest secure, and where man might retire from the woe and wickedness of a world given up to destruction, live out his life in quiet, and make his peace with his God.

That man was St. Benedict, who was born of noble parents about the year 480, at Norcia, a town in the Duchy of Spoleto; his father's name was Eutropius, his grandfather's Justinian. Although the glory of Rome was on the decline, her schools were still crowded with young disciples of all nations, and to Rome the future Saint was sent to study literature and science. The poets of this declining age have left behind them a graphic picture of the profligacy and dissipation of Roman life—the nobles had given themselves up to voluptuous and enervating pleasures, the martial spirit which had once found vent in deeds, with whose fame the world has ever since rung, had degenerated into the softer bravery which dares the milder dangers of a love intrigue, or into the tipsy valour loudest in the midnight brawl. The sons of those heroes who in their youth had gone out into the world, subdued kingdoms and had been drawn by captive monarchs through the streets of Rome in triumph, now squandered the wealth and disgraced the name of their fathers over the dice-box and the drinking cup. Roman society was corrupt to its core, the leaders were sinking into the imbecility of licentiousness, the people were following their steps with that impetuosity so characteristic of a demoralized populace, whilst far up in the rude, bleak North the barbarian with the keen instinct of the wild beast, sat watching from his lonely wilds the tottering towers of Roman glory—the decaying energies of the emasculated giant—until the moment came when he sallied forth and with one hardy blow shattered the mighty fabric, and laid the victors of the world in abject slavery at his feet. Into this society came the youthful Benedict with all the fresh innocence of rustic purity, and a soul

already yearning after the great mysteries of religion ; admitted into the wild revelry of student life, that prototype of modern Bohemianism, he was at once disgusted with the general profligacy around him. The instincts of his youthful purity sickened at the fœtid life of Rome, but in his case time, instead of reconciling him to the ways of his fellows, and transforming, as it so often does, the trembling horror of natural innocence into the wild intrepidity of reckless licence, only strengthened his disgust for what he saw, and the timid, thoughtful, pensive student shrunk from the noisy revelry, and sought shelter amongst his books.

About this time, too, the idea of penitential seclusion was prevalent in the West, stimulated by the writings and opinions of St. Augustine and St. Jerome. It has been suggested that the doctrine of Asceticism was founded upon the words of Christ, " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."* Upon the words " deny himself " they built the whole fabric of penitential laceration. St. Gregory himself dwells with peculiar emphasis upon this passage, which he expounds thus, " Let us listen to what is said in this passage—let him who will follow me deny himself ; in another place it is said that we should forego our possessions, here it is said that we should deny *ourselves*, and perhaps it is not laborious to a man to relinquish his possessions, but it is very laborious to relinquish *himself*. For it is a light thing to abandon what one has, but a much greater thing to abandon what *one is*."† Fired by the notion of self-mortification imparted to these words of Christ by their own material interpretation, these men

* Matt. xvi. 24.

St. Greg. Hom. 32 in Evangel.

forsook the world and retired to caves, rocks, forests, anywhere out of sight of their fellow mortals—lived on bitter herbs and putrid water—exposed themselves to the inclemency of the winter, and the burning heats of summer, lacerated their persons by mutilation and scourging, braved the maddening gloom of darkness and the wasting depression of solitude, until the brain wandered, and they mistook the simplest, natural objects, and the slightest sounds for impersonations of the evil one, sent for their especial temptation.

Such was the rise and working of Asceticism, which brought out so many anchorites and hermits. Few things in the history of human suffering can parallel the lives of these men, and when we reflect that it was voluntarily chosen, and chosen out of a pure, if mistaken notion, of the demands of religion—an ardent, though ill-conceived love of Christ; the error in the foundation of the system is lost in the unbounded faith and patience, the martyr-like tenacity manifested in the careers of those men, who, detracting from the power of the sacrifice of Christ, fancied that in the suffering of the body lay the salvation of the soul.

As regards conventual life, that is the assemblage of those who ministered in the Church under one roof, sharing all things in common, that may be traced back to the apostles and their disciples, who were constrained to live in this way, and, therefore, we find that wherever they established a church, there they also established a sort of college, or common residence, for the priests of that church. This is evident from the Epistles of Ignatius, nearly all of which conclude with a salutation addressed to this congregation of disciples, dwelling together, and styled a "Collegium." His epistle to the Church at Antioch, concludes thus, "I salute the

sacred College of Presbyters" (Saluto Sanctum Presbyterorum Collegium). The Epistle ad Philippenses, "Saluto S. Episcopum et sacrum Presbyterorum Collegium"—so also the Epistles to the Philadelphians, the Church at Smyrna, to the Ephesians, and to the Trallians.

But when St. Benedict was sent as a lad to Rome, the inclination towards the severer form of ascetic life, that of anchorites and hermits, had received an impulse by the works of the great Fathers of the Church, already alluded to; and the pensive student buried in these more congenial studies, became imbued with their spirit, and was soon fired with a romantic longing for a hermit life. At the tender age of fifteen, unable to endure any longer the dissonance between his desires and his surroundings, he fled from Rome, and took refuge in a wild cavernous spot in the neighbouring country. As he left the city he was followed by a faithful nurse, Cyrilla by name, who had brought him up from childhood, had tended him in his sojourn at Rome, and now, though lamenting his mental derangement, as she regarded it, resolved not to leave her youthful charge to himself, but to watch over him and wait upon him in his chosen seclusion. For some time this life went on, St. Benedict becoming more and more attached to his hermitage, and the nurse, despairing of any change, begged his food from day to day, prepared it for him, and watched over him with a mother's tenderness. A change then came over the young enthusiast, and he began to feel uneasy under her loving care. It was not the true hermit life, not the realization of that grand idea of solitude with which his soul was filled; and under the impulse of this new emotion he secretly fled from the protection of his

foster-mother, and without leaving behind the slightest clue to his pursuit, hid himself amongst the rocks of Subiaco, or as it was then called, Sublaqueum, about forty miles distant from Rome. At this spot, which was a range of bleak rocky mountains with a river and lake below in the valley, he fell in with one Romanus, a monk, who gave him a monastic dress, with a hair shirt, led him to a part on the mountains where there was a deep narrow cavern into which the sun never penetrated, and here the young anchorite took up his abode, subsisting upon bread and water, or the scanty provisions which Romanus could spare him from his own frugal repasts ; these provisions the monk used to let down to him by a rope, ringing a bell first to call his attention. For three years he pursued this life, unknown to his friends and cut off from all communication with the world ; but neither the darkness of his cavern nor the scantiness of his fare could preserve him from troubles : he was assailed by many sore temptations, one of which especially deserves narration, inasmuch as it has formed the subject of many Benedictine pictures which grace the churches and galleries of Europe, and is one of the three artistic badges by which his figure may be recognized both in sculpture and painting. In the midst of this solitude, according to the monkish records, there started up in the imagination of the young enthusiast the figure of a lovely woman he had seen at Rome, and this beautiful phantom haunted him day by day, wherever he went and whatever he did ; it stole in upon the abstraction of his midnight prayers and it flitted through the phantasmagoria of his dreams ; then a soft insidious longing sprung up in his soul to retrace his steps to Rome for the purpose of seeking out this fair temptress,

and in spite of prayers, and tears, and penance, that longing grew into a burning desire, until one day, when on the very point of yielding to its power, he rushed out of his cave, threw himself into a thicket of briars and nettles, and rolled in them till the blood flowed from every part of his lacerated body. The physical pain he endured seems to have broken the charm and dispelled the image from his fancy, for we are told that he was never more tempted by the alluring apparition of this phantom maiden ; and that incident of his rolling in the thicket is embodied in the background of nearly all the specimens of mediæval art which have St. Benedict as their subject—just as we may recognize a Wouvermann by a white horse, so we may recognize St. Benedict by the nude figure in the background rolling in the briars. St. Gregory tells us in his dialogues, and we may accept it as an evidence of the result of this severe seclusion upon the mind of the young anchorite, that he was also sorely tempted by the devil, who appeared to him in the shape of a black-bird, but upon his making the sign of the cross it disappeared and troubled him no further. However, incidents occurred which perhaps preserved to the world the mental equilibrium of this great man, broke the solitude in which he was living, and subjected him to the humanizing influence of contact with his kind. One day that solitude was disturbed by the appearance of a man in the garb of a priest, who approached his cave and began to address him ; but Benedict would hold no conversation with the stranger until they had prayed together, after which they discoursed for a long time upon sacred subjects, when the priest told him of the cause of his coming. The day happened to be Easter Sunday, and as the priest was preparing his

dinner, he heard a voice saying, " You are preparing a banquet for yourself, whilst my servant Benedict is starving ;" that he thereupon set out upon his journey, found the anchorite's cave, and then producing the dinner, begged St. Benedict to share it with him, after which they parted. A number of shepherds, too, saw him near his cave, and as he was dressed in goat-skins, took him at first for some strange animal ; but when they found he was a hermit, they paid their respects to him humbly, brought him food, and implored his blessing in return.

The fame of the recluse of Subiaco spread itself abroad, from that time through the neighbouring country ; many left the world and followed his example ; the peasantry brought their sick to him to be healed, emulated each other in their contributions to his personal necessities, and undertook long journeys simply to gaze upon his countenance and receive his benediction. Not far from his cave were gathered together in a sort of association a number of hermits, and when the fame of this youthful saint reached them they sent a deputation to ask him to come among them and take up his position as their superior. It appears that this brotherhood had become rather loose in their morals, and, knowing this, St. Benedict at first refused, but subsequently, either from some presentiment of his future destiny, or actuated simply by the hope of reforming them, he consented, left his lonely cell, and took up his abode with them as their Head.

In a very short time, however, the hermits began to tire of his discipline and to envy him for his superior godliness. An event then occurred which forms the second cognizance by which the figure of St. Benedict may be recognized in the Fine Arts. Endeavours had

been made to induce him to relax his discipline, but to no purpose; therefore they resolved upon getting rid of him, and on a certain day, when the saint called out for some wine to refresh himself after a long journey, one of the brethren offered him a poisoned goblet. St. Benedict took the wine, and, as was his custom before eating or drinking anything, blessed it, when the glass suddenly fell from his hands and broke in pieces. This incident is immortalized in stained-glass windows, in paintings, and frescoes, where the saint is either made to carry a broken goblet, or it is to be seen lying at his feet. Disgusted with their obstinacy and wantonness he left them, voluntarily returned to his cavern at Subiaco, and dwelt there alone. But the fates conspired against his solitude, and a change came gradually over the scene. Numbers were drawn towards the spot by the fame of his sanctity, and by-and-by huts sprung up around him; the desert was no longer a desert, but a colony, waiting only to be organized to form a strong community. Yielding at length to repeated entreaties, he divided this scattered settlement into twelve establishments, with twelve monks and a superior in each, and the monasteries were soon after recognized, talked about, and proved a sufficient attraction to draw men from all quarters, even from the riotous gaieties of declining Rome.

The monasteries grew daily in number of members and reputation; people came from far and near, some belonging to the highest classes, and left their children at the monastery to be trained up under St. Benedict's protection. Amongst this number, in the year 522, came two wealthy Roman senators, Equitius and Tertullus, bringing with them their sons, Maurus, then twelve years of age, and Placidus only five. They

begged earnestly that St. Benedict would take charge of them, which he did, treated them as if they had been his own sons, and ultimately they became monks under his rule, lived with him all his life, and after his death became the first missionaries of his order in foreign countries, where Placidus won the crown of martyrdom. Again, St. Benedict nearly fell a victim to jealousy. A priest named Florentius, envying his fame, endeavoured to poison him with a loaf of bread, but failed; then, foiled in his design upon the life of the Superior, this wicked priest tried to seduce the young monks by introducing seven loose women into the monastery, when St. Benedict once more left his charge in disgust; but Florentius, being killed by the sudden fall of a gallery, Maurus sent a messenger after him to beg him to return, which he did, and not only wept over the fate of his fallen enemy, but imposed a severe penance upon Maurus for testifying joy at the judgment which had befallen him. The incident of the poisoned loaf is the third artistic badge by which St. Benedict is to be known in art, being generally painted as a loaf with a serpent coiled round it.

Although, at the period when we left St. Benedict reinstated in his office as Superior, Christianity was rapidly being established in the country, yet there were still lurking about in remote districts of Italy the remains of her ancient paganism. Near the spot now called Monte Cassino, was a consecrated grove in which stood a temple dedicated to Apollo. St. Benedict resolved upon clearing away this relict of heathendom, and, fired with holy zeal, went amongst the people, preached the Gospel of Christ to them, persuaded them at length to break the statue of the

god, and pull down the altar; he then burned the grove and built two chapels there—the one dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and the other to St. Martin. Higher up upon the mountain he laid the foundation of his celebrated monastery, which still bears his name, and here he not only gathered together a powerful brotherhood, but elaborated that system which, although, it in turn became corrupt, still at that time infused new vigour into the monastic life, cleared it of its impurities, established it upon a firm and healthy basis, and elevated it as regards his own order, into a mighty power, which was to exert an influence over the destinies of humanity, inferior only to that of Christianity itself. St. Benedict, with the keen perception of genius, saw in the monasticism of his time, crude and corrupt as it was, the elements of a great system. For five centuries it had existed, and vainly endeavoured to develop itself into something like an institution, but the grand idea had never yet been struck out—that idea which was to give it permanence and strength. Hitherto the monk had retired from the world to work out his own salvation, caring little about anything else, subsisting on what the devotion of the wealthy offered him from motives of charity, or the superstition of the ignorant from terror of his supposed powers—then, as time advanced, they acquired possessions and wealth, which tended only to make them more idle and selfish. St. Benedict detected in all this the signs of decay, and resolved on revivifying its languishing existence by starting a new system, based upon a rule of life more in accordance with the dictates of reason. He was one of those who held as a belief, that to live in this world a man must do something—that, life which con-

sumes, but produces not, is a morbid life, in fact, an impossible life, a life that must decay, and therefore imbued with the importance of this fact, he made labour, continuous and daily labour, the great foundation of his rule. His vows were like those of other institutions—poverty, chastity, and obedience, but he added labour, and in that addition, as we shall endeavour presently to show, lay the whole secret of the wondrous success of the Benedictine Order. To every applicant for admission, these conditions were read, and the following words added, which were subsequently adopted as a formula :—“ This is the law under which thou art to live and to strive for salvation, if thou canst observe it, enter : if not, go in peace, thou art free.” No sooner was his monastery established than it was filled by men who, attracted by his fame and the charm of the new mode of life, came and eagerly implored permission to submit themselves to his rule. Maurus and Placidus, his favourite disciples, still remained with him, and the tenor of his life flowed on evenly.

After Belisarius, the Emperor's general, had been recalled, a number of men totally incapacitated for their duties were sent in his place. Totila, who had recently ascended the Gothic throne, at once invaded and plundered Italy ; and in the year 542, when on his triumphant march, after defeating the Byzantine army, he was seized with a strong desire to pay a visit to the renowned Abbot Benedict, who was known amongst them as a great prophet. He therefore sent word to Monte Cassino to announce his intended visit, to which St. Benedict replied that he would be happy to receive him. On receiving the answer he resolved to employ a stratagem to test the reality of the pro-

phetic powers of the Abbot, and accordingly, instead of going himself he caused the captain of the guard to dress himself in the imperial robes, and, accompanied by three lords of the court and a numerous retinue to present himself to the Abbot as the kingly visitor. However, as soon as they entered into his presence, the Abbot detected the fraud, and addressing the counterfeit king, bid him put off a dress which did not belong to him. In the utmost alarm they all fled back to Totila, and related the result of their interview : the unbelieving Goth, now thoroughly convinced, went in proper person to Monte Cassino, and on perceiving the Abbot seated waiting to receive him, he was overcome with terror, could go no further, and prostrated himself to the ground.* St. Benedict bid him rise, but as he seemed unable, assisted him himself. A long conversation ensued, during which St. Benedict reproved him for his many acts of violence, and concluded with this prophetic declaration—"You have done much evil, and continue to do so ; you will enter Rome ; you will cross the sea ; you will reign nine years longer, but death will overtake you on the tenth, when you will be arraigned before a just God to give an account of your deeds." Totila trembled at this sentence ; besought the prayers of the Abbot, and took his leave. If such prediction were really made, it was marvellously fulfilled ; in any case the interview wrought a change in the manner of this Gothic warrior, little short of miraculous, for from that time he treated those whom he had conquered with gentleness. At his own peril he executed one of his officers for violating the daughter of an Italian, and silenced the murmurs of his

* "Quem cum a longe sedentem cerneret, non ausus accedere sese in terram dedit."—St. Greg. Dial lib. ii., c. 14.

army by telling them that justice was necessary to insure the success of their arms. When he took Rome, as St. Benedict had predicted he should, he forbade all carnage, and insisted on protecting women from insult ; stranger still, in the year 552, only a little beyond the time allotted him by the prediction, he fell in a battle which he fought against Narses, the eunuch general of the Greco-Roman army. Towards the end of his career, in the year 543, St. Benedict's sister, Scholastica, who had become a nun, discovered the whereabouts of her lost brother, came to Monte Cassino, took up her residence near him, and founded a convent upon the principles of his rule. She was, therefore, the first Benedictine nun, and is often represented in paintings, prominent in that well-known group composed of herself, St. Benedict, and the two disciples, Maurus and Placidus.

It appears that her brother was in the habit of paying her a visit every year, and upon one occasion staid until late in the evening, so late that Scholastica pressed him not to leave ; but he persisting, she offered a prayer that heaven might interpose and prevent his going, when suddenly a tempest came on so fierce and furious that he was compelled to remain until it was over, when he returned to his monastery. Two days after this occurrence, as he was praying in his cell, he beheld the soul of his beloved sister ascending to heaven in the form of a dove, and the same day intelligence was brought him of her death. This vision forms the subject of many of the pictures in Benedictine Nunneries. One short month after the decease of this affectionate sister, St. Benedict, through visiting and attending to the sick and poor in his neighbourhood, contracted a fever which prostrated him : he immediately foretold his death, and

ordered the tomb in which his sister lay in the church to be opened. On the sixth day of his illness he asked to be carried to it, where he remained for some time in silent prayerful contemplation ; he then begged to be removed to the steps of the high altar, where having received the holy viaticum, he suddenly stretched out his arms to heaven and fell back dead. This event took place on Saturday, the 21st March, 543, in the 63rd year of his age. He was buried by the side of his sister Scholastica, on the very spot, it is said, where he threw down the altar of Apollo. In the seventh century, however, some of his remains were dug up, brought to France, and placed in the abbey of Fleury, from which circumstance it took the name of St. Benoit, on the Loire. After his death his disciples spread themselves abroad over the continent and founded monasteries of his name and rule. Placidus became a martyr, and was canonized ; Maurus founded a monastery in France, was also introduced to England, and from his canonized name, St. Maurus, springs one of the oldest English names, St. Maur, Seymaur, or Seymour.

Divesting this narrative of its legendary accompaniments, and judging of St. Benedict—the man by the subsequent success of his work, and the influence of his genius upon the whole mechanism of European monasticism, and even upon the destinies of a later civilization, we are compelled to admit that he must have been one whose intellect and character were far in advance of his age. By instituting the vow of labour, that peculiarity in his rule which we shall presently examine more fully, he struck at the root of the evil attending the monasticism of his times, an evil which would have ruined it as an institution in the fifth century, had he not interposed, and an evil which in the sixteenth

century alone caused its downfall in England, where monasticism, blinded by its wealth, and infatuated with its power, reverted to the very order of things which greeted the advent of its great reformer; and in spite of the uprising of the mendicant orders, who, threatened by their simplicity to imperil its existence, but ultimately fell into the same snare, in spite of the terrible warning of a Lollard insurrection, never thoroughly suppressed, sunk into imbecility under the weight of its own wealth, and fell an easy victim to the first political necessity.

The rule which swayed this mass of life, wherever it existed, in a Benedictine monastery, and indirectly the monasteries of other orders, which are only modifications of the Benedictine system, was sketched out by that solitary hermit of Subiaco. It consists of seventy-three chapters, which contain a code of laws regulating the duties between the Abbot and his monks, the mode of conducting the divine services, the administration of penalties and discipline, the duties of monks to each other, and the internal economy of the monastery, the duties of the institution towards the world outside, the distribution of charity, the kindly reception of strangers, the laws to regulate the actions of those who were compelled to be absent or to travel; in fine, everything which could pertain to the administration of an institution composed of an infinite variety of characters subjected to one absolute ruler. It has elicited the admiration of the learned and good of all subsequent ages, though it reads like a sad reproach to the monasticism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It begins with the simple sentence:—"Listen, O son, to the precepts of the master! Do not fear to receive the counsel of a good father, and to fulfil it fully, that

thy laborious obedience may lead thee back to Him from whom disobedience and weakness have alienated thee. To thee, whoever thou art, who renoucest thine own will to fight under the true King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and takest in hand the valiant and glorious weapons of obedience, are my words at this moment addressed." The first words, "Ausculta, O fili!" are often to be seen inscribed on a book placed in the hands of St. Benedict, in paintings and stained glass. The preamble contains the injunction of the two leading principles of the rule; all the rest is detail, marvellously thorough and comprehensive. These two grand principles were obedience and labour—the former became absorbed in the latter, for he speaks of that also as a species of labour—"Obedientiæ laborem;" but the latter was the genius, the master-spirit of the whole code. There was to be labour, not only of contemplation, in the shape of prayer, worship, and self-discipline, to nurture the soul, but labour of action, vigorous, healthy, bodily labour, with the pen in the scriptorium, with the spade in the fields, with the hatchet in the forest, or with the trowel on the walls. Labour of some sort there must be daily, but no idleness: that was branded as "the enemy of the soul"—"Otiositas inimica est animæ." It was enjoined with all the earnestness of one thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the great Master, who said, "Work while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work;" who would not allow one whom he had restored to come and remain with him, that is, to lead the life of religious contemplation, but told him to "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee!" That is the life of religious activity. The

error of the early monasticism was the making it solely a life of contemplation. Religious contemplation and religious activity must go together. In the contemplation the Christian acquires strength, in the activity he uses that strength for others; in the activity he is made to feel his weakness, and driven to seek for aid in contemplation and prayer. Nowhere does our Saviour enjoin a life of mere contemplation; but in the instance quoted, the refusal of this man's prayer directly discountenances it. His own life was a blending of the two; it was occasionally contemplative, but mostly active. Though he did sometimes retire from a noisy, hostile world, which reviled and persecuted him, to the mountain top, the desert, the wilderness for contemplation and prayer, yet how small a proportion does it bear to that active life of benevolence, preaching, reasoning, and wandering along the wearying roads, scattering the blessings of health and peace as he went, by the wayside, in the villages, and through the whole length and breadth of Palestine.

But besides being based upon Divine authority and example, this injunction of labour was formed upon a clear insight into, and full appreciation of one of the most subtle elements of our constitution. It is this, that without labour no man can live; exist he may, but not live. This is one of the great mysteries of life—its greatest mystery; and its most emphatic lesson, which, if men would only learn it would be one great step towards happiness, or at least towards that highest measure of happiness attainable below. If we can only realize this fact in the profundity of its truth, we shall have at once the key to half the miseries and anomalies which beset humanity. Passed upon man, in the first instance, by the Almighty as a curse,

yet it carried in it the germ of a blessing ; pronounced upon him as a sentence of punishment, yet there lurked in the chastisement the Father's love. Turn where we may, to the pages of bygone history or to the unwritten page of everyday life, from the gilded saloons of the noble to the hut of the peasant, we shall find this mysterious law working out its results with the unerring precision of a fundamental principle of nature. Where men obey that injunction of labour, no matter what their station, there is in the act the element of happiness, and wherever men avoid that injunction there is always the shadow of the unfulfilled curse darkening their path. This is the great clue to the balance of compensation between the rich and the poor. The rich man has no urgent need to labour ; his wealth provides him with the means of escape from the injunction, and there is to be found in that man's life, unless he, in some way, with his head or with his hands, works out his measure of the universal task, a dissonance and a discord, a something which, in spite of all his wealth and all his luxury, corrupts and poisons his whole existence. It is a truth which cannot be ignored—no man who has studied life closely has failed to notice it, and no merely rich man lives who has not felt it and would not confess to its truth, if the question were pressed upon him. But in the case of the man who works, there is in his daily life the element of happiness, cares flee before him, and all the little caprices and longings of the imagination—those gad-flies which torment the idle—are to him unknown. He fulfils the measure of life ; and whatever his condition, even if destitute in worldly wealth, we may be assured that the poor man has great compensations, and if he sat down with the rich

man to count up grievances would check off a less number than his wealthier brother. Whatever his position man should labour diligently, if poor he should labour and he may become rich, and if rich he should labour still, that all the evils attendant upon riches may disappear. Pure health steals over the body, the mind becomes clear, and the little miseries of life, the petty grievances, the fantastic wants, the morbid jealousies, the wasting weariness, and the terrible sense of vacuity which haunt the life of one-half of the rich in the world, all flee before the talisman of active labour; nor should we be discouraged by failure, for it is better to fail in action than to do nothing. After all what is commonly called failure we shall find to be not altogether such if we examine more closely. We set out upon some action or engagement, and after infinite toil we miss the object of that action or engagement, and they say we have failed, but there is consolation in this incontrovertible fact, that although we may have missed the particular object towards which our efforts have been directed, yet we have not altogether failed. There are many collateral advantages attendant upon exertion which may even be of greater importance than the attainment of the immediate object of that exertion, so that it is quite possible to fail wholly in accomplishing a certain object and yet make a glorious success. Half the achievements of life are built up on failures, and the greater the achievement the greater evidence it is of persistent combat with failure. The student devotes his days and nights to some intellectual investigation, and though he may utterly fail in attaining to the actual object of that search, yet he may be drawn into some narrow diverging path in the wilderness of

thought which may lead him gradually away from his beaten track on to the broad open light of discovery. The navigator goes out on the wide ocean in search of unknown tracts of land, and though he may return, after long and fruitless wanderings, yet in the voyages he has made he has acquired experience, and may, perchance, have learned some fact or thing which will prove the means of saving him in the hour of danger. Those great luminaries of the intellectual firmament—men who devoted their whole lives to investigate—search, study, and think for the elevation and good of their fellows, have only succeeded after a long discipline of failure, but by that discipline their powers have been developed, their capacity of thought expanded, and the experience gradually acquired which at length brought success. There is, then, no total failure to honest exertion, for he who diligently labours must in some way reap. It is a lesson often reiterated in Apostolic teaching that “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth;” and the truth of that lesson may be more fully appreciated by a closer contemplation of life, more especially this phenomenon of life in which we see the Father’s love following close upon the heels of his chastisement. The man who works lives, but he who works not lives but a dying and a hopeless life.

That vow of labour infused new vitality into the inert mass of monkhood, and instead of living as they had hitherto done upon the charity of the public, of peasants overawed by the tale of some miraculous vision, or the exhibition of some saintly relic—the mere pensioners of superstition, they soon began, not only to support themselves, but to take the poor of their neighbourhood under their own especial protec-

tion. Whenever the Benedictines resolved on building a monastery, they chose the most barren, deserted spot they could find, often a piece of land long regarded as useless, and therefore frequently given without a price; then they set to work, cleared a space for their buildings, laid their foundations deep in the earth, and by gradual but unceasing toil, often with their own hands, alternating their labour with their prayers, they reared up those stately abbeys which still defy the ravages of age. In process of time the desert spot upon which they had settled, underwent a complete transformation—a little world populous with busy life, sprung up in its midst, and far and near in its vicinity, the briars were cleared away—the hard soil broken up—gardens and fields laid out, and soon the land, cast aside by its owners as useless, bore upon its fertile bosom flowers, fruit, corn in all the rich exuberance of heaven's blessing upon man's toil—plenty and peace smiled upon the whole scene—its halls were vocal with the voice of praise and the incense of charity arose to heaven from its altars. They came upon the scene poor and friendless—they made themselves rich enough to become the guardians of the poor and friendless; and the whole secret of their success, the magic by which they worked these miracles was none other than that golden rule of labour instituted by the penetrating intellect of their great Founder: simple and only secret of all success in this world, now and ever—work—absolute necessity to real life, and united with faith, one of the elements of salvation.

Before we advance to the consideration of the achievements of the Benedictine Order, we wish to call attention to a circumstance which has seldom, if ever, been dwelt upon by historians, and which will

assist us in estimating the influence of monachism upon the embryo civilization of Europe.

It is a remarkable fact that two great and renowned phases of life existed in the world parallel to each other, and went out by natural decay, just at the same period; chivalry and monasticism. The latter was of elder birth, but, as in the reign of Henry VIII., England saw the last of monasticism, so amid some laughter, mingled with a little forced seriousness, did she see the man who was overturning the old system, vainly endeavouring to revive the worn-out paraphernalia of chivalry. The jousts and tournaments of Henry's time were the sudden flashing up of that once brilliant life, before its utter extinction. Both had been great things in the world—both had done great things, and both have left traces of their influence upon modern society and modern refinement, which have not yet been obliterated, and perhaps never will be. It may then be interesting and instructive, if we were to endeavour to compare the value of each by the work it did in the world. The origin of monasticism we have already traced; that of chivalry requires a few comments. Those who go to novels and romances for their history, have a notion that chivalry existed only in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, the periods chosen for the incidents of those very highly-coloured romances which belong to that order of writing. There is also a notion that it sprung out of the Crusades, which, instead of being its origin, were rather the result of the system itself. The real origin of chivalry may be fairly traced to that period when the great empire of the West was broken up and subdivided by the barbarians of the North. Upon the ruins of that empire chivalry arose naturally. The

feudal system was introduced, each petty state had a certain number of vassals, commanded by different chiefs, on whose estates they lived, and to whom they swore fealty in return for their subsistence; these again looked up to the king as head.

By-and-by, as the new form of life fell into working order, it became evident that these chiefs,* with their vassals, were a power in themselves, and by combination might interfere with, if not overthrow, the authority of the king himself. Their continued quarrels amongst themselves was the only protection the king had against them, but gradually that ceased, and a time came when there was no occupation for the superfluous valour of the country; retainers lay about castle-yards in all the mischief of idleness, drunken and clamorous; the kings not yet firmly seated on their thrones looked about for some current into which they might divert this dangerous spirit. The condition of things in the states themselves was bad enough, the laws were feebly administered; it was vain for injured innocence to appeal against the violence of power; the sword was the only lawgiver, and strength the only opinion. Women were violated with impunity, houses burned, herds stolen, and even blood shed without any possibility of redress for the injured. This state of things was the foundation of chivalry. Instinctively led, or insidiously directed to it, strong men began to take upon themselves the honour of redressing grievances, the injured woman found an armed liberator springing up in her defence, captives were rescued by superior force, injuries avenged, and the whole system—by the encouragement of the petty kings who saw in this rising feeling a vent for the idle valour they so much dreaded—soon consolidated itself, was embellished and

made attractive by the charm of gallantry, and the rewards accorded to the successful by the fair ladies who graced the courts. Things went on well, and that dangerous spirit which threatened to overturn royalty now became its greatest ornament. In process of time it again outgrew its work, and with all the advantages of organization and flatteries of success, it once more became the terror of the crowned heads of Europe. At this crisis, however, an event occurred which, in all probability, though it drained Europe of half her manhood, saved her from centuries of bloodshed and anarchy; that event was the banishment of the Christians and the taking of Jerusalem by the Saracens. Here was a grand field for the display of chivalry. Priestly influence was brought to bear upon the impetuous spirits of these chevaliers, religious fervour was aroused, and the element of religious enthusiasm infused into the whole organization; fair ladies bound the cross upon the breasts of their champions, and bid them go and fight under the banners of the Mother of God. The whole Continent fired up under the preaching of Peter the Hermit; all the rampant floating chivalry of Europe was aroused, flocked to the standards of the Church, and banded themselves together in favour of this Holy War; whilst the Goth, the Vandal, and the Lombard, sitting on their tottering thrones, encouraged by every means in their power this diversion of the prowess they had so much dreaded, and began to see in the troubles of Eastern Christianity a fitting point upon which to concentrate the fighting material of Europe out of their way until their position was more thoroughly consolidated. The Crusades, however, came to an end in time, and Europe was once more deluged with

bands of warriors who came trooping home from eastern climes charged with new ideas, new traditions, and filled with martial ardour. But now the Goth, the Vandal, and the Lombard had made their position secure, and the knights and chieftains fell back naturally upon their old pursuit of chivalry, took up arms once more in defence of the weak and injured against the strong and oppressive. That valour which had fought foot to foot with the swarthy Saracen, had braved the pestilence of eastern climes and the horrors of eastern dungeons, soon enlisted itself in the more peaceable lists of the joust and tournament, and went forth under the inspiration of a mistress's love-knot to do that work which we material moderns consign to the office of a magistrate and the arena of a quarter sessions.

It was in this later age of chivalry when the religious element had blended with it, and it was dignified with the traditions of religious championship, that the deeds were supposed to be done which form the subject of those wonderful romances;—that was more properly the perfection of the institution; its origin lay, as we have seen, much further back.

As regards the difference between the work and influence of chivalry and monasticism, it is the same which always must exist between the physical and the moral—the one was a material and the other was a spiritual force. The orders of chivalry included all the physical strength of the country, its active material; but the monastery included all its spiritual power and thinking material. Chivalry was the instrument by which mighty deeds were done, but the intellect which guided, directed, and in fact used that instrument was developed and matured in the seclusion of the cloister.

By the adoption of a stringent code of honour as regards the plighted word, and a gallant consideration towards the vanquished and weak, chivalry did much towards the refinement of social intercommunication and assuaging the atrocities of warfare. By the adoption, also, of a gentle bearing and respectful demeanour towards the opposite sex, it elevated woman from the obscurity in which she lay, and placed her in a position where she could exercise her softening influence upon the rude customs of a half-formed society; but we must not forget that the gallantry of chivalry was, after all, but a glossing over with the splendours of heroism the excrescences of a gross licentiousness—a licentiousness which mounted to its crisis in the polished gallantry of the Court of Louis XIV. Monasticism did more for woman than chivalry. It was all very well for *preux chevaliers* to go out and fight for the honour of a woman's name whom they had never seen: but we find that when they were brought into contact with woman they behaved with like ruthless violence to her whatever her station may have been, no matter whether she were the pretty daughter of the herdsman, or the wife of some neighbouring baron, she was seized by violence, carried off to some remote fortress, violated and abandoned. Monasticism did something better: it provided her when she was no longer safe, either in the house of her father or her husband, with an impregnable shelter against the licentious pursuit of these *preux chevaliers*; it gave her a position in the Church equal to their own; she might become the Prioress or the Lady Abbess of her convent; she was no longer the sport and victim of chivalrous licentiousness, but a pure and spotless handmaiden of the Most-

High—a fellow-servant in the Church, where she was honoured with equal position, and rewarded with equal dignities—a far better thing this than chivalry, which broke skulls in honour of her name, whilst it openly violated the sanctity of her person. It may be summed up in a sentence. Monasticism worked long and silently at the foundation and superstructure of society, whilst chivalry laboured at its decoration.

When we mention the fact that the history of the mere literary achievements of the Benedictine Order fills four large quarto volumes, printed in double columns, it will be readily understood how impossible it is to give anything like an idea of its general work in the world in the space of a short summary. That book, written by Zeigelbauer, and called "*Historia Rei Literariæ Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*," contains a short biography of every monk belonging to that order who had distinguished himself in the realms of literature, science, and art. Then comes Don Johannes Mabillon, with his ponderous work, "*Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*." These two authorities give a minute history of that marvellous institution, of whose glories we can only offer a faint outline.

The Benedictines, after the death of their founder, steadily prospered, and as they prospered, sent out missionaries to preach the truth amongst the nations then plunged in the depths of paganism. It has been estimated that they were the means of converting upwards of thirty countries and provinces to the Christian faith. They were the first to overturn the altars of the heathen deities in the north of Europe; they carried the Cross into Gaul, into Saxony, and Belgium; they placed that Cross between the abject misery of serfdom and the cruelty of feudal violation;

between the beasts of burden and the beasts of prey—they proclaimed the common kinship of humanity in Christ the Elder Brother.

Strange to say, some of its most distinguished missionaries were natives of our own country. It was a Scottish monk, St. Ribanus, who first preached the Gospel in Franconia—it was an English monk, St. Wilfred, who did the same in Friesland and Holland in the year 683, but with little success—it was an Englishman, St. Swibert, who carried the Cross to Saxony, and it was from the lips of another Englishman, St. Ulfred, that Sweden first heard the Gospel—it was an Englishman and a Devonshire man, St. Boniface, who laid aside his mitre, put on his monk's dress, converted Germany to the truth, and then fell a victim to the fury of the heathen Frieslanders, who slaughtered him in cold blood. Four Benedictine monks carried the light of truth into Denmark, Sweden, and Gothland, sent there in the ninth century by the Emperor Ludovicus Pius. Gascony, Hungary, Lithuania, Russia, Pomerania, are all emblazoned on their banners as victories won by them in the fight of faith; and it was to the devotion of five martyr monks, who fell in the work, that Poland traces the foundation of her Church.

It is a remarkable fact in the history of Christianity, that in its earliest stage—the first phase of its existence—its tendency was to elevate peasants to the dignity of Apostles, but in its second stage it reversed its operations and brought kings from their thrones to the seclusion of the cloister—humbled the great ones of the earth to the dust of penitential humility. Up to the fourth century Christianity was a terrible struggle against principalities and powers: then a time came

when principalities and powers humbled themselves at the foot of that cross whose followers they had so cruelly persecuted. The innumerable martyrdoms of the first four centuries of its career were followed by a long succession of royal humiliations, for, during the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, in addition to what took place as regards other orders, no less than ten emperors and twenty kings resigned their crowns and became monks of the Benedictine Order alone. Amongst this band of great ones the most conspicuous are the Emperors Anastasius, Theodosius, Michael, Theophilus, and Ludovicus Pius. Amongst the kings are Sigismund of Burgundy, Cassimir of Poland, Bamba of Spain, Childeric and Thedoric of France, Sigisbert of Northumberland, Ina of the West Saxons, Veremunde of Castille, Pepin of Italy, and Pipin of Aquitaine. Adding to these, their subsequent acquisitions, the Benedictines claim up to the 14th century the honour of enrolling amongst their number twenty emperors and forty-seven kings: twenty sons of emperors, and forty-eight sons of kings—amongst whom were Drogus, Pipin, and Hugh, sons of Charlemagne; Lothair and Carlomen, sons of Charles; and Fredericq, son of Louis III. of France. As nuns of their order they have had no less than ten empresses and fifty queens, including the Empresses Zoa Euphrosyne, St. Cunegunda, Agnes, Augusta, and Constantina; the Queens Batilda of France, Elfreda of Northumberland, Sexburga of Kent, Ethelberga of the West Saxons, Ethelreda of Mercia, Ferasia of Toledo, Maud of England. In the year 1290, the Empress Elizabeth took the veil with her daughters Agnes, Queen of Hungary, and the Countess Cueba; also, Anne, Queen of Poland, and Cecily, her daughter. In the wake of

these crowned heads follow more than one hundred princesses, daughters of kings and emperors. Five Benedictine nuns have attained literary distinction—Rosinda, St. Elizabeth, St. Hildegardis, whose works were approved of by the Council of Treves, St. Hiltrudis, and St. Metilda.

For the space of 239 years, 1 month, and 26 days, the Benedictines governed the Church in the persons of 48 popes chosen from their order, most prominent among whom was Gregory the Great, through whose means the rule was introduced into England. Four of these pontiffs came from the original monastery of Monte Cassino, and three of them quitted the throne and resumed the monastic life—Constantin II., Christopher I., and Gregory XII. Two hundred cardinals had been monks in their cloisters—they produced 7,000 archbishops, 15,000 bishops, fifteen of whom took off their mitres, resumed their monks' frock, and died in seclusion; 15,000 abbots, 4,000 saints. They established in different countries altogether 37,000 monasteries, which sent out into the world upwards of 15,700 monks, all of whom attained distinction as authors of books or scientific inventors. Rabanus established the first school in Germany. Alcuin founded the University of Paris, where 30,000 students were educated at one time, and whence issued to the honour of England, St. Thomas à Becket; Robert of Melun; Robert White, made cardinal by Celestine II.; Nicholas Breakspear, the only Englishman ever made Pope, who filled the chair under the title of Adrian IV.; and John of Salisbury, whose writings give us the best description of the learning both of the university and the times. Theodore and Adrian, two Benedictine monks, revived the University

of Oxford, which Bede, another of the order, considerably advanced. It was in the obscurity of a Benedictine monastery that the musical scale or gamut—the very alphabet of the greatest refinement of modern life—was invented, and Guido D'Arezzo, who wrested this secret from the realms of sound, was the first to found a school of music. Sylvester invented the organ, and Dionysius Exiguus perfected the Ecclesiastical Computation.

When we reflect that all the other monastic systems, not only of the past, but even of the present day, are but modifications of this same rule, and that it emanated from the brain, and is the embodiment of the genius of the solitary hermit of Monte Cassino, we are lost in astonishment at the magnitude of the results which have sprung from so simple an origin. That St. Benedict had any presentiment of the future glory of his order, there is no sign in his rule or his life. He was a great and good man, and he produced that comprehensive rule simply for the guidance of his own immediate followers, without a thought beyond. But it was blessed, and grew and prospered mightily in the world. He has been called by devotees the Moses of a favoured people; and the comparison is not inapt, for he led his order on up to the very borders of the promised country, and after his death, which, like that of Moses, took place within sight of their goal, they fought their way through the hostile wilds of barbarianism, until those men who had conquered the ancient civilizations of Europe lay at their feet, bound in the fetters of spiritual subjection to the Cross of Christ.

Nearly fourteen hundred years have rolled by since the great man who founded this noble Order died;

and he who in after years compiled the Saxon chronicle, has recorded it in a simple sentence, which, amongst the many doubtful records of that document, we may at least believe, and with which we will conclude the chapter—"This year St. Benedict the Abbot, Father of all Monks, went to Heaven."

CHAPTER IV.

The Augustinian Mission.*

A.D. DLXXX.—DXCVII.

IT is a remarkable fact in history that it was nothing but Christianity that saved Rome from utter extinction. Had she not been the chosen home of this rising faith and new glory, the barbarian would scarcely have left one stone upon another: she would have been to us now what Nineveh, Babylon, Thebes, and many other cities are, a tradition grand, yet almost beyond conception. As over the great solitudes of the sites of those mighty cities, wild beasts wander and howl by night, so it would have been with Rome when her glory fell, had not another and brighter glory settled upon her ruins. In fact, the remains of her ancient social life were never completely dispersed, and when the first dawn of the new religion appeared, and the old luminaries of pagan night receded before the rays of a brighter day, its votaries instinctively settled at Rome. Popes followed in the wake of Cæsars, the glory of the Flavian amphitheatre gave way before the new splendours of a Vatican; gladiators and games were supplanted by religious processions and masses; unable to destroy feudalism it created chivalry; in its convents persecuted innocence always

Authorities.—Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*; *Acta Sanctorum*; Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*; *Saxon Chronicle*; Gregory's Works; Steven's 2 additional vols. to Dugdale's *Monasticon*; Cockerell's *Iconography*; Gulielm. Malms., *de Gestis Regum Anglorum*, and *Histor.*; Glaston.

found an asylum, and against the ambition of tyrants it opposed the power of its thunders. But it was at Rome that the vicarial head of the Church had taken up his abode ; towards Rome were bent periodically the footsteps of thousands of pilgrims ; and from Rome as from a centre emanated all the influences which the new religion exercised over the nations who had enlisted under its cross. That every stage of her history, and more especially her future destiny, should be intensely interesting to Europe and all the outlying colonies, the rising new worlds of European planting, is not to be wondered at, for she is the foster-mother of modern civilization. When the wolf and the jackal roamed at large over the very sites of our proudest cities, when offerings were made to strange gods by a Druidical priesthood, and the inhabitants of this country were but a band of painted savages, Rome was in the very zenith of civilized life. When the migration of northern hordes towards the south, extinguished the just kindling torch of civilization, and overwhelmed in its dark flood all the evidences of refinement in Europe, Rome suffered last and least ; in her temples were gathered as in a sanctuary—learning, science, and art ; there was kept burning, dimly enough, yet still cherished with tender care, the trembling lamp of genius until the better time should come when it might be reproduced and its genial rays diffused ; and when the time did come and the nations awoke from their long slumber to a new life, it was from Rome and Roman traditions that the new order of things drew its laws, its language, and its faith. In nearly every part of Europe traces are to be found of Roman life ; it has permeated through the very aspects of the country, the blood of the races, their thought, their

laws, their idiom, so that civilization seems to have been concentrated into a focus at Rome and thence radiated over all the world. It is from the fountain of her lore that all modern law has been derived, and she might well be called the lawgiver of Europe.

Towards the close of the sixth century, when she was in her transition state from Rome Imperial to Rome Papal, the time of her worst troubles, just after the Goths had fallen into decay upon the death of Totila, another race appeared upon the plains of Italy, more cruel than the Goths, who, like the Saxons in England, receiving an invitation to assist in the country's peril, ended by seizing the country itself. During the devastating march of the Lombards under Alboin, their king, and his successors, Italy suffered scenes of violence and barbarity to which history has scarcely any parallel. Churches were destroyed, bishops and priests murdered, women violated and then butchered, monks hanged up by the dozen to forest trees, and an incident occurred which strangely fulfilled a prophecy, and exerted an influence upon the work of the great monastic founder whose life was the subject of the preceding chapter. It is said that St. Benedict was one day seen weeping bitterly, and on being asked the reason, replied: "This monastery which I have built, and all that I have prepared for my brethren, has been delivered up to the Pagans by a sentence of Almighty God; scarcely have I been able to obtain mercy for their lives."

In the year 580, on a certain night when all the monks were asleep, at Monte Cassino, the Lombards made their way by stealth to the sacred spot, attacked it, and, after pillaging it, burnt the building to the ground. Strange to say, although taken by surprise

and in the dead of the night, all the monks escaped, taking with them the Rule written by St. Benedict. They managed to reach Rome in safety, and were very kindly received by Pelagius II., the then Pope, who gave them permission to erect a monastery near the Lateran palace, where they remained until about the year 730, when, under the abbacy of Petronatus, they returned to Monte Cassino. At the time when the Lombards first crossed over into Italy, there was a young prætor at Rome, a descendant of Pope Felix III., son of a wealthy senator, Gordian by name, and of Sylvia, a lady of distinction. There was great destitution in and about Rome in consequence of an overflowing of the Tiber, and this young prætor won the affections of the whole city by his unwearied kindness and activity in relieving the poor sufferers. He was intellectually distinguished above his fellows, for it is said that no man in the city was his equal in grammar, logic, and rhetoric. He was much given to conversing with wise men, and particularly with the Benedictine refugees, then in Rome at their temporary monastery near the palace of the Lateran. Naturally of a retiring disposition, he became, under the influence of those conferences, the more easily imbued with the idea of a monastic life, and the idea soon ripened into a desire to embrace it. Then ensued the struggle between the splendid career open before him in the senate-house and the obscurity and self-denial of the monastery. He hesitated for some time, and at length broke away from a world which had showered its favours upon him, and a gay society in which he was already an ornament; tore off the gaudy insignia of his office, and cast them down in penitential humility at the cross of Christ.

With his wealth, which was considerable, he endowed six monasteries in Sicily, and of his own palatial residence on the Cœlian hill, he made another, which he dedicated to St. Andrew, established it according to the Benedictine rule, and into which he entered as a simple monk, and might have been seen serving the beggars lodged in the hospital attached to the monastery where he himself had been served in almost princely state. The man who submitted to these vicissitudes lived to become [St. Gregory the Great, the only individual ever endowed with the two chief titles, and certainly one of the noblest characters that ever sat in the papal chair. Under Pope Benedict I. he was made one of the cardinal deacons who had charge of the seven divisions of Rome, which dignity he accepted with reluctance. Then again, in the year 578, another honour was forced upon him, as Nuncio to the Court of the Emperor Tiberius, on the part of Pelagius II. In deep sorrow he left his beloved cloisters, and was absent for six years, when he returned to St. Andrew's and was elected by the monks as their abbot. During the period of his abbacy that incident took place which is now familiar to almost every child in the kingdom. [He was wandering through the market in Rome, and noticed some fair-haired pagan children exposed for sale, and on hearing that they were Angli, exclaimed, "*Non Angli sed angeli forent si essent Christiani.*" It is not improbable that the idea of a mission to Britain had long been in his mind, and was intensified by the sight of those beautiful children exposed for sale in the market-place. In any case, he urged the necessity upon the Pope with so much earnestness, and insisted upon going himself with so much eagerness, that the

Pontiff consented. Gregory set out at once from Rome, and had even gone as far as three days' journey on the way when he was overtaken and brought back to his monastery by force. The monks and people had reproached Pelagius with allowing him to leave Rome, and besought him to bring him back. However, though compelled to abandon the undertaking himself he did not abandon the idea, for soon afterwards Pelagius died of the plague then raging at Rome, and the Senate, people, and clergy, with one voice, elected the Abbot of St. Andrew's to fill the vacant chair. In vain did he appeal to the Emperor Maurice to annul his election; his letter was intercepted, and the imperial confirmation being duly received, Gregory, as a last resource, fled from Rome, and wandered about for two or three days, but was at length discovered and brought back, when he tearfully bid farewell to his beloved monastery and went out on the troubled sea of life. [As soon as he was seated in the papal chair his mind reverted to the idea of a mission to Britain, and as he could no longer entertain the notion of going himself, began to look about him for some one to intrust with the enterprise. His choice fell upon the prior of his monastery of St. Andrew, and Augustine, ever since memorable in the annals of Christendom, was charged with this mission to preach the Gospel to the pagan Saxons.]

Without detracting from the work of the Augustinian mission, it may be fairly asserted that as a missionary enterprise it has been much overrated. It has been spoken of in the same language and with the same spirit of eulogy as we speak of the undertakings of those devotees who have gone out to remote districts of the world with no other protection than the faith they bore, to preach that faith to a people savage,

idolatrous, and who had never before heard of the Christian religion. [Now, the Augustinian mission was sent to a country which had been in possession of a national Church for nearly five centuries, whose bishops had taken part in great ecclesiastical councils and signed their decrees; a country embellished here and there with renowned monasteries, which had reared up men who were then canonized saints; and although the particular district of the country towards which the mission was especially directed had been given up to Saxon idolatry, yet even there the way had been materially smoothed for the introduction of Christianity by circumstances which had been quietly operating long before Augustine was appointed to his unwelcome task. Ethelbert, the Bretwalda, or dominant king of Kent, more than thirty years before the arrival of Augustine, and some time before he came to the throne, had married Bertha, the daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, who was a Christian. One of the stipulations of the marriage contract was, that this princess should be allowed to follow out her own religion—should be provided with a chapel for worship, and a priest of her own faith for its ministrations. In fulfilment of this contract Ethelbert had given her an old Roman or British church, situated outside the city of Canterbury which had been dedicated to St. Martin by Liudhard, the retired bishop, who had accompanied her from France as her chaplain. In that church then the Christian service had been performed for years by a Christian bishop. Queen Bertha, too, had acquired great influence over her husband, and had by her devotion, pure life, and attention to the services of her Church, not only created a most favourable impression upon the mind of her royal consort, but also upon the whole

household, and upon many of the inhabitants of Canterbury. So that even as regarded pagan Kent this was no mission to a hostile country, but to a people who had already long been witnesses to the celebration of Christian rites, and were already favourably disposed towards the religion itself. In fact, Liudhard noticing this favourable inclination in the Court and people, and being too old and feeble to do much himself, had applied to the French and even to the Roman churches in vain for a mission enterprise to be directed to those dominions. Gregory, who had never forgotten the Saxon children, and had long dreamed of a mission to their shores, soon effected his wish when invested with supreme authority.

Augustine was the monk chosen, and as we shall see a more unfitting one could scarcely have been selected. There can be little doubt that he was a devout Christian, but he was a very proud bishop; he was imperious in temper, and not endowed with the grace of conciliation; he was haughty in demeanour, and vainglorious even of his piety, so much so that Gregory remonstrated with him, and cautioned him in his correspondence against being proud of his miracles; he was vain even of personal pomp, for that correspondence also informs him, as though the writer were instinctively conscious of this propensity, that the magnificent pallium of his dignity was only to be worn in the services of the Church, and not to be brought into competition with the royal purple on state occasions. Neither had he the courage of a true missionary, for, with all these advantages before him, he began to have misgivings as soon as he had entered Provence, and even returned to Rome to implore Gregory to release him and his companions (who awaited the result) from their dangerous

undertaking. Gregory, in reply, furnished him with letters of introduction to different monarchs, of whom Brunehaut, Queen of France, did much to facilitate the mission. He also gave him an epistle to his companions which began with these words, not a little tinged with the contempt he must have felt for their conduct: "Forasmuch as it had been better not to begin a good work than to think of desisting from that which has been begun, it behoves you, my beloved sons, to fulfil the good work which, by the help of our Lord, you have undertaken."* As it was impossible to resist this authority, Augustine and his forty companions pushed on in their journey, and in the latter end of the year 596 landed at the Isle of Thanet, sent word to King Ethelbert of their arrival and the object of their mission, and awaited his reply. It exceeded their expectations; an interview was promised, Ethelbert merely stipulating, for his own personal safety, that it should be held in the open air. He had heard, doubtless through the medium of his wife and her chaplain, much about the miraculous powers with which the early propagandists of Christianity were invested, and being still a pagan had no wish to be made the subject of magic arts, which he thought would be less easily exercised in the open air than in a confined building. A time was fixed for this interview, and when it arrived the Italian missionaries were formed in a procession, headed by a verger, carrying a silver cross; then came Augustine, behind whom were the brethren and the choir, which was under the supervision of Honorius; in the procession a representation of the head of Christ, painted on a board, was elevated and carried. In this

* Bede, Eccl. Hist. lib. i., c. 23.

order, the choir chanting psalms and litanies, the procession advanced to the spot where the King was seated, under an oak tree, surrounded by his guards and sages. As soon as they had recovered from their astonishment at this strange spectacle, Ethelbert very graciously motioned to the missionaries to sit down, when Augustine, by means of an interpreter, stated the object of his coming, and began at once to preach to the king of the death of Christ, whose picture they had borne, and of His being the only way to heaven through suffering for man's transgressions. The king listened very patiently to this first sermon he had probably ever heard, and at its conclusion thus addressed the preacher—"Your words and promises are very fair, but as they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake that which I have so long followed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from afar into my kingdom, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart to us those things which you believe to be true and most beneficial, we will not molest you, but give you favourable entertainment, and take care to supply you with your necessary sustenance, nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as you can to your religion."*

The tidings of the arrival of these Christian strangers, who had come so far to preach their religion to the Saxons of Kent, soon spread abroad in the neighbourhood, and the inhabitants of Canterbury, the seat of royalty, began to express a wish to see these illustrious visitors in their own city. They were permitted to advance, and they made their entry into that Saxon town, henceforward to become ever memorable from

* Bede, Eccl. Hist. lib. i., c. 25.

their visit, in the same order which they had observed in their interview with the king. The astonishment of the Saxons was immense; for the first time in their lives they heard the grand solemn symphonies of Christian music chanted by the sweet Italian voices of the choir; they gazed upon the mild suffering face of Him whose religion was that of pardon to His enemies who had crucified Him; and as these devoted missionaries entered into the little Christian temple of St. Martin, singing the words "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in," there can be no question that a profound impression had been made upon their Saxon imaginations. From this moment the mission prospered, for they not only preached with their lips but with their lives, so that some listened, became convinced, and were baptized; whilst others who would not listen watched these missionaries, saw their simple lives, their spotless humility, and ardent devotion, and like many who will not hearken to precept, yielded ultimately to the power of example.

But the finishing stroke to their success was the conversion of the king, who, on the 2nd July, 597, professed himself a Christian and was baptized, but at the same time declared that he would not compel any of his subjects to follow his example, as he had been taught that the service of Christ should be voluntary. Shortly afterwards the Witan was summoned, and Christianity acknowledged and recognised; then followed a general enthusiasm amongst all classes of the people, and on the 25th day of December, 597, ten thousand converts received baptism, many of whom must have lived to return with equal readiness, twenty-six years after, to the idolatry of their fathers under



the guidance of the succeeding sovereign. The foundation-stone was then laid of Canterbury Cathedral, which stands on the site of an old Pagan temple; they also began to build a monastery outside the town, which was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul.

Shortly after the baptism of the ten thousand, Augustine was made a bishop, and at this point cast the first slight upon the British Church then in existence. Instead of applying, as was most fitting, to one of the many English bishops for consecration, he left the country, went to France, and was consecrated by Vergilius, Bishop of Arles. His mind had already been exercised as to how he should comport himself towards the Christian bishops of the British Church, and rather than accept consecration at their hands upon British soil, he sought it at the hands of an alien in a foreign country. This was his first step—a sufficient indication to the British bishops of what they were to expect from this haughty brother. In due course of time, as the Church in Kent flourished and became consolidated, the question naturally arose—who was to exercise supreme authority in the ecclesiastical affairs of the country? As might be expected, Augustine claimed that right, being made by the orders of Gregory, Bishop of the English (*Episcopus Anglorum*), but he also wanted to claim the same right over the Gallican Churches, which sufficiently shows the arrogance of his nature, and for which he received a reproof from Gregory. His claim, however, to jurisdiction over the English Church received authority from the fact that in addition to consecration he received the “pallium” from Gregory, which conferred upon him the power of settling disputes, etc., as the representative of the Pope in the kingdom. He accordingly

resolved upon bringing things to a crisis, and the manner in which he conducted himself towards the British bishops in this matter will justify our assertion of him, that he was not endowed with the grace of conciliation.

It will be necessary to state at this point a fact which the Romish Church, in its unreasonable selfishness as to its Apostolic origin, seems to overlook altogether—that St. Peter was not the only Apostle who founded a Church. There was the Oriental Church, founded by St. James, which had spread itself over the tract of land lying between Asia Minor and the Euphrates. There was the Alexandrian Church, founded by St. Mark, extending through Egypt, Abyssinia, and the north-east of Africa. [There was the Gallican Church, founded by St. John, originally at Ephesus, and thence extended by mission-planting to Gaul, and Spain, and Britain ;] and, lastly, there was the Roman Church of St. Peter, if indeed St. Peter did found the Roman Church, which ultimately absorbed them all, and now denies their original independence. But at the time of the Augustinian mission each of these Apostolic Churches maintained its independence, and had its own peculiar liturgy. [Consequently, the liturgy used in the ancient British Church being the Gallican, was the first stumbling-block in the way of Augustine. When he arrived he found that liturgy in use in the queen's chapel of St. Martin, and though a bigoted ritualist in heart, managed to sink the missionary in the courtier for fear of giving offence to his royal converts. It was only when brought face to face with British bishops that his inflexible obstinacy manifested itself. He had already communicated the difficulty to his

master, Gregory, who, in a characteristic letter which does honour to his Christian feeling, advised him to conciliate the British bishops—not to adopt their liturgy if he felt he could not, nor to force the Roman upon them against their consciences, but out of the four great liturgies in use to select the best portions and form a new one—an Anglican liturgy for the Anglican Church. That was the advice of a noble liberal mind, who looked more to the spirit of worship than the mere form, and had Augustine obeyed this injunction there can be but little question that the dissensions which scandalized the Church in Britain through him would never have arisen. Gregory's own correspondence is the best answer to all Roman Catholic exaltations of Augustine. A meeting, however, was convened, and took place somewhere in Gloucestershire, near Austcliffe, under a tree, thenceforth called St. Augustine's oak, when for the first time the British bishops met the Roman missionary. The manner of Augustine was that of a haughty condescension—he invited them in a similar strain to join themselves with him in converting the Saxons, and this invitation was given in the manner of a reproach, justly due, perhaps, but not properly administered. He then stipulated, in direct antagonism to Gregory's advice, that as a condition of union they should at once abandon the liturgy they had been using for centuries, and certain other practices which were different from the Roman ritual. The British bishops were indignant and inflexible. They were the representatives of that old Church which had converted the Highlands and Western Isles, which had sent out missionaries in the very year 565, when Gregory failed in his endeavour to come to England himself; they were willing to join the new-

comers on fair and mutual terms, but were determined neither to be patronized nor dictated to by one who was only an equal, and, after all, a stranger. They declined the proposition, and Augustine lost his temper and broke out into a volley of reproaches. It has been said, and is recorded in Bede, that they arranged to decide the matter by a miracle—a blind man was produced, and the British bishops first prayed, but ineffectually, for the restoration of his sight. Augustine then implored the Divine interposition, and his prayer was immediately answered. It is worthy of note, however, that it was a *Saxon* man chosen, and not a Briton, or perhaps the miracle might have been wrought on the other side. But the whole incident is beyond all question an interpolation, for we find this meeting was adjourned and another arranged for the final decision, which certainly in that age would not have been done in the face of a Divine interposition such as the one recorded. In the meantime seven British bishops consulted a well-known hermit as to what they were to do. He advised them if they found Augustine to be a man of God to accept him as their head. They then asked how they were to be sure of this, and the hermit replied, "If he is meek and lowly of heart you may believe that he has taken upon him the yoke of Christ and offers the same to you; but if he is stern and haughty, then it appears that he is not of God, and you are not to regard his words." This man finally suggested that they should allow Augustine to be first at the place of meeting, and if he arose and greeted them kindly when they presented themselves, they should meet him in the same spirit of concession. It was done; they advanced to the interview, bent upon following the advice of this wise recluse, but as

they drew near they found Augustine sitting in a chair, which position he still maintained when they presented themselves, and, to make matters worse, he received them with coldness. In the conversation which ensued, and which was conducted by Augustine in the spirit of controversy, the British bishops reproached him with pride and harshness. Augustine merely responded that if they would abandon their obnoxious practices he would still receive them, when they at once declared that they would not do so, nor would they acknowledge him as their head, for, said they among themselves, "If he will not now rise up to us, how much more will he despise us when we are under his subjection!" Augustine again lost his temper, and declared in a threatening manner that if they would not join with him in the conversion of the Saxons as friends, the Saxons as enemies should wreak out upon them the vengeance of death. So ended the controversy. Augustine returned to Canterbury, embittered against the British bishops, who in turn went their own way, and worshipped God in their own manner. Time alone brought union, but it was not until sixty years after the death of Augustine that the British Church joined the Roman by virtue of a reconciliation effected under Archbishop Theodore.]

There can be no question that the Augustinian mission to the shores of Kent gave an impulse to Christianity in the whole kingdom. Whilst contending against the false historical importance which has been accorded to it, we are compelled to admit this as the truth. There had been no good feeling between the ancient British Christians and their Saxon conquerors, and it is not impossible that the reproach of Augustine was in a measure deserved—that they had to a certain

extent neglected the conversion of the Saxons ; but we must remember also on their side that they had been eye-witnesses to Saxon desolation, that they had seen their monasteries rifled, their treasures stolen, their most holy places given up to ruthless sacrilege, and to wild drunken orgies which were the national peculiarity of these Saxon heroes. They had witnessed the desecration of temples and the burning of sacred books, and in all fairness we must allow something for the horror and terror which these acts would naturally inspire, in extenuation of the charge that they neglected to preach the Gospel to these ruthless foes. When Augustine went to Canterbury it was different ; he was not a Briton, and the way, too, had already been paved by a Christian bishop and a Christian queen.

We have dwelt thus fully upon the mission of Augustine—we repeat, not from a wish to detract in the slightest measure from the greatness of its work, or its value in the history of the Church, but only to maintain what we have already laboured to show, that the Church in this country was not founded by Augustine any more than the kingdom itself was founded by William the Conqueror. To deny the truth of this, in mere wanton opposition as many do, is a folly too great to demand the least notice ; to attempt to upset it, as an historical fact, is to attempt to subvert the testimony of the Fathers, the ecclesiastical history of the Christian Church, and the national history of the country for five centuries. If it were possible to obliterate the works of the Early Fathers, the history of the great Western Councils, and that of the country for this period, the Roman foundation of the English Church might be made tenable ; but until this be done, an impartial reader of history must come to the conclusion we have already

mentioned, and which we venture to repeat—that the English Church was one of those foundations made in different parts of the world by the Apostles themselves, like the Eastern, the Alexandrian, and others which, in process of time, became amalgamated with that of Rome, submitted to her teachings, were permeated with her errors, and shared her corruptions. We see also that one of the greatest errors committed by Protestants, when defending their Church, is the speaking of it as a new Church, and the claiming for it, as a starting-point, the period of the Reformation, when it inaugurated a new and totally different order of things. We reiterate once more, and urge it seriously upon the consideration of every honest mind, that the Reformation, as regards the English Church, was not the inauguration of a new thing, but the return to an older system—a return from the corruptions of a mighty institution, whose great aim was political power, to the purity of that Apostolic worship which had been maintained in England in a Church founded long ages before the propagation of Papal supremacy, the invocation of saints, the adoration of relics, or any of those many interpolations made by Romanism into Christianity, and under which she buried the vital elements of her faith—a Church founded when Jesus Christ was the *only* Mediator between God and man, and the Virgin Mary, though cherished with proper reverence, had not yet been set up as the goddess of a semi-idolatrous Christianity.

CHAPTER V.

The Saxon Abbots of Glastonbury.*

DXCVII.—DCCCCXXXII.

WE now resume the thread of history more immediately connected with Glastonbury Abbey. That Augustine ever visited Glastonbury in person there is not much direct evidence, but a strong probability. At the time of his visit the Abbey was a spot renowned in the Church, and visited continually by pilgrims from foreign parts. We have already seen that he went as far as Gloucestershire, and it seems but natural to suppose that when only a few miles distant from this renowned Abbey he should make it the object of a pious visit—he, the great missionary of Christianity to this most celebrated Christian institution in the country. It is also probable from the fact that Paulinus is mentioned as being an inmate of Glastonbury Abbey, probably sent or left there by Augustine himself, for the purpose of establishing the modified form of the Benedictine rule which obtained there just at this period. John of Glastonbury mentions positively that he was there as a monk before his translation to York, and the probability is heightened when we reflect that he came to this country in the year 601, in company with Mellitus, Justus, and Rufi-

* *Authorities*—Saxon Chron. (Ingram)—William of Malmesbury Hist. Glaston.—John of Glaston-

bury—Soames' Saxon Church—Lappenberg's Saxons.

nianus, sent by Gregory as auxiliaries to Augustine in reply to his own request for aid. Three years after Mellitus was made Bishop of London—that is, of the East Saxons, and Justus Bishop of Rochester. Rufinianus was given the abbacy of Augustine's monastery, but it was not until 625, twenty-one years after his arrival, that Paulinus was made Archbishop of York; and in the absence of other testimony as to his occupation in the country, and as he does not figure elsewhere, it is not unreasonable to accept this statement of John of Glastonbury, who must have had it from the earlier chronicler, William of Malmesbury, that during this time Paulinus was engaged in establishing the new rule of life at Glastonbury Abbey. The point, however, is not vitally important; the historical fact is indisputable—that nearly all the monasteries in England adopted at this time the Benedictine rule, and Glastonbury Abbey in particular. It will be necessary here, before resuming the history of its direct line of abbots, to delineate the position of the Abbey as regards the political history of the times.

The Saxons, as they gradually took possession of the country, apportioned it amongst themselves, or rather that apportionment came naturally—each invader seizing the tract of country he had won, and establishing himself in it as king. Hence arose the Saxon Heptarchy, one of the most distinguished portions of which was Wessex, the kingdom of the West Saxons, in the very heart of which stood Glastonbury Abbey, subject, therefore, as regards civil obligations, to the king of those dominions. The West Saxons appear to have been a superior class of men, and they evinced their superiority by ultimately absorbing the whole Heptarchy into their dominion under the West Saxon, Egbert. They were more

disposed to religion than their brethren, and long before their compatriots of Kent had heard of the Gospel they had amongst them churches, monks, and Glastonbury Abbey. The West Saxon monarchs too were devoted to the Church, and testified their devotion in the true Apostolic manner, as we shall presently see, for just as in the earliest age of Christianity we are told that converts to the faith sold their lands and possessions and laid the money at the Apostles' feet, so we shall find these West Saxon monarchs, in continued succession, gave those lands and privileges to Glastonbury Abbey, which formed the basis of that fabulous wealth to which in subsequent centuries it attained. There was a strong nationality about the West Saxon Church, one expression of which may be found upon the west front of Wells Cathedral, in evidence of its power—it was the Church of the country, built up by the devotion and toil of the natives, and they loved it as a thing which was theirs, just like the soil; under its shadow they were born, around it they lived, and in its sanctuaries were the bones of their fathers. No wonder then that Augustine, when he expected instant submission, was received with stolid independence. It was the first expression of strong national feeling—a feeling which often manifested itself ecclesiastically long after the amalgamation of the Church with Rome, bursting out in all its vigour in the sixteenth century, and which manifested itself politically in the long struggle which ensued under the Norman invasion and rule. The men of the West of England ought still to feel a pride in the fact that it was amongst them Christianity was first planted—that it was a West of England king who, first of the Saxons, acquired the whole dominion of the country, and that

it was in the West of England the struggle was maintained longest, not only against the Danes on the field of battle, but against the Normans in the language, literature, and manners of the country.

From the time of the Augustinian mission to the year 670, three Abbots ruled over Glastonbury Abbey — *Worgret*, to whom the King of Devonshire granted a charter of lands, *Lalemund* and *Bregoret*; but though nothing of any consequence took place as regards the abbey itself, yet it was a period pregnant with important events as regards the Church.

To *Bregoret* succeeded *Berthwald* as Abbot of Glastonbury, and in the year 670 Kenwalth, King of the West Saxons, the seventh from Cerdic, gave to the monastery eleven hides of land at Ferrane, together with *Westei*, now called West-Hay, *Godenie*, or God's Island, now called Godney, *Martynesie*, and *Andreysie*. After presiding over the monastery for ten years, Abbot *Berthwald* was elevated to the archbishopric of Canterbury, then vacant by the death of *Theodore*; he was, therefore, the fifth archbishop from *Augustine*. In the meantime, *Kenwalth*, King of the West Saxons, had died, and *Sexburga*, his widow, reigned one year, and was followed by *Escwin*, who reigned three years, and was succeeded by *Kentwyn*, who, upon the promotion of Abbot *Berthwald* to the dignity of the episcopal throne of Canterbury, appointed *Hemigsel* Abbot in the year 678 or 680, who was recommended to him by the monks and by *Hedde*, the Bishop of the West Saxons, as a fitting person, both from his learning and manner of life. Soon afterwards *Kentwyn* bestowed upon the monastery the privilege of choosing and constituting their own governor according to the rule of *St. Benedict*, a custom which it seems

had lapsed to the hands of the king. He also gave to Abbot Hemigsel several hides of land, amongst which Westmuncaston may be recognised as the modern Wincanton, Carie, now Castle Cary, and three hides at Crucan. "These have I bestowed," says this pious monarch, "for the support of the regular life at Glastonbury, being moved to it by Divine fear." After his death, Kentwyn was buried at Glastonbury Abbey, in one of the pyramids in the Monks' Churchyard already mentioned. In the first chapter of this history, the inscriptions on these pyramids, such as were visible to the eyes of William of Malmesbury in the reign of Stephen, were quoted, and we will endeavour to recognise them as we go on. Upon reference it will be found that in the fifth story of the tallest pyramid the word "WESLIELAS" was legible. This in all probability was the name of the monk found there by St. Patrick, who assisted him in his investigation as to the state of the Church on the Tor, and who was mentioned in the Charter of St. Patrick as "Brother Wellias." Hedde, the Bishop of the West Saxons, was evidently buried here also, as on the other pyramid we find mentioned the inscription, "HEDDE EPISCOPUS." The inscription "LOGVVOR SVVELVVES and WEMCRESTE" are the names of others of the monks found by St. Patrick at Avalonia, and whose names have been already quoted as mentioned by him in his Charter—viz., Loyor, Selwes, and Wencreth. BREGORED, too, was the abbot who succeeded Lalemund.*

* It has often been a subject of much cavil that Glastonbury Abbey is claimed by its historians as the resting-place of many celebrities who were known to be buried

elsewhere. William of Malmesbury tells us, in his *Hist. Glaston.*, that during the ravages of the Danes, relics and bones, coffins and treasures, were brought from all parts

In the year 681 Baldred, King of Cantia, gave to the Abbey of Glastonbury Pennard, which still bears its name, sixteen hides of land at Logpores Beorgh, and a fishery at Pedride. Bishop Hedde also gave six hides of land at Lanctocracy, now Leigh, which donation was attested by King Cædwalla, who, though a pagan, made with his own hand the mark of the cross of Christ, used in that early age as the substitute for signatures.

This brings us down to the close of the seventh century, when a man ascended the throne of the West Saxons who was destined to help on the struggling Christians, and do more for the Abbey of Glastonbury than any monarch who had preceded him. This man was Ina, who succeeded Cædwalla about six years before the death of Abbot Hemigsel; but during that six years he gave to Glastonbury Abbey ten hides of land at Brent (which still bears its name) and a new charter, relieving them from civil liabilities, in order as it said, that "absque tributo fiscalium negociorum liberis mentibus soli Deo serviant." *Berwald*, upon the death of Hemigsel, succeeded to the abbacy, and his rule was ushered in by more royal gifts from Ina, who bestowed upwards of a hundred hides of land upon him, amongst which may be recognised the still retained names of Doultling, Pilton, the island of Wedmoor, and Clewer. *Albert* succeeded *Berwald* in the year 712, to whom Forthere, Bishop of the West Saxons, gave one hide of land at Blednie (now Bleadney). His abbacy was of short duration, for we find in the year 719 *Echfrid* seated in the abbatial

and deposited at Glastonbury for safety—the bones, etc., were deposited in shrines, and the bodies buried, and gradually the names of these kings and saints became associated with the abbey itself.

chair, to whom Ina still made other grants of land. The generosity of this monarch is the subject of much well-deserved laudation. There can be no doubt his influence was more effective than that of any other man then living in helping on the young Church, and we shall now proceed to describe the two principal acts of his life, the result of one of which still exists amongst us.

Three Churches had sprung up at Avalonia—there was the old rude edifice, the first planting enlarged and improved ; the one built by St. David in honour of St. Mary, to the east of the old church, and there was one which had been erected by a band of monks who had come from the North, and joined the Avalonian Christians shortly after the visit of St. David. To this cluster, the nucleus of the future monastery, King Ina resolved upon adding another, larger and more splendid than the rest, in honour of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and for the soul of his brother Mollo, whom the Kentish men had burned at Canterbury. A splendid church was then erected towards the east of all the rest. The interior of the chapel was decorated with a profusion of gold and silver, and all the sacred vessels were of the same costly material. The altar contained 264 lbs. weight of gold, the chalice and paten, the censer, were of gold ; the candlesticks were of silver. The covers of the books of the Gospel, we are told, were bound in 20 lbs. weight of gold. The basins, and vessel for holy water, were of silver and gold. The images of our Lord, St. Mary, and the twelve Apostles were of solid gold, and the altar-cloth and priestly vestments were interwoven with gold and precious stones.

In addition to building this magnificent Church, he granted to the monks of Glastonbury a totally new

charter, confirming all his and former grants to them. He then went to Rome and personally begged the Pope to take the church of Glastonbury into the protection of the Holy See, and confirm it by apostolic authority. The Pope consented, and Ina returned in triumph to Britain with the Papal Bull.*

After granting a charter to Glastonbury Abbey, and procuring for it the Papal protection, and soon after establishing the collegiate church at Wells, which ultimately became a great cathedral, Ina resigned his crown, went to Rome, and lived in retirement as a Benedictine monk. This he did at the instigation of his wife, Ethelburga, who went with him, and shared his retirement. William of Malmesbury gives a touching account of the last days of this royal couple, who had seen so much worldly glory, and done so much for the Church. He says: "Nor did his queen, the author of this noble deed, desert him; but as she had before incited him to undertake it, so afterwards she made it her constant care to soothe him, when sorrowing, by her conversation—to stimulate him, when wavering, by her example; in short, to neglect nothing that would tend towards his salvation. Thus united in mutual affection, they in due time went the way of all flesh."†

In the year 729, one year after the death of King Ina, *Cengille* was elected to the abbatial chair of Glastonbury, then vacant by the death of Echfrid;

* Vide Appendix to Dugdale's *Monasticon*; and for the Charter, *Ashmol. MSS.*, 790, fol. 60.

† "Nec deerat tanti dux femina facti, quæ cum antea virum ad hoc audendum incitasset, tunc merentem verbis lenire et labantem ex-

emplis erigere, prorsus quod ad salutem ejus spectaret, nihil dimittere. Ita mutua caritate connexi temporibus suis viam hominum ingressi sunt."—Gulielm. Malms.—*De Gestis Regum Anglor.* lib. i. c. 2.

Edelard, who succeeded to the throne of the West Saxons after Ina's retirement, bestowed several hides of land upon the abbey, as did also his wife, Fredogipa. In 744, Cuthred, who became king after Edelard, granted another charter,* confirming all the privileges to the abbey which his predecessors had given. During this monarch's reign *Cumbert* was made abbot, to whom he gave several hides of land, amongst which were ten hides at Baltensbeorghe, now known as Baltonsborough. In the year 746, Ethelbald, King of Mercia, sold to the Abbot of Glastonbury, for 400 shillings, four hides of land at Jetelig and Brandanlegh. Monarchs who were not ruling over kingdoms in which a monastery was situated, frequently sold lands to them, but at such a price as to be regarded as almost equivalent to a gift. To Cumbert succeeded *Tican*, to whom Sigebert sold, for fifty shillings in gold, twenty-two hides of land at Pololtsham, now well known by the name of Polsham. This abbot ruled six years, and was buried in the abbey. Over his tomb was the following inscription :—

“Tumba hæc mirifico fulget fabricata decore
Desuper exculptum condit sub culmine Tican.”

To him succeeded *Guban*, to whom King Kenulph gave five hides of land at Wudeton, now called Wootton. A minister of this king, by name Ethelard, gave land also ; and a certain venerable lady, Sulia, a “servant of Christ,” gave Culum and Cumbe, which latter place is now Coombe. *Waldum* next filled the chair, in 772, to whom Kenulph bestowed Cunctum, now Compton. This abbot ruled the monastery for

* All these charters may be seen in the Appendix to Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

twenty-two years, when he was succeeded by *Beadewlf*, in 794, to whom Offa, King of the Mercians, gave ten hides of land at Eswirth, now Worth. In the year 796, Pope Leo III. confirmed to the King the liberty of the donation of the monastery of Glastonbury, with all its lands, then amounting to 800 hides, to him and his heirs for ever; yet upon this condition, that the monastery should always continue in its order and establishment.* This was the first step towards royal aggression upon the privilege of the monks.

To this abbot succeeded *Cuman*, who only ruled for two years, and was followed by *Mucan*, to whom Egbert, then king only of the West Saxons, gave several manses. *Guthlac* followed him in the year 824, and during his abbacy, the glory of the West Saxons mounted to its climax, for, in the year 827, Egbert, having conquered the other kingdoms, united them under his sway, and the Heptarchy ceased to exist. To Guthlac succeeded *Elmund*, in the year 851, when King Ethelwulph, the successor of Egbert, outvied all his predecessors in charity, inasmuch as he is said to have bestowed upon Glastonbury one-tenth of his wealth. Amongst the donations may be recognised Pennard, now well known; Searampton, now Shireampton; Sowe, or Stowe. Earl Ethelstan also gave Chilton, which still bears its name, in order that he might be buried in the abbey. Dicheast, now Dicheat, was given by Earl Enulph. In the year 857, *Hereferth* was made abbot, to whom King Ethelbald, son of Ethelwulph, gave lands and a fishery. Alfred the younger, brother of King Ethelbald, afterwards Alfred the Great, probably having no

* Appendix, Dugdale, vol. ii., Nos. 97 and 98.

lands to bestow, gave to the monastery a piece of the wood of the Holy Cross, which he had received from Pope Martin. Ethelbald reigned two years, died, and was buried at Schirburne, now Sherborne, which was one of the two ancient bishoprics of the West Saxon kingdom. He had married his father's widow—a custom prevalent in those times to that extent that it became almost an injunction; it was long before even the power of Christianity could suppress this scandal. In fact, the very existence of the Church in Kent was imperilled through Eadbald, son of the first convert, Ethelbert, having married the widow of his father—the people lapsed into idolatry—the bishops fled, and it was only by a miracle which bears strong evidence of being a stratagem, that a reconciliation was effected.

[During the abbacy of Hereferth the Danes made an irruption into Britain, and ravaged the whole country. Again the Christian Church suffered, for, during a century and a half, the history of the whole kingdom is a long tale of pillage, warfare, and struggling—the monasteries suffered a great deal, and Glastonbury] amongst them. It is said that the numbers diminished as the disturbed state of the country engaged all men's minds, and novices could not be procured—the buildings, too, fell into decay, and gifts were no longer coming in to swell the rent-roll of the abbey. However, the last gifts bestowed upon Glastonbury during this period of trouble were in the abbacy of *Elfric*, who succeeded Hereferth, amongst which we can recognise Wrington, given by Duke Ethelstan upon the occasion of his becoming a monk at Glastonbury, Weston, Foxcote, and Stoke. To him succeeded in 922, *Stiward*, who ill treated the monks, and was represented in pictures as armed with a scourge. He

ruled ten years and was followed by *Aldhun* in 932, during which two abbacies there is no record of gifts or glories, in the archives of the monastery, which suffered bitterly from the misfortunes of the country; its old church was nearly deserted, its walls tumbled down, its inmates were dejected, but still lived on, though forgotten by royal favour, which was diverted into another and more worldly channel, for every crown became more insecure than its predecessor; yet it was protected and preserved. Prayer and praise were still offered at its altars by the few devotees who were left, and in course of time that prayer and praise were answered. There was still an obscure monk praying at its shrines who was destined to ascend the chair after the death of the then Abbot Aldhun—to raise up the tottering abbey, to reform its constitution, to infuse new life into its members, to become the master-spirit of his age, to attain to the highest honours as a statesman and a priest, and to lay the foundation of that spiritual power which competed with royalty, vanquished it, and kept it in subjection at its feet for centuries. That man was Dunstan, whose work in the kingdom and at Glastonbury we shall have next to examine. But at this point it behoves us to just review the three centuries we have gone over.

[The seventh century was characterized by a series of great monastic foundations. In Ireland, however, there had been monasteries flourishing for many years, and it is now universally acknowledged that the first ray of light which penetrated through the dense darkness of the age emanated from the vigil lamps of an Irish monastery. But it was not till the seventh century that the monastic system fastened itself firmly upon the soil of England, and the man who contributed

towards its consolidation more than any other was Benedict Biscop, the founder of the celebrated monasteries of Weremouth and Jarrow. He was one of the greatest benefactors to the Church of his age. Born of a noble race, he forsook the pursuits of the world, went to Rome, became an ecclesiastic, returned to England, received a grant of land from Egfrid, upon which he built first the monastery of Weremouth, in 674, and ten years later that of Jarrow : they were dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and in their cloisters, under the watchful eye of this good man, Bede was educated. The learning of these monasteries must have been very advanced, for Bede was well versed in Greek, and is even thought to have known Hebrew. Benedict also brought books, works of art, and relics from Rome : he was the first man who introduced pictures into the Church, who brought glass into the country, and with the assistance of John, the chanter of St. Peter's, whom he brought to Britain, taught the monks to chant. Weremouth was destroyed by the Danes in 867 ; was restored and ultimately destroyed by fire in an incursion of Malcolm in 1070. Jarrow was also destroyed by the Danes, rebuilt, and again destroyed by William I. Lindisfarne, another renowned monastery, was founded in 635, upon the arrival of St. Aidan out of Scotland, to preach Christianity to the Northumbrians. The celebrated St. Cuthbert was abbot of this monastery, and Ceolwolph, King of Northumbria, abdicated his throne to become a monk within its walls. The Danes who were infesting the shore often made attacks upon this holy place, and in 793 pillaged and plundered it, overthrew its altars, carried off its treasures, slew many of the monks, carried others into captivity, and left the building a ruin. Whitby was another foundation

of this period; it is renowned as having been the abode of Cædmon, whose name stands out boldly amongst the earliest literature of the country, having written a paraphrase of large portions of the Holy Scripture in metre. Medeshampstead, another great monastery, afterwards known by the name of Peterborough, was commenced by Peada, King of Mercia, in the year 656, and finished by his brothers Wulhere and Ethelred. The "Saxon Chronicle," under the year 557, gives a full account of the founding of this monastery, with a list of the lands bestowed upon it by the king, and a description of the "hallowing" at which Deusdedit, Archbishop of Canterbury, was present. The whole ceremony appears to have been regarded with great importance and carried out with much splendour. After the dedication or "hallowing" was concluded, a host of celebrities met together—kings, abbots, bishops, priests, and ealdormen—to witness the charter, and we are told that King Wulhere was the first to confirm it in words, and afterwards subscribed it with his fingers on the cross of Christ. "I, King Wulhere, with the kings and earls, dukes and thanes, witnesses of my gift, do confirm it before the Archbishop Deusdedit with the cross of Christ.+ And I, Oswy, the friend of the monastery, and of Abbot Sexwulf, approve of it with the cross of Christ+ And we the king's sisters, Kynenburg and Kyneswith, we approve it.+ And I Deusdedit, Archbishop of Canterbury, grant it.+” After that they all signed it with the cross of Christ+, a long array of princes and nobles. Then the charter was sent to Vitalian the Pope, for his signature and blessing, and he returned it with the rescript:—"I, Vitalian, Pope, concede to thee, King Wulhere and Archbishop Deusdedit, and Abbot Sexwulf, all the things which ye

desire, and I forbid that any king or any man have any claims thereon, except the abbot alone; nor let him obey any man except the Pope of Rome and the Archbishop of Canterbury. If any one break this in anything, may St. Peter exterminate him with his sword: if any one observe it, may St. Peter with the keys of heaven undo for him the kingdom of heaven." A somewhat different strain of communication from any that had formerly come from Rome, from Eleutherius and Gregory, but, as the centuries rolled on, the Church grew strong and mighty in the world, and the preliminaries were being gradually arranged for that terrible duel between Rome and royalty, which in its first stage brought such bitter humiliations upon crowned heads.

The incessant and increasing grants of land made by the rulers of this period, whose devotion, sometimes genuine, but often aroused by remorse for crimes, finding a penitential vent in contributing to swell the coffers of the monastery, laid the foundation of that wealth and power which in unworthier hands were to outvie that of their royal descendants, and in the long revolution of time to recoil in ruin upon the heads of the successors of those who had been the recipients of their charity. Little did they imagine as they poured their wealth into the abbot's coffers, and received his blessing, that a future emperor should stand shivering in the winter's snow for three days and nights before a castle, the refuge of an implacable Pope, in penitential dress, and with penitential supplications, and as little did the others imagine as they locked up these offerings of royal devotion in their treasure house, that a future king should seize upon those very monasteries, rifle them of their treasures, and drive their occupants out into a hostile world, to work,

to beg, or to starve. Six centuries from the period we are now approaching saw the whole of this drama played out in the world. From the first scene with Archbishop Dunstan, who dared the king, to the last with Henry VIII., who dared the Pope, there is a panorama of event to be unrolled, which displays the workings of the mightiest passions of humanity raised to their very catastrophe. Power abused with the most merciless atrocity; pride humbled to the very dust of degradation; nations plunged into the depths of misery and woe; depositions, rebellions, wars, persecutions, a whole Walpurgis Night's Dream of horrors, whose darkness is made vocal with the clashing of arms, the wail of lamentation, the cries of martyred saints, and the crash of the stronghold as it fell.

CHAPTER VI.

Dunstan.*

A.D. DCCCCXXV.—DCCCLXXXVIII.

WE have hitherto contemplated the monastic system in its infancy or period of development, we now advance to the contemplation of it at that point in its career when it first became conscious of its power, and exerted that power to bring about the accomplishment of priestly domination. In doing this we must bear in mind [the distinction which existed between the Church as regards the clergy who administered to the people—that is, the secular clergy, and the monks who were called the regular clergy; they were two distinct bodies, following a different mode of life, and having very little in common. The monk, shut up in his monastery, looked upon the Church as a great institution, whose power in the world should be dominant. The parish priest, mingling with the people, conversant with their wants and their sufferings, regarded the Church more as the representative of the Almighty in the world, to be kept above all worldly contact or contention, and to be

* *Authorities.* — Anglia Sacra Eadmeri Vita St. Duns., and Osborni Vita St. Duns.; Acta Sanc.; 19 Maii tom. iv. Guliel. Malms. Hist. Glast.; Dugdale's Monasticon (Stevens' 2 additional vols.); Saxon Chron. (Ingram); Gale's XV. Scriptorum; Cottonian MSS.,

Cleopatra, B. 13, D. 4, and Claudius, B. 6; Harleian MSS. 258; Fuller's Church History; Eadmeri Epis. ad Glast. de corp St. Duns. Anglia Sac., vol. ii.; Mabillon, Acta Sanct. Ord., Ben., vol. v.; Butler's Lives of the Saints.

only the instrument of instruction, charity, and salvation to the people amongst whom it stood. Consequently, we find that whilst the secular priest lived amongst his fellows in the same way, married and reared children, shared their troubles and felt their wants, the monk, sworn to celibacy, bound to the world by no tie, thought only of the consolidation and glorification of the Church as a mighty power. The natural tie of parentage bound the priest to humanity, but the vow of celibacy alienated the monk from the great family of mankind and made him the abject slave of his order. At this point it will be necessary, that we may the more easily appreciate the gradual change which came over the Church after the amalgamation of the two—the British and the Roman—to have a clear idea of what the early British Church taught. Its amalgamation with the Augustinian did not take place until the year 649, when the appointment of Theodore, a foreigner, to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, removing all cause of jealousy, a public reconciliation was effected; the two Churches were blended, and from that time the ancient British Church, as a separate establishment, ceased to exist, submitted itself to Romish discipline, and became permeated with Romish doctrines; so that, although it is not true that the Augustinian mission first planted Christianity in England, yet we are compelled to admit this truth, that it first planted the Pope in England, and through that channel there came, gradually but with inevitable certainty, both the then incipient doctrine of Papal supremacy, and the interpolations which were gradually made into Christianity by Papal authority. We propose, at this point, just to sum up briefly the teaching of that old Church before its amal-

gamation ; and then to review the relations in which the Church stood as regards Rome, and the general aspect of affairs which preceded the advent of Dunstan.

We glean from the writings of Gildas that both the doctrines and the ritual of the ancient British Church were of the simplest character. They taught the oneness of the Godhead ; the Trinity, the divine and human nature of Christ, redemption through His death ; and the eternity of future rewards and punishments. They regarded the Lord's Supper as a symbol, not a miracle ; they took the bread and wine as our Lord commanded it should be taken, "in remembrance of" Him, and they did not refuse the wine to the laity. Their hierarchy consisted of bishops and priests, with other ministers, and that a particular service was employed at their ordination. There were also monasteries with monks living in them sworn to poverty, chastity, and obedience to their abbot. That churches were built in honour of martyrs ; that each church had many altars ; and the service which was performed in the Latin tongue, was chanted by the priests. Disputes were finally settled by provincial synods, held twice a year, beyond whom, on matters of discipline, there was no appeal. So that we see the doctrines of this Old Church were characterised by a true Apostolic simplicity, and as an institution it was free and unfettered. After the amalgamation with the Church of Romish planting, its independence was lost, and it became subject, both as regards its doctrines and its ritual, to Roman influences—we say influences, because Roman authority was not established in the country until some centuries after—its operations upon what may be called the Saxon Church, that is, the amalgamation of the ancient British and Augustinian

Churches partook only of the character of influences, which, however, accomplished in that gentler manner a great deal, and paved the way for the exertion of authority; but on many occasions before the tenth century, when the slightest effort was made by the Romish element to bring the Saxon Church under Papal dominion, it was at once denounced as an unconstitutional thing, and resisted with determination. In the year 680, Wilfrid,* Bishop of Northumbria, was deposed from his see by Archbishop Theodore, upon which he went to Rome, appealed to the Pope in person, and received the Papal decision in his favour. Upon his return, armed with this authority, he expected to be reinstated, but the whole Church and court were aroused, they looked upon the appeal as a violation of law, and upon the Pope's decision as a national insult. The King Egfrid at once convened a council, composed both of nobles and clergy, which fully showed the vital importance attached to the point, and by that council the interference of the Pope was ignored and Wilfrid condemned to nine months' imprisonment. His see, in spite of all opposition, was then divided into two dioceses, and given to others. But although boldly and successfully resisted in the seventh century, Papal supremacy was gradually and cautiously insinuating its way into the constitutions of national Churches, and events were conspiring to crown its efforts with success. What happened in England had taken place also in Italy and in France. Christianity, as we have seen, was established in Rome upon the ruins of a fallen empire, from which it neither did nor could inherit anything; it therefore

* Gale's xv. Scriptores.

stood before mankind what it was—a thing not of the world, but a power from heaven—a spiritual power—poor and humble as He whose cross was its emblem. But as time rolled on, and the great ones of the earth began to yield to its influence, they laid their treasures at the feet of the priest, and poured their wealth out at the steps of the altar. The monarchs of the Carlovingian and the Saxon dynasties in France and England were distinguished by their devotion to the Church and that devotion was substantially manifested by grants of land, by gifts of money, and what recoiled upon them at last, by grants of exemption from liabilities. A territorial dominion only was wanting to the Pope to place him on a footing of temporal equality with the sovereigns of Europe, and an event transpired in the year 724 which brought the cession of this dominion about, and may be looked upon as the foundation of that bugbear of modern times—the temporal power of the Pope.

The worship of images, as a relic of ancient idolatry, had lingered in the new Church, and given rise to a fierce controversy between the Eastern and Western Establishments. Leo, the Emperor of the East, therefore, in the year 724, proscribed this worship by an imperial decree, which was carried out with great violence and persecution. The jealousy of the Pontiff was excited, and the Roman people expelled the representative of the Emperor from the city, formed themselves into a republic in the year 730, of which Gregory II., the then Pope, was the recognised head, with power over its territory, which constituted what was called the Duchy of Rome. The King of the Lombards next fell upon the Exarch in Ravenna, made himself master of the Exarchate territory, and demanded submission from the Romans

as his proper dependencies. Stephen III., who was then Pope, solicited the aid of Pepin le Bref, and for that purpose even went to France in person in the year 754. The price exacted by this monarch was the confirmation of his crown to his family; his coronation by the Pope at St. Denis, the coronation of his two sons, and the binding his nobility by solemn oath to maintain the crown in its hereditary descent. In consideration of this arrangement Pepin went to Italy, got possession of the Exarchate, which he immediately handed over to the Pope. Twenty years later the Lombards once more tried to wrest this territory from the Papal see, when Adrian I. appealed to the devotion of Charlemagne, who defeated the Lombards, overturned the monarchy, and added other possessions to the dominions of the Pontiff. These events were the foundations of that vast superstructure which ultimately overawed the whole Christian world. A territorial dominion once established, the idea soon arose of exercising over all other monarchs, by means of a gradually established spiritual supremacy as regards the Church in their dominions, a power which should bind themselves and direct their senates and their armies to its own personal aggrandizement—the most gigantic dream which ever filled the imagination of human vanity. Two centuries rolled by bringing with them towards the consummation of that idea great accumulations of wealth and territory. At the dawn of the tenth century the idea had so far become reality, that steps were taken to practically enforce its designs. In England the instrument by whose means that work was attempted was Dunstan, whose extraordinary career we shall now proceed to describe.

Of all the saints in the calendar St. Dunstan is the

one most generally known to the English people. He has been immortalized in the elaborate miracle-spangled biographies of the *Acta Sanctorum* and the *Anglia Sacra*; he figures prominently in the political and ecclesiastical history of the period in which he lived; he has been popularized by the lawless versification and fantastic wit of Barham, and he lives for ever in that lasting immortality of popular ballads.

According to Osbern's version of the life of Dunstan in the *Anglia Sacra*, he was born in the first year of the reign of King Athelstan. He was probably born in the immediate neighbourhood of Glastonbury; Butler says in the town itself; but as we read of his being taken when a child by his father into Glastonbury, it is more likely that his father's residence was somewhere in the immediate vicinity. His mother's name was Kynedrid,* his father's Herstan; they were of noble blood, and devout Christians, and Osbern remarks that it might be a special providential circumstance that such an infant should have had such parents, who, from living holily themselves, might be able to transmit the manner of holy living to the son which was to be born of their bodies. At the period of his childhood there were several Irish monks at Glastonbury Abbey, who being led to the spot by devotion to the memory of their patron saint, and probably by the rumour of its decadence during the troublous times of invasion, had settled there, and being, as were most of the Irish monks of that period, great scholars, they received the sons of the nobles living in the immediate neighbourhood and taught them science and letters. These monks do not appear to have followed the strict

* Or, as it is often spelt, Cynedrida.

conventual rule, for we are told they were married men, and the theory seems to be supported by the fact that some years afterwards, when Dunstan was made Abbot, he ejected all the married clergy from the abbey. He early manifested signs of intellectual stamina, and was ambitious to excel his fellow-students in learning. A prodigy of saintly virtue, even in his childhood, if we are to credit his biographers, it was his endeavour to excel others in the discharge of his duties in grace and affability of temper, to preserve his natural modesty, to flee from all lasciviousness. He was fond of the society and conversation of his elders, and declined to join in the frivolous pastime of his fellows : abstemious in his eating and temperate in his indulgence in sleep, not easily moved from one spot, and never abrupt in speech ; of great courage in the undertaking of good actions, and of equal constancy in persevering towards their completion. A thoughtful, silent, strange child, brought into existence by devout parents, and, as it were, at the very threshold of the monastery. Dunstan was really a born priest ; he came into the world under the shadow of that old abbey ; as a child he had been carried there by his devout parents ; he had wandered through its cloisters, listened to its rolling music, heard the chaunting of the monks, and watched the solemn processions as they moved across the quadrangle after the Divine Office, still chaunting as they went ; he had gazed with a child's wonder upon its mysterious ceremonies, at the marvels of its sculpture and stained windows, had looked with childish terror down its long, solemn aisles, and into its dark recesses ; had listened to the wind moaning through the spiral staircases of its towers, and had touched with his child's fingers the cold, pale, motionless statues reclining on its tombs ; in fact, his whole

mind had been imbued with the spirit of the place, and when in it he was lost in rapt though undefined contemplation, and when absent from it he buried himself in dreams of its grandeur.

It is reported of him that on one occasion he dreamed that an old man clothed in white had led him to the monastery and shown him, instead of the ruined buildings familiar to his sight, a magnificent pile, complete in every part; and it is added that it was with this dream or revelation, as the monkish chronicles have it, before his mind, that he rebuilt the monastery so splendidly years afterwards when he became its ruler. It is not improbable that this story of the dream may be perfectly true, for Dunstan, as a youth, was of a quick and vivacious imagination, ambitious and dreamy. His close application to his studies was also telling upon his constitution, for we find him shortly after this vision prostrated by a brain fever, in the delirium of which upon one occasion, when his nurse was absent, he arose from his couch and made his way to the abbey, which was closed. A scaffold had been erected for some workmen who were repairing the roof, and up the steps of this scaffold the lad rushed, mounted to the summit, got on to the roof, found his way to an opening which led into the church by a most perilous descent, down which he hastened unconscious of danger, and arrived at the bottom in safety, where he found two men asleep, by whose side he lay down, and soon fell into a deep slumber, from which he was awakened in the morning by his astonished companions, to whom he could give no account of the way in which he got there.* He soon, however, recovered from this fever and resumed

* Cleopatra, B. 13, fo. 62 (Cotton. MSS).

his studies, which were divided amongst book learning, music, the mechanical arts, and what science was then taught; in all these he excelled, especially in music, which accomplishment, however, caused him his first fall in life, as we shall proceed to narrate.

He had been introduced by some members of his family to the notice of the King Athelstan, who took a great fancy to him, invited him to court, and according to Osbern gave him some official appointment, he having at that time also received holy orders. He soon became a favourite at court, more especially amongst the ladies, to whom his musical talents rendered him very acceptable. The king also found pleasure and relaxation in his company, for we are told that when he saw his majesty fatigued with business, this courtly saint used to take up his lute or tambour, and play and sing, with which, says Osbern, he caused the hearts of the king and all the princes to rejoice (*“quo facto tam Regis quam omnium corda Principum exhilarabat”*). He soon, however, became an object of envy to the other courtiers, who lost no opportunity of doing him an injury, and an incident took place which enabled them to procure his downfall. The king was informed that his friend was given to evil arts, and appeared to be assisted more by demons than Divine aid; the issue of which was that Dunstan, perceiving he had lost favour with the king, chose, like a wise man, to retire and deprive his enemies of the pleasure of enjoying his fall. They, however, were not to be wholly disappointed, for as he rode away from the palace almost broken-hearted, he was assailed by his enemies, who, dragging him from his horse, threw him into a bog, leaving him, as they imagined, to be suffocated. Dunstan, however, was not destined to end his career in so

ignominious a manner ; and having managed to crawl out he made his way to some house,* whose inmates sheltered him, when the next day he journeyed on till he came to Winchester, where Elphege, who was a relative of his, was bishop. Elphege, or, as he is better known in history, Elphege the Bald, was a simple-hearted, venerable old man—a staunch advocate for the strict monastic ideas then coming into vogue, more especially of the vow of chastity, which was then being preached, and urged upon the Church, as an absolute condition of a priesthood engaged in handling the sacred elements, in which a mystic presence was even then supposed by some to linger, and which, therefore, should only be handled by a class of men around whom a veil of mystic purity was to be thrown, to elevate them above all other grades of humanity, and invest their very presence with a higher sanctity. Into the ears of this worthy old bishop Dunstan poured the tale of his misfortunes and his longings, and astonished the old celibate by telling him that he was most anxious to marry. Then ensued a long debate, in which Elphege urged upon his consideration the superior advantages of a life of celibacy in a spiritual point of view, and impressed upon his mind the sin, as he no doubt really thought it, of a priest marrying. Dunstan began to waver, but whilst hovering between the two alternatives, he was seized with another attack of fever, from which, after being tended with the most affectionate care by his aged friend, he recovered. Elphege then urged upon him that this was a divine indication of what he ought to do, and Dunstan, weakened by disease, won by the kindness of this bald old man who had hung

* Cottonian MSS. Cleop. B. 13.

over him in his sickness, at last gave way, promised to abandon all ideas of marrying, and expressed himself ready to take monastic vows at once. Elphege then sent him to Fleury, the most renowned Benedictine monastery in Europe, where he passed his novitiate, was admitted, and returned sometime after to England a confirmed monk—nay more, an enthusiastic ascetic, imbued with the full spirit of the Benedictine rule and Benedictine laws, which he was one day to make the basis of the whole monasticism of England. Immediately upon his return he went to Glastonbury Abbey, the scene of his childhood, henceforth ever to be associated with his name, and lived as an anchorite in a cell which he had constructed only five feet long and two and a-half broad. In this cell he passed his time in fasting and prayer, but even here the devil would not allow him to rest in peace, but on one occasion worried him to that extent that he lost all patience and inflicted that indignity upon his Satanic majesty which has immortalized his name.

Ethelgiva, a lady of royal birth and great riches, became smitten with an invincible desire to have some conversation with a saint of such renown, and one day she secretly made her way to Dunstan's cell, held some holy conversation with him, and was so charmed with his sanctity that she resolved upon remaining there, refused to go home any more, but chose to remain there to live and die with the blessed Dunstan (*cum Beato Dunstano manere vivere mori deligeret*). Then ensued the operation of that mystic sacerdotal influence of which there are so many records in history. Ethelgiva took up her residence close to the church, was most assiduous in her attendance and drew consolation and strength from the conversation of the renowned

anchorite. Things went on smoothly until one day this devout lady was taken ill, and feeling herself on the point of dying, sent for Dunstan, who wept bitterly when he saw her, but through the tears besought her to clear herself from everything of a worldly character, lest the prince of this world might find anything of his in her when she had passed away. This she proceeded to do in the following language :—" There is no one in the world I hold dearer than thee, because thou wert the principal author of my salvation next to God. I therefore make Him (God) inheritor of my possessions, but constitute thee the guardian of the inheritance (te vero hæreditatis tutorem constituo)". She died, and it is but fair to add, that Dunstan honestly applied the money he received to the rebuilding of the church.

Shortly after this circumstance, King Athelstan died, and his brother Edmund succeeded to the throne. His palace was at Cheddar,* only nine miles distant from Glastonbury, to which church he often resorted, having formerly been acquainted with Dunstan at his brother's court. His estimation of the saint appears to have been unimpaired, for he almost immediately invited him back to court. Dunstan at first hesitated, but at length accepted the offer, left his narrow cell, and once more appeared amongst the glittering crowd of a monarch's palace. Again his enemies prevailed against him, false charges were continually laid before the king, who at length ordered him to be deprived of his offices and banished the palace, when three days after, being delivered from imminent peril whilst hunting, he inter-

* Famous in the world also, in addition to being a royal residence, for one of the most magnificent pieces of rock scenery in Europe,

but better known in these days for the manufacture of excellent cheese. Sad reverse of fame, from chivalry to cheese.

preted the accident as a Divine reproach for his conduct towards Dunstan, whom he again recalled, and an opportunity offering itself, [he made him Abbot of the Monastery of his beloved Glastonbury, and promised him pecuniary assistance in rebuilding and redeccorating its structures. Dunstan then began the work of restoration, built up the dilapidated churches, rearranged the monastic appendages, introduced new monks, and with them the complete Benedictine rule, after the model of Fleury.] From that time Glastonbury Abbey flourished, and bishops were chosen from its brotherhood for all parts. A list is extant of twenty-one monks of Glastonbury who received mitres, out of whom the following were made primates :—Brithwold was first made Abbot of Reculver, and succeeded Theodore at Canterbury; Athelm received the mitre of Wells, and then the archbishopric; Egelgarus received an abbacy, a bishopric, and then the throne of Canterbury; Sigericus went to Wells, and thence became primate; Elphege and Elnoth were made archbishops direct.

In the year 946 Edmund met his death under very extraordinary circumstances. One day, at a festival held according to the Saxon chronicle at Pucklechurch, in Gloucestershire, he noticed amongst the company a celebrated robber, Leolf, who had been banished, but had by some surreptitious means procured admission to the feast, and being overcome with rage at the insult he fell upon him. A struggle ensued, when Leolf, pushed to extremity, stabbed Edmund with his dagger, and then fell under the blows of the king's attendants. Edmund died of the wound, and was buried at Glastonbury by Dunstan, in the presence of an immense crowd of spectators. Edred, his brother, succeeded him, as

his two sons were too young. This monarch was still more disposed to favour Dunstan, for he had known him for many years. We are not surprised to read, then, that when Edred came to the throne he gave himself, his wealth, and his kingdom up to Dunstan, to manage as he would, so that during the reign of Edred, it is said, that no one could move hand or foot in the kingdom of England without the command of Dunstan.

During the reign of this monarch an opportunity occurred of which Dunstan availed himself to advance one who was his most ardent disciple, and destined to be of great service to him in his work of monastic reformation. That man was Ethelwold, then a monk at Glastonbury, who had become, under the instruction and influence of Dunstan, an enthusiastic convert to the Benedictine system, so much so that he was on the point of leaving England for the renowned monastery of Fleury, when, from some cause or another, probably by the interference of Dunstan himself, who knew the man's worth, the king was prevailed upon, at his mother's entreaty, not to allow this holy man to be lost to the country. Edred, in consequence, established a monastery on his estate at Abingdon, and made Ethelwold its first abbot. Hence the origin of another renowned abbey. As we proceed we shall see how Abbot Ethelwold assisted Dunstan in carrying out that policy of ecclesiastical power for which he laboured. We must, however, give him credit for this fact, that the moment he got power into his hands his first thought was for the Church. He was the prototype of all those great ecclesiastical statesmen who embellish the blood-stained page of history in many nations, and who have striven to maintain the power of empire by the peaceful arts of negotiation and

diplomacy, to allay by their influence the evil passions of men, and in all their glory, all their power, and with all their influence to cherish and fortify the interests of the Church. Guilty as Dunstan may have been of acts which we regard with horror in a Churchman, yet we must ever bear this in mind, not only in his case, but in the case of all the great master-spirits of the early Church, that their position was insecure; they had to deal with kings and princes, half civilized, tyrannical, and suspicious, with a people untutored, violent, and bloodthirsty; that the Church was ever in peril during the first few centuries of its history from the caprices and evil passions of those semi-barbarous kings who divided the world amongst them on the overthrow of the Western Empire. We owe then to these men, no matter by what means accomplished the debt is the same—we owe to them the establishment and consolidation of the foundations of the Church. Had they been less firm, less determined upholders of their order, had they not on many occasions made use of the superstition, of the dense ignorance by which they were surrounded, to save the Church, that Church would have been one scene of alternate spoliation and restoration, and probably have sunk in the struggle with the blindness, the violence, and the evil passions of those by whom it was surrounded.

It was in this spirit, and with a keen eye to the interests of the Church, that Dunstan availed himself of his power and influence during the reign of Edred to commence the work of restoration. New edifices were built and dilapidated ones restored all over the country, the boundaries of the kingdom were enlarged and maintained, the laws were properly administered, and the whole economy of the government manifested

the presence of a master-hand. In the midst of this great work of reformation and restoration Elphege, the Bishop of Winchester, died, and the see was at once offered to Dunstan, who declined it, with the expressed determination never to accept a mitre during the lifetime of the king. A motive of a selfish character has been suggested for this act by many historians. It has been said that he was longing for the Archbishopric of Canterbury, which was filled by Odo, an old man under the influence of Dunstan, who cared for nothing until the death of this prelate, when he would take his place, lest another should be appointed who might not be so disposed to do what he wished. It is possible that some such motive may have existed, but we do not think the facts warrant such a conclusion. Had his motive been only to secure the Archbishopric of Canterbury on the death of Odo, the acceptance of the Bishopric of Winchester, so far from interfering with it, would rather have been one step towards it, since he could have been more appropriately translated from the lesser see to the greater than appointed from the cares and distractions of the court. It is more than probable that he felt that, as the favourite minister of the king, he could do more good to the Church by guiding his actions than he could in the limited arena of a diocese; that as a minister he could also influence the present archbishop, Odo, whilst as a bishop that influence would have been lessened. But whatever may have been his motives, he persistently refused the bishopric, in spite even of the intercession of the king's mother. Edred died in the year 955, and was succeeded by Edwy, the son of Edmund, when the troubles of Dunstan began.

Edwy was young, handsome, and gay, and very little

inclined to submit himself to the direction of monks, or to consult them in any way. It appears that he had married Elgiva, a young and beautiful lady, who was related to him within the prohibited degrees, and therefore looked upon, and spoken of by them as his harlot, but there can be little doubt that she was his wife in the sight of God. It was a legal defalcation, not a violation of morality.* However, this circumstance had led to considerable trouble and unpleasantness, between Edwy and the monks, before he ascended the throne, and on the very day of his coronation matters were brought to a crisis. They were seated in the festive hall, the nobles carousing with the licence of the times—the young king seated at their head, and with him Dunstan, then Abbot of Glastonbury, Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury, and others. Filled, probably, with the natural disgust of youth, for the noisy revelry, Edwy, at a certain point of the entertainment, left the table, and retired to a private apartment, where his wife and her mother were sitting.

Dunstan, who no doubt felt that this would be taken

* Roman Catholic historians speak of her as his mistress, and appeal to the monkish chronicles, where she is always branded with that epithet; but this does not disprove the possibility of a marriage, that is, a marriage ecclesiastically illegal, which they would never recognise, but which did not entitle Elgiva to be branded as a harlot. The Saxon chronicle notes that Archbishop Odo separated Edwy and Elgiva because they were too nearly related: a fact from which we may infer that Odo recognized the existence of a pseudo marriage.

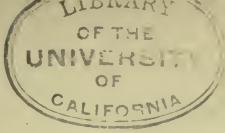
Again, in the Cottonian MSS. Claudius, B VI.—a history of Abingdon—there is a reference to a charter, wherein she appears as a witness, “Ælfgifu, the king’s wife, and Æthelgifu, the king’s wife’s mother.” The subterfuge of forgery will not hold good here, as Turner has shown, because if the charter were a forgery the monks would take care that the forged signatures should be correct in point of style. There is no more solid reason to believe that she was not married to the king, than the vindictive epithets of monkish malice.

as a personal insult, and very likely piqued himself that the king should prefer the company of his harlot (as they regarded her) to his own saintly presence, followed him, entered the private chamber, where he discovered Edwy seated lovingly with his wife, and on the ground lay the crown, which he had carelessly thrown aside. Dunstan remonstrated with him, and pointed out, with the best of motives, the probable consequences of his conduct, but the king only laughed at him, and refused to go back. Enraged at his obstinacy, and at being humiliated by this stripling, in the presence of a woman whom he regarded as a vile outcast; and her mother, who was stigmatized more severely than the daughter, he seized the king by the shoulders, pressed the crown upon his head, dragged him to the hall, and forced him into his seat, in the presence of all the nobles. The king submitted for the time, but threatened Dunstan with banishment, and on the next day proceeded to put that threat into execution. Under the pretext of financial expediency, he summoned Dunstan to render an account of moneys with which he had been entrusted during the preceding reign, and it was upon this rock that the good ship split, as many other good ships have done since. Dunstan's accounts were not in a fit state for such a sudden investigation, and sentence of banishment being pronounced against him, he fled to Glastonbury, to announce to his weeping brethren the news of his disgrace and exile. He remained at Glastonbury for some time, until he was driven from its shelter by the soldiery of Edwy, whence he escaped to Flanders.

But we must pause for a moment in our narrative, to describe the terrible fate which befel both Elgiva and Edwy. Embittered against the king, Odo lost no

opportunity of enforcing the discipline of the Church. He, therefore, divorced the young couple in 958,* and even went so far as to employ emissaries to seize the queen privately, when, by his orders, they disfigured her face with red-hot irons, hoping by the destruction of that fatal beauty, to disgust the young king and dissolve the attachment between them. Elgiva then fled to Ireland for safety, and lived in retirement for some time, until her wounds were healed, and her beauty restored, when she hastened back to rejoin her husband, but was captured in the neighbourhood of Gloucester, by the minions of the archbishop, who put her to a cruel death by severing the sinews of her legs. This has left a deep stain upon the memory of Odo, who was styled by his monkish contemporaries, as Odo the Good. But we cannot estimate the actions of men in bygone ages by the standard of action in the present. Odo himself was the son of pagan barbarians, from the obscurity of which position he had been raised to the dignity of the priesthood, and then advanced to the primacy; it was an age, too, of violence, when men listened to no other reason than the power of the strongest. Christianity was again in peril, and these early bishops regarded the Church as an institution which was to be consolidated in spite of all opposition, and at any cost, as a blessing to be forced upon men for the good of their souls, and in the face of their most violent resistance. In the eyes of the Church, then, the violation of the marriage laws was a scandal too great to be borne, and an open violation of those laws by one in the highest position in the realm, was

* Saxon Chron.: a passage wanting in Gibson's edition, but restored by Petrie.



an example too dangerous to be allowed to pass, without the exercise on the part of that Church, of all its powers. There can be no justification of the murder, it was guilt of the deepest dye, but it is only fair to take into consideration the circumstances which tend to extenuate that guilt. Edwy soon found, after the banishment of Dunstan, that he had overrated his power.

The monks were not idle in their great leader's absence, and there can be no doubt that a communication was established between Dunstan abroad, and the monastic party, his supporters in England, for soon after the disastrous affair of his disgrace and punishment an insurrection was raised in the North against Edwy, and the people of Northumbria and Mercia elevated Edgar his younger brother to the throne, Wessex remaining faithful to Edwy. As soon as Edgar was made king he summoned a council, revoked all the acts of his brother, and recalled Dunstan, who returned in triumph, but, however, cautiously refrained from interfering with Edwy, who still ruled over that portion of England in which was situated the long-coveted see of Canterbury.* Soon after his return the Bishopric of Worcester became vacant, and as it lay within the dominions of Edgar, Dunstan was at once appointed, and this time made no objection. The very next year London also was vacant, and Edgar evidently willing to make up for his brother's cruelties to the favourite saint gave this also to him. The year after he had been consecrated to the second bishopric, the primacy of Canterbury fell in by the death of Odo, but as this rich and coveted see was in the dominions

* Kent and Sussex were portions of Wessex, by conquest.

of Edwy, Dunstan had no chance, and saw the glittering prize snatched from his grasp by the appointment on the part of Edwy of Elsin, Bishop of Winchester, a known enemy to the monks. But the sun of Dunstan's glory was in the ascendant, and events conspired to raise him in spite of apparent impossibilities. Elsin went to Rome to receive the pall, and died from excessive cold whilst crossing the Alps. Brithelm, Bishop of Wells, was the next appointed, but before all the arrangements were completed Edwy died. It is said he was found slain near Gloucester, the scene of his wife's murder.

Edgar, then only a youth, ascended the throne of the whole kingdom. A reaction took place in favour of the monks, and it became necessary by some means to send poor Bishop Brithelm back to his country diocese, to make room for the rising man. That worthy prelate raised a natural objection against being dealt with in this manner. Osbern tells us he was a good-natured man, but knew better how to take care of himself than of others—a peculiarity which affects many people even now. However, the king interfered, the people of Canterbury were won over to the side of Dunstan, when at length Brithelm, like a wise man, seeing that resistance was useless, preferred to return to his quiet see of Wells to being deposed altogether, and Dunstan's triumph was complete. [As soon as he was consecrated he was appointed by Pope John XII. Legate of the Holy See, and thus he was at the very highest pinnacle of his ambition, Primate of England, representative of the Pope, with no one above him but a youth of sixteen, over whose mind he had acquired a power second only to that youth's natural licentiousness. He therefore began at once an extensive and

general system of Church reform. He rebuilt churches which had fallen into decay or had been destroyed by the Danes, he induced Edgar to build in the course of his short reign no less than forty-eight monasteries, he expelled all the married monks who had been introduced into the old establishments by Edwy and his party, he drove the secular priests from their livings, and compelled them either to separate from their wives and become monks or go out into the world to starve in disgrace. It was a severe measure, and led to much domestic misery. The husband and the father had to choose between parting from beings endeared by the tenderest ties of natural affection, the assuming the monastic dress, and the following the monastic life, or expulsion from home, expulsion from the Church; and as public feeling then was, expulsion from society as branded outcasts. Some went through that ordeal like martyrs; terrified by the threat of spiritual exclusion, they tore themselves away from the world while its endearments were thick around them, cut asunder the life chords of conjugal affection and parental love, and with sinking hearts and faltering spirits turned a deaf ear to a wife's lamentations, and a child's tears, buried their sorrows in the monk's cowl, and spent the rest of their days in purging themselves of the taint of their past lives by penitence and prayer. Whilst, on the other hand, many, and by far the greater number, were unable to overcome the instincts of nature, their lives were bound up with their families, children had grown up around them, and fastened themselves upon their affections; they looked upon those beings, their nature shrunk appalled at the thought of desertion, and they chose rather to dare the tyranny of man than outrage the laws of God. Hundreds who did this were driven

out into the world unable to get employment—outcasts in the eyes of men, they begged their bread amongst the people, until that very charity was withheld in terror, when, wasted and worn in the conflict with a cruel world, they fell by the wayside, the victims to a false asceticism.

In this work of ecclesiastical reform, Dunstan was materially assisted by two men, who, in a great measure, owed their position to his influence; Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, and ultimately Archbishop of York. The former, as we have already mentioned, was a monk under Dunstan at Glastonbury, had won his good opinion by his devotion to monastic rules and monastic discipline, insomuch that it was through Dunstan's recommendation he had been made Abbot of Abingdon, from which position he was raised to the episcopal throne. Oswald was a nephew of Odo, and was appointed by him to a canonry at Canterbury. Dunstan introduced him to Edgar, whose influence procured him the see of Worcester. As soon as he had taken up his position as bishop, he began to adopt measures for converting the cathedral into a monastery of the Benedictine order, but met with an opposition from the canons too vigorous to be overcome. He, therefore, opened a monastic establishment in opposition to his chapter, filled it with monks whose ascetic lives and continual devotion, when brought into close comparison with that of the secular ecclesiastics, operated as he had foreseen upon the minds of men, into whose ears these more severe doctrines were then being assiduously preached. Crowds deserted the cathedral and flocked to the monastery, but what was still more effective took their offerings with them.

Things fared ill with the canons, and gradually they came round. Wensius was the first to give way, and Oswald sent him to Ramsey to be instructed in the rule—then others followed in succession, until the change was completed, and confirmed by a charter from Edgar, which from that time made such innovations legal, and is known in history, to this day, as Oswald's law.*

Pious as Edgar was as regards building monasteries, endowing foundations, and allowing Dunstan to have his own way, still his vices caused that saint much trouble, and in the case we are now about to notice, serious embarrassment. Edgar had been on a visit to the monastery of Wilton, where he fell in love with Wilfrida, said by some to be a nun, by others to have assumed the dress to avoid pursuit—the former is the more probable supposition, from the fact that the severest punishment in Dunstan's power was inflicted upon the king; had she been an ordinary secular person we should have heard nothing of the incident, that amusement being a favourite one in those days, and especially with Edgar. However, as Edgar had caused this young lady to be seized and brought to him, and had made her his mistress, the scandal was too great to be passed over, public opinion was aroused—every monk's cowl in England shook with indignation, and Dunstan, like a bold man, resolved upon extending to Edgar the utmost ecclesiastical discipline. We must give him credit for doing this act honestly and bravely, at the signal risk of his position, and at the peril of the Church. To have imposed mere ordinary penances would have been of no avail, as they

* Eadmer de Vita S. Oswaldi, Ang. Sacra ii., 203.

could be evaded and compounded for. The Penitential Canons of Dunstan himself allowed one day's fast to be met by the penitent singing the Beati six times, and Pater Noster six times, or bowing down to the ground, with Pater Noster, sixty times, whilst a whole year's fast might be compounded for by his paying thirty shillings, and so on in proportion. Dunstan, however, resolved upon imposing a real penance upon his royal culprit, and in addition to sentencing him to almsgiving, fasting, prayer, and to the founding of a nunnery, he enjoined strictly that the king should not wear his crown for the space of seven years. This was a severe ordeal for his pride. Also, that he should cause copies of the Holy Scriptures to be made and placed in churches in different provinces of his dominions, which, as the expense of copying books in those days was something fabulous, was a severe infliction upon his purse. Short of this Dunstan was inflexible, and the king was compelled to yield. The alms were given, the fasts kept, the nunnery was built at Shaftesbury, the copies of the Scriptures were made and sent to their destination, and at the end of seven years, the crown which had not been used during that period was brought out. A jubilee was held, and at Bath, in the presence of robed nobles, mitred bishops and abbots, with all other dignitaries of the Church, Dunstan absolved the king, and amid the acclamations of the people placed the crown once more upon his head. The king had been publicly humiliated, and the monks were satisfied.*

* The monks instituted a comparison in this case between David and Edgar, Nathan and Dunstan; but Fuller crushes it by saying

Nathan pardoned David, *and imposed no penance* on him that he can find.

Another instance of his exercise of ecclesiastical power we may mention, in which he not only defied the king but the pope himself. A certain nobleman had married within the degrees; Dunstan commanded him to put away his wife, but the command was not attended to, when he instantly pronounced sentence of excommunication against him. The earl appealed to the king, who endeavoured to arrange matters, but ineffectually; then the pope was solicited, and being won over to the side of the nobleman, wrote a letter to Dunstan, commanding him to remove the sentence of excommunication. Dunstan firmly refused, and enforced the law of the Church. But his energies were now vigorously directed towards the expulsion of all the married clergy in the kingdom. It was reported to him that there were many of these clergy all over the country, and he was asked what was to be done; his reply was, "they must either live canonically, or retire from their livings." Expulsion, attended with the most painful scenes, then became frequent throughout the kingdom, when their cause was taken up by Elphere, the Ealdorman of Mercia. It was represented to the king, on the part of these married clergy, that they were virtuous men and good pastors, and they wished their cause to be investigated by his majesty himself. To this there could be no objection, and Dunstan was compelled to summon a council, which sat at Winchester; the king and nobles attended, and the case of the married clergy was gone into. Their sorrow and sufferings created a strong sympathy amongst the assembly, in spite of the severe charges brought by Dunstan's party against them; and the king, seeing the disposition of his nobles, began to waver in his mind as to whether they should not be

restored to their benefices ; and the party of Dunstan began also to fear the result, when suddenly a voice was heard to issue from the crucifix on the wall, uttering the following words : "Absit hoc ut fiat! Absit hoc ut fiat!" That settled the question ; the king and nobles, terrified at the miracle, filled the building with acclamations, and the cause of the secular clergy was lost. Edgar, however, died in 975, leaving his son Edward heir to the throne. An opposition was got up in favour of Ethelred, Edgar's son by his second wife, now his widow, who seeing there was a chance for her own offspring to supplant the claims of the elder son, joined the secular party. Dunstan, however, interfered, led Edward forth, crowned him and anointed him before them in spite of all opposition.

Again the kingdom was agitated by the complaints of the married clergy, who were reduced to such a state of misery as to be compelled to beg their bread. Their cause was taken up this time by one Beornhelm, a northern bishop of great eloquence. An assembly was convened and met at Calne, when the monks again lost ground in argument, and were being overcome by this northern orator. Dunstan was present, surrounded by his friends, and at the very point when the argument seemed to bear them down with its force, Dunstan said ominously, that he would argue no further, but leave the cause of the Church to God, when the floor suddenly gave way, and all the secular parties were precipitated into a chamber underneath, many being killed, and the rest seriously injured ; but the notable part of the miracle was that the floor did not give way where Dunstan and his friends were seated, which has drawn from the caustic Fuller the remark, that, "as he had something of the smith in

him, so he must have had also something of the carpenter." Miracles were the weapons of the monastic party, and they generally conquered all opposition. In the "Anglia Sacra," we are told with the greatest gravity, that when the married clergy were in possession of Winchester Cathedral, no miracles were performed at St. Swithin's tomb, but that when the monks were reinstated in the place, the saint resumed his miracles immediately. The inference is open to the reader.

The mother of Ethelred, Edgar's widow, being baffled in her designs, employed an assassin to kill the young king, and remove the only obstacle between her own child and the crown. This foul deed was perpetrated at her residence, Corfe Castle, in the year 978, when she left her son in possession of the throne, fled from her home, and sought shelter from human vengeance behind the walls of a convent. Ethelred, then only a child, eleven years old, was crowned by Dunstan, at Kingston, who, as he placed the crown upon his head, predicted, that, as he had been raised to the throne by his mother's crime, his reign would be most calamitous, that his kingdom would be handed over to an alien, of whose laws and language they were ignorant. His monkish biographer dwells upon this prediction as a Divine inspiration, but Dunstan was a statesman; he saw that the policy of the government would undergo a change, that dissensions would be again aroused with which he was now too old and too feeble to cope. And then far away in the north the Danes were looming threateningly; in fine, events all conspired to indicate to an eye accustomed to watch the political horizon, the approach of a dangerous tempest.

Dunstan retired to Canterbury for a few years

before his death ; the shadows of the dark world were falling on him, and he left the perplexing cares, the gay revelry, the intrigue, the distractions of court life, to meditate upon his approaching change, and purge his soul from all worldly thought and care. It is said that during this time he frequently visited Glastonbury, the scene of his earliest years, joined in the devotion of the monks, and shared the quiet of their cloisters. But in the year 988,* when his life-work was finished, and the worn-out weary servant was awaiting his summons, he was at Canterbury, a fine noble-looking old man, to be seen haunting the cathedral aisles, muttering his prayers as he passed, or musing dreamily of by-gone times at the tomb of his friend and predecessor, Odo the Good. His career had been a glorious one ; he had been the companion and even the maker of kings ; his life had been spent in the whirl of courts ; in his hands he had held the reins of government ; he had purged the Church of what he honestly thought a scandalous vice ; he had quelled internal dissensions, had kept foreign depredators at bay, and now he had crept back to his church like a weary pilgrim, to lay down his bones at the altar of his Master, whom he had so long served, the fires of ambition all burnt out of him, and the soul longing to be free. The unseen messenger came. On the day of Ascension he preached his last sermon, and gave the people his last public blessing ; his subject was the Incarnation ; he told his auditors they would never hear him again ; and as he was returning through the church, indicated the spot where he should be buried. When he found his end approaching, he desired to receive the Sacrament, after

which he uttered the following prayer, the beauty of which, we fear, we cannot preserve in English :—
 “Glory be to Thee, Almighty Father, who hast given to them that fear Thee the bread of life from heaven, that we should be mindful of the wonderful things Thou hast done in the world, in sending to us Thy only begotten Son, born of the Virgin. We render thanks to Thee, Holy Father, who when we were not, didst create us, and when we were sinners, didst make us partakers of this grace through the same, Thy Son, our Lord and God, who reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, creating and guiding all things, world without end. Amen.”*

Dunstan was buried near the altar in Canterbury Cathedral, but Glastonbury, for many centuries, was accredited with the possession of his relics. The fact was, however, questioned in the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, and will be noticed in the proper place. Thus departed the greatest man of his age, greatest churchman, and greatest statesman. He stands out boldly on the page of history even now, though nearly a thousand years have crowded that page with a multitude of names and figures; still towering above the mass he is prominent as the earliest of a long list of great ecclesiastical statesmen, numbering such spirits as Hildebrand, Mazarin, Wolsey, and Richelieu, men who have impressed their characters upon their age, who with one

* Gloria tibi, Omnipotens Pater, qui timentibus te panem vitæ de cælo dedisti ut memores simus mirabilium tuorum quæ in medio terræ operatus es mittendo nobis unigenitum tuum de vera Virgine natum. Tibi, Sancte Pater, meritas referimus grates qui et nos dum

non eramus, creasti et dum peccatores essemus hujus gratiæ participes fecisti per eundem filium tuum Deum et Dominum nostrum, omnia tecum et cum Spiritu Sancto facientem gubernantem et per infinita sæculorum sæcula regnantem. Amen.

hand upheld the Church, and with the other guided the State. A marvellous thing it is in history that these great Churchmen should prove such masters of state craft. The memory of many noted statesmen grows faint with time, but the memory of these great ecclesiastical statesmen is ever bright. Thurketul, the chancellor, pales before Dunstan, and Thomas Cromwell before Wolsey, and why? Because they cherished most tenderly the vital interests of that institution, which is the very soul of history—the Church—burdened as they were with errors, which are the common lot of humanity, yet they always faithfully fought for their Church, fought for it against prejudice, against ignorance, against barbarism, and fell beside it in times of persecution. What is it but the Church that makes the history of a country interesting? take away the Church, and you leave only a long, monotonous wearying tale of contentions, intrigues, bloodshed, and all the ghastly paraphernalia which follow the march of unbridled human passion; take away the Church, and you take away the soul of a country. It is the tale of her woes and joys, her sufferings and triumphs, her chastisements and sympathies, her strife against evil and encouragement of good, which ennoble the history of a country. A nation without a Church is a nation without a history, a motherless orphan nation. We can then readily understand why these men are truly great men, who have appeared in the world at rare intervals, and taken upon themselves the double care, Herculean care, of guiding and protecting the two interests, spiritual and temporal, the body and soul of a nation.

CHAPTER VII.

The last of the Saxon Abbots.*

A.D. DCCCCXLIV.—MLIII.

WE now resume the thread of history more immediately connected with Glastonbury Abbey, and to do so we must go back to the commencement of the abbacy of Dunstan, to whom many lands and treasures were given by the devotion of Saxon monarchs. King Edmund I. gave more than one hundred hides of land to the Abbey, amongst which were Christemulford, Hingestan, Wudeton (Wooton), Watelea, Wrington (restored), Elcfrid, and others. "These," said he, "I bestow on the Old Church of the Mother of God, on the hill of Glastonbury, for the wiping off of my sins, and those of my grandfather Alfred, and Edward my father." Queen Elflada, the widow of Edward, gave to the monastery the lands of Ackford, Bockland, Ply, and Hammerdowne (which latter still bears its name, Hammerdown Park being the seat of the Joliffes). Wilfred, the king's minister, gave several hides of land; also the queen gave, at the instigation of her husband, Domham, Norton, Pedington, and other lands—in all more than 100 hides. It is estimated that Edmund conferred on Glastonbury Abbey, by his own hand, and through his instigation, more than 368 hides

Authorities.—Acta. Sanct. 19 John Glaston. Hist. Glas.; Gulliel. Maii, tom. iv.; Gulliel. Malmesb. Malmesb. Gesta Regum; Gesta Hist. Glaston.; Saxon Chron.; Pont.

of land, besides many valuable relics which he had collected, and left his body to be buried there, which was done. He also gave a charter, which was written in letters of gold in the book of the Holy Gospels. He was succeeded by Edred, who gave to Glastonbury, Badbury, and other lands. To him succeeded Edwy, when the monastic party fell into disfavour, and Dunstan being banished the kingdom, the king, in the year 956, placed

Elsius in the chair of Glastonbury. This was the inauguration of a new order of things. The abbey was filled with seculars, and the old rule of St. Benedict set at naught. Edwy, however, increased the rent-roll of the abbey by the gift of Pangebroke and Blackford, and his ministers gave also Cranmere and other lands. The change which came over the country by the reaction in favour of the monastic party we have already sketched in the life of Dunstan. Edwy was found dead near Gloucester, and when Edgar, his brother, came to the throne of the whole kingdom, the exiled favourite of the monks was recalled, the rule at Glastonbury re-established, the secular clergy expelled, and Dunstan, the reinstated abbot, was rewarded for his sorrows and his exile, after passing through two bishoprics, by being elevated to the throne of Canterbury.

Egelward or *Adelward* then succeeded at Glastonbury, when the king, wishing to bestow some signal favour upon the abbey for its past grievances, conferred upon it the following privileges: That no one should ever be made abbot save a monk of the place, if one could be found fitting, though he were the meanest of them all; but in case no one could be found amongst them worthy of the dignity, then they should have the

privilege of choosing by vote some strange monk from another monastery. That the abbot might receive his benediction at the hands of any bishop. That he should have the power of punishing the faults of his own servants without the impeachment of the bishop or the king's officers, and that no person, bishop, commander, or prince, should enter the island upon any lawsuit or other account, as had been already enacted by his predecessors, Kentwyn, Ina, etc. This grant he confirmed with an ivory crozier adorned with gold, which he placed on the altar, and which was cut through the middle in his presence. For further security the king prevailed on John VIII., the Pope, to support what he had done by his bull, which he not only did, but ratified the same by promulgating it in a general council at Rome, and sent it to the king to be corroborated by his regal authority, who with his nobles confirmed it, and enjoined its observance.

Sigebar then became abbot, and in the year 965 Edgar gave a grant of lands: "I, Edgar, do bestow on Abbot *Sigebar* and the old church (*Ealdecyrce*) for ever, for the health of my soul, and for the soul of my father, *Hamme*, and several hides of land." Duke *Alfar* gave *Westbury* forty hides and *Otherey* five hides—these names are still preserved. Other lands were given by ministers and nobles, amounting to 215 hides, and in addition Edgar placed over the high altar a cross wrought in silver, some large figures, and also, for the decoration of the altar bestowed his own costly coronation robes. He afterwards gave a silver shrine covered with gold and ivory figures, curiously interspersed, which shrine contained the relics of St. Vincent and the head of St. Apollinaris, also other relics which he had procured in foreign countries, and the relics of

two Holy Innocents which he had brought from Bethlehem : these he placed with due reverence at Glastonbury, for all which the memory of Edgar is most fragrant in the monastic chronicles of the times, and his body was honoured with burial in the chapter-house of the abbey, at the church door, but not to rest in peace, as we shall presently see.

Berred then ruled the abbey for sixteen years, to whom King Ethelred gave many lands. He was succeeded by *Brithwyn*, who was appointed in 1017, and gave an altar-piece of gold, silver, and ivory. He ruled for ten years, when he was made Bishop of Wells. In his time Canute the Dane ravaged England, and though repulsed by Edmund I., who was called Ironsides, still committed devastations. At length a peace was concluded, by which it was arranged that Canute should possess Mercia, and Edmund the kingdom of the West Saxons. This, however, was annulled by the murder of Edmund. Sometime before, he had bequeathed by will several lands to Glastonbury Abbey, and left a request that his body might be buried there, which was done, and he was placed before the high altar. Canute in his progress through the country, when king, visited Glastonbury Abbey on St. Andrew's day, and honoured the remains of his brother monarch, by laying on his tomb his mantle or cloak, which was formed of peacocks' feathers, of several colours, curiously woven together. He also granted a charter to the abbey.*

Egelward II. succeeded to the chair of Glastonbury, in the year 1027, and ruled twenty-six years. The country was now governed by the Danes. Canute

* Dugdale, vol. ii., No. 100.; and for the visit, Cottonian MSS., Tiberius, A. v.

died in 1036, and was succeeded by Harold I., who died in the fourth year of his reign. Hardicanute, who reigned only two years, gave to Glastonbury a shrine, in which the body of St. Benignus was placed. After his death the English seized the opportunity of throwing off the Danish yoke, and placed the crown upon the head of Edward, the younger son of Ethelred, ever afterwards memorable in history by the title of Edward the Confessor. He ascended the throne in the year 1041, and died in 1066, being the last of the long and glorious line of Saxon monarchs. He had no issue, and during his lifetime attempts had been made by Godwin, Earl of Wessex, to raise a rebellion, with a view to lay hands upon the crown; upon his death his son Harold, having secured to himself a large and influential party in the kingdom, secretly carried on the same intrigue, when Edward, to avoid all quarrel and bloodshed after his death, bequeathed the crown to his relative William, Duke of Normandy, then illustrious all over Europe. Upon the death of the Confessor, Harold, the son of Godwin, seized upon the throne when William invaded the country with a view to enforce his rights; the battle of Hastings ensued, and with it the second marvellous change which was to come over the character of the country and exert a powerful influence upon its destinies, the circumstances of which, romantic beyond even the creations of fiction, we shall have to display hereafter.

Egelnoth succeeded to the abbacy of Glastonbury in the year 1053. These two last abbots appear to have done great injury to the monastery—the one lavishing away its wealth abroad, and the other in riotous living at home. The affairs of Glastonbury then sunk a little into decline, and the chronicles tell us that a sort of

vengeance hung over the place, which they attribute to the impiety of the predecessor of Egelnoth, who violated the tomb of Edgar. It appears he had some desire of removing the remains of the deceased monarch, probably with the best of motives, and to that end he had the grave opened, when the body was found in no way corrupted, but quite entire. The coffin he had brought to remove them in being too small, he is said to have mutilated the corpse, to the horror of all the bystanders. Ultimately the royal remains were placed in a shrine upon the altar, with the head of St. Apollinaris and the relics of the martyr St. Vincent, which Edgar had purchased at a great price and bestowed on the abbey. At this point we must pause, leaving Egelnoth seated in his abbatial chair at Glastonbury, the last representative of a race which was about to be brought into conflict with another and alien race, and to struggle during long weary years for an existence not merely on the soil of the country, but in the blood, the tongue, and the customs of that country's people.

The century which had rolled by had been fraught with incidents tending to increase the fame and embellish the glory of Glastonbury Abbey. Her ancient and glorious traditions drew the attention of the whole religious world of Europe upon her. Popes hastened to confirm her privileges; kings bent their knees at her shrines, poured out their treasures at her altars, and begged eagerly for a last resting-place within her walls; pilgrims from all quarters—from the glens and wilds of Northern Britain, from the green meadows of Ireland, and from the sunny South—came pouring in towards her towers, to say a prayer in her cloisters, to gaze upon her sacred relics, to kneel at the tombs of departed

saints, and to wander over scenes consecrated by the footsteps of apostles. The oldest churches of the country were her progeny ; she was their mother, and, as a mother, from the highest to the lowest in the land, men loved and revered her ; they sought her in poverty, in weariness, and woe ; they fled to her for shelter when the enemy had ravaged their homes, slaughtered their children, and burnt their crops ; and the great ones of the country—the kings, princes, and nobles—worn out with grandeur and weary of greatness, cast aside the emblems of their power when the shadows of life's evening were closing in upon them, and crept humbly, weepingly, to their sacred mother, to breathe out their last sigh on her bosom. She was the cradle of the great spirits of the time. Ethelwold and Dunstan were both reared and educated in her cloisters, and, going out into the world as the pioneers of their age, they reflected their glory back upon the spot whence they had sprung. They found the monk a poor obscure item in the social scale, shut up in his monastery, living on the produce of waste lands given by the capricious piety of princes, prone at the feet of half civilized tyrants, and defenceless against their power, and they elevated him into a position equal with the Crown itself ; they raised the order to which he belonged from obscurity to prominence, from impotence and dependence to being one of the most powerful agents in the politics of the times. The cowl was to be seen not only at the State feast but in the council chamber, at the king's elbow, and in the cabinet of the chief minister. Before Dunstan had departed from the scene of his labours, monastic influence had imperilled the diadem of one monarch, had procured the deposition of another from half

his dominions, and had anointed a third, in spite of open opposition. It was no longer suppliant and obscure, it was becoming prominent and imperious; no longer a simple phase of ascetic life, but a rapidly increasing political power.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Saxons.*

A. D. CCCCXLIX.—MLXVI.

THE influence of the Saxon element upon the national character has become so habitual that it is only upon investigation it can be fully appreciated. It would be difficult to say whether that or the Norman element has operated more powerfully upon the physical and mental fabric of the English. Vitally the preponderance lies with the Saxon, as we think may be shown from the structure of the language. Discarding from the English tongue the few importations from the Greek and Latin which do not come to us through the French, and a few other words from foreign tongues, we arrive at two distinct dialects, each of which may be translated into the other, spoken by all classes of the community, varied only by time and circumstance—the Saxon and the Norman. The most expressive portion is decidedly that which belongs to the Saxon element, but in the language of conventionality, and to a great extent in the language of literature, the Norman preponderates. The English Bible is a vast treasure-house of Saxon; its most

* *Authorities*—Taciti Germania; Eutrop. Hist.; Ptolemy Geog.; Anglia Sacra; Gildas; Nennius; Bede Eccl. Hist.; Asseri Vita Alfredi; Pauli's Life of Alfred; Kemble's Saxons in England; Turner's Hist. of Saxons; Lappenberg; Lingard; Soame's Anglo-Saxon Church; Gulielm. Malmesb. Gesta Pont.; Saxon Chron. (Ingram); Cotton MSS., Cleopatra, B. xiii., fo. 56; and Caligula, A. xiv.

effectual and expressive passages are in pure Saxon ; it is that which has sent its truths home into English hearts, interwoven them with English thought, and endeared its phraseology to English ears, and for this reason, if for none other, we should hesitate about disturbing that old Saxon text—the most lasting preserver of our Mother Tongue. The speech of the great mass of the people is Saxon, that of the refined, educated minority Norman ; but strange to say, the language of deep affection, of strong emotion, of close, intimate relationship, finds vent among all classes in the homely, natural Saxon. But although the peasant, the mechanic, the vast mass of the community in their every-day conversation, speak almost invariably Saxon, whilst those of the upper and middle classes speak the more classical Norman, yet in the relationships of father, mother, husband, wife, and child, which make all men brethren, the noble and the peasant speak in one common language, the natural expression of the affections. The terms of endearment are all Saxon. A mother talking to her child, whether she be noble or plebeian, falls back upon the simple expressive Saxon—the lover to his mistress, the brother to the sister, all the home tendernesses and endearments, the close familiar intercourse of the family circle flow most naturally in Saxon. “ I love thee,” the burden of all the tender correspondence and most animated conversation of the country, is purely Saxon ; but when we emerge from this unfettered, natural intercourse to the drawing-room of society, to the public courts, halls or pulpits, here we find another language spoken, still with a strong Saxon basis—that of our polished ancestors the Normans, ponderous, methodical, and measured. But it is not in our language only that this Saxon element is to be

traced, it has interlaced itself with the very tissues of our thought, it characterizes all our deeds, and it lies far down at the foundation of our laws, our institutions, and our manners. It will, therefore, not be inapt now that we have arrived at the period when the Saxon dynasty in England came to a close after an existence of six centuries, to review the work they did during that period, when the foundations of the English constitution were laid; such a review, though necessarily a brief one, may throw some light upon subsequent history, or in any case will be an appropriate summary of the historical results of the period we have just gone over.

Ptolemy the Alexandrian, who wrote about the year 140, A.D., is the first who honours the future rulers of the world with any mention, though this is scanty enough. In his geography* there occurs a passage to the effect that a race called "the Saxons" lived on a tract of land on the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus, at the north of the river Elbe, and three islands near its mouth. The next mention made of them, and in fact the first historic mention, is by Eutropius,† from whom we learn that Carausius was sent with a fleet by the Roman government to keep in check the depredations committed on the Belgian, Gallic, and British shores by the Franks and Saxons. They were an extraordinary race, a troublesome, intractable race, in this their earliest infancy, and they managed even then to be a serious annoyance to the dominant Roman powers, and to imperil the Roman government in

* Claudii Ptolemæi Geog., lib. . —Deinde supra dorsum Cimbricæ ii., c. xi. The passage in the Latin version is as follows, under the heading "Germaniæ Magnæ Situs:"

Chersonesi *Saxones*.

† Eutrop. Hist. Rom., lib. ix., 21.

Britain. A huge, brawny race, with a gigantic physical development, fair skin and light flaxen hair, blue eyes and ruddy cheeks, living on small islands exposed to the vicissitudes of the ocean. Accustomed to find their crops swept away by inundations, and their houses and lives often imperilled, they built themselves a sort of wicker boat, made of planks bound together with osier twigs covered with skins, and reckless of all danger put to sea in these crazy vessels to try their fortunes elsewhere—a people badly housed in the world, but bent upon finding better quarters somewhere—having nothing of their own but swampy fields and wretched houses, which the sea might sweep away at any time, their first instinct was to find out some one who had something better to lay violent hands upon it, and if need be upon its possessor. It was a pursuit for which they were in many ways admirably adapted; they knew nothing of danger, or rather we are told they gloried in danger; they were never deterred by defeat, and as they found from the neglected state of neighbouring coasts, a sudden descent made occasionally would supply their wants, this mode of life gradually became habitual, and they left agriculture and labour to their women and slaves, looking upon these matters as beneath the dignity of brave men, who would not submit to the drudgery of working for those things which they could acquire by force. Soon, these systematic descents upon shores under the dominion of Rome attracted the notice of the provincial governors, who appealed to the Imperial Court for help. A fleet was then fitted out and intrusted to a man by the name of Carausius, to cruise off the coasts of Gaul and Britain, seize all pirates, to suppress by violent means, and to exterminate, if

possible, these bold Saxons. The commander of this expedition was called the Count of the Saxon Shore, and it is the first mention in the history of England of a Channel fleet. Carausius, however, had a mission of his own: he played into the hands of the enemy, shared the booty, rebelled against Rome, seized upon Britain, called himself Cæsar, and held the country against the Romans for a long time; he was slain at York by Allectus, his minister. The troubles of Rome were accumulating, but the Saxons increased in territory, power, and renown. It was the retirement of one dominant race to make room for another, destined to be greater and more powerful; and although the prediction would have been treated with scorn had any seer declared to the Roman provincial governor that those hungry, ill-clad, restless barbarians would ever rise in the scale of civilization to a position far more brilliant than theirs, and attain to a power far greater than theirs, still even then the Saxon name was beginning to be noised abroad, tales of their prowess were rife, the whole coast line of the north of Europe was at their mercy, and men talked with terror of the prowess of these fair-haired giants. We find them spoken of frequently by the historians of the fourth and fifth centuries. Sidonius, Marcellinus, Zosimus, Julian, Procopius, and Orosius, all speak of the prowess and bravery of this people. They were in the very earliest period of their history a sore trouble to their neighbours and a terrible scourge to their enemies—a restless, active, pugnacious race, whom nothing would pacify or keep down—they grasped vigorously, and held firmly whatever came in their way, and they were not easily frightened. Strange to say, the Saxon, unlike many other type races, has never been completely extin-

guished ; has survived all the vicissitudes of time, and still lives and flourishes. The Greek and the Roman are extinct. A Roman of to-day is no more to be compared with his heroic ancestors than a modern Greek fig merchant with Jupiter. But the Saxon element lives in the English still—fourteen hundred years have failed to crush that out of our constitutions: we are still the same restless, impatient, indomitable race; still go out to sea in ships, are still ready and willing to fight, in spite of taxes, and, like our robber ancestors, we still manifest the same extraordinary readiness to lay hold upon other men's territories, and the same marvellous reluctance to release that hold ever after. These warlike Saxons continued their descents upon the English coasts for nearly two centuries, not dreaming of anything more than the chance of surprise, successful plunder, and ready escape; but events were coming to a crisis in Britain, and circumstances arose which led to the Saxons obtaining a footing in the country, but not in the manner usually supposed. The internal affairs of Britain after the departure of the Romans fell into confusion. It was divided into a number of small states, whose rulers were continually quarrelling and fighting with each other. This kept the country in a perpetual state of war, and laid it open to foreign invasion. The Picts and Scots made inroads in all directions. Rome could no longer help them, and they were unable to help themselves—they were reduced to the last extremity, and made unanimous by a common peril; they elected one sovereign who was called Gwrtheyrn, and summoned a general council to decide what was to be done.* Whilst the council was

* Nennius, Gildas, and Bede.

sitting, another descent was made by the Saxons with three vessels, and about three hundred men, who landed at Ebbs Fleet in the Isle of Thanet. Intelligence was brought to the council, when, as if moved by one common impulse, they decided upon employing these depredators as mercenaries to fight against their enemies. The proposition was made and accepted with that readiness with which a Saxon availed himself of the chance of fighting and plunder. They were established temporarily in the Island of Thanet, provided with all necessaries, and then sent to fight the Picts and Scots with their two chosen leaders, under whom they had landed, Hengist and Horsa.

This version, which is supported by the most ancient authority, appears to be more reasonable than the commonly accepted one, that the Saxons first landed by virtue of a national invitation. There had never been any thought of such an undertaking as an invasion on the part of the Saxons, nor on the part of the Britons could there have been reasonably any idea of invitation. They were the last people to whom they would appeal. They were barbarians, living by plunder, and occasional depredations made by rapid descents, conducted by small numbers of men, under leaders chosen only for the occasion, when their authority ceased. But their opportune landing at the time of the embarrassment of the national council suggested the idea of employing these men, as they were, to resist the enemy. The formal invitation occurred afterwards, and, as a natural consequence; the resistance offered by the Saxons was successful; they were a people who loved close fighting. When the ranks of the enemy were broken, they rushed in amongst them, and clove them down on all sides. The Picts and

Scots fled before them, and being unable to face them in the field employed strategy. A defeat at one point was the signal for an inroad at another. The British forces were too small to cope with the difficulty, and Hengist suggested that they should be allowed to send to their country for reinforcements to maintain the struggle. The British king, with the advice of his chiefs, consented, and hence arose the formal invitation, which was not given until they had been some time in the country, and had successfully fought against the foe. They were also still invited as mercenaries, nor is there anything to show that they regarded themselves in any other light, or had any idea of seizing the country themselves. That idea was of gradual growth, but arose quite naturally, as might have been predicted. Their being employed in their work taught them that the Britons could not subdue the Picts; their continual successes proved to them that they could do so, and though they were not versed in logic, the inference arose in their minds none the less readily as regards the Britons themselves. We have already seen that they were a people not comfortably settled in the world; their soil was damp and marshy, they were exposed to the ravages of the sea, upon which at last they almost existed; they found the soil of Britain more suitable; it was a goodly country, a fertile country, admirably adapted for rearing Saxons. They found the British divided amongst themselves, unable to contend against a foe whom they had crushed; and it is not improbable that at this point, when the Picts were driven away, and they came back to their settlements in Thanet, that some idea of establishing themselves in this drier and more convenient dwelling-place entered into their minds, but if so, it was not carried out until much later.

There appears to have been a sort of friendly hospitality extended to them by the British king, after the fighting had abated, which continued for some time, enlivened, according to certain historians, by a little love-making and matrimony. When Hengist sent to his country, with the consent of Gwrtheyrn, for reinforcements, there came over seventeen ships, on board one of which was his daughter Rowena. An attachment is said by these historians to have sprung up between the British king and this Saxon maiden, which ended in marriage. But however this may be,—and it is a doubtful point—one thing is clear, that a considerable interval of friendship did ensue after the defeat of the Picts, between the British and their Saxon guests. Time rolled on, the Saxons living on the Isle of Thanet, supported by the British, enjoyed themselves, and made no sign of preparations for a return. The British on their part began to find them a burden, the Picts had disappeared, but these Saxons did not seem inclined to move, and whether an intimation was sent to them that such a desirable step would be grateful to the Britons, as some assert, or whether dissensions on other points arose between them, as others maintain, matters ultimately came to a crisis, and resolved themselves into the question—Will the Saxons go? They thought not; they liked the country; it was a fine country—far better in every respect than those three very damp pieces of land at the mouth of the Elbe. They declined to return, and demanded a continuance of sustenance, according to agreement; it was withheld, when the Saxons at once made friends with the old enemies of the British, the Picts, began to turn their arms against the British, and to ravage the country. The struggle raged with alternate success,

when a vigorous effort was made by the British, under Guortemir, son of their king, who defeated and expelled them from the country. For four or five years they were kept out, until the death of Guortemir, when Hengist returned with a considerable force, and landed in Kent. A decisive battle, which terminated in his favour, was fought at Crayford, according to the "Saxon Chronicle," in the year 457. This was properly the foundation of the kingdom of Kent. Hengist made himself king, and chose Canterbury as his royal seat. In the year 465 the Britons made an attempt to dislodge these intruders, but to no purpose; another in 473, when, according to the "Chronicle," they fled from the Saxons like fire. The ultimate success of Hengist attracted other adventurers, and in the year 477, just twenty-eight years after his landing, a chieftain named Ella arrived with only three ships, with his three sons, Cymen, Wlencing, and Cissa, landed on some portion of the southern coast, where being met by the natives, they fought several battles, and at length drove them into a place called Andred-Ceaster. The struggle went on, and another battle was fought in 485 at a place called Mearcraesburn, in which the Saxons were victorious, but sustained a serious loss. Soon after this event, Ella having obtained reinforcements, began to lay siege to Andred-Ceaster, which was obstinately defended by the garrison and inhabitants. The Saxons persisted in the siege, and at last it fell to them, when, exasperated with the persistence of the citizens, they put them all to the sword, not leaving a single Briton alive.* This was the foundation of South Saxony, a kingdom which never became

* "Ne wearth thær forthon an Bryt to lafe."—Sax. Chron., 491.

great, and has, therefore, received very little notice in history. Nearly eighteen years rolled by, when another descent was made by a band of Angles, who were destined ultimately to absorb all the rest into one dominion. In the year 495 Cerdic, with five ships, arrived off the coast, either at Yarmouth or Southampton, it is impossible to ascertain which, opinions being divided as to the position of the place mentioned in the "Saxon Chronicle" as Cerdics-Ore. Cerdic met with a more vigorous opposition than all his predecessors, and had to fight his way inch by inch for nearly twenty-four years before he could establish his kingdom. In the "Saxon Chronicle," under the year 514, there is an entry of a second arrival of West Saxons in three ships, under the command of Stuf and Witgar,* who vanquished their opponents and advanced into the country. Previously to this arrival, Cerdic and his son Cynric had fought a great battle with the British, in which they slew their king, Natan-leod, and upwards of 5,000 men. But the most decisive victory was that of Mount Badon, near Bath, where the Britons had retired. It is said that at this juncture they appealed to Arthur, Prince of the Silures, for assistance against the Saxons, who had besieged the place. The siege was raised in the year 520, and under the leadership of Arthur the Saxons were for a time routed. This battle of Badon is the most clearly authenticated of the recorded achievements of Arthur, about whose name are clustered so many legends and mythical glories.† Cerdic died in 534, and his son Cynric succeeded to

* "Her cwomon West Seaxe in Bretene mith 3 scyfum in thas stowe the is gecweden Cerdics hora. Stufa and Witgar fuhton

with Bryttas and hie geplymdon." —Sax. Chron.. 514.

† See Appendix I. for an examination into the true history of Alfred.

the troublesome task of fighting for his throne. For eighty years from the time of their first landing did these West Saxons fight, until they acquired Hampshire, Wiltshire, Bucks, then Gloucester and Somersetshire. About the year 527, when the West Saxons were consolidating their kingdom in the south, whole tribes of adventurers of that active race, attracted by the success of their brethren, who were becoming kings and princes in this fair island, forsook the precarious life of piracy and plunder, landed on the eastern coast of Britain, and fought their way into the interior. Out of these invasions, but not without much struggling and many battles, arose three new kingdoms—East Anglia, in 575, founded by Uffa; Mercia, 585, by Crida; and East Saxony, or Essex, by Erkenwin. During the time of Hengist the Saxons had endeavoured to make a settlement in the north, but were so vigorously and obstinately resisted that for many years they were unable to do more than take the varied fortunes of continual conflict. Nothing approaching a kingdom was established in that region, until about the year 547, when Ida, a Saxon leader, came over with an army, subdued the Britons, conquered the tract of land now known by the names of Northumberland and Cumberland, and it is said some portion of Scotland. He then assumed the title of King of Bernicia.

After the death of Ida a division took place. Ella, another Saxon leader, left Bernicia, with his followers, to seek their fortunes in a different direction; they overran Lancashire and a portion of Yorkshire, and Ella was made King of Deira, about the year 559. Subsequently these two subdivisions were united by the marriage of Ethelfrid, Ida's grandson, with Acca, Ella's daughter, and the new kingdom destined to be

one of the most powerful of the Saxon settlements, took the name of Northumbria. These kingdoms formed what is known in history as the Saxon Heptarchy, which continued until the opening of the ninth century, a period of about four hundred years from the date of their first landing, during which time eighteen kings had ruled over Kent, eighteen over Wessex, twenty-nine in Northumbria, twenty-one in Mercia, seventeen in East Anglia, fourteen in Essex, but of Sussex, the names of two monarchs only have reached us. At the opening of the ninth century, the West Saxons were the most powerful of all the settlements, and Egbert, their king, was considered to be the only lineal descendant of the royal race. The thrones of the rest had fallen to other branches through being left vacant by childless kings who had taken off their crowns and retired into monasteries, or had been slain in battle, or by the assassin. It is not improbable, too, that an instinctive desire for union was springing up, for the Mercians before the time of Egbert had striven to acquire the sovereignty of the whole kingdom, had already absorbed into their dominion, East Anglia, and exacted tribute from Kent and Essex. Whilst Egbert was engaged fighting the Britons in Cornwall, who appear to have been troublesome even then, Bernulf, the Mercian king, made an attack upon his dominions, when he returned and met the enemy in Wiltshire, at Wilton, according to the "Saxon Chronicle." An obstinate battle terminated in the victory of Egbert, who then, according to the same authority, sent a portion of his army under the command of his son Ethelwulf, and the ealdorman Wulphere, to Kent, where they deposed Baldred, the tributary king, and drove him to the north of the Thames. Having

possession of Kent, the kingdoms of Sussex and Essex soon fell to him. East Anglia, which had also been tributary to Mercia, sought his protection. He then directed his arms towards Northumbria, which was in so unsettled a state, that upon his approach, the people sent messengers out to meet him, offering him their submission. This event took place in the year 827, when, as the "Saxon Chronicle" records, there was an eclipse of the moon on the mass-night of midwinter. Although Egbert had possession of the whole Hephtharchy, yet it is doubtful whether he ever assumed the title, or anything equivalent to it, of King of England. Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria, were still ruled by kings who paid him tribute, and that system was continued for some time after his death, in fact the question is still unsettled as to whether any of the Saxon kings who ruled from Egbert to the Conquest were ever crowned as kings of England.

As the Saxon life and government form the very basis of our present system, and many of its laws and customs still linger in some of our most cherished institutions, it is necessary that at this point we should investigate the system of the Saxon government, the fabric of its life, and what it did to lay the foundations of the law, customs, and literature of England.

We have said that the first mention made of the Saxons in history is made by Ptolemy—that is the first mentioned *by name*; but it is quite clear that though not considered of sufficient importance to receive an especial mention, yet they are included in the general description given us of the manners and customs of the ancient people of Germany in the history of Tacitus. He mentions their territory as part of Germania, in the words "Cetera Oceanus ambit,

latos sinus et insularum immensa spatia complectens." These islands, as we have already seen in Ptolemy, were inhabited by the people called the Saxons, who lived in the same way, and followed the same customs, with the exception of their seafaring peculiarities, as the other people of Germania. We therefore appeal to this work of Tacitus, as it is here we shall get the very earliest information as to the mode of life of that race from which we are sprung, and in doing so, we shall be able to show how in these very earliest times the marked peculiarities of the Saxons are to be traced. The profound historian of the Romans* tells us that the Germani (of whom the Saxons were an integral part) were a fierce, blue-eyed race, with reddish hair and huge bodies, just the description given by the earliest British historians of the Saxons. Their chief weapon was a short spear, with a narrow but sharp head, adapted for fighting in close combat or at a distance. They were of a most persistent bravery; to quit the field as long as they could stand up again was regarded as a mark of caution rather than courage, and in doubtful battles they always returned to the charge. They chose kings for their nobility and leaders for their bravery, but to neither kings nor leaders was there absolute or even free power (a peculiarity we shall find attaching to the Saxons when they acquired a settlement in England), and the leaders exerted an influence more by example than command, by their promptitude, and by their being foremost in the fight. The greatest incitement to them in battle was to fight in close propinquity to their women and children, so that they could hear the lamentations of

* Taciti Germania, secs. 4 to 27.



the former and the cries of the latter ; these were their most sacred witnesses and their most valued applauders ; they took their wounds to their mothers and wives, who did not fear to treat them, nor to bear food and refreshment to the warriors on the field—so that in these early times even the very women were warlike, heroic mothers of hero sons. Nay, Tacitus even goes on to say that at times when their ranks were thinned, and men could not be found to fill them up, they were filled up by women. In minor matters they consulted their chiefs, but in more important matters there was a general consultation, still with a reference to their chiefs, but they would be heard in their own business. That voice of the people, or public opinion, which in later Saxon institutions had such weight, was the dominant power in important events even then. To these great assemblies they came armed. If any proposition were disapproved of, they rejected it with murmurs and shouts ; but if it pleased them, they struck their spears on their shields. The most emphatic and decisive approbation was testified by the clash of arms. Traitors and deserters were hanged on trees, and the lazy or cowards were put upon hurdles and plunged into ponds of slime or mire. When a youth was old enough, he was publicly endowed with arms by his father or some near relative ; this was their toga, the first acknowledgment of manhood ; then he was associated with some chief. Among these followers there was a great emulation to attain the nearest position to the chief, and amongst the chiefs there was an equal emulation to attract to their side large groups of valiant youths, who in times of peace formed their ornament, and in war were their support. There was a strong and sacred devotion exacted towards the

chiefs on the part of these followers. It was considered disgraceful to be outdone by the chief in bravery on the field; it was a sacred thing to protect and defend him, and to ascribe all their deeds to his glory; but the most disgraceful thing—a life-long disgrace—was to have retired from the ranks alive when their leader had fallen. In all this we have the faint foreshadowing of that feudal attachment, the spirit of which is to be traced in subsequent Saxon history, but whose form as a system was perfected in England under the Normans. Domestic matters and the culture of the land were committed by these early people to the care of their women, old men, and the infirm of the family. When there was no fighting they hunted sometimes, but the majority gave way to eating, drinking, and sleeping, until they became dull and inert, and these very men, as Tacitus remarks, by a strange perversity of nature, loved idleness though they hated rest. They are accredited with the honour of being the only race of barbarians who were contented with one wife. Sometimes the nobles, more from pride of rank than licentiousness, took more wives, but monogamy prevailed. A man did not look for anything from his wife, but gave her the dower. Though they were a numerous people, few cases of adultery were known among them. When a case happened, the husband had the right of punishment in his own hands; the woman was stripped naked, and with stripes expelled from the house and driven from the neighbourhood. Homicide was punished by a fine of a certain number of cattle, and other crimes in proportion. Money-lending and usury were quite unknown among them. In funeral rites they were not ostentatious. They burned the bodies of great men, and preserved their

ashes ; their arms were burnt with them, and sometimes their horses. They soon laid aside their tears, but not their sorrow ; it was thought becoming in women to grieve, but in men to remember. Many of these customs, and especially that faint foreshadowing of feudalism, are to be traced in the habits and laws of the Saxon government in England.

The Saxons were divided into two great sections of social rank, which included other subdivisions to be noticed hereafter, the *eorl* and *ceorl*, equivalent to our noble and plebeian ; the *eorl* was a son of one who had never been occupied in tilling or cultivating the ground, or had engaged in any of the mechanical arts ; they were said to be *ethel-born*, and the title of *etheling* belonged distinctively to the sons of the reigning monarch only. All the rest not *ethel-born*, and therefore not *eorls*, were *ceorls*. The chief man in the state was the *Cyning*, or king, head of the *ethel-born*, and first in state rank. Generally the eldest son of the former monarch, if he were old enough, succeeded, not by absolute right, for the hereditary succession cherished so jealously by states in more advanced stages of civilization as a model and precedent for the descent of property was often interrupted and broken off by the Saxons if the affairs of the country demanded it ; were the *etheling* too young, or old enough, but too weak, were there any one else of royal blood more popular and more powerful, the succession was often interrupted, and branch families interpolated into the royal line. But, in any case, even if the eldest son of the deceased monarch were old enough to mount the throne, it was an element in the Saxon constitution, cherished from the olden times, when they shouted out the name of their chosen leader, and lifted him on their

shoulders, that the king, whoever he may be, must be elected by the Witan. No degradation could be greater to them than to be compelled to obey one in whose elevation to command they had had no voice. The wife of the king was called the queen, and held equal rank with her husband, sitting beside him on the throne, and sharing his honours, up to the time of Brihtric, King of Wessex, whose wife was the means of bringing degradation upon all her successors. He had married Eadburga, the illegitimate daughter of Offa, King of the Mercians, who appears to have been a licentious abandoned wretch; on many occasions she procured, through her husband's power, the murder of any one who was distasteful to her; or who had offended her. On one occasion she had prepared a cup of poison for a young noble of whose intimacy with her husband she was jealous. By some mischance, Brihtric partook of this cup and died; when, public indignation being aroused against the queen, she was compelled to flee to France, and Egbert, who had been exiled there, was recalled by the nobles to assume the kingly office. From that time, the queen was not allowed equal rank with her husband, she was no longer queen but "the lady." The Witan abolished the title and deprived her of all the appendages of royalty. Ethelwulph, the father of Alfred, when in his old age he married Judith, to whom some say Alfred traced all his taste for learning, endeavoured to revive the old system, ventured to place her by his side on the throne, which was not resisted; but no recognition of the queenly title or rank was ever afterwards effected, and though they were crowned with their husbands they bore no other title than that of "the lady." The next in rank to the king and royal family was the eorl or

ealdorman, under whose rule was placed a shire; on some occasions the ealdorman could represent the king; in time of war he had to lead the men of his shire to the field. The next most clearly defined was the thane, of whom there were several classes, with different privileges. It is thought that they held their land in return for or on the condition of military service. A merchant, who had sailed with his own wares three times to a foreign land, was, by the act, elevated to the rank of thane with its privileges. The "were" or fine for killing a royal thane was £200; for an inferior thane, 600 shillings. There was a class of officers called gereefs, who were appointed by the king and large landed proprietors to collect tolls, receive rents, apprehend malefactors, and on occasions to act as judges in the courts. The lowest class of freedmen, only one step above the slaves, were the ceorls; they held land by payment of rent. He had the power of returning the land he rented to his lord whenever he pleased, but as long as he paid his rent his lord could not eject him. He was a freeman, and could not be put in bonds nor be whipped. If any one bound a ceorl the fine was twenty shillings, if he took his life it was 200 shillings.

For the administration of justice in civil and criminal causes the Saxons had three inferior courts—the hall-mote, the hundred-mote, and the shire-mote. The hall-mote was the simplest form of administration, such as obtains even in our own times in remote country districts, where Hodge is taken up to the great house to appear before the squire. As its name implies, it was held in the hall of the lord. Above this simple court was the hundred-mote, generally held every month, whose jurisdiction extended over a division of

country called a hundred, and sometimes, as occasion required, over a larger portion. Then came the shire-mote, a still higher court, held twice a year, composed of the freeholders, who, hearing causes both civil and ecclesiastical, were presided over by an ealdorman and a bishop, who were not the absolute judges, being present chiefly to keep order and advise; cases were decided by the majority of voices. From these three inferior courts—the hall-mote, hundred-mote, and shire-mote—there was an appeal to the king's court, which could be held wherever his majesty might be present, no case, however, could be heard in this court which had not previously passed through one or two of the lower courts, a rule often abused by influential people, who had power enough to wrest their cause from the lower tribunals, where the judgment would probably go against them, and bring it forward in a more favourable arena. Civil actions were tried upon testimony. The plaintiff produced the best he could, and if it proved satisfactory the case was decided upon it; in the event of an assertion being made unsupported by testimony on either side, the party making such assertion was put upon his oath, and not only so, but had to bring forward others of a reputable position who would swear as to his character for truthfulness. Here, again, rank claimed its privilege;—the oath of a king's thane was equal to those of six ceorls; the oath of an ealdorman was equivalent to that of six thanes; the word of a king or an archbishop was sufficient, being regarded as sacred; they were therefore exempt from the oath. But a custom prevailed amongst the Saxons in the adjudication of cases which approaches very nearly in form and wholly in spirit to that cherished bulwark of

British liberty, trial by jury. In the laws of Alfred, it is stipulated that if any one accuse a king's thane, the accused, if he will purge himself, must take twelve other king's thanes; and if a thane of lesser rank be accused, he must purge himself along with twelve of his equals and one king's thane. In Wilkins' "Anglo-Saxon Laws" we read it was enacted, "If a king's thane deny this [that is the charge], let twelve be appointed for him, and let him take twelve of his kindred and twelve British *strangers*, and if he fail then, let him pay for his breach of law twelve half marcs; if a landowner deny the charge, let as many of his equals and as many *strangers* be taken as for a royal thane, and if he fail let him pay six half marcs; if a ceorl deny it, let as many of his equals and as many *strangers* be taken for him as for the others, and if he fail let him pay twelve oræ for his breach of law." It has been objected to this, that these thirty-six people were selected for the mere purpose of compurgation already alluded to, that is of swearing as to the veracity of the accused, but such an inference is hardly tenable when in each case twelve *strangers* are to be chosen, who must have been selected, certainly not for the purpose of swearing for the accused, not knowing him, but rather from being strangers selected for the purpose of impartial and unbiassed investigation. As we have remarked, it was not the form, but it was the spirit of trial by jury. Criminal cases were conducted in much the same manner. The hundred-mote assembled; the reeve, with twelve thanes, made inquiry into all the offences committed within the hundred; they were sworn not to foresay (present) any one who was innocent, nor to conceal any one who was guilty. A case was sometimes settled by their decision, but if the

accused persisted there were two ways by which he might maintain his innocence—compurgation and the ordeal. But we pause to remark how strikingly similar to the operations of our grand jury were those of the Saxon reeve and the twelve thanes. Compurgation, as has already been intimated, was the production of testimony as to veracity. The accused swore upon oath that he was innocent in word and work of the crime, and then produced compurgators, who swore that they believed his oath to be true—these compurgators being his neighbours, or reputable people who knew him. The number required was regulated by the nature of the offence, and if their testimony were satisfactory the accused was acquitted.

The ordeal, or appeal to the judgment of God, was a solemn ceremony, though open to a great deal of trickery and abuse. It was taken from a custom prevalent amongst Pagans in the most remote ages of history; although adopted by Christians, it is doubtful if it ever received Papal authority, though it did afford opportunities for priestly corruption. The only mention of any approach towards ecclesiastical sanction of the custom occurs in the ninth century, when the Council of Mentz enjoined the ordeal of the ploughshare to suspected servants. Stephen V., the Pope, however, wrote to the Bishop of Mentz, and condemned it, and Alexander II. absolutely forbade it, but it lingered in England even up to the last century in the shape of the ducking-stool ordeal for witchcraft. A Saxon who wished to avail himself of this mode of purgation had to give three days' notice to the priest, during which time he was to attend mass, and live only on bread, herbs, and water. On the day of trial

he received the Eucharist, and swore upon the Gospels that he was innocent. If the ordeal were by fire it was carried into the church, the priest and accused being there alone; in the case of carrying hot iron, a space was measured out nine times the length of the party's foot, and when the required heat had been reached two outsiders were admitted, one for the accuser and one for the accused, as witnesses to the fact; then twelve others as spectators of the ceremony. Holy water was sprinkled upon all of them, and a short service read. The iron was then removed from the fire, and placed upon a supporter at the end of the distance measured out. The hand of the accused was sprinkled with holy water, when he walked to the spot, took up the burning mass, carried it one-third of the distance, threw it down, ran up to the altar, where the priest bound up his scorched limb, and sealed it. On the third day after this ceremony the bandage was removed, and if the hand were healed the accused was acquitted of the charge, if not he was pronounced guilty. There were, however, many forms of ordeal. The accused might be required to remove a heavy substance with his naked arm from boiling water, or to walk barefooted over red hot plough-shares, but in all cases the ceremony was conducted with the same solemnity.

The great national council of the Saxons was called the Witanagemot, or the Witan. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain accurately its constitution; its members are all spoken of as men of rank, and most probably included bishops, abbots, ealdorman, and thanes. Every measure of national importance was debated here, the laws received its sanction, and the

succession of the crown depended upon its approval. The voice of the Church was never absent from its deliberations, so that the right of British prelates to sit and vote in the national assembly was one of the principles of the earliest regular form of government, not derived from Norman laws, but from that time long before when the Saxon archbishop, bishop, and abbot took their seats three times a year* in the Saxon Witan.

There was something especially religious in all Saxon constitutions—the Church had a voice in the king's election. At his coronation, when the archbishop administered the oath to him, the first thing he was called upon to swear was to uphold the Church—"In the name of Christ, I promise three things to the Christian people, my subjects. First, that the Church of God, and all the Christian people, shall always preserve true peace through our arbitration. Second, that I will forbid rapacity and all iniquities, to every condition. Third, that I will command equity and mercy in all judgments, that to me and to you the gracious and merciful God may extend His mercy."† When the Saxons became Christians they treated their women in a different manner from what they had done when Pagans. Woman was elevated to a higher position, both in the domestic and social circles under the Saxons, than ever she was in subsequent ages by chivalry. Her elevation was more real—it was a moral elevation, not a superficial flattery. She was

* The Witan assembled at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas.

† A copy of the coronation oath, as administered by Dunstan to Ethelred, at Kingston, transcribed,

as it is said, "scæf be scæfe"—word by word, is bound up with the contemporary life of Dunstan in the Cottonian MSS.—Cleopatra, B. xiii., fo. 56.

admitted into the Church, where she might hold a high position—a position equal to a mitred abbot. She might be a possessor of property, of which she had the right of disposal. When a man of any position married a woman he was bound to make a settlement upon his wife. This was not finally completed, however, until the morning after marriage, and for that reason it was called the “morgen gife,” or “morning gift.” The origin of the question in our matrimonial service, “Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?” may be traced to Saxon times, for every Saxon lady had a “mundbora,” or guardian, without whose consent she could not be married. The Saxons regarded matrimony as a holy estate; death alone could part the married. A man might put away his wife, “fornicationis causâ,” but he must not marry again during the divorced wife’s lifetime.* A layman, who was a widower, or a widow, might marry again, but the Church, though it did not prevent such marriages, only tolerated them, and at the ceremony the blessing was withheld. The “wakes,” so well known in Ireland, were once a religious rite amongst the Saxons in England. A man, when he died, made some provision for what was called his “soul-shot;”† that was, money for his funeral services, and prayers for the repose of his soul. The friends of the deceased gathered round his body and spent the night in prayer. But this pious custom became abused, as we may learn

* Decreed by the Council of Hertford.—Conc. Her. can. 10; Spelman, i. 153; and Wilkins’ Concilia, i. 45.

† It is not improbable that the slang phrase “to pay the shot” may

be derived from this word. With the Saxons, payments were called “shot.” Church-shot were tithes; soul-shot was the provision for a man’s burial and prayers for his soul, &c.

from an old Saxon homily,* where we are told that "some men drink at a dead man's wake, all through the night, very improperly, and provoke God with their idle talk, when no drinking party is suitable for a wake, but only holy prayers."

One more institution we must notice, which existed amongst the Anglo-Saxons almost through the whole course of their history, and obstinately resisted even the influence of Christianity—the institution of slavery. It has been computed that two-thirds of the population were slaves, but that must be regarded as including the tillers of the soil or serfs. There were two classes of slaves—the domestic and the rustic; but the master had not absolute power over them. If he wounded a slave, knocked out an eye or a tooth, the slave by that act recovered his liberty. They were bought and sold openly in the markets, much to the scandal of Christendom. The price of a slave was generally four times that of an ox. Neither had the master power over the life of his slave; if he killed him he had to pay a fine to the king. However, the condition of this servile people was much modified under the rule of Alfred. Still the traffic prevailed almost up to the time of the Conquest. The Bristol merchants appear to have been the most persistent, for in the life of Wulstan,† who was Bishop of Worcester about the year 1,000, we are told that the men of Bristol were then in the habit of exporting slaves to be sold abroad. Their agents went all over the country buying slaves, more especially

* Sume menn eac drincath æt dead manna lice ofer ealle tha niht swihta unrihtlice; and gremiath God mid heora gegaf spræce; thonne nan gebeorscipe ne gebyrath æt lice; ac halige gehedu

thær gebyrad swithor.—Hom. in St. Swithin, Cotton. MSS., Julius, E. vii., fo. 99.

† Wulstani Vita, Ang. Sacra, ii. 258.

females, for whom the highest prices were given. They were then shipped from Bristol to Ireland, where they found a ready market. The good bishop of Worcester resolved on making a holy crusade against this vile traffic, and for years he used to visit Bristol and stay there for months at a time, to preach against those who supported and followed the unholy trade. His endeavours were blessed with success; the merchants at length assembled in their guild, and formally bound themselves to abandon the custom. Their determination appears to have been maintained, for we are told that one of them who tried afterwards to violate his promise, was punished with the loss of his eyes.

The foundation of the Anglo-Saxon Church we have already delineated; it is but fair to add as an historical fact that after the amalgamation of the two—the ancient British Church and that of the Roman mission, both parties laboured nobly to bring the whole nation over to the Christian faith. National distinctions were lost sight of in their ardent devotion to rescue the Saxon from paganism; and a marvellous truth in history, well worthy of contemplation, is the readiness with which the Saxon heart beat its response to the bold simplicity of the gospel of Christ, and forsook the blind slavery of paganism. There were many things in Christianity which found a ready echo in the Saxon soul, its sublime generosity, in opening its portals to all mankind without distinction—the spirit of emancipation which pervaded it, emancipation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God—its broad fraternal principle, by which men were equalized into the common relationship of brethren, and without favour or distinction, the king and the

ceorl, the ethel-born and the rude, the rich man and the poor, all gathered together under the ample shelter of the Fatherhood of God—the ennobling self-reliance of its teachings and its example—making its way in the world against all obstacles and opposition, by the power of its own truth, and independent of all human aid. Coming amongst them, barbarians and enemies as they were, boldly, yet without arms, and placing the cross in their midst, inviting them to enlist themselves under the leadership of Him who was its great head and founder. All these things met with a response in the Saxon heart, and when the priests of this religion unfolded to their listening ears the glorious tale of Christ's career upon earth, his gentleness, love, simplicity, and yet boldness to the end, they drank in the truth with the eagerness of thirsty souls. This was a religion well fitted for them—it was a religion for freed men, and the rugged untamed spirit of the pagan Saxon soon lay vanquished by the power of the gospel of Christ. Kingdom after kingdom embraced the new and better faith, allured by the influence of Christian wives, or converted by the eloquence of Christian emissaries. The work of Augustine and Paulinus was supported by the gentler influence of Bertha and Ethelburga. Before a century had elapsed from the time of Augustine's mission, every kingdom of the Heptarchy had forsaken the lifeless gods of the Northern mythology, and embraced the only true and living faith. As the number of converts increased, and the churches multiplied, bishoprics were founded all over the country, subject as regards discipline, and whatever affected the economy of the church, to the primacy of Canterbury. Of the inferior clergy there were seven orders: the ostiary, who kept the church doors; the reader, who

read in the church, and sometimes preached ; the exorcist, who adjured evil spirits ; the acolyte, who held the candle at the reading of the Gospel, or the hallowing of the Eucharist ; the sub-deacon, who carried the vessels to the deacon ; the deacon, whose office it was to wait upon the priest, to place the offerings upon the altar, and to read the Gospel ; and lastly, the officiating priest.] Both bishops and priests were closely examined as to their piety and scriptural knowledge before consecration, and they entered upon their duties with the solemn assurance, and worked all through life awed by the terrible responsibility, that on the day of judgment every priest would have to lead his flock in person before the throne of God.*

Next to Bede, there lived one who not only gave the greatest impetus to Saxon literature, but stands out upon the page of history as the pioneer of his country's progress, and the greatest man of his times. That man was Alfred, and a brief sketch of his life will include nearly all that remains of Saxon history.

Far away in the remote distance of the past, when the great Charlemagne had been in his grave but a few years, and his grandchildren were in open war with their father for his possessions ; when the dissensions between the Greek and Latin Churches were first becoming serious ; before the Normans had obtained a footing in France, before their vessels had appeared on the Seine, or Rouen had been plundered, the little Saxon town of Wantage was a royal residence, and became the cradle of one of the greatest hero kings of ancient or

* In an old Saxon homily there occurs the following :—“ Eall this is gecweden be biscopum, and be mæsse-preostum, the Godes folc

on domes dæg to tham dome lædan sculon : ælc thone dæl the him her on life betæht wæs.”

modern times. There lived at this spot King Ethelwulph, son of the renowned Egbert. A strange monarch, half monk, half warrior, he had been driven into the field to active fighting by his heroic father, supported, and even accompanied in that expedition by Ealstan, the militant Bishop of Sherborne; on the other hand, his own inclinations and the influence of Swithin drew him towards the Church. It has been said that he was dragged out of a monastery with a shaven crown, and the monk's cowl on his back, to put on the purple of royalty and grasp the unsettled sceptre of England. In old chronicles he is spoken of by various ecclesiastical titles, monk, presbyter, deacon, bishop, and even cardinal, but it still remains doubtful if he ever bore any of these titles. About the year 830, when king, he had married Osburga, the daughter of his cup-bearer, who was, however, of good birth, being descended from the renowned brothers, Stuf and Whitgar, who helped to found the West Saxon kingdom. She is said to have been a woman of extraordinary piety* and domestic virtue, caring little for the glories of her husband's court, but devoting herself and her energies to her children and her home—a true Saxon mother; in a word, she was the mother of Alfred.

The precise day of Alfred's birth is not known, but it is supposed to have been soon after Christmas or New Year's Day, and about the year 849. He was the youngest child; three sons had preceded him, Ethelbald, Ethelbert, and Ethelred, and a daughter, Ethelswitha. Alfred appears to have drawn all hearts to him, even as an infant; he was the pet of his

* "Religiosa nimium fœmina, nobilis ingenio, nobilis et genere."—Asser.

mother, the favourite of his father, and old Saxon ballads sing of him as England's darling. It appears that in youth his education was much neglected; according to his own account, he was twelve years old before he began to learn to read, and he had passed the age of manhood before he had learned to write, or to read Latin. This arose not from wanton neglect, but from the custom of the times. The education of a Saxon youth, even if a prince of the reigning house, was for the field, unless especially destined for the Church. But there was one influence more powerful than all others under which the boyhood of Alfred was nurtured, and that influence, if it did not develop his intellect, trained his heart, inspired him with an ambition for intellectual pursuits, and filled his mind with a love for the noble and the true. It was the delight of Osburga to teach her favourite child to repeat after her the old Saxon ballads of her race, and to watch the kindling imagination of the youth as the charm of the heroic strain fastened itself upon his mind. What a great uncanceled debt does the world owe to the silent, patient labours of its good mothers! An incident is recorded of this worthy matron, which gives us a glimpse of the childhood of Alfred and his home life. One day she was sitting surrounded by her children, who had been probably listening to some tale of Norse adventure, when she showed them a beautiful book filled with Saxon poetry, and said, "I will give this to the one who shall learn it first."* Alfred, attracted by the glittering illuminations of the book, ran up to his mother and said, "Wilt thou really give this book to him who will learn it?" His

* This anecdote is related by Asser, the friend of Alfred (from whose lips, doubtless, he had it), by Florence of Worcester, and other historians.

mother, smiling, told him she would, when he took it from her and ran to his teacher, who, by reading its contents to him, impressed them upon his eager mind in a very short time, when he delighted his mother by repeating them to her from memory. There is no clear account of this good mother's death, but she must have died before the year 856, because in that year Ethelwulph, though an old man, married again.

In the year 853 Alfred was sent to Rome by his father, probably from some secret wish that this favourite child should be his successor, for we find that Leo IV. received him warmly, and actually anointed him as king. Two years after this he paid another visit to the Holy City, accompanied by his father, and on their return through France, they staid for eleven months on a visit to Charles the Bald, the result of which was a marriage between the old king and Judith, the daughter of Charles, then only thirteen years of age. This marriage took place on the 1st October, 856, and then they returned to England, just in time, however, to find Ethelbald in open rebellion against his father on account of this match; but the joy of the people at the sight of their king turned the tide of feeling. Still a division of the kingdom was the consequence, when Ethelbald had Wessex, and his father retained Kent and the other portions. Two years after, Ethelwulph died, and was buried at Winchester. It has been asserted by some historians that it was to Judith Alfred owed his intellectual training. It is not impossible that she may have influenced him, but it is scarcely probable, from the fact of her being little more than a child herself when Ethelwulph married her. Also, it is asserted that she left the kingdom and returned home in disgrace

about the year 860. After the death of her husband, who was succeeded by Ethelbald, she, to the great scandal of the Church, married him, the son of her husband. He, however, died in 860, when she returned, so that it is hardly probable that the influence of a young lady of seventeen could have been very great during her short stay in England over the opening mind of Alfred. To Ethelbald succeeded Ethelbert, with whom Alfred was then residing, and who died in 866, when again Alfred gave way to his brother Ethelred, who, as the Danes were assuming a threatening aspect, was allowed to fill the vacant throne. Alfred made no objection, and even went to reside with his brother.

In the year 868, when in his twentieth year, he was betrothed to Ethelswitha, a daughter of the Earl of the Gaini : they were married in Mercia, and returned to Ethelred's court, when in a short time messengers came from the bride's friends informing them that the Danes were in the field and must be met at once. The happiness of Alfred's honeymoon was disturbed by the shrill trump of war, and the two brothers prepared for the terrible emergency. The one leaving his kingdom and the other his bride, placed themselves at the head of the army, and marched as far as Nottingham, but could not get a pitched battle ; a sort of truce was declared, and they returned. But in a short time the Danes, who were very wary in the field, had reinforcements. Another division landed at Lindsay, in Lincolnshire, from the Humber, pillaged the cloister of Bardney, slew all its inmates, and burnt the building down. The Ealdorman Algar gathered an army together, which was reinforced even by a detachment of men sent by the monastery of Croyland, under the command of a bold

lay-brother. They met the enemy at Kesteven, and a fierce battle ensued. In the first brunt of the fight three of the Danish leaders were killed, but reinforcements appeared during the night, and the Saxons were panic-stricken, many fled, and before daybreak only one quarter of his forces remained to Algar. Early in the morning, the Christian leaders, after partaking of the sacrament, led out their men and marshalled them into a solid mass, when by linking their bucklers together, they offered a good resistance to the charges of the enemy. They continued to offer this passive resistance all day, though exposed to a sharp shower of arrows and repeated onsets, until the Danes, tired and exhausted with their endeavours to break them, feigned a retreat, when the Christians, against the advice of their leaders, broke through their ranks and followed in pursuit. As soon as they were scattered, the Danes turned upon them, fought them in detail, and slew nearly every man, only a few young men managed to escape into an adjoining wood. Algar, the leaders, the brave men were all dead. These youths pushed on as fast as they could to give warning to the monks of Croyland Abbey, one of the finest monasteries in that part of the country.

They arrive there just as Abbot Theodore and the brethren are at their matin vigils; with tears and sobs they rush into the church; the service is suspended, and the abbot and convent listen breathlessly to the hurried tale of these men, that all their companions were slaughtered, and the heathens, drunk with Christian blood, were hurrying on to their holy place. The old abbot, when he had recovered from the horror of the news, selected some of the oldest monks and young children to remain with him, thinking that

whatever happened they would not slaughter the defenceless; the rest of the brethren he ordered to make their escape to the adjoining fens. They set out, taking with them many of the most precious relics, all the jewels and valuables; filled a boat with everything that could be gathered in the time, and reached the wood of Ancarig, where they remained concealed for four days—ten priests and about thirty monks. After they had set out, Abbot Theodore and those who remained with him put on their sacred vestments, went into the choir of the church, and performed the regular hours of the divine office; then mass was celebrated, and at the very instant when the abbot and his assistants had partaken of the Communion, the wild shouts of the heathen were heard; in one moment they were in the church, and in another moment Abbot Theodore fell, smitten down by the ruthless hand of one of their leaders, smitten down in his sacred robes at the foot of the altar. His assistants were seized and beheaded, and the others, as they endeavoured to rush out of the building, were seized, tortured to reveal where the treasures were, and then put to death. Asker, the prior, met his death in the vestry, and Lethwyn, the sub-prior, in the refectory. When the work of slaughter was over, the Danes, exasperated at finding no treasures, broke open all the shrines of the saints, piled up the bones, set fire to them; then to the church, and then to the monastery and all its buildings. For seven days the conflagration raged, until what had been one of the most renowned abbeys in the kingdom, with its church, its shrines, its valued relics, its books, was all consumed, its busy life stilled, and no trace of it to be found, but a smouldering mass of charred timbers, fallen pillars, and half-shattered walls.

When this terrible work was done, the heathen marched on to Medeshampsted, another renowned monastery, known afterwards as Peterborough; they met with some resistance at first, but soon overcame it, broke their way in, and one of their leaders was killed in the breach. The other was so enraged against the monks, that he ordered every man to be slain who was found wearing that garb. Another carnage took place, not a monk escaped; all were slain, the altars overthrown, the monuments broken to pieces, the large library consumed, charters torn up, relics scattered about, trodden under foot, and the whole place, after a conflagration which lingered for fifteen days, burned to the ground. They then marched on towards a nunnery at Ely, where they slew all the women and destroyed the place. On they went through the panic-stricken country, their course marked by bloodshed and conflagrations, until they reached the territories of the West Saxons, when a pitched battle was fought, both Alfred and Ethelred being present in the field, and through the bravery and activity of the former the Danes were thoroughly routed.

Some time afterwards, when additional reinforcements had arrived, they made another onslaught, and at Merton the Saxons were defeated. Soon after this calamity Ethelred died, and his bones were conveyed to Wimborne Minster, as Sherborne, where the West Saxon monarchs lay, was in the hands of the enemy. Alfred then, in or about the year 871, succeeded to the throne, but there is no account extant of any formalities or ceremonies of his coronation. The country was in a most disturbed state, and the new king had to leave his brother's grave, put on his sword, and fight for his

own crown. That crown he lost after a long and bravely maintained struggle; everything was in confusion, monasteries were pillaged and destroyed, churches were rifled, the monks fled from the country, the nobles hid themselves, and Alfred, with a few followers, found a shelter in the wilds of Somersetshire, where he awaited in patience the hour of his delivery. Most of the romantic anecdotes connected with the Alfred of legend, relate to this period, more especially that well-known adventure with the neatherd's wife; not an impossible, nor an improbable thing, but unfortunately for its authenticity, not once mentioned by Saxon authorities, fond as they were of everything connected with the memory of "England's darling," as they called him. In the year 878, Alfred, whom the Danes thought dead, reappeared suddenly from his hiding-place, in Somersetshire, followed by an army, attacked the Danes, and defeated them. They then withdrew to Chippenham, which Alfred besieged for fourteen days, when hunger brought the enemy to submission and they promised to quit the kingdom. Subsequently another outbreak took place, and then came a long peace, during which the excellencies of Alfred's genius and character manifested themselves.

He made it his practice to travel about in his kingdom, staying at different places for some time; he compiled his code of laws, with the advice and assistance of the wise men of the kingdom; and he re-organized the administration of justice. In the year 880, when the Pagans were in possession of London, he made a vow that if they were defeated he would send an embassy with gifts to the Christian Churches in the remote East. A belief obtained amongst the Saxons

that St. Thomas had planted Churches in India,* which receives some confirmation from the fact that when the Mahometans spread their religion towards the East, they found Christian Churches there. London, however, was recovered, and Alfred fulfilled his vow. † An active intercourse was maintained with foreign countries, and we learn from Asser that he had seen letters and presents sent to Alfred from the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Amongst the wise and learned who surrounded the person of Alfred, whose advice he sought, and who were his active assistants in his benevolent works, were Werefrith, Bishop of Worcester; Plegmund, whom he elevated to the throne of Canterbury; Ethelstan, Werewulf, and last, but not least, his devoted friend Asser, who has left a most interesting biography of him to posterity, from whose pages we glean many of the incidents of our narrative. Asser tells us he was invited to the court of the renowned Saxon king in the year 884. It was then the gathering point of all the learning of the kingdom. He had been a monk of St. David's, but had attracted the notice of Alfred, who pressed him to come to court, made him his most intimate friend, and consulted him on everything. A fitter man could not have been found to enjoy the friendship of such a monarch as Alfred. By their united endeavours schools and monasteries sprang up in all directions, the educational part of which fell under the administration of Asser. Newminster Hyde Abbey, which Alfred's father had commenced, was completed; a monastery was built in Athelney by Alfred, also a nunnery at Sherborne, where he placed his daughter

* In the Cottonian MSS., Caligula, A xiv., is a life of St. Thomas in Anglo-Saxon, where he is represented as being sent on a mission to India.

† Saxon Chron., 883.

Ethelgiva as abbess; and his wife founded another nunnery at Winchester, to which she might retire if she survived her husband.

A new life seemed to awaken under the influence of this good king. He had felt the want of early education bitterly himself; it had caused him many a weary night's vigil, when battling against his own ignorance, and he longed for the diffusion of knowledge amongst his people of all classes. In his own works he has expressed a wish that all the free-born youth of his dominions might be taught at least sufficient to enable them to read the Scriptures in their native tongue—a noble sentiment for a monarch of the ninth century, and a member of a Church which was destined to be overturned before that wish could be accomplished. As an author he has left an imperishable name behind him. This man, who could not read until his twelfth year, and began to learn Latin at twenty, became an indefatigable translator of Latin authors, and not a mere translator, but a commentator, as whole passages of his own reflections, interspersed in his translations, will show. He had a great love of compiling. It was his practice to get Asser to read favourite works to him, and to enter choice passages in a book, which grew until it contained the gist of his reading and the gems of his own thought. That book was his constant companion; he carried it in his bosom, and has testified to the consolation it was to him in the hour of sadness and misfortune.

Ten years of peace were thus occupied, when the Danes once more invaded the country under Hastings, and Alfred was compelled to lay aside his pen and gird on the sword. They were repelled, but returned to the struggle, when the indefatigable monarch resolved upon meeting them upon their own element; ships

were built in which he put to sea, fought the enemy, and if he did not wholly defeat them, crushed their strength. Of the last four years of his life there is no record, and history is also silent as to the mode of his death. We are spared the pain of contemplating the sorrowful termination of a career which had been glorious and good. We have the life, with all its vicissitudes, its struggles, its triumphs, its bravery on the field, and its gentleness in the study. We have Alfred living, but at his death the historic muse laid down her pen. What more remains of Saxon history after the death of Alfred, embraces a final struggle with the Danes, who ultimately ruled the country for some years; when the Saxon line was once more restored, only to be overturned by an invading deluge of another adventurous race, who, as it marched through the country, reiterated upon Saxon people, upon Saxon institutions, and, though Christians, upon Saxon churches, the same scenes of violence and spoliation as did the Pagan Saxons upon the first phase of British Christianity. Many other points might have been touched upon, some perhaps more important than what we have selected, but space forbids us to go more deeply into this examination of Saxon history, though it is a subject towards which the attention of Englishmen is being directed.

In the shady evening of life the mind returns fondly to the scenes of early youth, and so, in the advanced ages of national maturity, it is but the operation of the same natural feeling to revert to the infancy of the State, and trace out the gradual stages of its development. More especially should this be the duty of the historian, to guide him in the mazes of investigation. It is the bent given to national action and character in

the earliest times which brings about those extraordinary events in after centuries, whose causes so often baffle the historical investigator. And thus it is, that by going back through the vast superstructure of the English constitution, through traces of periods of conflict, through works of Puritan zeal, Stuart folly, Tudor power, and the embellishments of Norman influence, we come to this broad Saxon foundation upon which it all rests, its liberty, its power, and its genius—a marvellous influence which has pervaded the whole system in all phases of its existence. For long years was that Saxon spirit trampled under foot by Norman warriors, but even then, ever and anon, it raised its voice and arm against the oppressor—it lay dormant but not dead, for it reappeared in the world in the person of Wiclif, the first great Saxon after the Norman spoliation. From that time it may be said to have gained the upper hand over the Norman. In the opening literature of the country the Saxon predominated—in the momentous affairs of the country Saxon vigour and Saxon voices prevailed, shaking the Church by a William Tyndall and a Hugh Latimer—twice imperilling the thrones of the Tudors—revived again in that fierce struggle for liberty which called into being a long line of Puritan heroes, and terminated in the tragedy of Whitehall. It inspired the humble tinker with that marvellous dream which has interlaced itself with the thought of the country, and stamped its impress upon the literature; and it is now growing stronger and stronger in the minds of Englishmen, as an extended historical investigation is opening up the treasures of Saxon history and Saxon laws, not only exhibiting truths which have long remained hidden, but awakening once more the old

Saxon love of liberty and light. And its tongue, after nearly fifteen centuries of vicissitudes, is improving and spreading all over the globe—a strong vital speech. There is something in the Anglo-Saxon idiom which is calculated to outlive the ravages of time ; it is nervous, vigorous, and flexible, capable of the highest uses of a language—it has in it a clearness which can reveal the most recondite truths of science, and a music which can express all the melodies of poesy. It has a power of denunciation terrible as the thunder's roar, and strains of pathos melting as a mother's tears. It is not then surprising that such a tongue should force its way in the world, and the prediction is becoming daily less unreasonable that if any one of the spoken languages of the earth should predominate over the others and become the universal tongue, that language will be our Saxon English. Already it has begun its strife with the many varied idioms of the earth ; it is heard everywhere—in the wild, snowy wastes of Greenland and in the arid plains of Arabia ; amongst the classic ruins of Greece and Rome, and amid the strange splendours of oriental architecture ; amongst the dust of Egyptian power, in the almost untrodden regions of Central Africa, in the dense forests of Canada, on many a broad lake, many a noble river, and many a prairie plain in the New World ; in fine, it is to be heard wherever the sole of man's foot has trodden, alike where civilization rears its palace and its temple as where the naked savage plants his primitive hut.

CHAPTER IX.

The Anglo-Norman Church.*

A.D. MLXVI.—MCCXVI.

THE influence of the Norman element upon the English constitution is often overrated. It was after all only a temporary influence, such as one nation could not help exerting upon a people in whose midst they had settled, and as regards the Church its influence was on the whole pernicious, for its results had to be eradicated by the Saxon race when the day of their marvellous resurrection dawned. Before they conquered England, the Normans had no written history nor written literature, and their Church, such as it was, had sunk into the grossest state of corruption; neither Christianity nor letters seemed to assimilate with the Norman character. Exceptions there were, as we shall presently show, but (as a race they were not given to meditation, religious nor secular,) and the best proof of their failure in casting the English character in their mould is the fact that the Saxon people ultimately worked out their development, which had only been retarded, at that time when the change took place in the tongue, the manners, and

Authorities — Ordericus Vitalis Eccl. Hy.; Eadmer Hist. Nov.; Florence of Worcester; William of Malmes. Gesta Pont.; Godwin de Presul; Saxon Chron.; Baronius' Annals; Lanfranci Opp.; Acta Sanctorum; Vita Anselmi; Roger de Hoveden; Matthew Paris;

Gervase Cantuar.; Annales Monastici Burton; Cotton. MSS.—Tiberius, A. v.; Annals of St. Vedast and Bertin in Perz Monumenta Hist. German.; Gieseler Eccl. Hy.; Gesta Stephani; Labb. Concilia.

the thought of the country, which we have ventured to term the resurrection of the Saxon life. The spirit of the country had slumbered, not fled, and when the old, half-extinct tongue crept out in the Bible of the Saxon Wiclif, and the cry was raised for liberty and light, the faint traces of the Norman influence vanished, and the Saxon life went on vigorously increasing until the Reformation, which was an essentially Saxon movement, lingering all through the Church under their domination, and breaking out at last in the brain of a Saxon monk. No race ever had the worshipping faculty more largely developed, nor the superstitious faculty less, a truth which must have prompted the remark of one of the greatest historians of modern times, that the Roman Catholic religion has never obtained a firm hold upon nations of that blood and lineage. There was from the Norman Conquest to the rise of the new nationality a continued struggle maintained as between two antagonistic elements; and the history of this struggle, as it affected the English Church up to the death of John, we shall proceed to consider.

When William the Conqueror was crowned at Westminster, he (swore to protect the Church, but he did not swear that he should regard the maintenance of Saxon bishops and abbots as necessary to its protection.) Consequently, we find that immediately after his consecration he took such measures as seemed best to his Norman mind for the protection of the Church, which, to the astonishment of the Saxons, resolved themselves into a (general expulsion of obnoxious Saxon prelates, and giving all Church preferment to Norman ecclesiastics.) It will be as well, perhaps, here to review the state of the Church

in Normandy, whence issued a tide of ecclesiastics into the bosom of the Saxon Church, and compare the two. The Saxon clergy at the time of the Conquest were (not so bad as those of other countries,) they did not labour (under the despotic sway of a foreign potentate,) they held their own synods, as had been customary from time immemorial, and submitted themselves to their own metropolitan. They lived also under the moralizing influence of the responsibilities of domestic life, brought up families, and (preserved an apostolic priesthood through the sure line of progeny.) There is (on record an unwilling admission on the part of the Pope, of the superior character of the clergy in the English Church,) who were nearly all the sons of clergymen, showing that the system was not only general in England but worked well. In a letter written to Anselm by Pope Paschal, giving him permission to dispense with the canon of the Church which forbade the ordination or promotion of sons of priests, he assigns as his reason, "because its execution would be very inconvenient in England where the better and larger part of the clergy are of that kind."

But let us turn to the Norman Church, an institution, let it be understood, quite independent of the Frankish. Long before they had thought of invading England, the whole Church had sunk into the (grossest state of corruption,) some of which they imported into the simplicity of the Saxon community. The clergy nearly all led lives of adultery with concubines, for which privilege they paid the bishops who overlooked the matter. They were also avaricious and luxurious. (Some of the monasteries, however, were pure and high toned,) such as St. Evroult, Fécamp, Jumièges, and Bec; these were (celebrated for their learning and

piety, and from these came to England those great prelates of the Normans whose exalted characters redeemed half the vices of others who followed in their wake. (From the one monastery of Bec came both Lanfranc and Anselm.) Shortly after the Conquest William returned to Normandy, to dazzle the eyes of his countrymen with the spoils of England. Directly he was out of the country, his followers who were left behind began to pillage towns and persecute the natives without mercy. This led to a general emigration of the Saxons, who poured out of England from all points; some bent their steps to Flanders, others to the Scotch cloisters in different parts of the Continent, and many even went as far as Constantinople, where they were kindly received by the Emperor Comnenus I., and employed by him against the very race who had subdued their own country, the Normans in Apulia, who had invaded the realms of the Emperor. The balance of fate was adjusted—they had yielded to the Normans in their own land, but they conquered them on a foreign soil, and from that time they, with others, were maintained in the service of the Greek emperors under the title of Ingloi. Edgar Atheling, who found how salt was the bread of others,* went to the Holy Land with a band of adventurers, who landed at Laodicea, under the guidance of one Winemar of Boulogne, supposed to have been a notorious pirate. The defence of Laodicea was entrusted to Edgar, who delivered it up to Duke Robert of Normandy when he came there, but the people rose against him on account of his cruel exactions, and drove the Normans from

* . . . Come sa di sale

Lo pane altrui.—DANTE—*Parad.* c. xvii., v. 58.

the place. The vicissitudes and fate of that exile Saxon race is one of the unwritten chapters in the history of England.

As soon as the plans of William became apparent, and the conquered people saw that (his design was to introduce his own countrymen into all the offices of dignity, and to exterminate them) they rose against him. Even Aldred, Archbishop of York, who had crowned him, remonstrated with him, and so took the troubles of his country to heart, that he died of grief before the messengers whom William had sent to effect a reconciliation could reach him. An insurrection then sprang up, the signal for which was the landing of the Danes, with whom the sons of Harold acted in concert, but after many atrocities it was suppressed by William, who took deadly vengeance on the north of England. There had been a severe famine, the consequences of which were so heightened by the war, that thousands died from starvation, whilst others, not released by death, were compelled to live on horses, and even human flesh. Bodies lay on the earth unburied and putrified; all who could, left the country; and it is estimated that nearly a hundred thousand Saxons fell under this double pestilence of war and famine. So great was the devastation that William of Malmesbury, who wrote more than fifty years afterwards, says that in his day the land in the north of England, for more than sixty miles, lay bleak, barren, and desolate, uncultivated and uninhabited.

After thus terrifying the people by laying waste a fertile province, he tried another favourite plan of his, which was (to display before their eyes the insignia of royalty.) He had often found this expedient effectual in

gaining over to his side the leaders of the disaffected, by that natural inclination which lurks in human nature, to yield to the external attractions of wealth and splendour. He had the crown and sceptre sent to York, and appeared before the victims of his power as their sovereign. It was a favourite trick of the Conqueror's; (according to an old poet, Robert of Gloucester, he used to be crowned at different places three times a year, at an inconceivable expense and waste of money in riot and feasting.) Robert sneeringly says :—

“ . . . Adoun he was anon,
Three sythe he ver crowne a-ger to Midwyntre at Gloucestre,
To Wytesontyde at Westmynstre to Estre at Wynchestre.”

Another plan of the Conqueror to secure the land he had won was (to erect castles) in the provinces. Amongst these were Exeter, Warwick, Nottingham, Chester, Strafford, Pevensey, Hastings, the Tower of London, Winchester, Chichester, Arundel, Lincoln, Huntingdon, Cambridge, and two at York. Then, under the pretext of a fairer adjustment, he (removed the bishoprics from the quiet spots where they had been founded to these fortified towns, so that the Norman bishop might be under the protection of the Norman castle;) another unexpected manner of carrying out his oath to protect the Church. In compliance with this arrangement, which was decreed at the synod of London, 1075, the bishopric of Sherbourne was removed to Sarum, that of Selsey to Chichester, that of Dorchester (Oxfordshire) to Lincoln, that of Thetford to Norwich, and that of Lichfield to Chester. William also extended his protection to Saxon estates by assigning them with new titles amongst his followers : William Fitz-Osbern, his great friend and faithful

follower, was made Earl of Hereford,* with the government of the whole of the north of England; Walter Giffard was created Earl of Buckingham; Roger of Montgomery, in addition to the city of Chichester and castle of Arundel, received the title of Earl of Shrewsbury; Robert Mortain was made Earl of Cornwall; Gherbord, Earl of Chester; Odo of Champagne, William's brother-in-law, had the earldom of Holderness; and Ralph of Guaden, that of Norwich. Others were appointed governors of different provinces. Odo, his brother, Bishop of Bayeux, he made governor of the south, under whom was a soldier, William of Warenne, who was made Earl of Surrey. The West-Saxon government was given to Hugh of Grantmesnil, and that of Dover to Hugh de Montford.

In the year 1070, by the advice of William Fitz-Osbern, he took a step which even by the monks of his own party is spoken of with horror. Under the instinctive notion that he should find Saxon wealth stowed away in them, he gave the order that the (monasteries and churches should be ransacked.) The fact is recorded in the "Saxon Chronicle" under the year 1070, in the words, "and during Lent, the same year, the king caused all the monasteries in England to be despoiled of their treasures."†

In the same year the celebrated council was held at Winchester, whose main object was to depose Stigand from Canterbury, which was done by means of false charges; he was then cast into prison, where he died, it is surmised, from ill-treatment and hunger. His life had been one long resistance to the subtle encroach-

* Flor. Wigorn: ad ann. 1067.

† And thæs on Lengten se cyng let hergian ealle tha mynstra the on Anglalande wæron.—*Sax. Chron.*

ments of Rome. He was the last archbishop in Europe who wished to maintain communion with the Holy See, but firmly refused to acknowledge the Pope in any other capacity than as the Bishop of Rome, but having no power over the rights of national Churches. For this he had been excommunicated by Nicholas II., who had gained the papal chair by the deposition of Benedict through the intrigues of Hildebrand; such an excommunication was not regarded in the slightest degree. Alexander, who succeeded Nicholas, being still more in the power of Hildebrand, who really ruled the Church, suspended Stigand as a schismatic.* This was equally disregarded; it was reserved for the strong arm of William to effect the unjust and violent deposition of this pure stanch churchman and inflexible patriot. It is (not surprising that Stigand should be vilified by Roman Catholic historians,) but their vilification is the best proof we can have of the truth of the historic testimony to his patriotic character.† After his deposition, the (see of Winchester, which he also held, was given to Walkelin, one of the chaplains of William.) Egalmaer, Stigand's brother, was deposed from the see of East Anglia, which was given to Herfast, another of William's chaplains. The (vacant archbishopric of York was given to Thomas of Bayeux.) Many abbots were deposed for no other reason than to make way for Norman successors. At Glastonbury,

* Godwin. de Præsul.

† Baronius, who wrote his Annals when the Church of Rome was still smarting from the Reformation, thus speaks of the death of Stigand, who had always opposed the Pope : "Hic finis *nequissimi hominis ac sordidissimi* qui diu ab ipso tem-

pore invasor alienæ sedis nullam cum Romana ecclesia habere meruit communionem. At cum hæc tollerasset pius Rex Edwardus, Deus ultorem regem externum immisit, vindicem acerbissimum ejus scelearum."

Egelnoth was succeeded by Turstine of Caen. Shortly after, Egelric, Bishop of Selsey, was degraded, and another Norman chaplain provided for. At this point the (Pope even ventured to interfere, but the interference was disregarded,) and the fact became apparent that Papal benedictions, consecrated banners, holy water, and relics, had all been lost on William. That determined monarch proceeded in his work; Remigius, one of his followers, was given the see of Dorchester, in return for active service in the field. It then became necessary to appoint some one to the vacant see of Canterbury, and William, instinctively feeling that no one of his rapacious semi-soldier ecclesiastics would do for that dignity, sent (over to Caen for Lanfranc, who was its abbot,) and whose name was justly renowned for learning and piety. After some hesitation he came, and was (consecrated by two interpolated bishops, Giso, of Wells, and Walter, of Hereford, both natives of Lorraine.

It is a singular coincidence that as it was a Gregory who sent missions to the pagan Saxons, so it was reserved for another Gregory (to strive to draw the Church so founded from its independence into the jurisdiction of Rome.) For thirty-five years Hildebrand had virtually ruled the Church before he became Pope, under the title of Gregory VII.; the Popes who had reigned during that time were little better than his instruments, advanced by his intrigues and guided by his advice into paths leading only to his great purpose. When he (ultimately ascended the chair, he entertained great expectations from William,) who was under obligations to the Holy See for blessing his enterprise against England. He (began by pressing Lanfranc to visit Rome,) in order that he might communicate with

him on matters of the highest importance; but Lanfranc, who seems to have regarded his obedience to his sovereign as a higher duty than compliance with the Pope's request, pleaded the unsettled state of England, the toil of the journey, and finally the unwillingness of the king to consent to his being absent, as excuses for his non-compliance with the Pope's invitation.* Then, in (1076, Gregory sent a legate, Hubert, to inform William that England belonged to St. Peter, and he expected him to swear fealty to him as sovereign lord, also requesting him to send on the Peter's pence more regularly. William wrote back a characteristic letter, refusing to swear fealty, but promising to collect the pence.) To this unbending epistle Gregory replied with much petulance, that he did not value money without honour; he also wrote to Lanfranc, reproaching him with his neglect, and repeating his demand that he should appear at Rome without fail within four months. To this Lanfranc replied, probably by the dictation of William, that by the laws of England no man could go to a foreign country without licence from the king, and that his sovereign refused to grant him that licence. This was a severe stroke for Gregory, who looked upon kings as subservient to the rights of Rome; but (he wrote again to William, who took no notice of his letter, which hinted at his power to correct kings;) then the enraged Pope sent to Hubert to tell the Conqueror that no pagan king had ever dared to oppose the Papal See as he had done, and (threatened him with St. Peter's anger.) Eight years were consumed in these continual remonstrances, and when the sun of Gregory's glory began

* Epist. Lanfr., viii. opp., 305.

to set, he wrote once more to Lanfranc, threatening him with suspension if he did not come to Rome before the Feast of all Saints;* but Lanfranc replied in the same strain as before, and the matter dropped. Upon which, as no calamity befell William, it has been irreverently suggested that St. Peter was not so angry with him as his representative. In this line of conduct William persevered throughout his reign; (he would not allow the Pope to be recognised as he wished in the country, nor would he allow His Holiness' letters to be admitted until read by him.) Synodical decrees could not be put in force until they had received his sanction; in fine, he saw the rising tendency on the part of ecclesiastical authority to encroach upon the civil jurisdiction, and he consistently laboured to check it.

His successor, Rufus, had all the vices with none of the redeeming qualities of his father—he was a tyrant unheroic. He allowed the archbishopric of Canterbury to remain vacant for four years, during which time he spent the money arising from the revenues, not only of that, but also of two other bishoprics, and thirteen abbacies. At length a severe attack of illness aroused him to action; he decided upon filling the vacant see, and named Anselm, the Abbot of Bec, who declined the undertaking until the crosier was forced into his hand, and he was hurried almost by violence into the church, and consecrated. William, however, had made a mistake in his estimate of Anselm's character; (deceived by the gentleness of his disposition,) he thought to make him an easy instrument in his purposes; but he found Anselm, like many dispositions gentle in tranquillity, of an (immoveable firmness in the hour of duty.) He

* Baron. Annal. ad ann. 1081.

reproached him with his rapacity, and demanded restitution of lands which he had wrung from the see of Canterbury.) Then Rufus, taking a great dislike to this good prelate, (intrigued with Rome for his deposition,) offering to recognise the claims of Urban to the chair on this condition. He did so, but still Anselm was not deposed, and William began to hate him more than ever. He then (accused him of not furnishing a proper number of troops towards his expedition against the Welsh.) Anselm, perceiving that his position was becoming dangerous, requested the king's leave to go to Rome, which was twice persistently refused; but the archbishop was equally determined, and told the king if he could not go with his consent, he would without it, which he did. The Pope however would not interfere, and Anselm therefore remained at Rome, and ultimately returned to Lyons.) In his absence, however, (William consoled himself by seizing upon the revenues, and spending them for his own pleasure.) He went on in this way throughout his reign, until the (fatal arrow shot in the New Forest) rid the country of a tyrant, and the Church of a persecutor. He was insensible to all religious feeling, and had once replied savagely to the mild reproof of Anselm, that "God should get no good of him, as He had visited him with nothing but evil." It is recorded in the life of Anselm, that when the news was brought him of the mode of William's death, he asserted solemnly that he would rather have died himself, than that God should have taken the king in the state in which he was.*

* Quia si hoc efficere posset multo magis eligeret seipsum corpore quam illum, sicut erat, mortuum esse.—*Acta Sanc. Eadmeri, Vita S. Anselmi, 21 Aprilis.*

Henry I. succeeded, and Anselm was recalled; but the king would not consent to the claim of investiture by the Pope. The archbishop opposed him, and was supported by His Holiness. The ancient custom was for the king to invest bishops with the pastoral staff and ring, but Anselm, who was a convert to the claims of Rome, refused to receive the investiture from the king; ultimately a compromise was effected, and on the part of Henry it was conceded that he should no longer invest bishops with the staff and ring, and on the part of the Pope, that bishops should pay homage to the sovereign without prejudice to their consecration. Again the vexed question of priestly celibacy was canvassed. (For a long time the English clergy had been married,) in spite of the decrees of councils and the denunciations of Popes, and it was on this occasion that (Paschal wrote to Anselm the letter already referred to, advising him not to press the matter) upon the English, as the greater and better part of the clergy were sons of priests.

In the year 1109 this good prelate died, when Henry, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, (kept the archbishopric vacant,) and enjoyed its revenues himself, assigning as a reason the hypocritical assertion that he did not wish to tarnish the fame of Anselm by appointing an inferior man. After plundering the see for six years, Radulphus was translated to it from Rochester, without any intimation being made to Rome, which drew an indignant remonstrance from the Pope, who also complained that no appeals were made to him. Henry, however, paid no attention to the remonstrance, and even (refused to allow the Pope's legate to exercise any authority in England.) The successor of Radulphus, William Corboyle, however, managed the matter for

the Pope, by accepting a commission from Honorius III., empowering him to summon the clergy to exercise discipline, and take measures for the benefit of the Church. In less than three years after this, a *legate a latere* appeared from Rome, one John of Crema, to whom the (king at first refused permission to land,) but yielded the point, and for the first time the bishops of England beheld at Westminster, on the 9th September, 1126, (an Italian Presbyter taking precedence of their own Primate.) At this Synod of Westminster the (canons were renewed against the marriage of priests,) and no one spoke so eloquently or so satirically upon the subject as John of Crema; but it is clearly recorded that on the same evening he was discovered in the company of a common strumpet, which caused so much scandal that he left the country. Baronius tries to throw doubt upon this, but without any show of reason. It is recorded by no less than four different historians—Huntingdon, a contemporary, Roger de Hoveden, Matthew Paris, and Matthew of Westminster, as a fact well known and never questioned. By the thirteenth canon of this council, (marriage was again forbidden to priests, deacons, subdeacons and canons.) In the year 1129 a synod was held at London, when the bishops, being unable to put down the marriage of the clergy, very (incautiously submitted the matter into the hands of the king.) He settled the question in a way they little expected; (levying a fine upon all married clergy,) he allowed them to keep their wives, and thus raised a considerable sum of money.) One point we will mention here to guide any investigation into the subject. The historians who leaned towards the domination of Rome, and therefore advocated the celibacy of the clergy, speak of these wives as “*focariæ*” or mistresses; but

the greater number, amongst whom are Huntingdon, Hoveden, The Annals of Waverly, Margan, and Hemingford, invariably speak of them as "uxores," wives, as there is not the slightest reason to doubt they were, for their husbands always lived with them, and their sons were brought up, as we have seen, to take their father's place in the Church. One of the last acts of Henry was to bring his daughter, the empress, now a widow, to England, and to make the nobility swear allegiance to her as his successor; amongst the number was Stephen, her cousin, who was so eager in his loyalty as to have a violent dispute with a natural son of Henry who should swear first. In the year 1135, the king, who had been sick in Normandy, died at Rouen very repentant. The archbishop says, in a letter to the Pope, "We spent three mournful days with him; he confessed his sins, renounced all sinful inclination, and three days after we gave him absolution, and then extreme unction."

The moment his death was announced, the loyal Stephen, his nephew, posted to England and usurped the crown, when the bishops and barons at once renounced the allegiance they had sworn to the Empress Maude, and joined his party. The Pope, Innocent II., blessed the unholy deed upon the condition of Stephen's promise of obedience to the Romish See. > Archbishop Corboyle, who also turned traitor, died from remorse. An attempt was afterwards made to restore the empress, and the country was given up to an internecine war, but the dispute was ultimately settled by allowing Stephen to wear the crown during his lifetime, on condition that Henry, the son of the Empress Maude, should succeed him. During the troubles of this dispute, however, a legate was sent

from Rome, one Alberic of Ostia, to preside over the synod held at Westminster, in the year 1138. The king demurred at first, but he had promised submission to the Pope, and submitted. Seventeen bishops and thirty abbots were present, and were presided over by this foreigner. The legate then ordered the prior and convent of Canterbury to elect an archbishop, when Theobald, Abbot of Bec, was chosen, and consecrated *by the legate*. The submission to Rome began now to be ceded, for appeals which had never been made were frequent and general. Stephen died in 1154, and was succeeded by Henry, according to the treaty. The reign of Henry was a continued struggle against the encroachments of ecclesiastical authority, and its great event was the episode of Thomas à Becket. The incidents of that struggle are well known. Space forbids us here to speak of them in more than general terms, and as their results affected the English Church.

It was quite impossible that things could go on as they had been without coming to a crisis. Henry was a king of great ability and strength of purpose, Becket was his equal in both these qualities. His elevation from the chancellorship to the archbishopric was due beyond all doubt to a little hypocrisy; he had impressed Henry with the idea that he would support him in his determined resistance to Rome, and when Theobald died, he was at once made archbishop. From that hour the man altered, or rather manifested his real character, for under the guise of the gay and luxurious chancellor there had always lurked the ambitious churchman. His first step was to resign the chancellorship against the king's wish. He then took to an ascetic life, began to make exorbitant demands of restitution from the king, and homage from nobles for possessions

they held. A series of differences arose, which came to a crisis upon a point of vital importance. A priest had seduced a young girl, and murdered her father ; when Henry determined that the offender should be tried by the civil courts—a point upon which he had insisted against the ecclesiastics who claimed exemption from their jurisdiction. Becket, however, interfered, rescued the offender, and shut him up in the prison of the bishop of the diocese. One or two similar interferences brought the king to a determination to maintain the dignity of his crown. A convention was held at Clarendon, and the clergy swore to submit to the laws. But Becket relented, and refused to ratify his consent ; a serious dissension arose, and he was once more compelled to submit by the intercession of the nobles. Then he endeavoured to leave the country, but was brought back by the very crew he had engaged. He was then cited before a council at Northampton, and fined. At length he escaped in disguise to France, when Henry took a vigorous step to prevent any interdict coming from Rome, by ordering all the ports to be closed, and that if such a thing were found upon a monk his feet should be cut off ; if upon a clerk, his eyes were to be put out ; if upon a layman, he was to be hanged. All intercourse with Rome was prohibited, but at last both parties found reasons for a reconciliation. The obstinate Becket was prevailed upon by the Pope to become reconciled with Henry. He came to Champagne, where the King of England was, and threw himself at his feet ; but he soon recovered himself, and reproached the king, when Henry, who was anxious for a reconciliation, said very generously, addressing the King of France, who was present, “I have had a great

many predecessors, some greater and some inferior to myself; let him but pay me the same regard, and own my authority as far as the greatest of his predecessors owned the least of mine, and I am satisfied." Upon this the whole audience declared that the king had spoken most graciously, but Becket remained sullen and silent, when the King of France asked him if he thought himself a better man than St. Peter and all the saints; and Becket declared that he would only obey the king in so far as the canon law allowed him, and relapsed into his obstinacy. Ultimately the Pope interceded, and Becket was restored, but he had scarcely taken up his see when he refused to absolve the bishops whom he had excommunicated when absent in France, unless he first obtained the consent of the Pope. This aroused the whole hierarchy, and a deputation waited upon the king, who, tired out with his relentless obstinacy, made the unfortunate remark, that he had "fed a great many sleepy men of quality, none of whom had either the gratitude or the spirit to revenge him upon this prelate by whom he was so outraged." These unfortunate words were heard by four bold knights, who, without saying anything, resolved upon ridding their monarch of this obstinate unpeaceable priest. There can be no question that Henry was morally guiltless of what followed. The knights had set out by stealth, and when they had committed the dark atrocious crime in Canterbury Cathedral, they were afraid to face the king, but retired into the country until they became the aversion of every Christian, when they fled to Rome, received absolution from Pope Alexander III., and by his order went to Jerusalem, where they spent the rest of their lives in penitence and prayer. They found a grave

outside the door of the Templars' church, and the following inscription marked their resting-place :—

“Hic jacent miseri qui martyrizaverunt beatum Thomam Archiepiscopum Cantuariensem.”*

What followed afterwards shows that Henry was acquitted of compassing the murder of Becket both by the clergy and the Pope, for after solemnly swearing at Avranches, before the cardinals and prelates, that he was innocent of any desire for the crime which had been committed, he received absolution. His penitence, however, was made more acceptable to His Holiness by his promise not to hinder appeals being made to Rome, and other matters which virtually repealed the constitutions of Clarendon, and once more laid the Church at the feet of the Pope. Age and domestic calamities softened the heart of Henry. His son, whom he had crowned, intrigued against him, and he returned to his disaffected subjects on the 8th July, 1174, landed at Southampton, and voluntarily made his way first to Canterbury, where he walked barefoot to Becket's tomb, submitted to the discipline of scourging, spent the night in prayer and fasting, and then took up arms in defence of his crown. He was successful, and crushed the rebellion. The election of bishops now began to be confirmed at Rome. Richard, Prior of Dover, was elected to Canterbury, and he went to Rome to have it confirmed, where also was Reginald of Bath, on the same errand, and to procure the confirmation of five other elected prelates. The Pope is said to have been angry that they were not all present in person, and demanded why the elect of Ely was not there, when Berter, the ambassador,

* Roger Hoveden, fol. 229.

replied, "If it please your Holiness, he has a Gospel excuse; he has married a wife and cannot come."* From this point the aggression of Rome upon the English Church progressed rapidly. Cases were decided there as regards discipline, in a manner contrary to the laws of England. Political intrigue found its advances a useful weapon, and the system throve upon the worst vices of traitors and tyrants. Henry died 1189, and was succeeded by his son Richard. The ten years of his reign were marked by no very striking ecclesiastical events; a great many appeals were made to Rome, all of which tended to strengthen the hold of the Pope upon the country, who interfered in every matter. The dignity of the sovereign was seriously impaired by the loss of the right of investiture, of the power to convene synods, and by the absolute necessity of submitting causes to Rome. Richard himself complained bitterly of the degradation; he said, "the Court of Rome treated him as if he was their pupil; forced his subjects to buy their bulls; encouraged strife; multiplied appeals; prevented the administration of justice to enrich themselves;" then he appealed to the bishops of his kingdom to assist him in adopting measures to resist these "*thieves of Rome.*"† Then, after a long absence from his country in the Holy Land and in an Austrian dungeon, during which his brother John rebelled, he returned to England, and reigned for another five years, when he met his death from a slight wound received at the siege of Chaluz. John, to whom he had been reconciled, succeeded, in spite of an attempt to place Arthur, son of an elder brother,

* "Evangelicam habet excusationem." Hoveden, 307.

† Gervas. Chron., Ann. 1196, in Twysden. Decem Scriptores.

upon the throne. This monarch did more through his wanton obstinacy to advance the degradation of the national church than any of his predecessors, for by his tyranny he estranged his people and his nobles, and drove them even to seek aid from the Pope himself against their own king. After the death of Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, a division arose amongst the monks, a party of whom elected furtively, and without the king's knowledge, Reginald their superior; then afterwards appealing to the king for permission in regular form, he recommended to them John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, whom to please his Majesty they chose. The dilemma arose as to who should be consecrated, and the matter, like all others, was referred to the Pope. Deputations went over and discussed the matter, when the Pope, seeing no chance of bringing them to an agreement, annulled both elections, and recommended them to take Stephen Langton, a cardinal priest, as their archbishop. They were alarmed; pleaded their inability to elect without the king's consent. The Pope overruled them, and by threat of excommunication compelled them to choose Langton, whom he thereupon consecrated. This was a bold step, and plainly shows to what an extent the Popes had been brought to calculate on their power. When John heard what had been done, he sent to Canterbury, expelled all the monks by force, and seized upon the revenues of the see. Then he wrote a menacing letter to the Pope, and threatened to break from him altogether if the appointment of Langton were not withdrawn. The Pope then directed the Bishops of Ely and Worcester to wait upon John, and threaten him with an interdict, which he empowered them to pronounce if the king would not obey. They

went, and a violent scene ensued. John swore that if either they or others were to interdict his dominions, he would seize the estates of the Church, and send the clergy out of the country to the Pope; and then bid them begone before they provoked him to violence. The time was not ripe, or John might have anticipated the work of Henry VIII., or at any rate have crushed the power of the Pope in England. The bishops left the presence, and a few weeks after they pronounced the dread sentence, and fled from the country. From that time, although the Bishops of Norwich and Worcester nobly refused to observe it, the greater portion did, and all over the country divine service was suspended, the dead were brought out of the towns and buried in ditches without ceremony. John, however, seized upon the Church property, and banished the bishops, who retired into monasteries and refused to leave unless compelled by force.

Clergymen were openly ill-used, and if met by the king's officers were plundered and abused. The Pope then proceeded to the higher sentence of excommunication, by which all Christians were forbidden any intercourse with John. We must remark, however, that this thunderbolt was never really launched in England. It was sent by the Pope to the Bishops of Ely and Worcester, who were not in the country. They sent it to the bishops and abbots in England; but no one could be found rash enough to execute it in form. It was only whispered to one another with bated breath, and the first formal intimation John received was the sudden retirement of Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Norwich, one of the barons of the exchequer, who returned to Norwich without leave, not thinking it necessary to show that courtesy to an accursed

monarch. The king then sent to Norwich, imprisoned the archdeacon, put him in irons, loaded him with a leaden cope, under which, with short allowance of necessaries, he died in a few days. In a little time two nuncios were sent from Rome, Pandulphus and Durandus, who with difficulty procured an audience of the king, when a terrible colloquy took place. They demanded that the Church property should be restored, and Langton admitted. The king replied that he might, on certain conditions, do the former, but he would most certainly hang Langton if he ever set foot in his dominions. A long debate ensued, when John, speaking of Edward the Confessor as his predecessor, was reminded by Pandulphus that not Edward but William the Bastard was his proper predecessor and type. The king, after listening for some time, asked, "Have you anything more?"

Pandulphus.—From this day we excommunicate all those who shall communicate with you.

King.—Have you anything more?

Pandulphus.—We absolve all the clergy and laity from allegiance to you; and His Holiness designs to send an army to England to maintain the rights of the Church.

King.—Have you anything else?

Pandulphus.—Yes. We tell you in the name of God that neither you nor your heirs can henceforth wear the crown.

The king then, after telling them that if they had come into the country without his consent he would have despatched them, ordered the officers to bring forth their prisoners. Some he condemned to be hanged, others to have their eyes put out and their hands amputated, hoping by this severity to terrify

Pandulphus. One of them was a clergyman convicted of forgery, whom the king condemned to be hanged, when Pandulphus at once declared that he would excommunicate those who dared to lay hands upon him, and went from the presence to get a candle for that purpose, when John suddenly gave way, followed the nuncio, and yielded up the clergyman to him, by whom he was at once acquitted. The Pope then gave the throne of England to Philip of France, commanded him to undertake an expedition against John, and promised the same privileges to all who should join in it as if they had gone on a crusade to Jerusalem. The king, when he heard this, prepared for his defence, and marched all the troops to the coast towns where the French might land. War seemed imminent; but at the last moment a proposition was made him of another interview with Pandulphus, who had power yet to effect a reconciliation. He consented, and the wily nuncio told him that the King of the French, with a powerful fleet and army, were awaiting at the mouth of the Seine the signal to come over and seize England, that most of the English nobility had promised to join him, and that the Pope had formally conceded the government and crown of England to him. But there was yet a chance; let him restore the possessions of the Church, and abide by her decision, and he might yet wear the crown. Terrified beyond all control, John gave way at the last moment, and promised to agree to anything; humbled himself at the feet of the haughty priest whom he had just before threatened to hang. The articles of agreement were drawn up. He was to make full restitution to all bishops, abbots, and clergy who had suffered injury; Stephen Langton was to be received as archbishop, all

outlawries were to be reversed, and the question of damages to be left to the legate.

Two days afterwards, at the Templars' house, near Dover, John, who had braved a five years' excommunication, had threatened the Pope, and browbeaten his nuncio, resigned into the hands of that very nuncio his crown of England and Ireland, promised to pay the Pope a thousand marks yearly if he would allow him to retain the sovereignty, took publicly the oath of homage, and handed to the nuncio a sum of money as earnest of vassalage, which the haughty priest, glad of an opportunity to wound his fallen foe, trampled under his feet. As a further humiliation, he kept the crown in his possession for five days before he permitted the king to have it. Thus fell King John, and thus was Papal domination confirmed in England. What more remains of him is well known. Harassed by ecclesiastical tyranny through the rest of his reign; once more humiliated by his own barons on the bloodless field of Runnymede; threatened with a foreign invasion, John hastened to his end. Whilst marching with his army through Norfolk and Suffolk, his carriages, with all the regalia and treasures, were lost in the Ouse. This threw him into a fever, which released him a few days after, in the hospitality of Newark Castle, from a life which incessant contention had embittered and final dishonour rendered unbearable.

CHAPTER X.

The Norman Abbots.*

A.D. MLXXXI—MCXCII.

WE have investigated the influence of the Norman upon the interests of the English Church generally, but in the career of Glastonbury Abbey we shall see how it affected the destinies of the monasteries in particular. We therefore resume the thread of history more immediately connected with Glastonbury Abbey. It was not likely that this flourishing monastery would escape the hands of William. We accordingly find that soon after the Battle of Hastings and his public consecration, he seized upon Glastonbury Abbey, deprived it of many of its lands, which were given to some of his followers; and upon his return to Normandy, he took with him, amongst many other bishops and abbots, Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Elnoth, the last Saxon Abbot of Glastonbury. In the early part of the primacy of Lanfranc, the Norman Archbishop of Canterbury, at a council held at London, Elnoth was formally deposed from his abbacy, and in the year 1081, *Turstine*, a monk of Caen, in Normandy, was sent over and installed at Glastonbury as the first Norman abbot. As soon as he was settled in his new quarters, he used his influence with William for the restoration of some of the property which he found had

* *Authorities*—Johan. Glaston. Antiq. Glast.—Harleian MSS. Hist.—Adam of Domerham — Index, vol. iii. p. 534—Dugdale—William of Malmesbury, De Stevens' Appendix—Saxon Chron.

been taken from the monastery. William, willing to make amends for their losses, more especially as the abbey had been somewhat impoverished by the extravagance of the two last abbots, Egelward and Egelnoth, as well as by the Danish invasion, and his own rapacity, gave the monks a charter,* by which he restored to them for ever some of the lands they had lost, and confirmed all their privileges. A circumstance almost immediately transpired which afforded the new abbot an opportunity of defending those privileges. A dispute had been raised by Giso, Bishop of Wells, as to the jurisdiction over two minor monasteries in his diocese, Muchelney and Etheling. From time immemorial, these monasteries had been subservient to the jurisdiction of Glastonbury, but Giso persuaded Lanfranc to charge the two abbots in a general council of the English nation, and the case was brought to an issue. The Abbot of Muchelney, in reply to the charge, boldly said he would answer for himself in the chapter-house of Glastonbury, should the abbot of that place require him to do so. The Abbot of Etheling evaded all examination. The archbishop then threatened to take his pastoral staff from him, when he replied, "I care not, for I have a better, and yet I will not deliver this to you." Turstine, the Abbot of Glastonbury, was then called upon to speak if he considered the matter concerned him in any way. He then arose and made a long, learned speech in defence of the rights of his abbey, reviewing all the grants and charters which had been made by different kings, from Kentwyn and Ina down to Edward, by which he proved that no one ever had any jurisdiction over these

* Dugdale's Monasticon, i. p. 18.

two monasteries but the Abbot of Glastonbury, nor had any man been made abbot over them without being first elected by the Convent of Glastonbury; upon these facts he rested his case. The archbishop then addressed the king, and said that he had no wish "to lessen St. Dunstan's foster child;" and the king replied that neither would he disoblige the Mother of Our Lord, but that (for the future the Bishop of Wells should decide the matter in the chapter-house of Glastonbury Abbey.) Turstine then spoke again, and repeated with emphasis that the (privileges of his church were clear and authentic, that it would therefore be a violation of those privileges were any man, of whatever dignity he may be, allowed to come to Glastonbury with a judicial power—) nor had any one a right to do so; that all judgments there, both ecclesiastical and secular, belonged to him alone; and that it was a matter of wonder to him, that an invincible prince, and a holy archbishop, should be pressed by envious persons to make innovations upon his privileges; but on his part, the abbot added, he would never be wanting in defending his own rights, and the dignity of his Church, with the same spirit as his predecessors had shown; and that if the Bishop of Wells had anything to allege, he might come to Glastonbury, not upon the summons of the archbishop, or even the king, but upon his summons, who was the abbot of the place. Turstine carried his cause; Giso was cited to the chapter-house at Glastonbury, but the monks defended their rights so ably that the case was decided in their favour, and (Giso went back to his see, dishonoured and reprimanded.)

After thus boldly and publicly maintaining the privileges of his abbey, Turstine began to turn his

attention to its internal arrangements, and here though he acted with the same determination, yet from want of consideration or discretion, he brought about a state of affairs which came to a crisis in an event which terminated most disastrously both for the monastery and himself, and fills many pages of the Saxon and other chronicles with wailing and lamentation. Turstine was a foreigner, and his monks were all Englishmen, they had been accustomed to certain laws and regulations, to which they were not only attached from habit, but from the strong tie of tradition; they had been established by the great spirits who had been connected with the earliest periods of the abbey's existence, and they (dreaded naturally any innovation being made in their customary routine.) Turstine wished to introduce other and foreign customs, and being of an obstinate cast of mind, having resolved upon their introduction, (made no allowance for the prejudices of his monks,) but proceeded to enforce those rules and ceremonies which were abhorrent to them, but to which he had been accustomed. At first the monks bore it patiently, but as they saw their old English customs being gradually neglected, and foreign practices substituted in their place, they first of all remonstrated privately with the abbot; and this proving of no avail, they brought their case before him publicly in the chapter-house, but were met with no redress, only an expressed determination from the abbot to carry out his plans. One of these innovations which they could least bear with, was the (suppression of the Gregorian Chant, always used in their services.) Abbot Turstine forbade its use, and (ordered the monks to learn a new one) he had brought over from France, composed by one William Féschamp. To this order they replied that

they were grown old in the use of the Gregorian Chant, and the order of their services which were according to the canon of the Roman Church, and declined to adopt a new one. They were displeased also with his arbitrary manner, the more so as they recollected that he had not been chosen canonically from their own body, according to their ancient right, but was a foreigner, of whom they knew nothing, who had in fact been forced upon them only by the power of victorious arms. Things then went on very badly, until one day they came to a crisis, and another Chapter was held. The abbot addressed them upon the subject of their disobedience, spoke of enforcing discipline, and demanded their submission to his authority. An angry discussion ensued, recriminations were passed on both sides, when as he saw they were determined to resist his innovations, Abbot Turstine despatched a messenger from the chapter-house, who in a few moments returned, followed by a band of French soldiers, all armed, and under the command of their officers. The monks, upon seeing them approach the chapter-house, arose in the greatest consternation and fled, taking shelter in the church, where they locked the doors, and congratulated themselves upon being safe in sanctuary. The soldiers, however, soon broke into the church, and pursued the monks, who retreated in terror up to the very altar stairs, where they knelt to implore divine assistance, with tears and groans. Their enemies remained at a distance, but shot arrows at them, others went up into the galleries, which were erected between the columns of the church, and shot arrows down upon them as they knelt round the altar; meantime the soldiers who were below getting bolder, rushed up the altar stairs, not regarding the sanctity of the place, ran one of the monks

through the body with a spear, as he was clinging to the very altar with his arms ; another fell pierced by arrows at the foot of the altar ; fourteen more were severely wounded. At length these trembling monks, inspired with courage by the terror of their danger, (turned upon their enemies in a body and managed to drive them before them out of the choir.) One soldier, said to be a member of the Abbot's family, seeing a monk carrying a cross in his hands and holding it up before him in self-defence, deliberately and wantonly let fly an arrow at it, which stuck in the wood-work of the cross. Horrified at the sacrilege, the soldiers began to take fright—a panic seized them ; they all rushed for the doors to get out of the church, in the confusion of which many were seriously injured, and some lost their lives ; the (soldier who aimed his arrow at the cross was found with his neck broken, trampled under foot.) A formal complaint was then made by the monks to the king, who could not venture to pass over such sacrilege without notice. An examination was made into Turstine's conduct, and the particulars of the outrage, and as it was found that he had overstepped his duty, he was obliged to retire to Normandy in disgrace : (many of the monks, however, were taken into custody, and the matter ended.) Soon after this unfortunate occurrence, and before any new abbot had been elected, the king died, and Turstine, by the interposition of his friends and relatives, managed to get the permission of William II. to return to his abbacy at Glastonbury by payment of a sum of five hundred pounds in silver. He once more took possession of the monastery, but appears not to have stayed there. The particulars of his death are not known ; he (held the abbey for some years, and is said to have died abroad.)

In the year 1101 Henry I. persuaded the convent of Glastonbury to accept *Herlewin*, another monk of Caen, as their abbot, being recommended for his clemency and generosity. The times were different; although the consent of the monks was still held necessary to the canonical election of an abbot, the interposition of the king was omnipotent, admitted of no question, and the monks were tacitly compelled again to accept this foreigner, to the disappointment of all those amongst their number who naturally looked forward to the dignity as a right. From the first they took a great dislike to this new comer; they thought he would prove another Turstine; although a man of great wealth he was very strict and parsimonious in his own diet, and enforced similar rules upon the convent, without consideration for the more bracing climate of England, or the more vigorous appetites of Englishmen. Dissatisfaction prevailed, and the monks soon found a means of conveying their feelings to Herlewin, when, to their astonishment, the abbot called together his officers, told them that his enforcing strict rules of regimen was more in accordance with the practice of his own country than his own tastes; that he was most anxious not to acquire the reputation of being a miser; begged them to undeceive the monks and suppress the scandal; he then gave orders that the gates of the court, which had hitherto been kept shut, should be thrown open night and day that no one might be prevented from coming in; threatened the porter that if he shut out any man he should not only lose his place but one of his ears also; so that this abbot whom the monks began to reproach with being a miser soon acquired the character of being extravagant, but with that fault in an abbot we never read of

any great remonstrance being made on the part of the monks in any period of history. The church which his predecessor had begun to build not pleasing Herlewin, he laid it level with the ground and began a new one at his own expense, upon which we are told he expended four hundred and eighty pounds. He bought an image and a cross for seventy marks, and he made a proposition to the king to redeem all the lands which had been taken from the monastery from the time of the coming of the Normans by the payment of a thousand marks. This proposition was rejected, and the chronicler* says he conformed his mind to the saying of Terence, "If we cannot do what we will, let us do what we can." Accordingly he set to work, and at the expense of one hundred marks of silver and two of gold, retrieved the loss of his own manors. During his abbacy he recovered many other manors which had been lost to this abbey. Herlewin also enlarged the offices of the monks, and received all clergymen gratis who wished to enter the monastery, setting no price upon their entrance as some had done. The day before his death, as he was singing mass, he offered himself up to God as a sacrifice, with a contrite heart and in tears. Then, after the service, when they repaired to the chapter-house, he publicly asked pardon of the monks for all his offences, telling them that the end of his life was come. In the evening, by the advice of his physician, but against his own wish, he took some medicine, which appeared only to make him worse; just before midnight he received extreme unction in the presence of the monks who surrounded him, and before the dawn he died. He was buried in the church of St. Andrew's.

* William of Malmesbury.

Sigfrid then became the next abbot. He was a monk of Saint Martin le Seez, and brother to Ralph the Archbishop of Canterbury; he ascended the chair of Glastonbury in the year 1120 by the appointment of the king. He ruled over the monastery for about six years, during which time he gave several presents to the Church, and obtained a bull from Pope Calixtus II. confirming all the privileges and possessions of the monastery. He was then elevated to the bishopric of Chichester, and the vacant abbacy was filled by

Henry of Blois, the king's nephew, and brother to Theobald, Earl of Blois; he was also a monk of Clugni. His memory is fragrant amongst the monkish chroniclers. John of Glastonbury tells us he worthily governed the flock committed to his charge, recommending the divine commands not only by his words to his disciples, but endeavouring to demonstrate them to the more simple by his actions. He appears to have been a man of some literary attainments, and resolutely set to work to improve his monastery. He turned his attention to the recovery of lands which had been alienated from the Glastonbury rent-roll by Norman liberality. Three years after his accession to the abbacy of Glastonbury, this scion of royalty was made Bishop of Winchester; but contrary to all usage was allowed to retain his position as Abbot of Glastonbury, for which a special dispensation was granted by the Pope, at the intercession of the king; he was also made legate to His Holiness, and being so nearly related to royalty, and endowed with so many honours, he appears to have been the grandest abbot of the long roll of Glastonbury. However, the additional duties of his bishopric, and the distractions of his office as legate, did not prevent him from continuing the good

work he had begun at Glastonbury. It is recorded that he added many buildings to the manors of the abbey and to the monastery itself. No wonder the chronicle glōws with the praise of this good abbot. He understood the monk of his times, and dealt gently with him; he was a genial monk himself, and we are told that shortly after the death of the king, his uncle, and the accession of Stephen, who was his brother, he bethought himself, no doubt, amid the rejoicings and festivities of the occasion, of his old friends the monks at Glastonbury, and as it is quaintly recorded, "considering that a competent supply of corporeal wants is wont to attract some persons to the service of God," and chiefly to cut off all occasion of muttering, he thought fit to appropriate some things for the recreation of the monastery. Accordingly, he added ten shillings per week for the use of the kitchen; the mill at Street and the revenue of twenty pounds of pepper from the city of London. During his long and useful career, this great abbot, to finish and secure what he had done, had procured from the successive kings and popes whom he had outlived, confirmations of all the possessions and privileges of Glastonbury; these confirmations were made by the Popes Innocent II., Alexander III., and by the three kings, Henry I., Stephen, and Henry II. He departed this life in the year 1171, after wearing the mitre of Glastonbury for the long space of forty-five years, and was buried at Winchester, having lived through the reigns of Henry I., Stephen, and seventeen years of Henry II. At the period of the death of Abbot Henry, the subjugation of Ireland was effected (1172), and the king gave many of his soldiers and followers lands and possessions there in fee, and appointed a chancellor,

seneschal, justices, and other ministers. One of these, Philip of Worcester, who had been made Constable of Ireland, gave to the monastery of Glastonbury the town of Kilcumyn,* in that country, with the church and one hundred carracates of land, freed from all secular service, and with all appurtenances, for the building and founding of a priory of monks, in honour of St. Philip, St. Jacob, and St. Cumin. This was ultimately done, and a monk of Glastonbury, one James, with other brethren, went over; brother James becoming the first prior. †

This gift was followed by a second, for William de Burg gave to Richard, another monk of Glastonbury, probably one of the settlers at Kilcumyn, the town of Ardimur, with the church and certain adjacent isles, with a religious house to be constructed for the benefit of his order, and in honour of the Virgin Mary. Another priory was then founded, which was called Ocmild, and the monk Richard became its first prior. †

Robert, Prior of Winchester, was the next abbot after Henry; he was a wealthy man, and very charitable to the poor. Like his wise predecessor, he appears to have understood the monk of the twelfth century, for

* Nec multo post, quidam Philipus de Wigornia acūs constabulariū: Hiberniē factus contulit in eadem, monasterio Glastōn: villam de Kilcumyn cum ecclīa ejusdē: villæ.—Cotton. MSS. Tiberius A. v., fo. 102.

† Missus est illuc a Glastōn. quidā Jacobus cum aliis ejusdem loci monachis et factus est ibi Prior primus.—Cotton. MSS., ibid.

‡ Aliq. quōq. vir venerandus nomine Wilh-mus de Burgo circa

idem tempus dedit quidā Ricardo monacho quandam villam in Hybernia quæ vocatur Ardimur cum ecclīa, &c. . . . dedit et quasdam insulas circumjacentes . . . et quandam domū religionis ad sui ordinis professionem construendā in honorem Dei et Bte. Mariæ Virginis, Fundato igitur ibi pōratu vocatus est locus ille Ocmild predcusq. Ricard. factus est ibi primus Pōr. — Cotton. MSS. Tiberius A. v., fos. 102 and 103.

we are informed that in order that his memory might be the more devoutly preserved, he arranged that some refreshment should be provided always on his anniversary, not only for the brethren of the convent, but for the poor. During the abbacy of Robert, the first fatal quarrel arose between the monastery and the see of Bath and Wells, the prelude to that great monkish squabble which subsequently raged so fiercely as to necessitate the interference of the king and the Pope; and of which the compiler of the "Anglia Sacra" has preserved a memorial written by Adam of Domesday. It appears that the churches of Pilton and South Brent had always been in the patronage of Glastonbury, but they fell into the hands of the church of Wells through the following circumstance, the monkish chronicler of course insinuating that the whole thing was a plot on the part of the bishop. Reginald, who was Bishop of Bath and Wells, had induced Abbot Robert to become a canon of Wells cathedral, taking the above churches as his demesne. Shortly after, finding the double office too onerous for him, the abbot resigned his canonry; but the see of Wells claimed the power over the two churches by reason of a transaction made concerning the jurisdiction of the archdeaconry. The poor monks were impleaded by the bishop, and it was settled by the annexation of the church of South Brent, on the condition of the archdeacon's doing fealty for the same to the church of Glastonbury. Abbot Robert died after filling the chair for seven years, and was buried in the south side of the chapter-house. Contrary to the expectation of all, instead of allowing them to elect a successor, the king, Henry II., retained the monastery in his own hands, and, as it ultimately turned out, for his own political

purposes. He wished to negotiate some business at the Court of Rome, and could not find any one in his own dominions who had tact enough or interest sufficient to accomplish his desires with the Papacy. But a bright idea occurred to him. At the monastery of Clugni, the chamberlain was *Peter de Marci*, a monk who had great influence at Rome, through his brother the Bishop of Albano. Henry then fixed upon this man as his instrument, and to win him over to his purposes made him an offer of the vacant mitre of Glastonbury. He accepted it, repaired to Glastonbury, and being anxious to be elected by the monks, endeavoured to cajole them with fair promises and gifts. They, however, had heard something already of Chamberlain Peter—strange rumours of intrigue and irregularity; they therefore resisted his appointment, but without success.

The year following a tremendous fire broke out in the monastery, on the Feast of St. Urban, when all the buildings except the apartments built by Abbot Robert (into which the monks retired afterwards), and the belfry built by Bishop Henry, were consumed; everything was destroyed—all the beautiful new buildings erected by Bishop Henry; the old abbey lay in a heap of ashes, books of great value, relics of still greater, ecclesiastical documents, gold and silver ornaments—all were destroyed, and the poor monks were driven into Abbot Robert's apartments and chapel to manage as best they could. In the midst of their misfortunes they were freed from the yoke of Abbot Peter, the foreigner, who died in the year 1184. The king then took pity upon the monks, and charged Ralph, a son of Stephen, and his own chamberlain, with the repairing and rebuilding of Glastonbury Abbey. For this purpose

he granted his charter.* The king's chamberlain set about the work with diligence, and even assisted the monks in their extremity out of his own purse, allowing them and the servants an additional quantity of bread, amounting to one quarter of what they then had. At length the church of St. Mary was finished; it was built upon the very spot where the old church had stood, and was profusely decorated. Reginald, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, consecrated it. Then the offices were erected, and last of all, the large church, which was extended to the length of four hundred feet. No expense was spared in building and decorating these new churches and the monks' offices, and what the revenues of the abbey failed to meet, the liberality of the king made up. During these works, relics of the old saints of the abbey were dug up, and we are told they were placed in shrines. Amongst others, those of St. Dunstan, or rather that portion of St. Dunstan's relics which had been retained at Glastonbury, were recovered, and gave rise to the first monastic quarrel between the monks of Glastonbury and the authorities at Canterbury, about the proprietorship of these bones, and which was not even concluded in the sixteenth century. The fact of this discovery, which drew from Eadmer, the monk of Canterbury, a letter of remonstrance, has already been mentioned in a former chapter. The incidents of the discovery, as related by Adam of Domerham, are the following. There was in the monastery a certain old monk whose name was John Canan, and it was generally believed by the convent that the secret of Dunstan's burying-place had been transmitted to him by succession.

* Appendix to Dugdale, Vol. ii., No. cii.

There was also in the monastery a lad, by name John Waterleghe, to whom the aged monk was much attached, and the inquisitive brethren urged this lad to beguile the old man into showing him the spot where the saint was buried. The boy attempted the task, but in vain, until one day the monk yielded to his importunities so far as to say, "My son, no sooner will you enter the church and sprinkle yourself with holy water, than your habit will touch the stone under which that which you inquire about is concealed; but ask me no more concerning this affair, and wisely consider with yourself what you have heard." The boy kept the old man's secret until death removed him, when he divulged it to the monks, and two of them went, taking the lad Waterleghe with them, to the spot, where they found the stone, as had been described, and lifting it up discovered a wooden chest plated over with iron. The prior and all the convent were then summoned, and the case opened, when they found some of the bones of Dunstan, a ring, in one-half of which was a picture curiously wrought; on the right of the chest were the letters "Sūs." (sanctus) with a crown over them, and on the left the letters "Ds." with a similar ornament. The monks then gathered up the relics, and solemnly placed them in a shrine covered with gold and silver, together with relics of St. Oswald, the king and martyr. Hence the agitation of the Canterbury monks, when the news was brought to them of this new shrine at Glastonbury. Competition was great in those days, as severe perhaps in relics as it is now in manufactures; crowds were drawn to the shrine of Glastonbury, for there had always been an instinctive idea that the great Saxon Abbot, or the better portion of him, lay in his native town, and in

the abbey, about whose aisles he had wandered as a little child, which had been the pride of his manhood, the ornament of his fortunes, and his shelter in adversity. But as the Avalonian coffers were rapidly filling, and those of Canterbury as rapidly diminishing, it became evident that something must be done to turn the tide of faith, which had hitherto flowed with such regularity, back to the archiepiscopal see, and therefore Master Eadmer, who was the author of some valuable history,* was deputed to write a letter to the brethren of Glastonbury upon the subject. The bitterness of that letter speaks for the success of the Glastonbury shrine; it is preserved in the collection of the "Anglia Sacra."

The fairest supposition is, that both had a portion of the saint's precious relics. Canterbury would probably never have had a bone had they remained there during the ravages of the Danes, who would have dug into the bowels of the earth for him had he been there, and therefore the solemn assertion of the Glastonbury monks that the relics had been sent to the abbey for safety, as were many others all over the country, acquires an additional probability. The abstraction of a certain portion before their return would be an easy thing, and one almost sure to take place, which seems to be again proved from the statement of Canterbury itself, for when the tomb was searched there, they only found a *portion* of the remains. As an excellent specimen of the peculiar acerbity of monastic correspondence, we will quote a passage or two from Archbishop Warham's celebrated letter. Eadmer

* "Historia Novorum sive Sui Seculi," from 1066 to 1122. His style is like a verdant oasis in the vast desert of monastic lore, being, strange to say, totally free from *miracles*.

wrote his remonstrance in the year 1124, and the subject was revived four centuries afterwards by William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, who caused a search to be made, when he found, according to his own statement, the "skull bone of the renowned saint complete, and divers bones of his body."* A letter was then written to the Abbot of Glastonbury, which recites the result of the search, and adds, "Wherefore we wonder vehemently that you should be led by such blindness, or such temerity or audacity, as not to be afraid of asserting that the said body was buried with you."† To this letter the abbot replied very mildly, and suggested the fact of a portion of the relics being at both places, which only appears to have aroused the jealous spite of Warham to a greater pitch, for another letter was written in a most abusive strain, the concluding paragraph of which we will quote. "We are compelled," says this haughty prelate, "to protect boldly, and to the best of our power, the dignity and rights of our Church. In order, then, that this business may be fairly weighed, and brought to a just issue, and all kinds of ambiguity, scruples, and occasion of scandal be removed, we do emphatically exhort and earnestly require you to bring to light immediately, and without delay, the writings, evidences, documents, and everything which supports your cause in this matter. But if you will not do so, this one thing you may take for granted, that we will declare by our letters, and stringently enjoin throughout our province of Canterbury, that no one shall venerate

* *Calvam capitis memorati sancti integram atque diversa sui corporis ossa reperimus.*—*Anglia Sacra* ii., p. 226.

† *Quare vehementes admiramur*

tanta vos cæcitate tantane temeritate aut audacia duci ut non vereamini asserere præfatum corpus apud vos habere sepultum.—*Anglia Sacra* ii., p. 226, seq.

or regard as true the relics asserted to be with you, under pain of excommunication and other ecclesiastical censures. At Lambeth, 10th July, in the 23rd year of the reign of Henry VII. and 5th of our pontificate.”

But to return to the affairs at Glastonbury. The church was nearly rebuilt, and would have been completed had it not been for the king's death, which took place in 1189, and he was buried at Font Everard, in Normandy. Richard, his son, then succeeded him, but was too much engaged with military matters to attend to the building of the church at Glastonbury, so that the works were suspended for the want of funds. But soon after the death of Abbot Peter, *Henry de Soliac*, the Prior of Bermondsey, was appointed to be the next abbot; he was related to the king, and it was during his abbacy the bones of Arthur were dug up, as we have already mentioned in a former chapter—Giraldus Cambrensis being present at the search.* Henry de Soliac obtained from the Pope several privileges for the monastery, but what was more, recovered the churches of Pilton and Dicheat from the Bishop of Bath and Wells. He, however, was not liked by the monks; he took very little interest in the rebuilding, which was at a standstill; he also very unjustly gave lands belonging to the abbey in fee to his friends, and by many other innovations upon the customs of the convent, drew down upon himself the indignation of the brethren. Meanwhile, as they were naturally anxious to continue their buildings, they managed to keep the works going on by seeking alms, and sending out to various quarters certain chosen ones of their number to preach and exhibit their choicest relics.

* Appendix iv.

But at this point a terrible calamity befel Glastonbury Abbey, in which Abbot Henry does not figure very creditably. The monks had been for a long time at a sort of a skirmishing warfare with the Bishops of Bath and Wells, in fact, for centuries the rich monastery of Glastonbury had been an object of envy to the bishopric, and every effort had been tried to get it into their power, but without success until now, when an utterly unforeseen and unexpected circumstance brought it about, to the great horror and consternation of the poor monks. Whilst they were chanting their services peacefully, and speculating about their new buildings, their fate was being settled far away in an Austrian dungeon, and by people who had never seen them. It will be remembered that King Richard, when on his way home from the Crusades, was taken prisoner in Austria, and was not released until the nation had paid one hundred thousand marks for his ransom. Whilst he was in the Austrian prison one Savaric, a relative of the emperor, and his chancellor, did various acts of kindness to the unfortunate prisoner king, and in the course of their acquaintance so far acquired an influence over him as to elicit from him a promise that he would give him the bishopric of Bath and Wells. After that, bethinking himself that the wealthy Abbey of Glastonbury, situated in the diocese, would be a very acceptable addition, he induced the emperor to wrest another promise from the king, that this should also be added. Harassed by his entreaties, and afraid to refuse, as his release was then under discussion, King Richard gave his consent, as he afterwards confessed, with unwillingness. Then Savaric, through the king's influence, managed to procure from Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William, Bishop of Ely, letters im-

ploring the Pope Celestine to unite the Abbey of Glastonbury with the diocese of Bath and Wells. These letters were sent by messengers, who assured the Pope, who was then worn out by age, that the dissensions between the two places were a scandal upon the Church, and would never cease until the abbey was united to the bishopric; by this means they won his consent, and the affair was settled without the Abbot of Glastonbury or the monks of that place being consulted in the matter in any way. A private message was sent to Abbot Henry, requesting him to come over to the king at once. After the customary solemnities held on the departure of an abbot, he bade the monks farewell, himself as ignorant as were they of the object of his journey. As soon as he had arrived he was welcomed by the king, who said,* "Dear cousin, if you had come sooner I had been sooner released; the emperor presses me to give Savaric the Abbey of Glastonbury as an addition to the bishopric of Bath and Wells, and you shall be promoted to the bishopric of Worcester, now vacant." The bait was an excellent one, and Abbot Henry consented to the arrangement; he was then put into communication with Savaric, and the two consulted as to the best means of bringing the business to an issue. As a preliminary step, he sent some of his servants back to England to sell all the moveables they could in the abbey. Shortly after, on the Feast of St. Michael, he returned himself, and resumed his duties, maintaining a rigid reserve as to what he had been doing on the occasion of his journey. Things went on thus, the monks totally unconscious of their having been bartered

* *Anglia Sacra* i., p. 578 et seq.

like cattle, until Advent, when suddenly the abbot was called away to London. Very soon after his departure Savaric, who had arrived and taken up his bishopric, sent for Harold, the Prior of Glastonbury, to confer with him on matters connected with the monastery. He set out, taking two other monks with him, anticipating some new difficulties and contentions, but when they arrived there, Savaric asked them naïvely where their abbot was. They replied he was gone to London. "Then," said Savaric, addressing the prior, "you are discharged of him, for I am your abbot!" Whilst this conference was being held, Savaric's agents were on their way to Glastonbury. The interview was only a trick to get the prior, who had charge of the monastery in the absence of the abbot, out of the way, in order that they might accomplish their purpose the more easily. Before Prior Harold had sufficiently recovered from his astonishment at the announcement of Savaric, and had set out on his return, the agents of the astute foreigner had seized upon the abbey and all its appurtenances in the name of the king, and by his authority; and when the prior arrived he found them in full possession of the place, and the monks all paralysed with rage and terror. This event, which was the forerunner of an Iliad of monastic woes, took place in the year 1192, and led to the dissensions which will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Monastic Dissensions.*

A.D. MCXCII—MCCXVIII.

WE resume the internal history of the Abbey of Glastonbury at the period where we left that wealthy prize being made the subject of a simoniacal transaction, by means of which *Savaric* was interpolated into the line of abbots. The Prior of Glastonbury returned with the news of what had been done, that they had been handed over to the hands of this foreigner, and the city of Bath given up to the king in consideration. The monks, when they had recovered from the shock of this intelligence, took counsel with some wise men as to what steps they should take in the matter. They resolved upon making an appeal to Rome for the rights of the monastery, and having drawn it up in form, they laid it upon the altar of St. Andrew's Church, at Wells. In the meantime Abbot Henry went to London, where he was at once elected Bishop of Worcester, and consecrated on the third Sunday in Advent. He then returned to Glastonbury, attended by *Savaric's* servants, celebrated mass there on the feast of St. Thomas, and went back to his see of Worcester, where he soon after died. Thus was Glastonbury Abbey bartered away, and its monks handed over to the tender mercies of a foreigner, in open violation of all laws, human and divine. They looked anxiously for

* *Authorities* — Anglia Sacra — Hist. Glast. ; Cotton MSS. Tiberius Guliel : Malms. Gesta Pont. ; A. v. Gesta Regum ; John of Glaston.

the king's return from his Austrian prison, and at length he came, to the great joy of the country, during Lent. The next Easter, Prior Harold, with some of the brethren, went to Winchester to seek an interview with the king to plead the cause of their insulted Church, but the Bishop of Ely, a friend of Savaric, who was the king's chancellor, so contrived it that they were obliged to return to their monastery without having succeeded, and without an answer.

Next year the king went to Normandy, and the monks, nothing daunted, sent two of their number over to him to implore his aid in the restoration of their community to its former state and rule. This time they were successful, and Richard graciously promised to take their case into consideration at the first opportunity he could find. This proved to be no idle promise, for Richard, reflecting upon the scandal he had brought upon the Church, sent messengers and letters to Pope Celestine, begging his Holiness to absolve him from a promise which had been wrung from him by compulsion, and to make void what he had caused to be done. The tables were then suddenly turned upon Savaric, for upon his return from Normandy Richard dispossessed him of the abbey, and gave it into the custody, temporarily, of one William, of the Church of St. Mary, who was afterwards Bishop of London. The next step taken by Savaric was a bold but decisive one; he spared neither time, trouble, nor *money*; went in person to the Apostolic See, and so vigorously used these three great powers, or one of them, the most potent of all, that he obtained from the Pope a bull that what had been arranged about Glastonbury should be enforced, that the prior and monks should obey Savaric as Bishop of Glastonbury and their abbot. He also sent special

letters forbidding the monks to choose an abbot for the future, and also others to the Archbishop of Canterbury mandatory to this effect. The archbishop accordingly enjoined the prior and monks of Glastonbury to pay their obedience to Savaric, and the poor monks, terrified by this papal bull, thinking it best to yield the point for the present, until the mercy of God should give them a more favourable opportunity of renewing the conflict, bowed in submission to the victorious Savaric, who for a second time was installed in the chair of Glastonbury. Reflection, however, soon brought courage back to the monks; they knew very well that by issuing this bull the Pope had done violence to the constitution of the country and the rights of the national church. They therefore sent two brethren, John Cusyngton and William Pike, to King Richard, in Normandy, begging him in pity to provide for their Church. His answer was favourable, and Cusyngton returned to Glastonbury, but Pike was sent on to Rome with the king's letter, entreating him to annul the grant of the abbey to Savaric, which it was thought he would have done had he not been cut off by death. Innocent III. succeeded him, and Richard urged the necessity upon the new Pope of making void the iniquitous grant which his predecessor had made to Savaric, and in addition he wrote to the cardinals begging them to persuade the Pope to do this.

Meanwhile the monks of Glastonbury adopted another and more vigorous plan. John Cusyngton and Eustace Comyn, another monk, set out for Normandy; and obtained from the king letters addressed to his justices in England, empowering them to seize the abbey into their hands for him, which, in spite of vigorous opposition from Savaric, was done. As soon as

this was accomplished, William Pike returned from Rome to Normandy, whence he wrote to the prior at Glastonbury, telling him that he had obtained all they wanted against Savaric, and requesting him to send the chamberlain, Eustace Comyn, and John Cusyngton to him, that they might with him make a formal application to the king for his licence to elect an abbot. They were sent, had audience of the king, who gladly gave them his licence, when the three returned to Glastonbury, and announced the joyful intelligence to the monks that they might now once more elect their own abbot. A chapter was held, when the brethren enthusiastically declared at once for their champion,

William Pike, who was duly elected to sit in the abbatial chair of Glastonbury. But to make all things secure, the newly elect was sent with three other monks to London, taking with them the king's letters to his justices. They then, in the name of the whole convent, confirmed the election in the exchequer five days before the feast of St. Andrew ; up to this time the monks had been unanimous ; but now that victory was dawning upon them, the petty dissensions and jealousies which had been absorbed in the great cause began to break out again. Four of them appealed against the election of William Pike, but nothing was done, and when the new abbot returned, he was warmly received by the great majority of the convent ; the dissensions, however, were not crushed. The task of the new abbot was a difficult one ; he was obliged to impose a heavy duty upon the country people, and alter some of the regulations and privileges which had been granted by Savaric to curry favour, consequently there were murmurings without and dissensions within. In the meantime Savaric was not idle. As soon as he heard of the

election of William Pike, intelligence of which was brought him whilst at one of his manors near Wells, he declared the election void, and excommunicated William Pike and all his adherents. He then contrived to get the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pandulphus, the Pope's legate, to confirm his sentence, and write letters to the Bishop of Winchester and the Archdeacon of London, directing them to cause the sentence to be promulgated in all the conventual churches in England. But in spite of this, William Pike continued to discharge the spiritual and temporal duties of abbot at Glastonbury, from the feast of St. Nicholas to the purification of St. Mary, when he went over to Normandy with Eustace Comyn and another monk to seek the king's advice. Then he went on to Rome, leaving Comyn behind. He shortly afterwards fell into the hands of Savaric's agents, who seized him at Rouen, and shut him up in prison, whence, however, he was released by the archbishop of the city, and returned to Glastonbury. Before William Pike could get anything done at Rome, death unfortunately cut off King Richard in the month of April, after a reign of only ten years, and he was buried at Font Everard, at his father's feet.

This event was most unfortunate for the monks of Glastonbury, for Hubert, the Archbishop of Canterbury, interdicted the monastery, and excommunicated the priors and the whole convent, because they had communicated with William Pike contrary to the papal privileges granted to Savaric. The poor monks became alarmed, humbly observed the sentence for a time, and then sent a deputation of two brethren to Canterbury to implore absolution. The archbishop gave them letters to the Abbots of Sherbourne and Abbotsbury, requesting them to repair to the monastery

of Glastonbury, make every one take an oath of obedience, whereupon he should absolve them, reserving however to the archbishop the right of correcting their offences either in person or by proxies. These two abbots then proceeded to Glastonbury the first Sunday after Easter, and absolved the monks accordingly. Eight days afterwards came the Abbots of Malmesbury and Evesham, who, showing the monks the authority they had received from the archbishop, proceeded to correct their offences, removed the sub-prior, precentor, and granary keeper, who had been appointed by William Pike, and took security from each of them that they would pay obedience and respect to Bishop Savaric.

We must now return to Rome, where we left William Pike, who set out shortly before the death of Richard. In the meantime he had procured from the Pope letters of revocation of the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him and his monks by Savaric, and sent them home to Glastonbury, where they were received with great joy.

As King Richard had died without issue, his brother John succeeded him, when Savaric once more began to act. By dint of entreaties and money he managed to secure the king's favour, and obtained his consent to the possession of Glastonbury Abbey. The king also directed Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, to commission a certain Arragonian archbishop, and the Archdeacon of Canterbury, to enthrone Savaric according to the custom of Glastonbury. They arrived at the monastery at Whitsuntide, bringing with them the king's and the archbishop's letters, enjoining them to obey Savaric as Bishop of Bath and Glastonbury. Savaric himself arrived on Whitsunday in a hostile

manner, pulled down the gates, and entered by violence. He then sent for a smith, had the locks of the church and treasury broken open, and seizing the vestments, caused them to be put on the Canons of Wells and other secular persons, and marched at the head of the procession into the church. Only eight renegade monks who favoured his cause met him in the church, by whom he was enthroned in a hurried disorderly manner. All the others who would not be present at the ceremony he drove out of the church when they assembled to perform the divine office. They took shelter in the cloisters, which were besieged all that day and the next night by men armed with swords and staves, nor would he permit any but those who had received him to enter into any of the offices except the infirmary, and having shut them up there, he publicly declared them excommunicated, reduced them to hunger, and even denied them water. The next day he caused them to be brought to the chapter-house, absolved them from the sentence of excommunication, and had them stripped and scourged in the presence of many clergymen and laity. He thus terrified some into obedience by fear of punishment, others he gained by soft allurements, whilst those who would yield neither to threats nor bribes, he wore out gradually by cruelty and oppression. He also made each one subscribe his name to a writing, and put to it the seals of the church and that of the prelates who were present. The convent seal, which he seized, he committed to the custody of his favourites, sealing with it the letter containing the forced consent of the monks, to be sent to the Pope and the king in spite of their protest. He then degraded Harold the prior, and all others who were in office in the church, and put in their places his own favourites,

taking an oath from them that they would be faithful to him under all circumstances. He appointed one James to be the prior, who had formerly held that office under Abbot Henry, who degraded him for his irregularities ; but on the next feast of the commemoration of St. Paul, Prior James still governing with his accomplices, there arrived at Glastonbury the Precentor of Wells, the sub-dean, and one Jocelin, who was afterwards bishop.

They had been sent by Savaric with a number of laymen to overcome the resolution of some of the monks, who endeavoured to withdraw themselves from the obedience they had sworn to Savaric through compulsion, and to take away the monks who were appointed to go to Rome against Savaric. These monks, however, resisted boldly, and took refuge in the church just before high mass. As they were preparing to serve at the altar, they, with others, were violently seized by these clergymen and their accomplices, with the sanction and by the encouragement of Prior James. Five of them were immediately confined in prison till night without food, and when it was dark they were conveyed to Wells, and there, after being exposed and scoffed at, were put into gaol, receiving on one day meat without drink, and on the next drink without meat. Afterwards they were dispersed and sent to different monasteries in different parts of England for greater security. Savaric, being once more in possession of Glastonbury, went away to Rome to oppose in person William, the abbot elect. A most intricate and difficult suit then commenced between them, Savaric labouring hard to upset William's election. On the other hand, Pike declared that he had been chosen by the monks canonically, and pressed for a recognition of

his rights. After a long debate, attended with much expense on both sides, Pope Innocent declared the election of William void, and confirmed the bull granted to Savaric by his predecessor. However, he sent orders to the Bishop of Ely, and the Abbot of St. Edmond's, to arrange the priory and to make a just partition of the possessions between the bishop and the monks. A delay ensued in the settlement, as Savaric had everything in his own hands, and threw impediments, and it is said also bribes, in the way of the delegates. Then the Pope interfered again, directed another mandate to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, to prohibit, under pain of excommunication, the bishop's officers and ministers, or even the monks, from taking away or squandering anything that belonged to the monastery, but that they should await the Pope's pleasure. Then William Pike died at Rome, being it was said poisoned by the agents of Savaric. That persistent bishop, not regarding the apostolic injunctions, squandered the revenues of the monastery with impunity, and so persecuted the monks that two of their number, and a clergyman named Martin de Summis, who had done active service to the monastery, were sent to Rome to prosecute their appeal in the place of William Pike.

As soon as they had reached Winchester on their journey they were seized by Savaric's minions, and robbed of everything they had. Martin de Summis, however, managed to escape, but the two monks were put in irons and sent to different monasteries. Ultimately they were set at liberty, and one of them went to Rome to assist Martin. They stayed there some time, and obtained the Pope's letters to the delegates to prevail upon Savaric to make restitution to the

monks for all the injuries he had done them, or if he refused, the delegates were to restore the monastery to its former condition, in spite of any opposition. Savaric then adopted a conciliatory form of behaviour towards the monks, and induced them not to prosecute the execution of those letters, and gave up some of the possessions to the monastery. They also remitted the apostolic mandate, which they had received a second time, to the Bishop of Ely, the Abbot of St. Edmond's, the Prior of Christ Church at Canterbury, for regulating the priory and dividing the possessions of Glastonbury between the bishop and the monks, and assigning competent revenues, according to the value of the church, to the convent and their servants, without diminishing the usual number of monks, as also for the purposes of hospitality, alms, and the building of the church. The delegates then summoned the parties concerned before them, and too partially assigned to the bishop one fourth part of the possession, eleven manors, the lodgings in the monastery which before had been the property of the abbots, and the Priory of Kilcumyn, in Ireland. All the rest they consigned to the monks. Thus was Glastonbury Abbey stripped of its possessions. The Abbots Egelward and Egelnoth had commenced the work by their extravagance; the Danes and the Normans had carried it on, and the Bishops of Bath and Wells had completed it. But Savaric's day was fast closing, and probably the approaching end softened his heart, for of his own will he restored to Glastonbury the Manor of Lyme, which had belonged to the monastery kitchen, and the documents concerning it; he also removed the prior he had appointed, and Thomas Harold was restored. He died in the year 1205.

The monks now recovered themselves a little from the lethargy into which they had sunk, and appealed to Pope Innocent III. to reform their Church. King John also wrote to the Pope and cardinals, and to the ambassadors at the Papal court, upon the subject; also to the bishops, abbots, priors, earls, and barons throughout his kingdom, begging them to intercede with the Pope in the matter. Letters were accordingly addressed from all parts to the Pope, informing him of the loss the poor and pilgrims had sustained through the impoverishing of Glastonbury Abbey, and begging him as a national blessing to restore it to its original condition. The question excited general interest and sympathy, and the appeal was supported by nearly the whole Church. In reply to this entreaty, it was granted to the monks of Glastonbury that they might renew their suit before the Pope as soon as Savaric's vacancy was filled. He also sent his mandate to the Bishop of Winchester, and the Abbot of Battle, to inquire whether the Abbey of Glastonbury had been given in exchange for the city of Bath. Then Jocelin, a Wells man, and very much after the spirit and type of Savaric, succeeded to the bishopric. Immediately upon this, a deputation of monks was sent to Rome to beg the Pope to reform the monastery, and grant them a licence to choose an abbot. Unfortunately, just at this time England lay under the interdict pronounced by the Pope, because John would not allow Stephen, the cardinal, to take the archbishopric of Canterbury. As we have already noted, his excesses towards the Church brought upon the country the severer sentence of excommunication, which remained even after he had succumbed through the rebellion of his barons to the ecclesiastical power, as the clergy opposed its removal

until full restitution had been made. This circumstance proved very unfortunate for Glastonbury Abbey. Jocelin, appreciating the condition of John, thought it a favourable opportunity for upsetting the work of the poor monks, upon whom a ray of hope had fallen. Disguising his real purpose, he came forward with a proposition to the monks to refer the whole matter to the king, and abide by his decision as to the adjustment. They, thinking it would be the speediest way for a settlement, consented, while Jocelin privately arranged with the king, who was hardly pressed for money, to discharge him from all claims by sufferers in his diocese, upon condition that he would confer upon him the patronage of Glastonbury Abbey. To this arrangement John consented, and confirmed it by his charter; the monks in the meantime not suspecting any treachery, awaited in patience for some notice of settlement. During this interval the prior, whilst on his way to the Council held by the Pope in the year 1215, died at Troyes, in Champagne. He was succeeded in his office by Eustace Comyn.

Eustace Comyn, however, tried to retrieve the character he had lost by submitting to Savaric, by following up the suit with vigour. On the other hand, the bishop's party interposed many obstacles which the monks tried in vain to remove by argument and prescription. They were continually going to Rome appealing and writing for decisions at great loss of time and expense; and in everything Martin de Summis proved a true friend to them. Pope Innocent died soon after, and Honorius II. succeeded him; John also died, and was buried at Worcester in the monks' choir, 1217, being succeeded by Henry, his son, then only a youth.

Honorius had taken great interest in the Glastonbury suit, and as soon as he ascended the chair, the monks resolved upon bringing their case before him. He was inclined to settle the affair amicably rather than by a judicial sentence, and to that end he wrote to the Bishop of Bath, enjoining him not to be in any way troublesome nor offensive to the Convent of Glastonbury on account of the controversy between himself and them, but to treat them respectfully. He also commanded the Bishops of Exeter and Sarum, and a Canon of Exeter, in case they found anything done to the prejudice of the Church at Glastonbury, after their deputation had set out on their journey, to appear before him, to restore the monastery at once to its original condition, disregarding any appeal to the contrary whatever. He also wrote to the Bishop of Bath and to the Convent of Glastonbury, directing them to come to an amicable composition under one of those forms he sent to them enclosed in his bull, or any other that may be agreeable to them both. If they could not do this, then they might send their proxies to his presence to that effect. The first form the Pope suggested was this—that the bishop, the union continuing during his life, should enjoy all the temporalities and spiritualities as before, and that after his death the union should be dissolved and the monastery restored to its former condition, reserving for ever to the Bishops of Bath all the diocesan rights in the monastery. The second was that the union should be immediately dissolved; and that by apostolic authority the present bishop and his successors for ever should receive a yearly pension from the Monastery of Glastonbury of such value as the Pope should appoint; still, however, reserving the diocesan

rights to the bishop. The third form was that the union, continuing for ever, the quarter part of the revenues which had been allowed to the bishop should be abated as the Pope should ordain. The fourth form was that the union should be immediately dissolved, the present bishop still holding and possessing all the temporalities from the monastery which he had before, and only the spiritualities belonging to him as the diocesan, and that after the death of the present bishop, the monastery should be entirely restored to its former condition, still reserving to the bishops the diocesan rights.

But in case they could not agree to any of these propositions, and the parties should both consent to refer themselves to the Pope's disposal, he would then, by the help of God, provide in such manner for the peace and benefit of both that the dissensions and scandal should cease. The Pope also sent his letters to Richard, Bishop of Sarum, and Pandulphus, the elect of Norwich, enjoining them to persuade and induce the bishop and monks to agree among themselves pursuant to one of the forms in his mandate directed to them. By virtue of this authority, the Bishop of Sarum and the Abbot of Reading, whom Pandulphus had appointed in his place, summoned the parties to appear before them at Shestibury; Bishop Jocelin in person, and the Convent of Glastonbury by their attorneys appointed, in order to come to some composition pursuant to the apostolic mandate. Thus, after many debates, through the mediation of this bishop and abbot, they at last consented to a form of agreement, which the mediators transmitted to the Pope with their letters, accompanied by messengers from both parties. Eustace, the prior, was then

labouring under a fit of sickness, and could not be present. The form of agreement was this—that there should remain to the bishop and his successors for ever the manors of Wynescombe, Pokelechirche, Blakeford, and Cranmere; but that there should be restored to the monks the following manors, which had before formed part of the bishop's portion, viz., Mere, Bokelond, Hynton, Cristemaleford, Badbury, and Assebury, excepting the advowsons of the churches of all these manors but that of Mere. This was concluded on the Octave of St. John the Evangelist in the year 1218; and then William and Michael, two monks, set out for the Court of Rome, where they at once obtained an entire dissolution of the union between the monastery and the Bishops of Bath, and free liberty to elect a new abbot according to their regular observances, the bulls and all other instruments concerning the union obtained by the bishops being declared void. They also obtained a renewal of their privileges concerning the use of pontifical ornaments and blessing of priestly vestments which had been formerly granted by Pope Celestine. Thus the ancient monastery of Glastonbury, which had been deprived of the dignity of an Abbey from the year 1192 till the year 1218, a widowhood of twenty-six years, was by Pope Honorius II. restored, though not wholly, to its former condition, to be governed by an abbot chosen from amongst the monks. Soon after this happy settlement the monks William and Michael returned from the Court of Rome, on the Octave of Peter and Paul, and the whole Convent, with tears of joy and gratitude, at once assembled for the solemn purpose of electing a new abbot.

CHAPTER XII.

Missal-Painting.*

THE review of monastic literature which we can present in the limited space of a single chapter must necessarily be a concise and condensed one, a mere skeleton of the superstructure, not exhaustive but rather suggestive of the sources where information may be found by others who may care to investigate the merits or demerits of a subject about which there have been such varying representations. A complete history of monastic literature would occupy as many volumes as this chapter will pages, for it would not only necessitate a review of certain portions of the literature of every civilized country in Europe, but to a great extent at some periods of the whole of European literature. The materials of history, the hymnology of the Church, the elements of science, art, and the very woof as it were of modern literature, were all handed down to us by that great institution, whose fate as it chanced in England we are

* *Authorities*.—Plinii Nat. Hist. ; Cornel. Nepos ; Giraldu Cambrensis ; Anglia Sacra ; Brompton's Chron. ; Humphrey's "Art of Illumination and Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages ;" Sylvestre, "Paléographie Universelle." (Sir F. Madden's edition) ; Muratori, *Antiq Ital. Med. Ævi* ; Lanzi, *Hist. of Painting* ; Baldinucci *Notizie* ;

Froissart's *Chronicles* ; Mrs. Jamieson's "Life of Our Lord ;" Cotton. MSS.—Claud. B. iv.—Faustina, B vi.—Galba, A xviii.—Nero, C iv.—Tiber, A ii., C vi.—Vesp. A i. ; Harleian MSS. 2904, 5102, 7026, 2900, 2846, 2884, 2853 ; Bib. Regia, 2 A xxii., 1 D i., 2 A xviii., and 2 B viii.

endeavouring to delineate. We have hitherto striven to make this investigation a fair and impartial one, based upon facts not as represented by the pens of Protestant historians, but upon facts gleaned almost entirely from the works of men who lived and died in the bosom of that Church of which this institution was the cherished offspring. Still more unreasonable is the prejudice of many who refuse to award any meed of praise to the literary labours of monasticism, who look upon the monk as a lazy, sensual, selfish misanthrope, who have heard of the dark ages, and are therewith satisfied that they must have been totally dark—intellectual obstinates who wilfully shut their eyes and maintain there is no light. We may have doctrinal prejudices, theological prejudices, social prejudices, against monasticism, but these things ought not to prevent a reasoning man from paying his homage to the genius which may be found in its works. Genius is universal; it is not confined to any doctrine, for it is found in all doctrines; it is not limited to any age, for it is common to all ages; it does not flourish merely under enlightened and free governments, for it has lived triumphant through the dull oppression of tyranny; riches cannot create it nor poverty crush it out; it is born in the hovel; it is nurtured on bleak mountains; it will flourish even under the weary training of indigence and wasting toil; like air, light, and beauty, it is the free, the unbought gift of God.

We have already, in a former chapter, described the scriptorium, or room adjoining the library, where books were copied and multiplied by monks chosen for that work. We will only add to that description what we glean from the rule of St. Victor—that no visitors

were allowed to go into the scriptorium except the abbot, the prior, the sub-prior, and the precentor—that the abbot ordered what books were to be transcribed, and that the writers were appointed by him. At all periods it was a great ambition amongst the monks to be a good transcriber and decorator of manuscripts. Not only was it a matter of distinction but a sure path to promotion; many who had worked well in the scriptorium were rewarded for their services with abbacies and bishoprics. In the thirteenth century a monk of the monastery of St. Swithin, at Winchester, was recommended for the vacant abbacy of Hyde, as being well versed in the glosses of the sacred text, a skilful writer, a good artist, and clever at painting initial letters.

In this scriptorium was cultivated and brought to perfection an art which has been the admiration of all subsequent ages, but which printing completely swept away, and failed to supply anything adequate in its place—that art is called illumination. It has a career of its own, and a value as a beautiful eloquent monument in the history of the Church, and under these two phases we shall proceed to investigate this first part of the literary labour of monasticism.

The art of illuminating manuscripts was not, as has been supposed, originated by Christianity, though it was brought to perfection under its sway. There are two periods in its history; the first goes far back into the remote past, to the times of the Egyptian papyri, sixteen centuries before Christ, and the second period commences with the chrysography or writing in gold of the Greek manuscripts, between the fifth and eighth centuries after Christ. The more ancient rolls of

Egyptian papyri are written in red, with a reed, decorated by rude drawings similarly traced, representing mystical scenes of the Egyptian mythology—some of these papyri, however, are of higher finish, being elaborately painted, gilded, and extending to the length of sixty feet. There is preserved in the museum of the Louvre, a specimen of the plain style of papyrus, ornamented with illustrations, drawn in outline. It is said to be one of those Rituals which are often found enclosed in mummy coffins; it is about forty feet in length, and is in a good state of preservation. There are directions on it for the illuminator, such as were adopted also by the Christian penmen. In the corner of the space left for illumination there was inserted a small sketch of the subject to guide the artist. The French recovered also a specimen of the superior kind of papyri at Thebes, in 1798.* It consists of a number of religious scenes, comprising many figures of human beings and animals, drawn with a pen, and brilliantly coloured. It is about forty-four feet in length, though imperfect.

It is more than probable, also, that the Romans had some knowledge of the art of illustrating manuscripts. The passage usually quoted in support of this theory occurs in the Natural History of Pliny, where we are told that Varro wrote the lives of 700 Romans, which he illustrated with their portraits. But there is also an account of a similar work by Pomponius Atticus, recorded by Cornelius Nepos, who tells us that Atticus wrote about the actions of the great men of Rome, which descriptions he ornamented with their portraits.

* Published entire by the Imperial Government, in a work called "Description de l'Egypte," 1812.

It is impossible to fix the time when the art of Christian illumination commenced, but most probably it occurred when the ancient fashion of rolled manuscripts gave way to something more like the present book form; that is, instead of one long narrow sheet of some forty or sixty feet, a number of square sheets placed upon each other, and sewn together at the back. The ancient manuscripts were rolled either upon one or two rollers. The second roller was adopted for the convenience of the reader, who might roll off his manuscript as he read it from one to the other; thus one roller was placed at the end of the manuscript, round which it was rolled first, then a second roller was attached to the commencement of the manuscript, and upon this the reader rolled it off as he read; it was the duty of the librarians to roll it back again for the convenience of the next reader. As long as this mode prevailed there could be no elaborate painting or gilding of manuscripts, such as we are familiar with, and this is attested by the fact that the manuscripts of this rolled form which were dug up from Herculaneum and Pompeii have no trace of decoration. But in the very earliest specimens of the book form which came into vogue early in the second century of the Christian era, there were decorations of various degrees of richness. The Dioscorides in the Vienna library, and the celebrated Virgil of the Vatican, said to have been executed in the fourth century, are amongst the earliest specimens of illuminated manuscripts. Still the miniature prevailed in these, the decorations in the Dioscorides being very simple, but absent altogether in the Virgil, whilst the miniatures are large and clear. Decoration, however, was prevalent in that early time, for St. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century,

complains of the abuse of this art of filling up books with ornamented capital letters of an enormous size. It is therefore in this fourth century that we find a marked advance in the art of illumination. The most valuable books were written in gold and silver inks by scribes who were called *chrysographi*; the vellum was stained with rose coloured or purple dye, to throw up the gold and silver letters. One of the most valued authorities on the text of the New Testament is the version by Ulphilas, the Gothic bishop, who lived in the early part of the fourth century. A copy of this in letters of silver, with the initials in gold, was executed in the fifth century, and is now preserved in the royal library at Upsal, under the well-known title of the "*Codex Argenteus*."

Some of the MSS. of this period were written on a blue ground in silver, with the name of God in gold. This magnificent form of copying was devoted principally to the Gospels and Scriptures generally. To this succeeded, as an influence of Byzantine luxury, the style of writing on a gilded ground in letters of black. During these early periods miniatures formed the principal feature of the ornamentation, but towards the seventh century, two centuries after the fall of Rome, a change came over the style of art, and miniatures gradually gave way to more elaborate decoration. In this age, too, the initial letter sprang up. In the most ancient manuscripts it was not distinguished from the text, but from the seventh to the eleventh century separate capital letters of a large size were the characteristics of the volumes most decorated. It is to this period that the origin of the various schools of illumination may be traced. Rome had succumbed to barbarian violence, and her arts,

though decaying, still exerted an influence upon this new style of painting, then in its infancy. That influence was naturally stronger in Italy, and, therefore, the early illuminations of the Italian school bear traces of the old Roman style. In France the same influence was manifest, mixed up with national peculiarities, and this school was consequently called the Franco-Roman. Miniatures now were gradually displaced by intricate ornamentation, interlaced fretwork, or entwined branches of white or gold, on a background of variegated colours. But far away in the distant west, in a country which had never been under Roman domination, and was therefore free from Roman influence, a style of art rose up of a purely original character. Historical research has placed it beyond question that in these remote times Ireland was far in advance of other nations in the scale of civilization. Her fame had extended over Europe, her monasteries were adorned with men of great piety and learning, who were the trainers of the leading spirits of the age. She was the first to break through the dense darkness of the times, and as she gave Christianity to Scotland, so she also imparted to the Saxons the art of illumination. The very earliest mention we have in the history of our country of an illuminator, is of Dagæus, Abbot of Iniskeltra, who lived in the early part of the sixth century, and died about 587. Adamnanus, the Saxon Abbot of Iona, retained Genereus, who had taught illumination in the Irish monasteries, to impart that knowledge to the Saxons; and in the eighth century another Irish monk, Ultan, is mentioned as having a great reputation as an illuminator of MSS. Bede also confirms this fact of Irish civilization, for he asserts that it was the custom to send youths out of

England into Ireland to study at her monasteries. It was from Ireland, then, that the Anglo-Saxons learned the art of illumination.*

Later in the tenth century, a style, peculiar and original, was started, it is said, by Dunstan, who was a great illuminator, which consisted in a novel use of the foliage, quite distinct from all other styles. It prevailed to the end of the Saxon rule, and is known by the name of "Opus Anglicum." One of the finest specimens of the Anglo-Saxon school is extant in the Cottonian Library, in the shape of the "Durham Book, or St. Cuthbert's Gospels;" it was the work of Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, in honour of St. Cuthbert; its execution extended from the year 698 to 721; it is peculiarly a Saxon piece of art, and belongs to that species known as "tesselated." Giraldus Cambrensis, who wrote in the twelfth century, speaks of having seen a similar MS. at Kildare, which was called "The Evangelisterium."

The finest specimen of English illumination of the tenth century is the Duke of Devonshire's celebrated "Benedictional," by St. Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, written and painted between 963 and 984. The first page is a magnificent picture of a number of glorified confessors; it was executed by a monk, of whom we shall speak hereafter. Up to the twelfth century, decorations were the peculiar characteristics of illumination, although some Saxon MSS. written during those periods have pictures drawn in outline; but the great point in all richly illuminated MSS.

* Mr. Noel Humphreys, in his beautiful little work upon the "Art of Illumination and Missal Painting," has given as a specimen of

this Anglo-Hibernian school, a page from the Gospels of Mælbrigid Mac Durnan, the MS. of which is preserved in the Lambeth MSS.

was the initial letter, and every effort of art was exerted to make that as rich and magnificent as possible. After that time we find these initial letters ornamented also with drawings of the human form, animals, birds, &c., in addition to the foliage which had hitherto predominated. The colouring of the period was richer also, and these MSS. so decorated with pictures were called "historiated," and led by degrees to the fine historical illuminations of subsequent centuries. Gradually these initial letters became larger and longer, until their tails reached nearly the whole length of the page. They were then carried round the bottom, until out of this progression of the initial letter arose what is called the "Gothic bracket," an ornamentation like a clasp, which ran round three sides of the page. During the fourteenth century miniatures were again introduced, and were improving and becoming more finished up to the middle of the sixteenth century. The Gothic bracket was also extended gradually, until at last it embraced the whole page, and became one of the great features of subsequent illumination—the "border."

In these borders all kinds of subjects were crowded ✓
—foliage, flowers, birds, animals, and miniatures, and ✓
towards the end of the fifteenth century a background
was added, first in parts, and ultimately entirely.
A work which appeared in the thirteenth century
exerted, however, a great influence over the art of
illumination, even down to the time of its decline,
three centuries later. It was a series of meditations
on the life of Christ, by John Fidenza, better known
as Bonaventura, and the minute descriptions it gave
of the various scenes of which it treated formed a sort
of ideal, the influence of which may be traced in nearly

all subsequent treatment of similar subjects, and accounts for their general uniformity. During the Byzantine period, illuminating was confined to manuscripts of the Scriptures, the works of the Fathers, and books for the services in the church. To these were then added volumes for private devotion, such as Horæ, or prayers for hours and holy days, sometimes called Missals. Legends, history, and poetry followed, and in the fourteenth century the works of Chaucer and the Chronicles of Froissart opened a vast field to the illuminators for the delineation of battles, sieges, religious ceremonies, public events, and scenes of domestic life. Some copies of classical authors also were then illustrated, until by the end of the fifteenth century nearly every kind of formal document was illuminated, including charters, wills, indentures, patents of nobility, statutes of foundations, and mortuary registers.

But the printing-press was looming in the distance, and the death-knell of this beautiful art began to toll. Its fall, which was inevitable, was, however, gradual. Men could not be weaned at once from these illuminated books, and a sort of temporary alliance between the two arts was effected. The earliest printed books were illuminated, spaces which had been formerly left by the copyist were now reserved by the printer, and the whole work when it left his hands was given over to the artist; then the subjects were engraven on wood, and transferred to the vellum by means of ink and the press; but the manuscript style was still preserved, and the closest imitation of written volumes was retained by the early printers, and with such dexterity that it is not an easy thing to detect some of the earliest printed books from manuscripts. Perhaps

the last effort to illuminate a book by the printer's art to the extent of the older MSS., was an edition of the Liturgy, brought out in 1717 by John Short, entirely engraved on copper plates. The pages were surrounded by borders, and embellished with pictures and decorated initial letters. Even down to the early part of the present century, books were printed with ornamental initial letters, and borders on the top and bottom of each page, both of which may be seen occasionally in the present day, more especially in works issued from presses which seek to revive the antique type and style. In concluding this portion of our sketch, we may mention another characteristic of early MS. writing which exists in some of our books in present use. If we take up an edition of a Greek classic printed some forty or fifty years ago, or even less, we shall find it almost unintelligible, from the number of contractions used in the printing; and if we go further back still, we shall find these contractions more numerous. It arose in the eighth or ninth century; the scribes introduced into the copying of Greek MSS. a system of contraction called tacygraphy, by which two, three, or more letters, were expressed by one character, which was termed "nexus literarum." The editors of the early period of printing adopted them in their type, and they continued in use down to the beginning of the present century.

As we have thus given a condensed review of the history and development of that most beautiful art of illuminating MSS., we shall proceed to describe the details of the work as it was carried on for centuries in the various monasteries in Europe. The parchment was cut into sheets of the required size, and prepared for the copyist in the following manner:—they were

first rubbed over with the powdered bone of the cuttlefish, or with the ashes of a certain kind of bone or wood burned and pulverized; a wheel with sharp teeth at equal distances was then run down each side of the sheet, and lines ruled across from point to point between which the matter was to be written; it was then handed to the scribe, who began his work. In the ancient manuscripts there is to be found no paging or table of contents. The whole work was divided into packets of parchment sheets, each containing about four leaves; these packets were sometimes marked with a number temporarily on the first page, which was cut off when the whole was bound. At the end of each section of leaves the scribe wrote the word with which the next section should commence, a practice continued by printers under the title of "catch words." If a manuscript contained several treatises on different subjects, a list of contents was appended, the initial word of each tract, and the number of sections. As soon as the copying was finished, the work of illustration commenced.

The outlines were traced with a pencil made of silver, or brass with a silver point; then the metallic outlines were gone over with a fine quill pen, dipped in a preparation of lampblack and gum. There are many MSS. extant originally intended to be illuminated, but, from some unknown cause, have come down to us in this unfinished state of outline sketches. The next step was to wash in the shades with ink and water of three degrees of strength; at this point the gilding was done, in order that the burnishing might not interfere with the colours. The raised or embossed gold grounds were executed first by laying the metal leaf on a thick smooth bed made of fine plaster, carefully

ground; they were then burnished, and if it were intended to decorate these raised gold grounds with engravings or patterns cut in the metal, that was done as the next stage. After this the large masses of flat painted gilding were added, and the colours laid on with the utmost care as to the tints. The last process, which was intrusted only to superior hands, was that of diapering, pencilling, inserting brilliant touches of gold and white, and in fact finishing the whole work. These two forms of gold work, the embossed and the flat, are to be found in perfection in MSS. of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They prepared their gold with great care. In the fourteenth century the gold leaf was ground with honey, carefully washed, and the powder mixed with gum water. In a treatise written by Theophilus,* the pulverization of gold for painting forms a difficult process; he directs that the pure gold should be filed into a cup, and then washed with a pencil in the shell of a sea fish, after which it is to be milled in a mortar made of copper and tin, with a long pestle worked by a strap and wheel. Then the gold filings are to be milled in water for two or three hours and gradually poured off. The powder thus produced was to be tempered with isinglass and laid on a ground of red lead, mixed with the white of an egg; after this it was burnished with a bloodstone, a shining horn tablet being placed under the gilded picture. The Anglo-Saxons used to rub gold filings in a mortar with sharp vinegar, and then dissolve them with salt and nitre.

The principal colours used, according to Theophilus, were vermilion orpiment, Greek green, dragon's-blood,

* Theoph. De Diversis Artibus.

granetum, carminium, saffron, folium, brunum, minium, white and black. After they had ground their colours on a slab of porphyry, they placed them in covered glass vessels under water, which not only preserved them from dust, but kept them always soft and ready for use. The old painters never touched their colours with iron, but used as a palette knife a thin blade of wood. They made their own pencils and brushes, the pencils being made of minever tails, set in quills, and the brushes of the bristles of the white domestic pig, bound to a stick. When a manuscript had passed through all these stages of copying and illuminating, it had to be bound, a work also done in the scriptorium. The sacred MSS. at an early period were bound between two wooden boards covered with engraved plates of gold and silver set off with crystals and rubies. But the usual binding of volumes for the services of the church was in the skins of deer, sheep, and calves, pieces of which were stretched over the boards, and the leaves were sewn together by the same material cut into strips. The ecclesiastics were forbidden to indulge in the pleasures of the chase, although the love of that sport was a universal passion, and it was with great difficulty they could be restrained from joining in such diversions; but Charlemagne granted permission to priests to hunt for the purpose of procuring deer-skins to bind books. Grants were made to monasteries by other sovereigns of a certain number of skins annually. The corners of the covers of large service books were protected by plates and bosses of metal; there was a metal centre with a large projected hemisphere on each side, and across the book were two strong loops of leather for the purpose of lifting it when closed. The service books of the

church were necessarily very large, and were therefore placed on a high sloping shelf, around which the choristers stood, whilst the precentor, standing behind them, turned over the leaves with a staff from above their heads. Such are a few of the details of the art of illuminating manuscripts, which flourished in the monasteries from the eighth to the eighteenth centuries, when it died out in Europe under Louis XIV. The schools of this art, which sprang up from its cultivation, may be enumerated by six denominations, as shown in the following table :—

GREEK or BYZANTINE, from the eighth to the tenth century: the *Irish-Saxon*, *Anglo-Saxon*, *Franco-Saxon*, and the painting of *Russia* belong to this school.

EARLY ROMAN, tenth to fourteenth century, which includes also the *Anglo-Norman*.

ITALIAN, fourteenth to sixteenth century, including the *Spanish* and *Portuguese*.

EARLY FRENCH, fourteenth to seventeenth century, under which may be ranged the *later English*.

FLEMISH, GERMAN, and DUTCH, from the close of the fifteenth century.

LATER FRENCH, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

We have already remarked that a genius for illumination and excellence in copying were at one time sure recommendations for promotion. The memories of men too who had spent their lives in this occupation were tenderly cherished; and two incidents preserved in history attesting the fact we shall mention. Baldinucci, in his "History of Painting," gives an account of two brethren in the Camaldulan Monastery, *Degli Angeli*, at Florence, who were most indefatigable copyists. Dom Jacopo Fiorentino made his appearance at the

monastery of Degli Angeli in the year 1340; he is described as a monk of holy manners, who, when he was not engaged in monastic duties, spent all his time in copying. He acquired an extraordinary expertness and elegance in writing the peculiar character used in the books of the choir. His talents were appreciated, and Dom Jacopo was seldom idle. He wrote twenty massive choral books for his own monastery, the largest ever seen in Italy, and a great many others for Rome, Venice, and Murano. His fame spread abroad, and after his death the brethren of the order preserved the right hand of this scribe, which had done so much good work, as a lasting memorial of his name. Don Silvestro, another monk living in the monastery of Degli Angeli at the same time, excelled in miniature painting, and to his lot fell the decoration of those very books, as they issued from the facile pen of Dom Jacopo. His work was thoroughly appreciated by the great artists of the best ages of Italy. Lorenzo the Magnificent, and Leo X., his son, were pleased to accord their admiration. When he died his right hand was also embalmed. Although this work of copying and illuminating was carried on generally in the scriptorium of the monastery, yet occasionally a monk had a room to himself for the purpose, bearing the same name. Giraldus Cambrensis, in his "Life of St. David," tells us that the great bishop commenced writing a copy of St. John's Gospel in gold and silver letters in *his own scriptorium* at Menevia: "Scriptorium suum locumque laboris."*

Many of the names of great illuminators are lost in oblivion, but some have been preserved. Of these,

* Anglia Sacra, vol. ii., p. 635.

as our investigation is directed particularly to the monachism of our own country, we shall dwell more largely upon those men who were born on British soil. We have already adverted to the peculiarly advanced state of the Irish monasteries in the very earliest times. There can be no doubt that both as missionaries and educators they took the lead in those remote periods. Muratori, the great Italian historian of the middle ages, mentions Ireland as surpassing other nations in the west in the career of letters,* and we have already quoted the testimony of Bede. We shall therefore commence our review of the English art of illumination with the name of the Irish abbot already alluded to, as the first upon record, *Dagæus*, Abbot of Iniskeltra, who died about the year 587, and excelled not only in writing, but in binding and decoration. The next in order is the monk *Genereus*, an Anglo-Saxon, who had both studied and taught in the Irish schools; his services were retained by Adamnanus to teach the Saxon monks in the monastery of Iona; and the third, as we have before mentioned, is an Irish monk, *Utan*, who, at the end of the eighth century, was renowned as an illuminator. The seed fell upon good soil, and bore abundant fruit, for we next read of *Eadfrith* and *Ethelwold*, both abbots of Lindisfarne, and bishops of Durham, who, early in the eighth century, wrote and illuminated the magnificent copy of the Gospels in golden letters, to the honour of St. Cuthbert, which is now preserved in the Cottonian Library at the British Museum, and known as the "Durham Book." There is good reason to suppose that *Dunstan* excelled in illumination. In a manuscript in the Bodleian Library,

* Muratori—Antiq. Ital. Medii Ævi, Dissert. 43.

there is a drawing purporting to be by his hand—a figure of Christ appearing to the prelate, who is prostrate at his feet. *Godeman*, to whom we have alluded, was chaplain to Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, at whose instigation he undertook the task of writing and illuminating the celebrated Benedictional, which is preserved in the Duke of Devonshire's library. In return for this work, Ethelwold made him Abbot of Thorney. He flourished about 970. *Ervenius*, a monk of St. Edmondsbury Abbey, was renowned as an illuminator, about ten years later. In a life of Wulstan, Bishop of Winchester, written by William of Malmesbury, we are told that Ervenius was his tutor, and that young Wulstan was first attracted to letters by the beautiful illustrations of a sacramentarium and psalter, from which he was taught. "Thus," says the biographer, "the youth Wulstan acquired, almost by miracle, the chief heads of the most precious things, for while those lustrous beauties entered in at the apertures of his eyes, he received the knowledge of sacred letters into his very heart." A similar instance is recorded in the life of Alfred, who, when a child, was drawn towards books by the charm of the illustrations. In Brompton's Chronicle we are told that *Osmund*, the Bishop of Salisbury, in the year 1076, did not disregard the labour of writing, binding, and illuminating books.* *Eadwinus*, a monk of Canterbury, in the middle of the twelfth century, has left a monument of his labours behind him, in the shape of an elaborate psalter, preserved in Trinity College, Cambridge. At the end of this psalter are two drawings, one of Christ

* Ipse episcopus libros scribere, illuminare, et ligare, non fastidiret.—*Brompton Chron.*, ann. 1076.

Church and the monastery at Canterbury, and the other a full length portrait of himself. In the same volume are many historical figures, with initial letters in gold, silver, and vermilion. We include in our list *Matthew Paris*, the historian, who, although he is supposed to have been a Frenchman, yet passed his life in St. Alban's monastery, wrote an English history,* and may at least be taken as a naturalized, if not a born Englishman. He is reported to have had a good knowledge of painting, architecture, and the mathematics. The history which is called "Historia Major," up to the year 1235, was in all probability the work of another. Matthew Paris wrote the continuation, and copied the whole as it is now in the British Museum, and illustrated it. The next English name rescued from the oblivion of the past, is that of *Alan Strayler*, who was also a monk of St. Alban's, about the year 1463. His work is contained in a volume called the "Golden Register of St. Alban's," extant in the Cottonian Library.† It is a record of the benefactors of the monastery down to the year 1463. His own portrait is inserted as a benefactor, inasmuch as, according to the text, "he had given to the adorning of the present book very much labour, and had also remitted a debt of 3s. 4d. due to him for colours." Beneath his portrait are two lines in Latin, to the effect that—

* Or rather, a continuation of one; the first part of it, from 1066 to 1235, is attributed to Roger of Wendover, who was in the same monastery. William of Rishanger continued it to the year 1273, from the point where Matthew Paris leaves off (1259), but the whole is frequently quoted as by Matthew

Paris. The probabilities are greater in favour of his being an Englishman than the contrary. His works were admired by the early Reformers, for the bold and vigorous manner in which he wrote upon ecclesiastical affairs.

† Cotton MSS.—Nero. D vii.

“The painter, Alan Strayler, here is given,
Who dwells for ever with the choir of heaven.”

There are many other portraits of royal and noble personages, holding their respective donations. About thirty years afterwards died an eccentric recluse, *John Rous*, called the hermit of Guy's Cliff. He was chantry priest at a small chapel, founded by Guy, Earl of Warwick, at Guy's Cliff, and from the austere, solitary life he led there, acquired the appellation of the “hermit.” He was an antiquary and a historian. He wrote a life of Richard Beauchamp, fourteenth Earl of Warwick, and illustrated it with fifty-three large drawings, executed with a pen, which style of sketching in those days was called “tricking,” or “drawing in trick.” This MS. is still to be seen in the Cottonian collections.* Rous spent his time in the study of history and genealogy, and wrote and ornamented several manuscripts, one of which was a roll of the Earls of Warwick. This is the last Englishman who is recorded to have attained to any excellence in the art of illumination.

We must not omit some of the most prominent of foreign artists, who distinguished themselves in this study, and in the thirteenth century *Oderico*, Canon of Sienna, is mentioned as being one of the most renowned. Lanzi, in his “History of Painting in Italy,”† gives a description of one of his MSS., which is preserved in the library of the academy at Florence, decorated with initials, ornaments, and figures of animals painted by him in 1213. The names of two celebrated illuminators are mentioned by Dante in his “Divine Comedy,”

* Cotton MSS.—Julius, E iv.

† Lanzi—Hist. of Painting, book ii.,—Siennese School.

though unfortunately one of them is in the state of Purgatory :—

Oh, diss' io lui, non se' tu *Oderisi*,
 L'onor d'Agobbio e l'onor di quell' arte
 Ch' alluminare è chiamata in Parisi ?
 Frate, diss' egli, più ridon le carte
 Che pennelleggia *Franco Bolognese* :
 L'onore è tutto or suo e mio in parte.
 Ben non sare' io stato sì cortese
 Mentre ch' io vissi, per lo gran disio
 Dell' eccellenza ove mio core intese.
 Di tal superbia qui si paga il fio :
 Ed ancor non sarei qui, se non fosse
 Che, possendo peccar, mi volsi a Dio.

DANTE'S *Purgat.* ; Canto xi., vv. 74-90.

Oderigi d'Agubbio, whom Dante saw writhing in Purgatory under the weight of an immense stone, was born at Agubbio, or Gubbio, near Perugia, and died about the year 1300 ; he was the friend of Giotto and Dante at Rome. He was introduced by Giotto to Benedict VIII., for whom he illuminated many volumes. *Francis of Bologna*, the other mentioned by the poet, was also in the employ of Benedict, and executed many works for the Papal library—probably was a rival of *Oderigi*, hence the jealousy confessed by the Purgatorial sufferer in the latter lines of the quotation.* There is an account in Baldinucci of one *Cybo*, who lived in the fourteenth century, and is better known as the Monk of the Golden Islands, from his custom of retiring from his monastery at Lerino every spring and autumn to an

* Giotto, the friend, is mentioned in the well-known lines which follow :—

“Credette Cimabue nella pintura
 Tener lo campo ; ed ora, ha Giotto il grido,
 Sì che la fama di colui oscura.”

island in the Mediterranean off the coast of France, for the wise purpose of the contemplation of nature. "He would walk abroad," we are informed, "not only to contemplate the beautiful prospects offered by the shores of those islands, the mountains, villages, and the sea itself, but also the birds, the flowers, the trees, the fruits, the rarer fishes of the sea, and the little animals of the earth, all of which he would draw and imitate in a wonderful manner.* Would that such an inspiration might steal over the minds of some of our modern artists! In 1433, according to Lanzi, flourished one *Fra Giovanni da Fiesola*, a Dominican friar, who attained to great fame as an illuminator. Then from the monastery of *Degli Angeli* came again another artist, *Don Bartolommeo*, Abbot of St. Clement, who was a painter from youth. Vasari speaks of books and beautiful illustrations executed by him for the monks of *Sante Flora and Lucilla* in the Abbey of Arezzo, and in a missal given to Sixtus IV. Two great French illuminators come next upon the scene, one of whom, *Andrieu de Beauneveu*, is mentioned in the "Chronicles of Froissart."† One of his works, called "Le Petit Psautier," was valued at eighty livres, about £120 of modern English money. Another of his works was "The Great Hours of the Duke de Berri," facsimiles of which will be found in the works of Sylvestre and Noel Humphreys.‡ He died in the year 1416, leaving a volume of "Hours" behind him unfinished, which was bought by the French government for 13,000 francs. The other French artist was *Jean Foucquet*, a

* Baldinucci—Notizie de' Professore del Disegno.

† Chroniques de Froissart, vol. iv., p. 71, Lyons.

‡ Paléog. Univ., plate 195 : Madden, ii., 544-7. "Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages," plate xxi.

native of Tours, who is spoken of as one of the glories of the fifteenth century. His principal works were the illumination of a book called "L'Ancienneté des Juifs," and the "Hours of Anne of Bretagne," two specimens of which may be found in Mr. Noel Humphrey's excellent work before alluded to.* The greatest artist in the Italian school of miniature was *Don Giulio Clovio*, whose advent closes the history of the art in the fifteenth century. The incidents of his career may be found in Vasari; they are eventful; he was driven into a monastery in early life, when the Spaniards devastated Rome in 1527. He threw up the cowl some years after, by the Pope's permission, and went into the service of Cardinal Grimani, for whom he executed many of his best works. "An Office of the Virgin" occupied him nine years in painting; it is still extant in the Museo Borbonico at Naples. He also illuminated a copy of Grimani's "Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans:" this is now in the Soane Museum. In Sylvestre's "Palæography"† is a copy of one of Clovio's miniatures from the MS. of Dante's "Vision," now in the Vatican. Another splendid relique of this artist consists of a large miniature of the "Crucifixion," executed for Gregory XIII.; it was brought from the Vatican during the campaigns in Italy, in the time of the French Revolution, by the Abbe Celotti. He was called the Michael Angelo of painters, and died in 1578, at the advanced age of eighty. His last days were spent in peace, as Vasari tells us, "he does not study, or do anything but seek the salvation of his soul by good works, and a life spent wholly

* "Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages," plates xxxi. and xxxii.

† Sylvestre—Paléog. Univ., plate 162.

apart from mundane affairs." *Godefroy* and *Dutillet* were two distinguished French illuminators of the sixteenth century, and *Johan Benzel*, of Ulm, is the one with whom Vasari concludes his anecdotes of painters.

This list is scanty enough, and there can be no doubt that hundreds of names have sunk in the oblivion of the past; devotees to this beautiful art, and victims to the negligence with which contemporary historians treated their labours; they slumber in their unknown graves, but their works exist to the admiration and speculation of modern times. We have given a very cursory and rapid review of the rise and development of this most beautiful art; the most beautiful thing that mediæval Christianity has bequeathed to us. We have endeavoured also to give the names of such of our countrymen as excelled in its exercise, and it only remains to say a few words upon its use, as a work of refined piety, before we proceed to glean the historical lessons as to the doctrinal development of the Church, to be drawn from these art expressions of different periods, for there is nothing upon which a nation or a community stamps the characteristics of its individuality more clearly than upon its art.

These illuminations have a great historical value, as evidences of the life of the times. Were it not for them the past as a life would be lost to us. We should be almost ignorant of the modes and manners of existence of our ancestors. We might have descriptive representations of the deeds they did, but their customs, their habits, their amusements, and their interior existence would have been lost to us for ever. It is that which enables us to put as it were a soul into history, to revive a past life in our minds, to resuscitate it, and

make it live again before us; all this, but for the preservation of illuminated MSS., would have been irretrievably lost. It is from them alone we can *see* the customs of the domestic life of our ancestors, their habits at home, at table, in the field, in society; for those pictures, though executed to represent a life of Eastern and Biblical incident, have this peculiarity about them, that the paraphernalia of the scenes are in keeping with the times of their execution; so that unconsciously these monks, when decorating their psalters and their missals, have handed down to us the very best illustration of the written history of their age.* We have hitherto reviewed this labour as a work of art, but we must not forget its higher and nobler motive. Art may be kindled by the fire of ambition or the love of gain, but the motive which inspired the monastic illuminator was a far higher one. Whatever we may think of what we sometimes call the folly of spending years in illustrating a Gospel or a psalter, we must be driven to the conclusion that as these monks were situated, it was a work of devotion. No other feeling could prompt them to give their lives to such a labour, because it was labour unrequited. In our times, or in fact in all times, men will accomplish marvels for money, but these men were paid nothing for their labour, not even the flattery of admiration.

* I know of no better evidence of the value of these MSS. than the excellent and valuable work compiled by Mr. Thomas Wright, a great authority on Saxon antiquities, called "The Domestic Manners and Sentiments of the Middle Ages in England." The work is compiled principally from these

sources, the illustrations are copied from ancient MSS., and it contains a repertoire of nearly all that can be gleaned from them, forming a picture of the life of Saxons, Normans, and early English, as it was sketched by themselves a most valuable work, both for the historian and general reader.

In the early periods of the art, it is true that in one or two cases an illuminator was made an abbot or a bishop, but those cases were so exceptional, that scarcely half a dozen instances could be found in history of such honour being conferred upon an obscure monastic artist. The works over which they spent their long days and longer nights were sent into the church for use; gems of art they were, but exhibited to no public admiration, to no applauding critics; there they lay hidden in monastic libraries, in church vestries, in convent chests, to moulder in obscurity for the amusement and commercial speculation of an after age, when the life they embellished had died out in the world, and it should become impossible to ascertain the names of the men whose busy fingers were plied with such magic skill. Nothing but devotion could have prompted such labour as that; and who are we, to say that in the eyes of the Almighty the devotion which could spend years lovingly over the embellishment of a Gospel, to illustrate it with the choicest productions of genius, and to offer up to it all that was beautiful and good in thought, fancy, and execution—who are we, to say that such an offering may not have been under the circumstances in which they were placed as acceptable in the eyes of God as the limited devotion of modern life, with its mechanical modes, its periodical days of worship, amid long intervals of sin. The devotion of modern times may sometimes manifest itself in the erection of hospitals and churches, but we are not always sure that such deeds are free from the taint of ostentation of wealth or jealousy of hated heirs—to flaunt the one or to balk the others; but the devotion which found vent in missal-painting and copying the Scriptures by hand in the dark ages

must have been pure ; for we cannot, even by the most prejudiced investigation, discover any sordid or ambitious motive for it. Where there is no payment we may rest assured that labour is a labour of love. The best proof of the fact is the difficulty to get people to illuminate missals now.

It was an exquisitely beautiful art, and ought not to have died out so completely. Latterly, however, in the Church, to the scandal of vigilant Protestants, there has been a sort of attempt at a revival of mediævalism ; it has become the vogue to appeal to the Fathers, to sing mediæval hymns, and to decorate the covers of prayer-books and the interiors of churches with mediæval art ; but it has proved to be more a revival of mediæval forms than mediæval devotion. It has also become fashionable to study illumination—an elegant amusement for an idle hour, and many have tried it as an art, but it has failed both as an art and a work ; as an art, even in these days of art excellence, it has failed, and as a work, it has not been pursued with that avidity to bring success, because the modern stimulant is wanting—it pays not ; it is lifeless, automaton-like, a dead body galvanized, missal-painting without devotion.

But in our admiration of the genius and piety of these monastic artists, we must not overlook one great fact, that this art is not only a representation of the interior life of the nation, a representation of its manners, customs, and modes of existence, but it is also a reflection of the state of the Church at each successive period. Chroniclers may differ in their accounts, historians may quarrel with each other, but the history which a Church writes in its art and literature, in its sculpture, painting, and poetry, is traced, as

it were, by the events themselves, and graven by the very fingers of time. The fact becomes patent upon the most superficial examination, that there is in the art and literature of the Church evidence of a vast change which came over her constitution during the middle period of her career—during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. Before that time, in its works we get the manifestations of a pure and simple worship, free from doctrinal mysteries and human inventions, as evinced by the peculiar Biblical character of the subjects represented; but afterwards we gradually get manifestations of strange theories of transubstantiation, worship of the Virgin, invocation of saints, and other doctrines, the history of whose interpolation we shall have to consider in another chapter. It is impossible to get rid of this evidence, and enlightened Roman Catholics must admit, and do so without danger to their own faith, that the Catholic Church of the first periods was a very different thing from the Roman Catholic Church of subsequent periods. To get rid of this evidence would involve the destruction of all the labours of her historians, of every specimen of Church decoration, of every illuminated missal, in fine, of all those manifestations which an institution leaves behind it as evidence of its greatness and its power. It will be sufficient for our present purpose merely to mention this fact, and to prove it as far as the art of illumination goes by a few specimens chosen from periods ranging from the ninth to the fourteenth century, by which we shall find that in the early ages of illumination the MSS. extant reflect the image of the Church, that as in its worship the Church was characterized by an apostolic simplicity and a close adherence to Scripture, so are these artistic productions

executed in the same simple manner, and adorned with purely Biblical scenes and subjects.

We take up a manuscript supposed to be written about the year 900.* It is an *Evangeliarum*. It contains a picture of St. Matthew, with his left hand resting upon a desk, and his right holding a pen. On the next page is the word "Liber," the beginning of the Gospel, written on a crimson ground in letters outlined in vermilion and gold; at page 72 there is a picture of St. Mark; all the Evangelists are delineated, but no other figures. In a psalter,† written in the year 1000, the same simplicity prevails. It is written in capital letters, with an interlinear Anglo-Saxon version. The title-page contains the figure of Christ in the act of blessing, but the principal picture, which occupies a whole page, is a representation of David in his youth, playing on a lyre-shaped psalter, accompanied by six smaller figures, below which are two others dancing. In another psalter‡ of the same period there is a picture of the Crucifixion, with Mary, the mother of Jesus, on the one side, and St. John the Baptist on the other. A psalter of the year 1000,§ very fully illuminated, is a fine specimen of the purely Biblical nature of the illustrations of that period. The calendar at the beginning contains a representation of three persons at a table, and two kneeling attendants. On page 7 is a youthful Christ, holding a large scroll, upon which the word "Vita" is written; also God the Father, as Creator of the world, in the Mosaic type; the figure is hidden up to the face by a globe, and from the mouth issue two blue lines, representing streams of

* Cotton MSS.—Tiberius, A ii.

‡ Harleian MSS., 2904.

† Cotton MSS.—Vespasian, A i.

§ Cotton MSS.—Tiberius, C vi.

water, over one of which a dove hovers—one of the oldest specimens of this conception of the Almighty. Another representation, on the next page, is the figure of David tearing open the lion's jaws; then the temptation of our Saviour—the devil is represented as having a beaked nose and claws. On page 10 is the washing of the disciples' feet, with an angel descending from heaven with a cloth. Page 14, Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene. On page 18, the Last Judgment, in which Christ is most prominent, holding in one hand a horn, and in the other a cross; below him is the Book of Life open, and at his side are two large angels blowing trumpets. Page 30 contains David playing on the psalter; and on page 114 there is a large figure of Christ, holding in his left hand the Book of Life, in his right a sceptre, with which he is piercing the jaws of a lion beneath his feet, and a dragon at his side is biting the lion (see Psalm xci. 13.)

One of the most interesting specimens of the opening of the eleventh century (1006) is a manuscript called *Ælfric's Heptateuch*, in Anglo-Saxon.* Its principal subjects of illumination are the Fall of Angels, the First Person in the Trinity enthroned, Lucifer, the Days of Creation, the Creation of Adam, the Fall, and the Expulsion from Paradise. But we wish to call attention to the close resemblance of the Saxon of that period to our modern English. We shall quote a passage from the Anglo-Saxon text, which might almost be translated by the same words in modern English. The passage is Genesis iv. 9, 10. The Saxon runs: "Tha cwœth drihten to Caine, hwœr is

* Cotton MSS.—Claudius, B iv.

Abel thin brothor ? Tha answarode he and cwœth, ic nat. Segst thu sceolde ic minne brothor healdon ? Tha cwœth drihten to Caine, hwoet dydest thu ? thines brothor blod clypath up to me of eorthan." Which may be rendered in English by almost the same words, thus :—" Then quoth the Lord to Cain, where is Abel thy brother ? Then answered he and quoth, I know not. Sayest thou should I hold my brother ? Then quoth the Lord to Cain, What didst thou ? thy brother's blood crieth up to me off the earth."

But during the early part of the eleventh century a change came over the doctrine of the Church, a rage prevailed for making pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, the lives of saints began to be written, and the Virgin Mary to be elevated into a high position in the worship of the Church. For the mother of Christ the early Church had always the most tender reverence ; but it was not until the thirteenth century that a set form of worship was composed and dedicated to her service. The Office of the Virgin was made canonical at the Council of Clermont by Pope Urban II. During this period the first stone was laid of the foundation of that mysterious fantasy which gave rise to what is now called Mariolatry. The Franciscans began to promulgate the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, and fierce controversies ensued, of which we shall make mention elsewhere. But we pause to venture one remark upon the doctrine itself. It is occasionally curiously misunderstood by some who imagine that it means simply the immaculate conception by the Virgin Mary of her son, Jesus Christ, the doctrine taught us in the New Testament, and which we Protestants hold. The Roman Catholic doctrine means much more : it is that not only did the

Virgin Mary immaculately conceive her son, Jesus Christ, but was as immaculately conceived herself. We believe in the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ, which the Old Testament predicted, and the New teaches ; but they believe also in the immaculate conception of the Virgin mother, of which we have sought in vain to find a trace in Old or New Testament. That is most essentially a doctrine peculiar to the period when a Church which had been Catholic became Roman Catholic ; it was unknown as a doctrine to the Church of the first thousand years or more ; it began to be mooted by the Franciscans ; it caused much dissension ; and although Offices for the Virgin were instituted, and a feast in her honour appointed by papal authority, the popes would have nothing to do with this favourite Franciscan doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin. From the Franciscans it fell into the hands of the Jesuits, and neither wiles nor intrigues could procure canonical sanction for it until as late as the year 1848, when the general revolutionary mania swept over Europe, and Pio Nono, the present Pope, fled in disguise from Rome, and placed himself behind the fortress of Gaeta, in the hands of the Jesuits, who ultimately restored him to his chair. From behind the walls of that fortress, under the shelter of Jesuit protection, his life dependent upon that protection, was it reserved for the present Pope to make for the first time in the history of the Church this doctrine, whose chimerical and unscriptural nature had deterred all his predecessors, a canonical dogma. It was conceived in the silence of the cell by the brain of infatuated monks, and canonized by a helpless pontiff. The historical evidence of this is within the reach of everyone, but

we must here return to the evidence we have of the fact in the art of illumination.

In the first half of the eleventh century, representations of the Virgin are multiplied in the MSS. of the period, though not yet as the predominant figure. In a psalter of that date* we have a representation of David in prayer; then Christ enthroned, with angels around him; below in a row are eleven heads; and below all, the Virgin and twelve Apostles in full-length figures. In the representation of the Ascension, Christ is the main figure borne up by two angels, and below are two other angels and the Virgin with her hands raised in prayer. In a Picture Bible† of this period, she is again introduced, but still in a subordinate position. Page 8 contains a representation of the Root of Jesse—below lies Abraham, then David, and next the Virgin, above all is Christ; but at page 20 we have the death of the Virgin, and the Virgin enthroned in heaven. In the thirteenth century MSS., we find the Virgin taking the most prominent position, and Christ represented as a child; saints too creep into the illuminations, more especially St. Thomas à Becket, whose “murder” appears to have been always diligently inserted by the monks in their MSS., as we shall see. In a psalter‡ of the year 1200, amongst many other pictures, is a burial of a saint in his episcopal mitre; and the anointing of David is followed a few pages after by the murder of St. Thomas à Becket. In Matthew Paris’s “History of the English Nation” (died 1259), there is a picture of the Virgin enthroned as the Queen of Heaven, with

* Cotton MSS.—Galba, A xviii. † Cotton MSS.—Nero, C iv.

‡ Harleian MSS., 5102.

Christ as a little child; she is bending her crowned head, with her hair flowing down, towards the child, pressing her cheek against his, whilst with her right hand she gives him a fruit. In a psalter* of the same period we find the Annunciation of the Virgin, the Visitation of the Virgin, and the Virgin crowned, with Christ again as a little child. In a copy of the Vulgate† the fourth page is full of pictures; there is the Virgin, with Christ as a child, St. Peter on one side, and St. Paul on the other; below is St. Martin, above, the Crucifixion, with the Virgin and St. John; above that are two cherubim, and quite above all, in the position formerly accorded to Christ, is a representation of the Coronation of the Virgin. In the fragment of a Lectionary‡ executed for Lord Lovell by one John Siferwas, a Benedictine monk, there is on the title-page a portrait of Lord Lovell looking at a book, upon the cover of which is a picture of the Coronation of the Virgin; on the inner border of page 3 there is the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven, holding the child with her robe in the left hand, and a sceptre in her right. After three or four more representations of her, we meet with the Presentation of the Virgin; in the centre is the Virgin crowned by the First Person of the Trinity, who is represented as having a long white beard; another with the Virgin and child upon the moon, surrounded with rays; on page 23, the Virgin surrounded by the Pope, bishops, and others, and on page 27, the birth of the Virgin. We have said that what was called the Office of the Virgin was confirmed by Pope Urban II., at the Council of

* Biblia Regia, 2 A xxii. † MSS. Regia, 1 D i.

‡ Harleian MSS., 7026.

Clermont. There are several of these Offices extant. In an Office of the Virgin and prayers* of the date 1420, we find pictures of John the Baptist, St. James of Compostello enthroned, St. Thomas Aquinas, also enthroned, and St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata or wounds of Christ. On page 11, the Virgin and child Christ seated on a bench with St. Anna; on page 13 St. Catherine, page 15 St. Margaret, and page 21 the Annunciation. In another Office of the Virgin,† we find the Evangelists, the Annunciation and Visitation of the Virgin, the murder of Thomas à Becket, St. Catherine, St. Margaret, the Scourging of Christ, Adoration of Kings, and in the most prominent picture the Coronation of the Virgin, in which she is represented as being supported by an angel, while the Almighty is pointing with his right hand to a cherub, who, accompanied by two angels, is about to place the crown on her head. At the conclusion there is a picture of the Virgin on a throne with the child Christ. There are several other offices of the Virgin in the Harleian Collection,‡ but we shall only notice one more, which bears date from 1490 to 1500.§ On pages 20 B and 21 are autographs of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., which will justify the supposition that it belonged to both. Its illustrations include, amongst other things, the murder of Thomas à Becket, St. George and the Dragon, St. Christopher, the Virgin and Child, with St. Anna, St. Catherine, St. Barbara, and St. Margaret.

One of the best specimens of the extravagant pitch

* Biblia Regia, 2 A xviii.

† Harleian MSS., 2900.

‡ Harleian MSS., 2846, 2884,
2853, &c.

§ MSS. Addit., 17012.

to which the worship of the Virgin was carried at this period, though it has been outdone in some countries in our own days, is a religious poem, illustrated with miniatures, and bearing date from 1420 to 1430,* which elaborately delineates the intercessorial powers attributed to the Virgin. The picture in which this is set forth is a remarkable one. In the lower part of it is a man dying on a bed, at the foot of which stands Death, in the usual form of a skeleton, making ready to pierce the heart of the dying man with a spear, and there is a black demon, with a hook reaching towards him; at the head of the bed is an angel receiving his soul, which is represented as a naked infant; above is the Virgin, with a crown upon her head, baring her bosom to Christ, and imploring him, by the breasts which nourished him, to take pity upon the soul of the dying man. They are both kneeling before the Almighty, and Christ is represented in a red mantle as showing his wounds, in token of granting his mother's request. The Almighty is represented as seated upon a throne, robed in a blue mantle, and having the usual long white beard; he is lifting his hand in benediction.

In the fifteenth century, however, there were many strange interpolations of incidents into Christian art—of incidents which were not true, and must have been inventions. We shall mention one or two. An idea was set on foot that the Virgin had fainted at the Crucifixion; and in some of these later manuscripts she is represented in the act. In a psalter,† page 256, there is a picture of the Crucifixion, with the Virgin in the act of fainting. Mrs. Jamieson, in noticing this

* Cotton MS.—Faustina, B vi.

† MSS. Regia, 2 B vii.

fact in her "History of Our Lord as exemplified in Art," has remarked that it was condemned by Catholic writers themselves. Thomas Cajetani wrote of it as "indecens et improbabile;" and other writers are quoted by Molanus who inveighed against it, and stigmatized it as a thing "temerarium, scandalosum, et periculosum." There were also many interpolations of false incidents in the art-representations of the procession to Calvary. It was the custom to represent Christ carrying his cross, and being followed by women who were lamenting him, amongst whom was the Virgin Mary. These women were seldom represented in early art; and, from the language of Christ himself, we may deduce the inference that they could not have been Mary the mother and the attendant Maries, because his saying, "Blessed are the barren," could not apply to his mother. It has been intimated* that probably this idea of the Virgin following and lamenting our Lord was taken from her mystical sorrows in the Rosary instituted by St. Dominic. One of the incidents was, that a Roman soldier pushed her rudely and cruelly aside with a stick, and that Christ turned his head and looked pityingly upon her. In a fresco by one of Giotto's pupils, a soldier is seen drawing his sword upon her, and in another, by Pinturecchio, the soldier has actually seized her by the throat. No wonder that pious Catholics of that age cried out, "temerarium, scandalosum, et periculosum," when they saw the most solemn spectacle in the world's history made the sport of wanton imaginations. In the "Bearing of the Cross," in the Louvre, a horseman, with a lance, is seen galloping between Mary and

* Mrs. Jamieson's "Life of Our Lord."

her Son, when the Virgin stretches out her arms in agony, and St. John rushes between them to protect her. In fact, in these later representations, the sorrow of the cross is made to rest more heavily upon the mother of Christ than upon him. No pencil can paint the agony that mother must have endured ; but we are taught by the scene in the Garden that no human agony can approach that which devolved upon the Son of man. The tendency of the later school of art, just as it elevated her in painting above her Son, who became a child, and ceded the prominent position to her, detracted in these representations the glory of the suffering from Christ to her honour.

In conclusion, we must mention one interpolation which obtained in the school of art as regards Christ himself. He is represented as carrying his cross, assisted by his mother ; then an idea came up that he had fallen under the weight of his cross. He is sometimes represented as staggering on the way, with the Virgin fainting behind him. It is said that Raphael was the first in the Italian school to represent him as falling under the cross, and after him Domenichino goes farther, and not only depicts our Lord as falling prone upon the earth, but as quitting his hold upon the cross, which we know he never abandoned. This gradual interpolation of strange fancies in art was but the reflex influence of that interpolation of new doctrines which had been going on in the Church for so many centuries.

The sublime mysteries of Christianity and its supernatural powers were transferred to the Church as an institution, and claimed by the ministers of the Church, who, as agents of that institution, were supposed to be endowed with a share of those powers. So that

whenever an attempt was made by some bold spirit, like Wickliffe in the first instance, and Tyndall in the later times, to bring the simple Gospel before the eyes of the people in their own language, that they might carry it about with them in their bosoms, and stealthily read it, the effect upon men's minds was marvellous ; it was like the awakening from a long slumber. As they read that book their eyes opened ; they looked about them for Christ, and they found only the priest ; they went into the church to pray in the name of Christ, and they found prayers offered in other names ; they longed to seek pardon from Christ, but they dared not ask those to help them who had interposed themselves between Christ and sinners as the immediate adjudicators of pardon and absolvers from sin ; they were bewildered with what they saw, shocked at what they heard ; they were like waking men, gazing upon a crowd of somnambulists, who in their morbid sleep were wandering along the margin of precipices and over deep abysses ; they longed to warn them of their danger, to startle them out of that fatal slumber ; but it was dangerous to arouse men in those times, and to awake was to awake to destruction. Some were aroused, and fled from the dangers which beset them, but only to a certain extermination by a persecuting Church, which put forth all her energies to crush this Lollard heresy. Still it was never extinguished ; the fire smouldered unseen all over the country ; many a timid soul cherished the truth in silence and obscurity, whispering it to a son or a daughter with caution and jealous watchfulness, and it spread under the surface unseen, unfelt, until the time when it could be concealed no longer, and the conflagration broke out which as it were by fire purged

everything before it. But it was at the period of the Reformation, and after then, that these treasures of art suffered, and the natural iconoclasm of human nature broke out. Men gazed around them upon gorgeous temples, decorated with splendid paintings, stained glass windows, marvellous sculpture, and to their zealous minds it was all idolatry; and they tore down frescoes, destroyed paintings, overturned altars, broke up statues, and burned sacred books, to exterminate error if possible, not by the powers of truthful preaching and godly lives, but by the battle-axe and the bonfire; not by uprooting error itself, so much as by beating down and destroying its mere evidences.

It was in consequence of this iconoclasm that many of the art productions of Christianity have been lost to us; nay, much of literature and history also, for in the sack of a monastery little discrimination was used, save as to precious metals. We frequently read of valuable books and manuscripts being consigned to the flames, but the cups, the chalices, the contents of the coffers, invariably found their way to the treasury. We must always remember this, that human nature was not wholly confined to Roman Catholics, but that there was a considerable amount of it amongst the Reformers. Still, in spite of iconoclasm, in spite of misguided zeal, sufficient has escaped destruction, and been preserved to our inspection, to convince us of the beauty of those arts which sprang up in the wake of Christianity, though they did ultimately become tainted with human error. And we may see in all this painting and sculpture, poetry and music, the marvellous adaptability of Christianity as a regenerator and stimulant, how it takes up what is good in the world—genius, skill, love, devotion, and starts them into new channels, with

increased vigour and nobler aim. It took up philosophy, purged it of its errors, and of philosophers made Fathers; it took up science, and bade it labour to alleviate human suffering, and assuage the physical condition of humanity; it took up art, and not only embellished it, but gave it an inexhaustible realm of subjects—a realm in which it has been labouring ever since, and though improving and advancing in each age, in spite of enemies its power is undiminished; it has been, as its Founder declared it should be, the salt of the earth; it has rescued the world in moments of darkness and danger, aroused it from apathy and indifference, purged it, stimulated it, sent it on in the right way, and brought it back again when it had peevishly wandered; and not the least evidence of its purifying elevating effects upon the fine arts, is this which we have been faintly endeavouring to describe in the rise and development of missal painting, that beauty of cloistered holiness.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mediæval Books and Hymns.*

THE fall of Rome was the annihilation of a great dominant power, a power which had been supreme; and when the barbarians marched into her streets and devastated her homes, the world sank back into a tenebrous night of social, intellectual, and moral darkness. But the world was not abandoned to utter destruction, it was indeed given up to the hands of rude barbarians, who in turn were subjected to a new influence which accompanied them to the various kingdoms founded upon the ruins of the extinct empire, and formed the basis in each of those kingdoms of a new and higher civilization. With the fall of Rome the gods of the pagans were overturned; their temples destroyed, and in the midst of the devastation, the ruin, and the despair into which the world was sinking, the Church of Christ arose as the guiding spirit, the pioneer of the new life. Another incident in connection with the establishment of Christianity, which saved the lore of ancient times from destruction, was

Authorities.—Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*; Asseri *Annales*; Orosius *Hist.*; Guliel. Malmesb. *Gesta Regum*; Anglia Sacra; Mabillon *Acta Sanc. Ordin. Bened.*; Brucker's *Hist. of Phil.*; De Gregory's *Histoire du Livre de l'Imitation*; Malou, *Recherches Historiques*; Trench's *Sac. Lat. Poet.*; Mone, *Hym. Med. Ævi*; Daniel, *Thesaurus*; Sti. Bernardi *Opera*; Augustine's *Confessions*; Neale's *Mediæval Hymns*; Percy Society's *Pub.*, vol. iv.; Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica*; Peter Lombard, *Liber Sententiarum*, lib. iii.; Cotton MSS. Cleopatra, B xiii. *Vespasian A i.*

the adoption of the Latin language by the Church, for although that language had made a settlement in many of the countries subject to the Roman arms; yet a tendency soon sprang up, from the mixture with barbarian invaders, to the degeneracy of the Latin tongue, and the rise of new and separate idioms. But it was preserved in comparative purity in the Church, which naturally led to the preservation of its most noble monuments, and it ultimately became, when the modern languages were in their infancy, the tongue especially devoted to the transmission of learning. History, poetry, science, and what little there was of literature, found a medium of communication and a means of preservation in the Latin language. Had it not been adopted by the Church, then, for some centuries whilst the new tongues were gradually developing themselves and settling into a form, the world would have been dark indeed, not a book, not a page, not a syllable would have reached us of the thought, the life, or the events of that period.

From the fourth to the seventh century there would have been an impenetrable gap in the annals of humanity—the voice of history would have been hushed into a dead silence, and the light of the past which beacons the future would have been extinguished in the darkness of a universal chaos. In England, however, the case was somewhat different. From the earliest period of the Saxon domination there was a struggle for a literature in the vulgar tongue. The Saxons had brought with them a vast store of traditional poetry, out of which one specimen has been preserved, consisting of an epic poem in forty-three cantos, and about 6,000 lines—the oldest epic of modern times. It is called “Beowulf,” or “The Glee-

man's Song," and was composed in their native wilds, and brought over with them in the fifth century. It is a strange poem, impregnated with the vigorous air of the North; strength and simplicity being its chief characteristics. The principal personage is Hrothgar the King, and the poem is full of incidental descriptions of manners and customs which afterwards became native to England, and linger about amongst us even now—there are great halls, ale-carousals, fighting with giants, the elements of a rude chivalry, and an invincible prowess which dares both dragons and ghosts. But the first native writer in Anglo-Saxon after the conversion to Christianity is Cædmon, who lived in the latter part of the seventh century (680). The story of his miraculous inspiration is recorded by Bede.* He was born in Northumbria, and was a monk of Whitby. He paraphrased large portions of the Scripture, and has aptly been called the Anglo-Saxon Milton; indeed it is more than probable that the Puritan poet borrowed the ideas of his sublime soliloquy of Satan in Pandemonium from this Saxon monk.

But after the death of Cædmon (680), there must have been a great deal of poetry written which is now lost; for we read that Bede, on his death-bed, repeated several passages from national poets, one of which is preserved in that interesting description of the last moments of the great historian, written by St. Cuthbert, who was with him to the end.† But the chivalrous poetry of tradition gave way to that of religion, which is the characteristic of Saxon song after the sixth century.

We are also told that Aldhelm, Bishop of Sher-

* Eccl. Hist., lib. iv., c. 24. † Asseri Annales (Gale's Collec.) ann. 731.

bourne, who died in the year 709, was one of the best poets of his day. But still at this period, although there was a struggle after a national literaturè, the great works were all written in Latin, and Bede, much as he admired the Saxon poets of his country, intrusted his Ecclesiastical History to the only idiom sacred to learning. Gildas and Nennius, who preceded Bede, also wrote in Latin. But the Saxons were the first out of all the barbarians to acquire a vernacular literature. Of that literature we are scarcely competent to judge; but from what has come down to us, from allusions in history, from the state of education amongst them, we may safely conclude that, although little has survived, it was not a poor literature. We must remember the continual scenes of devastation which took place during the period of their domination; when monasteries were rifled, books burnt, and manuscripts wantonly destroyed. From the time of Alfred, only one Anglo-Saxon writer of any consequence has come down to us, Ælfric; but from what we know of Saxon progress, we may be assured there were many others. It is evident from the state of education among them. Before the middle of the seventh century schools had sprung up, and towards the latter end an impetus was given to learning by the labours of Theodore and Adrian, of whom Bede asserts that they gathered together a crowd of disciples, and taught them not only the books of Holy Writ, but the arts of ecclesiastical poetry, astronomy, and arithmetic, and adds in proof, that some of their scholars were alive in his day who were as well versed in the Greek and Latin tongues as their own.* Even the ladies among the

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* Eccl. Hist., lib. iv., c. 2.

Saxons were well educated, for it was to them that Aldhelm addressed his work "De Laude Virginitatis," and Boniface corresponded with ladies in Latin. In the ninth century also we find that schools were flourishing in various parts of the kingdom, especially the one at York, under Archbishop Egbert, who taught Greek, Latin, and Hebrew to the scholars, amongst whom was Alcuin the friend of Charlemagne.

From the letters of Alcuin, but more especially from his History of the Church of York, we may learn that for the time there was a renowned library there, and as it is the earliest list of books—the first catalogue of an English library extant—we may as well subjoin it. Alcuin says that in this library were the works of Jerome, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Athanasius, Gregory, Pope Leo, Basil, Chrysostom, and others. Bede and Aldhelm, the native authors, of course were there. In history and philosophy there were Orosius, Boethius, Pompeius, Pliny, Aristotle, and Cicero. In poetry, Sedulius Juvencus, Prosper, Arator, Paulinus, Fortunatus, Lactantius; and of the classics, Virgil, Statius, and Lucan. Of grammarians, there was a great number, such as Probus, Phocas, Donatus, Priscian, Servius, Eutychius, and Commianus. Boniface was a great collector, and used to send books home to England. So that we may fairly conclude that if the Danish depredations and the internal dissensions of the country had not been so fatal to the treasures hoarded up in monastic libraries we should have had much more of Saxon literature. The influence of Dunstan, too, gave an impulse to learning, both in the country generally and in the Church. He himself was a scholar, a musician, an artist, an illuminator, and a

man of science;* but the most prominent figure is Bede, who, as we observed, wrote in Latin; he was well versed in Greek and Hebrew; he wrote many works—thirty-seven according to his own list, including compilations, but the most important was his Ecclesiastical History, which traces the course of the national Church from the earliest times down to 731, within four years of his own death. In his introduction he honestly gives us a list of his materials, from which we can gather that in all parts of the country the bishops and abbots had instinctively turned their attention to historical writing; for he says he was indebted to Albinus, abbot of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, for the particulars of the Augustinian mission, and the history of the Kentish Church generally, and to Nothelm, a priest of London, who had discovered at Rome the epistles of Pope Gregory upon the subject; from Daniel, Bishop of the West Saxons, he received much assistance as to the history of that province and the adjoining. Abbot Esius, of East Anglia, and Cunebert, of Lindsey, are also mentioned as contributing valuable materials. So that this history of Bede is compiled from the most authentic sources, and forms one of the most valuable collections of ecclesiastical annals extant in any nation.

It is a fact worthy of note in the history of letters, that these early prelates of the Saxon Church, and in fact the monks in the various monasteries scattered over the country from the earliest period, and even down to their decadence, silently and patiently recorded the events of their times and of their Church, and that their labours, such as have been rescued from the

* "Artem scribendi necne citharizandi pariterque pingendi peritiam diligenter excoluit."—Cotton MSS.—Cleop., B xiii., fol. 69.

ravages of the past, form the only true "materia historica" of modern writers. But we pass on from the time of Bede to that of Alfred, under whose influence the Saxon language almost displaced the use of the Latin. The extraordinary vicissitudes of his life have been elsewhere recorded, but in literature he was an historian, a theologian, a commentator, and a transcriber. His principal works were translations of Gregory's "Pastoral Care," the "Universal History of Orosius," Boethius's "Consolations of Philosophy," Bede's "Ecclesiastical History," and several parts of the Bible; but he not only translated, but interpolated whole pages of his own. In the "Pastoral Care" he has inserted original prayers; in the "History of Orosius" there is a sketch of the state of Germany by him, and the translation of Boethius is tessellated with profound and pointed thoughts, which fairly entitle him to the name of philosopher. The greatest achievement of King Alfred was perhaps the reviving and restarting the "Saxon Chronicle." It is probable that from the earliest times of the Saxon rule a national record of events had been kept somewhere, either from the instinct of preservation or by concert. The evidence of Bede proves that it was done in the Church as regards ecclesiastical matters, and we know that in the time of Alfred there was a short record of bare events, with now and then a genealogy treasured up and handed down from age to age. It was his thought and care to reform these records and restart the "Chronicle" as a great national archive. For this purpose, he enjoined Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, to collect what could be found, write it out fairly, and commence his labours as the chronicler of the period. From that time the records are fuller and

more in detail, and down to the year 1154 it was kept up by different men in different monasteries, who were eye-witnesses of the events they recorded, and out of whose labours there are only six original MSS. extant of this great national work. The first is called the Plegmund, or Benet MS., because it was, as we have said, compiled by Plegmund at the instigation of Alfred, and is preserved in Benet (Corpus Christi) College, Cambridge. From the year 891 it is written in different hands and by different people down to the year 1070. The second copy is in the Cottonian Collection at the British Museum (Tiberius, A vi.), written apparently by one hand, which has been attributed to Dunstan, and it terminates at the year 977, eleven years before his death. The third copy is in the same collection (Cotton—Tiberius, B i.), and is thought to have been written in the monastery of Abingdon; it reaches down to 1066. The fourth copy is also in the Cottonian Collection (Tiberius, B iv.), written by different men down to the year 1079. The fifth manuscript is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (Laud, E 80), from internal evidence, written in the year 1122, compiled from older materials, and carried down in different hands to the year 1154, showing the gradual degeneracy of the Saxon language under Norman influence, from 1132 to the end. The sixth and last manuscript is in the Cottonian Library (Domitian, A viii.) It has been accredited to a Canterbury monk; it is written in Latin and Saxon, and terminates in 1058. Besides these six, one other MS. is mentioned as of great value, being a transcription of a Cottonian MS., which perished in a fire at Dean's Yard in 1731. It is in the Dublin Library (E 5-15), and was written by Lombard in

1563-4.* Scarcely any country in Europe possesses such an historical treasure as this, so authentic and so characteristic. It is a very interesting study to note its many peculiarities; there are sad gaps in its records, as though the sorrow of the land were too great to be recorded, and the hand had failed; there are songs of triumph at the defeat of the enemy, and pathetic lamentations over desolated homes; there are noble panegyrics upon men of blessed memory, who had fought up bravely for their Church and country, and words of bitter scorn for traitors, cowards, and profligates; it contains pious reflections, ejaculations, and aspirations; it is a most vivid picture of the manners, the thoughts, the joys, the sorrows of the most interesting and important period in the history of our country, as though the life itself, with its characters and incidents, were made to pass before our eyes in a rapid panorama.

Such was the result of one of Alfred's many plans for the good of his kingdom. His own diligence as a writer and translator told vitally upon the language, then rapidly improving. Latin manuscripts had for some time previously been interlined with Anglo-Saxon "glosses"—that is, interpretations of Latin words and passages in Anglo-Saxon—and this gradually led to the complete transcription of Latin MSS. into Anglo-Saxon, and the writing of original matter in the vernacular tongue.†

Although only one writer of any consequence has

* For a more detailed account of these MSS. see Preface to Bohn's edition of the Translation of Bede and Saxon Chronicle.

† A specimen of this interlinear translation may be seen in the

Cottonian Collection—Vespasian, A i.—a Psalter written in the year 1000, in Latin capitals, with an Anglo-Saxon interpretation between the lines.

been handed down to us from the time of Alfred, yet we may fairly infer that many others lived and wrote, whose works were destroyed in the ravages made by the Danes from that time to the Norman Conquest, and afterwards when Norman monks looked with contempt upon Saxon MSS., and used them for other purposes, such as binding or transcription after erasure. The Latin then once more became the language of literature in this country. Still the Saxon lived, and would not be trampled out by the Normans, though it degenerated sadly, until, in the fourteenth century, an idiom sprang up by a mingling of the two, which has been called Semi-Saxon. Out of this came the Early English, from which, after an additional Saxon infusion from Puritan times, came the idiom we now use, whose strong Saxon basis bids fair to make it live through all time, and is spreading it in every quarter of the world. We have mentioned Ælfric as the only writer of consequence whose works have reached us after Alfred. They were the favourite arguments of the Reformers in the sixteenth century, who eagerly studied Saxon, and sought out Saxon MSS. with an instinctive idea that evidence would be found of a different state of things in the Church of those days, both doctrinally and ritualistic, and that as their opponents relied much upon antiquity, they, by going far enough back into antiquity, might prove the novelty of the interpolations which had found their way into the Church of their times. This circumstance was the cause of the preservation of many Saxon MSS. which would have been lost in the distribution of monastic libraries after their general spoliation. It will be interesting to note at this point that two men managed to preserve a great deal of literary matter out of the gross Vandalism

which was rife, Archbishop Parker and Sir Robert Cotton. Parker's collection is in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and those of Cotton in the British Museum, the present references to which, under the titles of Roman Emperors, arose from the circumstance that in his own library they were arranged on shelves, over each of which was a bust of one of the Roman Emperors. In this manner, and by the diligence of these two men, many valuable MSS. were rescued which had passed into the hands of private individuals and booksellers.

But the Reformers also did good service this way, especially Foxe the Martyrologist, who assisted in bringing out Saxon homilies and gospels. The works of Ælfric in particular were their stronghold. He had written several homilies, letters, and translations of portions of the Scriptures; he evidently strove hard to reform the manners of the clergy, even then beginning to degenerate. Educated in the monastery of Abingdon, he was, in 987, made Abbot of Cerne, in Dorsetshire, then promoted to the abbacy of St. Albans, consecrated Bishop of Wilton, and, at the death of Sigeric in 994, he became Archbishop of Canterbury, where he ruled until 1005. One of his homilies was on the Holy Eucharist, and this was more especially brought out by the Reformers against their opponents upon the subject of transubstantiation. Ælfric clearly contends in this Easter Homily that the words of our Lord were allegorical; that He is called the Bread in the same sense as He is called the Lamb, as a figure of speech; that the bread and wine, as material bodies, remain just the same after the consecration of the priest, and are only the body and blood of Christ in their operation upon the soul, by being received in

faith and remembrance of our Lord. "The Sacrifice of the Eucharist," he says in a pastoral letter, "is not our Saviour's body in which He suffered for us, nor His blood which he shed upon our account; but it is made His body and blood spiritually, as the manna was which fell from the sky, and the water which flowed from the rock in the wilderness"—the very doctrine held by the Protestant Church of England at the present moment.

All hopes of a national vernacular literature were, however, frustrated by the advent of the Normans. Centuries before, the French had ceased to sing their mournful litany, "*A furore Normannorum libera nos, Domine,*" and had found it advisable to give these troublesome strangers a settlement. Here they had multiplied and thriven until the middle of the eleventh century, when they were the most promising people in Europe. There are traits in the Norman character not unlike the Roman. The Gothic tribes generally adopted the language, and, to a certain extent, the customs of the countries they conquered; but the Normans, like the Romans, always endeavoured to graft their own language and customs upon their vanquished. As soon, therefore, as William had made his tenure sure in England, he began the work of Saxon extermination, by ordering that the elements of grammar should be taught in the French language, that the Saxon caligraphy should be abandoned, and all deeds, pleadings in courts, and laws, should be in French. Saxon then sunk into contempt, and those of the old race who were more politic than patriotic set to work vigorously to acquire the elements of the favourite tongue. Then also the custom of writing books in Latin was revived, and continued, as regards

all important works, down to the sixteenth century ; for although books were written in English before that time, the language was in a very crude state ; for as in Germany and other countries, so in England, the event which first fixed its character was the translation of the Bible into the vernacular ; the Book, which everybody read, soon became an authority, and was appealed to on points of language. Still the influence of the Normans was beneficial, both upon the manners and the literature of the country. The Saxons, with all their greatness, were not a very refined people ; they were given to carousals of which we can scarcely form any conception, their diet was coarse, and their manners unpolished ; but the Normans, if not more simple in their habits, were more refined. Norman extravagance found vent, not in drunken orgies and riotous feasting, but in fine buildings, horses, trappings, and dress.* The importation of Provençal poetry in the shape of Trouvère poems, romances, and fabliaux, had a refining effect upon the literature, and laid the foundation of English chivalry. But the most beneficial effect was the introduction of two or three master spirits into the country, whose friendship William had formerly cultivated. Of the two most important we will give a rapid sketch.

In the early morning of a day in the first quarter of the eleventh century, a poor young scholar walked through the gates of Pavia, staff in hand, into the open country, and made his weary way across the Alps. He was heavy in heart and light in purse ; he had lost his parents, and had left his native city to seek the

* There is a very good comparison of the manners of the two races drawn by William of Malmesbury in his "Gesta Regum ;" and, being related to both, he is likely to have given a fair estimate.

scanty livelihood of a vagrant scholar, and yet bound up in that ragged form, as it were in an undeveloped germ, were wealth, power, and influence; he was making his way, as far as he knew, to some of those French schools of disputation, which had sprung up, where a poor scholar, whose wits had been sharpened by scanty fare, might by a happy sophism or a crushing conclusion earn a bed and refreshment for the night; but he was in reality making his way to fame, distinction, and wealth, to a conqueror's court and to the episcopal throne of Canterbury. This ragged scholar, who thus left his native city, was Lanfranc, a name familiar to English ears, and ever memorable in English history. For some years he led this vagrant life, travelling from place to place, disputing and studying, when he once more returned to Pavia and established himself as a pleader. His eloquence soon brought fame and competence; but, urged by some hidden impulse, he threw up the prospects open to him, once more left the city, and once more took his way across the Alps and settled at Avranches in Normandy, where many schools were established. He soon found disciples; but the secret yearning of his heart developed itself—the monastery of Bea was not far distant, and to it he bent his steps, hoping to find that peace which the cloister alone could afford. But he was not allowed to remain in obscurity, his scholars and others, attracted by his fame, crowded around him, flocked to his lectures, and the school of Bea became so renowned that the attention of the young Duke of Normandy, who also had in him the germ of a glorious career, was attracted to this rising dialectician, and through the medium of intellectual intercourse, a friendship was engendered which procured for the conqueror

of England a wise and trusty adviser, and paved the way to fortune for the poor student. The remainder of his career may be summed up in a few words. William had just founded a new monastery at Caen, and over it he placed his friend as abbot. But during the twenty years which had elapsed between the time of his settlement at Bea and his elevation to the abbacy of Caen, the school he had founded had become most renowned, and some of the great men of after times boasted of having sat there at Lanfranc's feet. Among these were Bishops Guimond, Ives, and another Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm. On one occasion, after the elevation of Lanfranc to the primacy of England, he was obliged to visit Rome to have an audience of Pope Alexander II., who paid him such marked respect that the courtiers asked the reason, and the Pope replied, "It was not because he is Primate of England that I rose to meet him, but because I was his pupil at Bea, and there sat at his feet to listen to his instruction."

Whilst at Caen, however, he entered into the renowned controversy with Berenger upon the doctrine of the real presence in the Eucharist, Berenger admitting the fact but denying the change of substance. The results of this controversy, however, were anticipated by neither party. It led to a thorough change in the mode of investigation of truth, more especially of divine truth. Berenger had adopted the course of arguing the point upon the grounds of pure reason, a course not unfamiliar to an expert dialectician like Lanfranc, but utterly novel in theological disputation, where authority was omnipotent. Lanfranc himself says of his opponent that he desired "*relictis sacris auctoritatibus ad dialecticam confugium facere.*"

But, like a true athlete, he meets his adversary with his own weapons; and for the first time in Europe men beheld a vital theological dogma being discussed by champions who had agreed to throw aside all the weight of authority and rely upon the strength of their own logic. This was the first signal for the union of scholasticism with theology, which prevailed in Europe for centuries, tinging even the writings of the early Reformers. What Lanfranc had done in the pressure of controversy, Anselm took up with all the ardour of a convert; and the change which passed over the thought of Europe, and which we shall investigate presently, amounted to a sort of intellectual revolution. But to return to the fortunes of Lanfranc;—soon after William had been consecrated he returned to Normandy, taking with him Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose deposition he ultimately procured, when he immediately installed his friend and adviser, Lanfranc, into the see of Canterbury. At first, however, Lanfranc declined the post, upon the grounds that he did not know the language; but his objection was over-ruled, and in the year 1070 he was consecrated and took up his residence in England.

To him at Bea succeeded as teacher Anselm, who made great advances in the scholastic mode of teaching. He was also prior of the monastery, and during this period he wrote six treatises—on the Fall of Satan, on Truth, on Original Sin, on the Reason why God created Man, the Liberty of the Will, and the Consistency of Freedom with the Divine Prescience. These great questions were then uppermost in men's minds, and they were treated by Anselm in the new and more attractive mode of appeal to pure reason. Whilst in the midst of these studies, he was appointed

abbot of his monastery, which dignity he reluctantly accepted, and in the year 1093, fifteen years afterwards, four years after the death of Lanfranc, he was translated by William II. to the archbishopric of Canterbury. His relations with the king were not happy, he opposed that obstinate and rapacious monarch, and a series of misunderstandings ensued, which led him to retire to Rome to consult with the Pope. During his absence he wrote that book by which he is most known, "Cur Deus Homo," "Why God was made Man." He also took a prominent part in the Council of Bari, in 1098, where he procured a decision against the Greek delegates, upon the question of the Procession of the Holy Ghost. Upon the death of William he returned; but the rest of his life was occupied in continual disputes on points of privilege with the king, Henry, and he died in the year 1109.

But we will now advance to the consideration of that great change which came over the thought of Europe, and bears the name of scholasticism. It was a mode of philosophy in itself, which may be briefly defined to be an utter reliance upon reason and a discarding of authority; but the aspect in which we shall regard it is when its method was applied to the investigation of divine truths, and it gave rise to what is called scholastic theology. The early theologians appealed not so much to the Scriptures as to the Fathers of the first six centuries. Their authority was considered equal to that of Scripture, and accepted as the only explanation. But, even in the ninth century, an effort to resist this incubus of authority, and to free human reason, was made by the renowned Irish philosopher, Scotus Erigena, and indeed some writers attribute to him the founding of the scholastic system. But it was in the

eleventh century that it reached its climax. Various points are mentioned as its origin, but the tendency was continual and gradual. The controversy of Lanfranc with Berenger, on the doctrine of the real presence, may be accepted as the point where the new method was applied to theology; from that time it became the favourite mode. But although the scholastic philosophers professed to rely upon bare reason, they appear to have instinctively felt that great want of human nature, the want of an oracle, and they found their oracle in the works of Aristotle, then in use in the university and schools of Spain, sadly perverted by being filtered through an Arabic translation. Men flew to Arabic grammars, and to Spain, to Arabic versions of Aristotle, and the Stagyrice became the oracle of the Scholastics just as the Fathers were of their opponents. But still, as is and must be the case in all religious controversies, both parties lay under the same necessity, and, after all, drew their premises from the same quarter. The defender and the opposer were alike subject to the influence of revelation; without that, the opponent would have wanted the subject of opposition, and the defender the object of his defence, so that the premises of both appear to be involved in the same thing; and in fine the Scholastics fell back also upon the Fathers, as may be seen in the "Sentences of Peter Lombard," the handbook of scholasticism, which is nothing but a mass of extracts from the Fathers and Popes, worked up together into a system of theology.

In its earliest form it cannot be denied that scholasticism did good. It was a healthy revival of intellectual life, it stimulated all classes of thinkers, and created a passion for inquiry; it brought out such great minds

as Abelard, Duns Scotus, and Thomas Aquinas. The very subjects upon which men debated gave an elevation to thought, and the result was an intellectual activity which has rarely been equalled. It must be remembered also that the schoolmen did not discard the facts laid down by the Fathers; they were not infidels, but their investigations turned more upon the mode of operation—they accepted the Divine presence in the Eucharist, but what they wanted to ascertain was the way in which it manifested itself. They believed in the Incarnation, but they desired to know the exact mode in which a sacrifice had worked out human redemption. It was just what modern rationalism is now; an attempt to ascertain by unaided reason the mysteries which had necessitated a revelation—to elevate reason into the position of judge and final arbitrator. Then it degenerated into mere senseless quibbling, into disputations about shadows, serious debates about questions which excite only laughter, such as those of the number of angelic legions that could dance on the point of a pin, and whether the motions of angelic hosts were vertical or horizontal. It also acquired a mysterious, meaningless phraseology, which indicated distinctions inconceivable by sane intellects; as, for instance, hæcceity, formality, quiddity, as though another judgment of the Almighty had gone forth, and these bold speculators who were erecting their Babel tower of philosophy, by which they were to scale the heavens, were involved in the confusion of their own jargon, and turned upon each other. Such was this great feature of the intellectual life of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and it lingered on even till the time of the Reformation.

But we must return to the development of English

literature. After the Norman Conquest, we have already observed, the Latin tongue became once more the medium of communication for the learned, and all great works were written in that idiom, so that there were three tongues used in England; the Latin by the clergy and scholars, the Norman-French by the court and nobles, and the Saxon, which fell to the common people. The literature of that period was rich in some departments, poor in others. In philosophy, whatever we may think of its merit, it was anything but scanty, and a perfect library of scholastic writings have come down even to our times, a desert of argumentation and reasoning, but containing veins of gold, could a mortal ever be found endowed with the patience to dig deep enough, and labour long enough to open them. The "Book of Sentences," by Peter the Lombard, Bishop of Paris, to which we have already alluded, was one of the wonders of the twelfth century. It is divided into four parts; the first treats of the Trinity and divine attributes; the second of the creation, the origin of angels, of the fall of man, of grace, free will, of original and actual sin; the third of the incarnation, faith, hope, charity, the gifts of the Spirit, and the commandments of God; and the fourth discusses the sacraments, the resurrection, the last judgment, and the state of the righteous in heaven. Although a great deal is borrowed from the Fathers, yet there is in this work a marked tendency towards the scholastic method; the author wanders into abstruse speculations and subtle investigations as to the generation of the Word, the possibility of two persons being incarnate in one, sins of the will and of the action. It did much to mould the thought of succeeding writers, and it won for its author the title of "Master of Sen-

tences ;" it was appealed to as an authority ; what the "Master" said was a sufficient answer to an opponent. Another great work was the "Summa" of Thomas Aquinas, a book which excites admiration even now. Duns Scotus and Occam also contributed voluminously to the stores of scholastic theology. The literature, however, was richer in history. Whilst the theologians were debating about questions beyond the reach of the human intellect, a band of quiet pious persons devoted their time to the recording the tale of human actions. Upwards of forty men lived from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, who have written the history of this country from the earliest periods down to the dawning of the sixteenth century. Probably no nation in the world is richer in historical material than England.

From the time when the "Saxon Chronicle" was commenced down to the age of printing, the pens of the monks were unwearied in recording the history of their country, and although they had their share of human weakness, and were influenced in matters of opinion frequently by the treatment shown to their order, still amongst such a mass of writers the truth may surely be ascertained. The severity of criticism applied to history in these days is driving men rapidly to active research amongst these *origines historicae*. Formerly, when any one wrote a history, he framed his work upon other men's labours and his own fancy. For the future the historian must write from manuscripts or printed copies of manuscripts, or his theories and his fancies will be soon dissipated under a criticism which is becoming daily more powerful, and acquiring new compass as fast as the labours of the Record Office are being brought to light. The

narrative of the most vital periods of our country's history will have to be rewritten. We are being gradually taught that the Dark Ages were not so dark as our conceptions of them ; that some of our favourite historical villains may yet be saved ; and that many of the gods we have worshipped had very few claims to divinity. The very fact of there being such a repertoire of historical materials created by the labours of those forty monks of different monasteries ; the existence of a voluminous and important controversy involving the vital questions of religion, and argued with scholarship, logical acuteness, wit, and vigour ; the works of piety, in literature and art which have come down to us from that age, must convince us that, however rude the physical mode of life may have been, the intellectual activity and mental calibre of the men of that period, when we remember their immense disadvantages, were little inferior to those of our day. We produce many things, but not many great things ; but the labours of mediæval monasticism were not *multa sed multum*, and they live now, and probably will live when much of this profuse literature of our age will be obliterated by the impartial, discriminating hand of time.

We cannot pass over this period of what we may call national Latin literature—that is, when the literatures of all nations were written in Latin—without noticing the history of one book which has ever stood out prominently from the mass of mediæval productions, not only from its intrinsic excellence, but from the unfathomable mystery connected with its authorship. We allude to the treatise “De Imitatione Christi,” popularly attributed to Thomas à Kempis. His claim rests chiefly upon the fact that the first printed copy

was made from a manuscript written by him and signed "Finitus et completus Anno Domini, 1441, per manus fratris Thomæ Kempis in monte S. Agnetis prope Swoll." But there is in this subscription no evidence of authorship; it was the usual formula appended to copies. Kempis was an inveterate copyist, and it will be a sufficient proof of the untenable nature of this argument if we mention that a copy of the Bible made by him is subscribed in a similar manner—"Finitus et completus Anno Domini, 1439, in Vigilia S. Jacobi Apostoli per manus Fratris Thomæ à Kempis ad laudem Dei in Monasterio S. Agnetis." There is no evidence, therefore, of authorship in the subscription of the MS.

But doubts existed soon after the publication of the work about its authorship, and another MS. was discovered at Arône bearing the inscription, "Incipiunt capitula primi libri Abbatis Johannis *Gesen* De Imitatione Christi et contemptu omnium vanitatum mundi," and at the end was written "explicit liber quartus et ultimus Abbatis Johannis *Gersen* de Sacramento Altaris." The house in which this document was found belonged to the company of Jesus, but as it had formerly been held by Benedictines, some vigilant members of that active body at once declared it must have been written by one of their order. They managed to get possession of it, and immediately brought it out with the unwarranted addition in the title after the name of Gersen of "*Abbatis Ordinis Sti. Benedicti.*" Then commenced that celebrated controversy between the two monastic orders, the Augustines, who advocated the claims of Thomas à Kempis, and the Benedictines, who fought for Gersen. A volume might be written easily upon the bare

history of that controversy, as some hundreds of volumes were during its progress. It began immediately after the publication of this Benedictine claim in the year 1616, and it raged in different countries in Europe for more than two centuries, the last controversy coming to a conclusion in 1832, which arose from the discovery of a MS. at Paris, copied in 1550, and a document purporting that it was bequeathed to one of the De' Avogadri family in the year 1347. This further confirmation of the antiquity of the work gave rise to the last controversy, which ended like all the others in increasing the doubt as to Thomas à Kempis' authorship and the uncertainty of the whole question. But during the two centuries of that controversy every possible method of fighting was tried, sudden sallies with new discoveries, orders from "Parlement" and Councils surreptitiously obtained, assemblies of savans secretly summoned, and decisions authoritatively pronounced, intrigue, sarcasm, vituperation, invention, every species of warfare was tried and exhausted by those two veteran orders, the Augustines and Benedictines. The "powers that be" had frequently to interfere, seize their slandering writings, and silence both parties; when the noise was too great for the business of the world authority stepped in and demanded peace on the part of the general community; but all the powers of the world could only suspend the controversy, and all the controversies, the examinations, the debates, have hitherto failed to settle the question.

We think it can be shown that the "De Imitatione" was known before the birth of Thomas à Kempis, and about the time of the existence of Gersen; but the evidence of the claim of the Gersenites is so

slender that the mere chronological coincidence is not sufficient to maintain it. Passages have been collected from works written long before the time of à Kempis word for word the same as in the "De Imitatione." In the conferences of Bonaventura to the people of Toulouse, written about 1260, there are many such passages; and in an Office written by Thomas Aquinas for the Pope Urban IV., about the same time, there are many other passages.* In fact, in the "Conferences" a whole paragraph is quoted verbatim, concluding with the phrase, "as may be seen in the pious book on the 'Imitation of Christ.'" Criticism has laboured diligently to discover in its text evidences indicative of the nationality of the author, but they have ended in contradictions which seem to insinuate that it might be the joint production of pious minds in different countries, which would leave to Thomas à Kempis the honour of having collected and arranged them into one form. However, instead of wasting time over a fruitless investigation, we prefer taking the book as it is, with its wealth of spirituality, with its calm beauty, its power of soothing the perturbed spirit, its subtle analyses of the human heart † and the springs of human action, its encouragement to a godly life, its fervour, its eloquence, and its strange power; and we are driven to the conclusion that it is the most marvellous book ever produced, most marvellous from the universal influence it has exerted over the minds of men of all creeds, ages, and countries, and from its

* These passages may be seen collected in parallel columns in a work by M. De Gregory on "L'Histoire du Livre de l'Imitation." Paris, 1843.

† Vide the analysis of "Temptation," lib. I., c. xiii., and the well-known chapter on the "Royal Road of the Cross," lib. II., c. xii.

adaptability to the common yearning of all humanity. Like the Gospel, of which it is the exponent, and therefore from which it derives the quality, it stands out in its marked individuality in the midst of every phase of life through which it has passed, a distinct thing, having nothing in common with the world or worldly pursuits, but trying to wean men from them, or at least from allowing them to gain an ascendancy over their affections. In the present age this isolation is more striking. We are far too philosophical, too scientific, too logical, to attend to the ascetic ravings of this monkish book. The business of life runs high with us, runs too noisily to allow us to listen to its small voice. We are so deeply engaged in the pursuits of pleasure and the acquisition of wealth, that we have no time for the "Imitation of Christ." We are involved in great undertakings—Atlantic telegraphs, principles of physical science, railway committees, parliamentary reforms, and drainage questions, absorb all our attention. But philosophy, science, and logic, fail to exempt humanity from its ills. The hour comes when a man falls sick, sick unto death; then in that moment when philosophy deserts pain, and science affords no consolation; when logic is dumb, and the soul with instinctive apprehension is clamouring for help, then is the moment for such a book as this. And it was in such a moment that La Harpe, cast into a dungeon of the Luxembourg, with nothing but death before him, accidentally meeting with this book, and opening its pages at the words, "Ecce adsum! Ecce ad te venio quia vocasti me. Lacrymæ tuæ et desiderium animæ tuæ, humiliatio tua et contritio cordis inclinaverunt me et adduxerunt ad

te," * he fell upon his face heart-broken and in tears.

We must conclude this portion of the subject by repeating that the Latin language retained its position as the language of literature until the time of the Reformation. But during the fourteenth century there was a tendency to blend the two vernacular tongues spoken in England—the French and Saxon. In the struggle for precedence the Saxon conquered, and out of it came the present vigorous idiom spoken by the English ; but nothing of any consequence was written in this tongue until it became settled and confirmed. Its development began with the translation of the Scriptures by Wiclif, but the history of that development must be reserved for another chapter.

We now advance to the consideration of one of the most beautiful emanations of Christianity in the world—her hymns. We take up these hymns of the Church, and we find that they bear testimony, not only literary but historical, as to the state of the Church at any given time, and certainly one of the best and purest testimonies that can be found. Few if any writers have sufficiently investigated this branch of ecclesiastical history, the evidence of the hymnology of the Church. If we appeal to her controversial theology we shall find invariably a mass of one-sided representation, mutual vituperation, and invective ; if we go to ecclesiastical history we shall find that those histories are written by minds working under the bias of some inclination towards sect or theory ;

* "De Imit.," lib. III., c. xxi., sec. 6. Behold me ! behold I come to thee because thou hast called me. Thy tears and the desires of

thy soul, thy humiliation and contrition of heart have inclined and led me unto thee.

but if we take up the hymns of the Church we shall have the pure, free, outspoken voice of the Church—we shall see, as it were, its internal organization, its emotions, its aspirations, its thoughts, living, throbbing, palpitating—the very heart of the Church itself.

The song of Christianity has never ceased in the world; it has continued in an unbroken strain. It began at its very outset in the song of the mother of its Founder, and it has been going on ever since. As the voice of one age dies away, the strain is taken up by the next. It has sunk at times into a low plaintive melody, and at others mounted into a grand swelling psalm, heard above the noise of the world, which ceases its strife to listen to its music. From the time of the Apostles to Ambrose, and from Ambrose to Bernard, to Luther, to Watts, Wesley, and to him who has just sung himself to sleep,* the song of Christianity has been always maintained. Of this melody we shall now endeavour to give a brief history. We begin at the coming of our Lord; but the whole worship of the true God is marked by the psalmody of rejoicing hearts. The children of Israel by the Red Sea broke out into the first recorded song; a considerable portion of the Scriptures is in that form; Jesus with his disciples sung a hymn at the Last Supper; the Apostles continued the practice, and from post-apostolic times there have come down to us three great hymns, whose origin is lost in their remote antiquity—the *Ter Sanctus*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and the *Te Deum*. These hymns were used in the very earliest ages of the Church. Of the latter there is a

* Dr. Neale, the translator of "Jerusalem the Golden," died 6th August, 1866.

legend that it was sung spontaneously by Ambrose and Augustine at the baptism of the latter.

The periods of hymnology may be divided into two great sections—the earliest, or Greek period, extending to the dawn of the fourth century, when the second or Latin division commences; and this latter may be subdivided into three parts—the Ambrosian, the Barbarian, and the Mediæval. The earliest Greek hymns are anonymous; there is one to “Christ on the Cross:”—

“Thou who on the sixth day and hour
Didst nail to the cross the sin
Which Adam dared in Paradise,
Rend also the handwriting of our transgressions,
O Christ our Lord! and save us.”

There is one on repentance, commencing:—

“Receive Thy servant, my Saviour,
Falling before Thee with tears, my Saviour,
And save, Jesus, me repenting.”

And a simple Doxology:—

“God is my hope,
Christ is my refuge,
The Holy Spirit is my vesture.
Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!”

The first name of a hymn-writer which has reached us is that of Clement of Alexandria, who lived towards the close of the second century. One of his hymns is called “Hymn of the Saviour.” But it is recorded by St. Basil that a hymn was well known in the first and second centuries, called, “Hail, Gladdening Light!” which was sung in the churches at the lighting of the lamps:—

“ Hail, Jesus Christ ! hail, gladdening Light
Of the immortal Father’s glory bright !
Blessed of all saints beneath the sky,
And of the heavenly company !

“ Now, while the sun is setting,—
Now, while the light grows dim,
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
We raise our evening hymn.

“ Worthy Thou, while time shall dure,
To be hymned by voices pure.
Son of God, of life the giver,
Thee the world shall praise for ever ! ”

There were several Syriac hymns at this period. Ephraem Syrus, a monk, and Deacon of Mesopotamia, wrote “ The Children in Paradise,” “ On Palm Sunday,” “ The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem,” and another, called “ The Lament of a Father on the Death of his Son,” which used to be sung at the funerals of children. Gregory, of Nazianzen,* is the best known of the Greek hymn-writers. There are two well-known hymns to Christ extant by him, and an evening hymn. In one of the hymns to Christ the following passage occurs :—

“ Unfruitful, sinful, bearing weeds and thorns,
Fruits of the curse—ah ! whither shall I flee ?
O Christ, most blessed ! bid my fleeting days,
Flow heavenward, Christ, sole fount of hope to me !

“ The enemy is near—to Thee I cling ;
Strengthen, oh ! strengthen me by might divine ;
Let not the trembling bird be from thine altar driven—
Save me—it is Thy will, O Christ !—save me, for I am Thine.”

* He was a most voluminous poet ; there are amongst his works nearly 500 poems on religious subjects, arranged under headings :—
Poemata Theologica — Poemata Moralia—Poemata Historica ; and many of these are extremely beautiful.

Gregory's life was spent in a continual conflict with Arianism. At the age of fifty he went to Constantinople, and as all the churches were in the hands of the Arians, he preached in the house of a relative. He was soon subject to persecution, was pelted in the streets, arrested, tried, and with much difficulty acquitted. Ultimately he succeeded; the Arian heresy passed away; the house where he had so faithfully preached became the Church of "Anastasia;" because the truth had risen there. But time, though it brought success, had left him a sad, lonely old man. He was made Patriarch of Constantinople, by the Emperor Theodosius; but he had lost all his dearest relatives, and he threw up his dignity and retired from the world. In that retirement he wrote a beautiful hymn, which sums up his life. We quote the first and last verses:—

"Where are the winged words? Lost in the air.
 Where the fresh flower of youth and glory? Gone!
 The strength of well-knit limbs? Brought low by care.
 Wealth? Plundered. None possess but God alone.
 Where those dear parents who my life first gave,
 And where that holy twain, brother and sister? In the grave."

"This as thou wilt, the Day will all unite,
 Wherever scattered, when Thy word is said;
 Rivers of fire; abysses without light,
 Thy great tribunal, these alone are dread.
 And thou, O Christ, my King, art fatherland to me—
 Strength, wealth, eternal rest, yea all I find in thee."*

St. Andrew of Crete, St. John of Damascus, St. Cosmas, Bishop of Maiuma, and Chrysostom, were amongst the Greek hymn-writers. Their productions are characterized by the greatest simplicity and fervour,

* The translations quoted are from "The Christian Life in Song," where the full versions may be seen. They are very well executed, and preserve the spirit of the original composition.

reliance upon Christ and love to God being the most prominent topics. We now come to the period of Latin hymns, and we begin with the first or Ambrosian division. The principal writers are Ambrose, Hilary, and St. Prudentius. Augustine, in his "Confessions," quotes one of Ambrose's hymns, as having repeated it when lying awake in bed, "Atque ut eram in lecto meo solus, recordatus sum veridicos versus Ambrosii tui : Tu es enim *

"Deus creator omnium
 Polique rector, vestiens
 Diem decoro lumine
 Noctem sopora gratia.

"Artus solutos ut quies
 Reddat laboris usui,
 Mentisque fessas adleuet
 Lactusque solvat anxios."

Ambrose was born about the year 340; his father was a prefect of Gaul, and belonged to a noble family. Before the age of thirty he himself was consul of Liguria, and dwelt at Milan. Up to this time he had no notion of becoming an ecclesiastic. But Auxentius, the Arian bishop, having died, a dispute arose between the citizens of Milan and the emperor, as to who should appoint the successor, each trying to evade the responsibility. It was left to the people; the city was in a state of great excitement, and a tumultuous assemblage filled the cathedral, in the midst of whom appeared Ambrose in his civil capacity, to command peace, and it is said that in the lull which ensued, a voice was heard crying, "Ambrose is bishop," which the whole mass of people, seized by a sudden impulse, repeated. Soon afterwards he was ordained and consecrated.

* August. Confess., lib. ix. c. 12.

The majority of the people were opposed to Arianism, and he was soon involved in a dispute with the Empress Justina, who required him to give up the Portian Basilica to the Arians. He refused, and, accompanied by a multitude of people, took possession of the church, and fastened the doors. The imperial troops besieged them for several days, during which time the people kept singing the hymns of Ambrose. Monica, the mother of Augustine, is said to have been amongst the crowd in the church. One of Ambrose's hymns was used for centuries as a morning hymn, called "Hymn at the Cock-crowing;" another Advent hymn is, "Veni Creator gentium;" and one for Easter, "Hic est dies verus Dei." St. Hilary, Bishop of Arles in the sixth century, is the next of the Ambrosian period; the best known of his hymns is that to the morning, "Lucis largitor splendide." But the most prominent name of the period after Ambrose is Prudentius, who was born about 348, practised in the courts as a pleader, and in his fifty-seventh year forsook the world, and spent the rest of his days in religious exercises. One of his great hymns is for Epiphany, "O sola magnarum urbium," another on the Innocents, "Salvete flores martyrum;" but the hymn most known is a very beautiful, perhaps his most beautiful composition, a funeral hymn, beginning "Jam mæsta quiesce querela." After the Reformation this hymn was adopted by the German Protestants as their favourite funeral hymn, their version beginning "Hört auf mit Trauern und Klagen."

The resurrection of the body is thus expressed:—

"Non si cariosa vetustas
Dissolverit ossa favillis
Fueritque cinisculus arens
Minimi mensura pugilli:

“Nec si vaga flamina et auræ
 Vacuum per inane volantes
 Tulerint cum pulvere nervos
 Hominem periisse licebit.”

“For though, through the slow lapse of ages,
 These mouldering bones should grow old,
 Reduced to a handful of ashes,
 A child in its hands may enfold.

“Though flames should consume it, and breezes
 Invisibly float it away,
 Yet the body of man cannot perish,
 Indestructible through its decay.”

The next period of hymnology is what we have termed the barbarian, because it began at the time when the northern invaders were settling down in the various parts of Europe which had fallen to their arms. Though not so fertile in hymns, yet some beautiful things were produced in this period. We shall only mention three hymn-writers—Gregory the Great, Venantius Fortunatus, and Bede. The principal hymn of Gregory's is the “Veni Creator Spiritus;” but the most distinguished hymn-writer of this era is Fortunatus; he was an Italian, born about 530; a gay poet, the delight of society, until Queen Radegunda persuaded him to be ordained, and to settle at Poitiers, where she, having left her husband, was presiding over a monastic establishment. There is a beautiful hymn of his, which commences—

“Pange lingua gloriosi
 Prælium certaminis.”

We quote two verses (v. i. and viii.) of the late Dr. Neale's translation, and call attention to the fact that as early as the sixth century there was a creeping in of a tendency towards the worship of the material cross.

i.

“Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle,
 With completed victory rife,
 And above the Cross’s trophy,
 Tell the triumph of the strife ;
 How the world’s Redeemer conquered,
 By surrendering of His life

viii.

“ Faithful Cross, above all other,
 One and only noble tree,
 None in foliage, none in blossom,
 None in fruit, compares with thee ;
 Sweetest wood and sweetest iron,
 Sweetest weight sustaining free.”

A portion of one of his poems, on the Resurrection of our Lord, was sung in the Church for ten centuries as an Easter hymn. It commences, “*Salve, festa dies, toto venerabilis ævo.*”* In another of his poems, “*De Cruce Christi,*” there occurs a beautiful image of the Cross as the tree around which the True Vine is clinging :

“*Appensa est vitis inter tua brachia, de qua
 Dulcia sanguineo vina rubore fluunt.*” †

But his most celebrated hymn is the one written on the occasion of the sending the true Cross by the Emperor to Radegunda, at the consecration of a church at Poitiers. It is called “*Vexilla Regis prodeunt*” :

i.

“ The royal banners forward go,
 The Cross shines forth with mystic glow,
 Where He in flesh, our flesh who made,
 Our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

* Trench’s “*Sacred Latin Poetry,*” p. 152.

† For the whole see Trench’s “*Sacred Latin Poetry,*” p. 130, and Bässler’s “*Auswahl Altchristlicher Lieder,*” p. 193.

vi.

“ With fragrance dropping from each bough,
Sweeter than sweetest nectar thou ;
Decked with the fruit of peace and praise,
And glorious with triumphal lays.

vii.

“ Hail, Altar ! hail, O Victim ! Thee
Decks now Thy passions' victory,
Where life for sinners death endured,
And life by death for man procured. ”*

Bede the Venerable wrote hymns also ; the two best known are the “ *Hymnum canamus gloriæ,*” and “ *Hymnum canentes martyrum.*”

We now advance to the last and richest of all the periods of hymnology, the mediæval. The list is headed with the royal name of Robert II. of France, who wrote hymns, one of which is a “ *Veni Sancte Spiritus.*” Peter Damian, the Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, who died in 1072, wrote many hymns, but the two greatest are “ *De Die Mortis* ” and “ *Ad perennis vitæ fontem.*” † Adam of St. Victor was another prolific hymn-writer ; thirty-six of his productions are extant, and well known. ‡ Peter the Venerable and Thomas à Kempis have also left hymns behind them. But it was reserved for Archbishop Trench to dig out of the mouldering relics of the past a hymn written by a monk of Clugny, one Bernard de Morlaix, the translation of which, by Dr. Neale, has supplied the Church of every denomination with favourite hymns. The most general name by which it is known is “ *Jerusalem the Golden.*” The original is a poem of

* Dr. Neale's “ *Mediæval Hymns.*”

† Trench's “ *Sacred Latin Poetry,*” pp. 278, 315.

‡ Trench's “ *Sacred Latin Poetry,*” pp. 53, 111, 160, 202, 212, 227, and Büssler's “ *Auswahl Altchristlicher Lieder,*” p. 212.

about three thousand lines, called "De Contemptu Mundi," a melancholy satire upon the corruptions of the times. The first appearance of it in print, is in a collection of poems, "De Corrupto Ecclesiæ Statu," by Flacius Illyricus, who laboured at that subject, and compiled also a very useful work called "Catalogus Testium Veritatis," or an account of those many "witnesses to the truth" who sprung up in the bosom of the Church from the earliest ages down to the times of Luther, their works being but a foreshadowing of his. We cannot speak too highly of this poem of Bernard, nor of the merits of Dr. Neale's translation. The original is written in one of the most difficult of all metres, technically called "leonini cristati trilices dactylici," a dactylic hexameter, divided into three parts, with a tailed rhyme, and rhymes between the two first clauses. Dr. Neale gives a specimen of this verse in English :—

"Time will be *ending soon*, Heaven will be *rending soon*, fast we and
 pray we ;
 Comes the most merciful ; comes the most terrible, watch we while
 may we."

The imagery in the original poem is gorgeous ; but Dr. Neale has exceeded the original* in many parts of his translation. We add a few gems. The opening lines are—

"Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus !
 Ecce minaciter imminet arbiter ille supremus.
 Imminet, imminet, ut mala terminet, æqua coronet
 Recta remuneret, anxia liberet, æthera donet."

* The best edition of this poem is the little shilling volume by Dr. Neale, called "The Rhythm of Bernard de Morlaix," published by Hayes, Lyall-place, Eaton-Square. It contains between two and three hundred of the original lines, with Dr. Neale's complete translation.

“ The world is very evil,
 The times are waxing late,
 Be sober and keep vigil,
 The Judge is at the gate:
 The Judge that comes in mercy,
 The Judge that comes with might,
 To terminate the evil,
 To diadem the right.”

Dr. Neale has proved himself a true poet in this translation; the rendering is most happy, and the whole version forms one of the finest sacred poems in the language. The lines—

“ Patria luminis, inscia turbinis, inscia litis,
 Cive replebitur amplificabitur Israelitis.
 Patria splendida, terraque florida, libera spinis
 Danda fidelibus est ibi civibus, hic peregrinis,”

are thus happily rendered—

“ And the sunlit land that recks not
 Of tempest nor of fight
 Shall fold within its bosom
 Each happy Israelite;
 The home of fadeless splendour,
 Of flowers that fear no thorn,
 Where they shall dwell as children,
 Who here as exiles mourn.”

Then the episode—

“Sunt radiantia jaspide mcenia clara pyropo.”

With jaspers glow thy bulwarks,
 Thy streets with emeralds blaze,
 The sardius and the topaz
 Unite in thee their rays;
 Thine ageless walls are bonded
 With amethyst unpriced;
 The saints build up its fabric,
 And the corner stone is Christ.

.

Thou hast no shore, fair ocean!
 Thou hast no time, bright day!
 Dear fountain of refreshment,
 To pilgrims far away.

.
 They stand, those halls of Sion,
 Conjubilant with song,
 And bright with many an angel
 And all the martyr throng;
 The Prince is ever in them,
 Their daylight is serene;
 The pastures of the blessed
 Are decked in glorious sheen.
 There is the throne of David,
 And there, from care released,
 The song of them that triumph,
 The shout of them that feast;
 And they who, with their leader,
 Have conquered in the fight,
 For ever and for ever
 Are clad in robes of white."

But we must pause, for to give all the beauties of this poem would be to transcribe the whole. Another St. Bernard, the well-known Abbot of Clairvaux, was a contemporary with him of Clugny. He was one of the most influential men of his age, a man far in advance of it; the adviser of popes and the confidant of kings. Many hymns are attributed to him, one of the most beautiful being that known as "Jesu Dulcis Memoria." In Trench's "Sacred Latin Poetry" there is a selection of fifteen verses, but the original consists of forty-eight verses.* It is a fine specimen of the ardent loving poetry so characteristic of the period. A very beautiful version, or rather imitation of this

* *Sti. Bernardi Claræ Vallensis Opp* : Benedictine edition, vol. ii., p. 895.

poem, is extant in the Harleian MSS., written in the reign of Edward I., and as it is a very good specimen of the English of the period, and represents the spirit of the original, we venture to quote a verse or two.*

I.

“Jesu, suete is the love of thee,
Nothing so suete may be;
Al that may with eyen se
Haveth no suetnesse ageynes the.

XIV.

“Jhesu, when ich thenke on the,
Ant loke upon the rode tre;
Thi suete body to-toren se,
Hit maketh heorte to smerte me.

XVIII.

“Jhesu, my saule drah the to,
Min heorte opene ant wyde undo;
This hure of love to drynke so,
That fleysshlich lust be al for-do.

XLV.

“Jesu, thin help at myn endyng,
Ant ine that dredful out-wendyng
Send mi soule god weryyng,
That y ne drede non eovel thing.”

We can only notice one other grand hymn, selected also from a long poem of Bernard, addressed to the different portions of the body of Christ on the cross. This is from the “Ad Faciem,” and commences—†

“Salve caput cruentatum
Totum spinis coronatum.”

As it is one of the finest mediæval hymns, and has been translated into nearly all European languages, we give the translation:—

* Printed also in the “Percy Society’s Publications,” vol. iv., p. 68.

† For the Latin, see Trench’s “Sacred Latin Poetry,” p. 139, and Bässler’s “Auswahl,” p. 217.

"Hail! thou head so bruised and wounded,
 With the crown of thorns surrounded;
 Smitten with the mocking reed,
 Wounds which may not cease to bleed,
 Trickling faint and slow.
 Hail! from whose most blessed brow
 None can wipe the blood drops now.
 All the flower of life has fled;
 Mortal paleness there instead.
 Thou, before whose presence dread,
 Angels trembling bow.

"All thy vigour and thy life
 Fading in this bitter strife;
 Death his stamp on thee has set,
 Hollow and emaciate,
 Faint and drooping there.
 Thou, this agony and scorn,
 Hast for me a sinner borne;
 Me, unworthy—all for me,
 With those signs of love on thee,
 Glorious face, appear!

"Yet in this thine agony,
 Faithful shepherd, think of me;
 From whose lips of love divine
 Sweetest draughts of life are mine,
 Purest honey flows.
 All unworthy of thy thought,
 Guilty, yet reject me not;
 Unto me thy head incline,
 Let that dying head of thine
 In mine arms repose.

"Let me true communion know
 With thee in thy sacred woe,
 Counting all beside but dross,
 Dying with thee on the cross;
 'Neath it will I die.
 Thanks to thee with every breath,
 Jesus, for thy bitter death;
 Grant thy guilty one this prayer—
 When my dying hour is near,
 Gracious God, be nigh.

“ When my dying hour must be,
 Be not absent then from me ;
 In that dreadful hour I pray
 Jesus, come without delay,
 See and set me free.
 When thou biddest me depart
 Whom I cleave to with my heart,
 Lover of my soul, be near,
 With thy saving cross appear ;
 Show thyself to me.”*

There is an excellent version of this in German in the “Passion Hymn” of Paul Gerhard, beginning—

“ O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden
 Voll Schmerz und voller Hohn !”

But the grandest of all the mediæval hymns is that attributed to Thomas of Celano, known as the “Dies Iræ.” Its authorship is uncertain ; it burst upon the world after a long silence in the Church, like some strain wafted over the earth on the winds of heaven. It has always been the favourite hymn for solemnities in every country. In Germany upwards of sixty translations have been made of it, Göthe has effectively introduced it into the “Faust” in the cathedral scene, where Marguerite is tempted by the Evil Spirit, who, when the choir chanted the words—

“ Dies iræ, dies illa,
 Solvet sæclum in favilla,”

whispers sardonically into her ear—

“ Grimm fasst dich !
 Die Posaune tönt !
 Die Gräber beben !
 Und dein Herz,

* Quoted in “Christian Life in Song.”

Aus Aschenruh
 Zu Flammenqualen
 Wieder aufgeschaffen
 Bebt auf ;”

and so on through the whole scene, corrupting the meaning of the hymn in the mind of the broken-hearted girl. It was muttered by the dying lips of Walter Scott, and has employed the genius of such men as Schlegel, Fichte, and Herder. We give one passage—

“Recordare, Jesu pie,
 Quod sum causa tuæ viæ,
 Ne me perdas illa die.

“Querens me sedisti lassus,
 Redemisti crucem passus,
 Tantis labor non sit cassus.”

“Think of me, good Lord, I pray,
 Who trodest for me the bitter way,
 Nor forsake me in that day.

“Weary sat'st thou seeking me,
 Diedst redeeming on the tree,
 Not in vain such toil can be.”

With this hymn, perhaps the grandest of all, we must conclude by making a few remarks as to the evidence to be drawn from them as to the state of the Church at different periods in its career. It is quite clear that in the early period of the Church her hymns were characterized by a marked difference in spirit and doctrine from those of the later periods of doctrinal interpolation. For instance, in the hymns of the fifth and seventh centuries, we find that the symbolic nature of the bread and wine were accepted and believed in simply. This is evident from a hymn used in the churches of the time, and sung by the people during

the administration of the Sacrament, in which the elements are spoken of as a type, as—

“Victims were offered by the law of old,
That in a type celestial mysteries told.”

But when we come to the fourteenth century we have quite a different thing. In a hymn by Thomas Aquinas, “*Pange lingua gloriosi*,” occurs the following passage:—

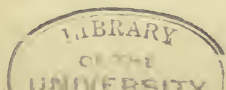
“Word made flesh, by word He truly
Makes true bread His flesh to be ;
Wine, Christ’s blood becometh newly ;
And if senses fail to see,
Faith alone the true heart only
Strengthens for the mystery.”

In fact, the whole history of the hymnology of the Church is a history of a gradual change. Religion in its progress became degraded and materialized; holiness was transferred to material objects; there were holy hours, holy days, holy wood, holy water, oil, bread, stones, and even holy bones. The contemplation of the death of Christ was transferred to an idolatrous worship of the material cross, the “holy wood!” In a collection of hymns of the middle ages, in three volumes,* only one volume is filled with hymns to God and the Saviour, the other two being the hymns of later date to the Virgin Mary, the material cross, the Host, and the Saints. As Mariolatry† spread, hymns were written especially for it,

* Mone—Hymn. Lat. Med.Ævi.

† The idolatrous nature of the worship is indicated by the very etymology of this word, which comes from “*Mariola*,” the word used by the historians for the *image* of the Virgin. “*Mariolas super altare positas*,” is a frequent expression. *Εἰδωλα*, the generic term

which includes images of all kinds, involves in its meaning deception, false appearance, as opposed to *Ἐπιφανεια* or manifestation of reality. The adoration of *εἰδωλα* is simply *idolatry*, and therefore the adoration of the *Μαρι-ωλα* is nothing more than the *idolatry* of Mary.



which introduced new features into the already interpolated hymnology. No trace or shadow of such a thing can be found in the early Greek hymns, and in Daniel's "Thesaurus," from the third to the twelfth century, only two can be found, and those of the later date, which are wholly addressed to Mary. But the doctrine grew, and the worship of the Trinity was set aside for the worship of the Virgin, who was made the saving intercessor and true comforter. Not without opposition, and that by some of the best lights of the Church, was this dreadful change made in the worship. St. Bernard himself has left the following words on record—"We ought not to attribute to Mary that which belongs to one Being alone, to Him who can make all holy, and, being Himself free from sin, purify others from it. Besides Him, all who have descended from Adam must say of themselves that which one of them says in the name of all, 'In sin did my mother conceive me.'"

As the new worship spread, offices were composed for her especial adoration, and a whole class of hymns to her honour. One especially arose out of a perversion of Scripture, "Ave Maris Stella." The Latin word in the Vulgate expressing the gathering together of the waters is "Maria," they therefore detected in this a foreshadowing of her name "Maria," and she was made "Maris Stella." We may smile at such wanton perversion of Scripture in an age of superstition; but it is only recently that an article upon the worship of the Virgin appeared in one of the leading Catholic reviews, in which the writer seriously insisted upon the old patristic* delusion that the

* The theology of our Roman Catholic brethren has what may be termed an *ἀθεος* tendency—a departure from God; not God's word,

“woman” mentioned in Genesis whose seed was to bruise the serpent’s head, was none other than the Virgin Mary, an equivalent to the notion that “Eva” was the foreshadowing of the “Ave.” The beautiful hymn, “Stabat Mater,” composed by Jacopone, a Franciscan, concludes however with a prayer for the protection of the Virgin in the day of judgment:

“Ne flammis urar succensus
Per te Virgo sim defensus
In die iudicii!”

There was a still higher Babel of Mariolatry to be erected in the Church, and it may be said to have reached its catastrophe when psalms and hymns which had been written, and for centuries had been used, in honour of God and Christ, were actually parodied to her glory. One is given in Mone’s collection, which is called the Marian Te Deum, and runs as follows:—

“We praise thee, O Mother! we acknowledge thee to be the Virgin.

Thee, the star of the sea! the splendour of the Eternal Father illuminates.

To thee all angels cry aloud, the Heavens and all the powers therein. The Cherubim and Seraphim with us with lowly voices proclaim :
Virgin, Virgin, Virgin of Virgins, without peer!

Before the birth, during the birth, and after the birth ;

Thee, glorious Virgin, the ranks of Apostles and prophets praise ;

Thee the martyrs testify to be the Mother of their Lord.

The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee,
Mother of an infinite Majesty!

Venerated bride of God, knowing not man, conceiving only by the
Holy Spirit,

Thou art the Queen of Heaven ; thou art the mistress of the whole
world ;

Thou, to deliver fallen man, didst clothe in flesh the Son of the
Highest.

but the Fathers ; not God, but the objects between man and the
Saints ; not Christ, but the Mother blessed invitation, “Come unto
of Christ ; an interpolation of many *me.*”

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death
 Thou didst bring forth the Life from thy glorious womb,
 Thou art the Mother of the Son who sitteth at the right hand of God,
 Who is the Judge of quick and dead.
 We therefore pray thee, help the servants of Christ, redeemed by the
 precious fruit of thy womb;
 Make them to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting.
 O lady, save thy people; let the heritage of Christ be saved by thee;
 Govern them and lift them up for ever.
 Day by day we bless thee, and praise the name of the Highest who
 made thee highest;
 O most worthy of all praise, deign to be praised by the most
 unworthy.
 Have mercy upon us, O lady, mother of mercy;
 Let the mercy of thy Son be upon us, O lady, on us who call on him.
 In thee, O lady, have I trusted, let me never be confounded."*

This was the climax of that new worship which has spread itself over the entire Roman Church, and been consummated in our own times by the making canonical the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, a task from which all the popes had shrunk from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. These gradual interpolations of new doctrines, such as transubstantiation, worship of relics, invocation of saints, indulgences, and others, were not, however, effected without strenuous opposition from leading men in the Church in every age. As early as the fourth century Vigilantius wrote vigorously against the tendency, then

* There was also a *Te Deum* which came into use, written to her honour, by an obscure abbot of the little monastery of Muchelney—a dependent on Glastonbury Abbey—John de Bracy. It is preserved in Hearne's Preface to Adam of Domerham's works, who was sacrist of Glastonbury. But Bonaventura outdid all. He not only composed a *Te Deum*, but translated the

Psalms, the Litany, and even the Athanasian Creed, in her honour, the latter beginning with the words, "Whoever will be saved it is necessary before all things that he hold the firm faith concerning 'the Virgin Mary,' which, unless any one keep whole and undefiled, 'without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.'" (See Bonav. Opera, vol. vi.)

springing up, towards the veneration of relics and tombs. Jerome, speaking of him, says that he had "opened his fetid mouth to pour forth a filthy stench against the relics of the holy martyrs, daring to criminate us who reverence them as *ashes dealers* and *idolaters*." So with transubstantiation, Mariolatry, and all the others, there were men in the Church enlightened enough to resist them, as there are to the present day men enlightened enough to regret their interpolation; so that from very early times the Reformation lingered in the bosom of the Church like a germ. Vigilantius in the fourth century, Claude of Turin in the eighth, Berenger in the eleventh, Abelard, Arnold of Brescia, and Bernard in the twelfth, were all Reformers before Wiclif and Luther. The Church of the Reformation existed in the Romish Church as an antagonistic element centuries before, now and then striving to disassociate itself from the corruptions which bore it down; so that the Reformation was not the starting of a new thing, order, or system, but the final accomplishment of a struggle which had been going on for ages—the ultimate achievement of a spiritual emancipation. The only difference between Luther, Melancthon, Tindal, Zuingle, Calvin, and such men as Vigilantius, Claude, Berenger, and Bernard was, that the times were riper for the former, and the world more alive to the necessity of a purification of the Church.

But we must conclude this chapter by a brief *résumé* of its general statement. We have endeavoured, to the best of our ability, and subject to the limitations of space, to investigate the intellectual state of a period hitherto carelessly characterized as a time of dense ignorance and gross superstition. That there was superstition we must admit, but we are compelled to

acknowledge that it arose from excess of faith, just as in our own times of improvement and advancement there is infidelity and abandonment of faith under the pretext of avoiding superstition. Which is the better state of things, reason in subjection to faith, even though, in its abnormal form, it did produce superstition; or reason freed from all spiritual guidance, abandoned to its own fatuous light, which invariably leads it to error, doubt, and infidelity? No better reason can be given for the necessity of a revelation to which all men shall be subject than the natural inevitable tendency of the human heart to rebel against its God. It was so with the antediluvian man, for we are told that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." It was so with the Israelites, that "stiff-necked people" who went "whoring after strange gods," and it will be so to the end of time, whenever men break away from the anchorage of faith. In spite of its superstition, in spite of its errors, the mediæval period was one rich in art and active in intellectual work; the great difference between that age and this is, that in mediæval times intellectual life was concentrated, and now it is spread abroad; we get more books and readers, but less great books and thinkers. Perhaps there has never been a time of such vigorous intellectual effort in England, unless we except the Elizabethan age, than that of the scholastic controversies of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. It was in this age too that the essentially mediæval art of illumination flourished in all the lettered monasteries of Europe, the age when all the great cathedrals were built, and when that enchanting song, to whose notes we have just been listening, was improvised and sung. The God who presides over the

economy of nature presides also over that of life. His hand is in both, upholding, protecting, guiding. We take up a phase of human history like this mediæval phase, and to us it appears contradictory, objectless, useless; but we must remember that it is but one part of the great economy, that as every phase of nature has its separate use, so every period in the history of humanity contributes its share to the general result. There are no arid, dark wastes in history any more than in nature. Progressing geographical science is gradually revealing to our minds the fact that Central Africa is not the deadly, useless desert of our imagination, but is probably belted and intersected with rivers, whose fertilizing power has only to be applied. So a progressive historical science is rapidly clearing away the darkness of these dark ages, revealing to us treasures which have long lain hidden. We speak of the past as antiquity, and we are apt to associate the idea of age with it, just as we look towards the present as youthful and new. But we must remember that antiquity really belongs to the present as the result of time, and that the past was the youth. So when we go back into these past ages of the Church we must regard them as her youth, and instead of quarrelling with the follies and wantonness inseparable from immaturity, endeavour to do our best to help on the great consummation of her mission in the world, knowing well that although the heyday of her youth is past, she has not yet attained her full maturity; and in times of despair, when schism is rife, when the sons of her bosom desert her, when men harden themselves against her love and forsake her, ever bear in mind the promise of her great Head and Founder, "Upon this rock I build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

CHAPTER XIV.

St. Francis: his Life and Work.*

A.D. MCLXXX—MCCXXVI.

THERE is something essentially divine in the insight which our Saviour had into nature, as manifested by the use He made of natural phenomena to illustrate His teaching, and impress men with the truth of His mission. Some of those illustrations compress the sum of centuries of human experience, and the history of the world is but a continued commentary upon their truth. One of the most striking occurs in that address to His disciples, when He tells them, "Ye are the *salt* of the earth," and that "salt is good; but if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" This is the experience of all history. The world sinks periodically into states of gross corruption and rottenness, when morals and manners are alike vitiated, when justice corrupts her balance, patriotism becomes venal, and the Church, yielding to the evil influences around her, loses sight of her high commission, flaunts in gay attire, longs after wealth, becomes listless and effete.

At such moments in the world's history, when good men in contemptible obscurity have looked on in

* *Authorities*—Rolls Publications, "Monumenta Franciscana;" Anglo Minoritica; St. Francisci Assisit. Opera; Gieseler, Eccl. Hist.; Acta

Sanct.; Vita Francisci a Bonaventura, a Tribus Sociis, a Johan: de Ceperano; a Thomâ de Celano Matt. Paris, Opp.

sorrow, and taken refuge in prayer, a kind of salt is infused into the constitution of things ; and, as the operation of that moral purifier becomes effective, there takes place a revival of healthy life, the putrefaction is stayed, the corruption is driven out, and the body politic, as well as the body ecclesiastic, regains its healthy vigour.

But, as time rolls on, the purifying element which has worked such wonders ceases in its operations, the natural corruption gains the ascendancy, the old taint breaks out, the salt has lost its savour ; and then arises the question, as put by our divine Master, "Wherewith shall it be seasoned ?" All institutions, phases of life, and systems of philosophy and religion, have gone through these alternate stages of corruption and revival, and it was at one of these periods of general debasement that the extraordinary phase of monasticism which we are about to review arose, and was infused into the Church, as a sort of reviving salt, to purify her from the corruptions which were making fatal havoc upon her vitality. In the early part of the twelfth century St. Bernard himself declared that the clergy could no longer be reproached with being as bad as the people, for they had become worse than the people. But in the thirteenth century things were still worse. In the contemporary literature of almost every country we have satires and lampoons upon the vices of the clergy. The illuminated manuscripts, the songs and tales of the Trouvères, are filled with lamentations and invectives against their luxury and vice. The great ruling order of monastic life, the Benedictine, which had begun with so fair a promise, and which had really done wonders in a world of semi-barbarity, had yielded to the treacherous influences of

fame, ease, and wealth. The Benedictine monasteries were filled with scholars, whose devotion was directed more to the preservation of classic texts than the performance of the Divine Office; with luxurious monks, strangers to fasting, and unused to vigils, revelling on the good things of life and the riches of their revenues: their abbots were lords and rulers, living in princely state, and riding out on richly caparisoned palfreys. The old humility of the monastic life was lost; they took part in state intrigues, dictated laws to kings, shook the thrones of monarchs who had offended them, and began to aspire after worldly power and dominion.

Nor were things better outside the Church. There was a reaction in the world: men had passed out of the gloom which the apprehension of the approaching judgment had caused to settle upon them, and driven them, as though stirred by some mysterious impulse, to band together in a Holy War against Saracens to rescue His tomb from sacrilegious hands before He came Himself in His glory. Two centuries had rolled by, and still the riot of the world went on. Europe had been drained of her vigour and her chivalry; but whilst they were fighting under the broiling sun of Palestine, a new life was silently springing up in the countries they had deserted, and an instinctive consciousness seized upon the minds of kings and potentates that society was about to undergo some great change, that the old life was nearly played out, and another and stronger form of existence was crowding in upon them; the world was throbbing with the pains of childbirth, and those who could penetrate into the future anticipated it with apprehension.

Hitherto the feudal lords, secure behind the walls of

their castles, did nothing for the defence of the country, and looked down with contempt upon those clusters of humanity which were gathering together in the cities starting up around them. They were yet strong enough to exact homage, and wring out imposts and dues, but in progress of time the cities took upon themselves their own defence, and as they grew in prosperity, and acquired wealth and strength, they soon began to dictate laws to the feudal lord. Then commenced a struggle : that spirit of resistance which had arrayed itself against barbarian monarchy for feudalism, now arrayed itself against feudalism for democracy.

At the opening of the eleventh century the Lombards acknowledged no rule. Frederic Barbarossa attempted to subdue them, but was compelled to retreat, and the peace of Constance, signed in the year 1183, guaranteed the independent rights of the Italian cities, closed the middle ages in Italy, and gave her the lead amongst the nations. In the meantime the maritime nations had procured their independence from the Eastern powers. Venice became a republic ; Pisa and Genoa were free. By the twelfth century there was a general enfranchisement of towns all over Europe. In the next, the signs of the new life were already manifest in Italy. Agriculture, the truest indicator of prosperity, was flourishing, the plains were covered with plentiful crops, marshes were drained, fences planted, and nature smiled back her blessing on human industry. The blue waves of the Adriatic were covered with the sails of ships bringing with them the treasures of the East, and laying the foundations of modern commerce.

In Lombardy were the forges at which nearly all

the armour of Europe was made, and the shrewd Lombards, enterprising, independent, bold, the only people who appeared to understand the coming times, were establishing banks and exchanges, not only in their own country, but at the peril of their lives in France, Germany, and even in England. They were the business men of Europe, equally ready though to take the field or strike a bargain, and they were the first pawnbrokers of modern civilization. Genoa was rising also, she built ships and bred sailors; Tuscany was studded with silk factories; architecture started into existence—it was the age of cathedral building; painting revived; the fertile soil responded willingly to the labours of diligent husbandry; manufactures were supplying the materials for future commerce, and everything betokened the advent of a new life in a country which, emerging from the darkness of the past, began to show the first signs of a vigorous maturity.

That gradual rise of towns, and dawn of the day of commerce, is an interesting phase in the history of every European state. It developed itself in Belgium, in Germany, in France, in England, different in mode, but the same in principle. The development was natural. As soon as the incessant fighting which ensued after the barbarian invasion had somewhat subsided, when the new nationalities began to form themselves, and the agitated peoples were settling down, those who acquired land began to build. Then arose the castle, a house rudely constructed at first, but strongly fortified; and under its battlements, stretching out far and wide, were the huts of those who tilled the soil for the lord, fought for him in battle, and clung around him for protection and sustenance.

By-and-by the countries were portioned out in this way under the feudal system, and though kings were retained, their authority was somewhat reduced by it, from the despotism of the barbarian form to the limited power of a great military chief. The towns, if any, upon the estate were subject, under the feudal laws, to the baron. Of their condition in the early ages of feudalism history is unfortunately silent; from the wretched state in which they were, when, as a system, they first came into notice in the twelfth century, we can imagine what they must have been; but of that hereafter.

When the towns began to take to trade, and the burgher interest sprang up, when money was accumulated, and wealth proverbially assigned to them, it was not unusual for the baron to make an occasional raid amongst them to pilfer and pillage them of their treasures. And in his passage from one domain to another, he and his retainers were quartered upon the honest burghers, and consumed their substance in riot and revelling. But, as we have already hinted, the towns gradually acquired wealth, and with wealth, strength; they then banded together against the barons; men were learning fast that in isolation they could do nothing, but by combination everything. Gradually encroachments were made upon the power of the barons; instead of freely quartering their retainers upon the burghers, they were obliged to make arrangements for payment, and ultimately the citizens increased in influence to such an extent, as to procure their emancipation in the manner we have already described. In Italy this emancipation of the burgher class was the most marked phase of the thirteenth century. In order to make our sketch of

the state of things clear, we must add to this that, in addition to the corruption of religion, the results of the crusades were unfortunate. Orientalism had become the vogue. Men went out to Palestine good Christians, and returned tainted with Oriental notions, superstitions, luxury, and vices. All these exerted a deleterious influence upon Christianity, and it was at that time thought by some that, in revenge for the slaughter of the sons of Moslem, Moslemism would overturn Christianity. But worse than this, as men returned from that fierce sky of the East they brought with them Oriental pestilences, more especially that terrible scourge the taint of leprosy. That disease was rife in Europe at the period of which we are writing, and the state of the towns was such as to foster it. They were badly built, for the most part damp and muddy, being unpaved, and were soon overcrowded with settlers who fled to them for shelter against feudal tyranny.

Such was the state of things in Europe towards the end of the twelfth century, when the leaven of "*salt*" was once more sent into the midst of moral and physical pestilence.

The towns of Italy, as we have seen, were in advance of those of other countries; many of them beautifully built, and celebrated for their wealthy and powerful citizens. Such a town was Assisi, in Umbria, and such a citizen was Pietro Bernadone when his son Francisco was born. Francisco Bernadone, afterwards Pater Minorum, Pater Seraphicus, then St. Francis, with a place among the saints in the hagiology of the Church, now high up on stained glass windows of thousands of churches, in illuminated missals, imperishable in history, and honoured by men of all subsequent

times and creeds as a great reformer and benefactor to humanity, an ardent enthusiastic Christian. We shall contemplate the character and work of St. Francis as the "SALT" infused into the world at one of those periods of its corruption, and in order to do this we shall endeavour to delineate the man as clearly as we can from the acts of his life, and the emanations of his mind ; then examine his great work, and its effect upon the Church in general, and upon that of our own country in particular.

We shall endeavour to pourtray St. Francis, the Founder of the Friars Minors, not according to the phantoms of imagination, nor the caricatures of prejudice, but from the records of his life, and still more efficiently from his works and sayings. Fortunately the materials are ample. There is a life of St. Francis, written by Thomas of Celano, the probable author of the sublime mediæval hymn, the "Dies Iræ," and as he was a follower and an intimate friend of the saint, he writes with authority. At the command of Gregory IX., he committed to writing his knowledge of the life of St. Francis, which work was called the "Legenda."

A second life was written by John of Ceperano ; a third by an Englishman, being a metrical version of that of Celano ; a fourth by three companions of the Saint (*a Tribus Sociis*) Leo, Angelus, and Ruffinus, compiled at the command of the Minister-General of the Order, Father Crescentius ; a fifth by the same Thomas of Celano, being a fuller sketch, at the request also of Crescentius ; and a sixth, written at the request of nearly the whole Order by St. Bonaventura, who when a child, had seen the saint.

All of these biographies are extant in the *Acta Sanctorum*, written in what Carlyle would term

“Monk, or dog Latin, still readable to mankind.”* His works are scanty, but, such as they are, they bear the impress of the man’s mind. It must be remembered that St. Francis made no pretensions to being a scholar, a theologian, or an author; in fact, he was a little inclined to deprecate these things; therefore his literary remains are only a few letters, hymns, addresses, colloquies, predictions, and apophthegms.

His father, though an avaricious man, yet lived in the profuse style characteristic of the leading Italian merchants, and young Francisco was brought up accordingly, so that his youth, up to the age of twenty-five, was spent in vanity. During that time, he excelled all his companions in gay frivolity, and the vices common to a young man with a rich father, proud of his son. He was the admiration of all, and led many astray by his example. He dressed in soft and flowing robes, spent his time in jesting, wanton conversation, and singing songs. Being rich, he was not avaricious, but prodigal; not having to work for his fortune, he cheerfully set about spending that of his father.

An incident is recorded in the life by the Three Companions which is not mentioned by Thomas of Celano nor Bonaventura.† It is said that during a disturbance between the citizens of Assisi and the people of Perugia, young Francisco was captured, and, with others, placed in prison. Whilst there, his manner was so different from the rest, they being sad, and he more gay than ever, that they asked him the reason. “What do you take me for?” said he. “I shall yet be adored all over the world.” He spent nearly a year

* Past and Present.

† It is alluded to, however, in the Life of St. Columba Reatina.

in this durance, and, when peace was declared, returned to Assisi, and devoted his attention to the sale of his father's wares, until his conversion, which happened some years later. During the interval, he fell ill, and began to lament for the sin of his past life, and to make resolutions of amendment. He recovered, and, with the recovery, the penitence and the resolutions vanished.

He pursued his former life until a circumstance happened which very nearly changed his whole career. A certain nobleman of Assisi was about to undertake a military expedition against Apulia, and young Francisco was immediately fired with the longing to become a soldier. He had a mysterious dream, which he misinterpreted into an encouragement. After making all preparations, he set out, and reached as far as Spoleto, where he had another dream which convinced him of his mistake, and sent him back to Assisi. From that time he began to reflect, and, in the embarrassment of his thoughts, would retire into solitary places, and pray to God to guide him and direct him what to do.

He spoke in enigmas, and told his friends that he should not go to Apulia, but would make his name famous at home. In reply, they demanded what were his plans? was he going to take a wife? "I am"—said Francisco—"I am going to take a more beautiful and noble wife than you have ever seen, who will excel in beauty and wisdom all women."

He now took to fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. The mysterious work had commenced; his whole nature changed; he isolated himself from all his companions, began to hear voices from heaven, to see visions, and to listen to calls from the Invisible.

Whilst in this state, he was one day returning from

a neighbouring market, where he had sold some of his father's goods, and passed by the Church of St. Damian, which had fallen into ruins. A light flashed upon his mind. He had previously, when praying in the fields, heard a voice say to him, "Francis, go and repair my house," and therefore, without a moment's hesitation, he entered the church, found the old priest, bowed before him, kissed his hands, implored him to accept the money which he was taking home, and permit him to remain there. The cautious priest allowed him to remain, but refused to take his father's money, when Francisco, in a fit of indignation, threw it aside contemptuously.

By this time the father began to be uneasy about the fate of his eccentric son, and set out to make inquiries for him. Francisco then retired to a neighbouring cavern. Here he stayed some time, but at last, resolving to brave it out, he returned, wasted and wan, to Assisi. The people thought him mad, and pelted him through the streets, when his father, hearing a noise, went out, and, recognising his son, seized him, dragged him home, chastised him severely, shut him up in a dark place, and firmly bound him, that he might be safe till he returned from a journey he was about to take.

In the father's absence, however, the mother, after trying in vain to reason with him, let him go, and he immediately returned to the church where he had been hiding. His father, upon his return, upbraided his wife for releasing this disobedient son, and resolved upon bringing the matter to a settlement.

To this end he went to the church, saw Francisco, and finding him more obstinate than ever, decided upon letting him have his own way, but with charac-

teristic prudence, demanded the money from his son which he had received for his goods. This being restored, he was appeased, and then suggested that, as Francisco had devoted himself to poverty, he would not require any patrimony, and might release his father from all claim upon him. To this Francisco willingly consented. A formal document was prepared, and the parties appeared before the Bishop, when Francisco not only renounced his inheritance, but taking off his clothes, threw them to his father, with these words, "Up to now I have called thee my father on earth, but now I can securely say, My Father who art in heaven." The Bishop was so delighted that he embraced him, and gave him his cloak.

Thus was Francisco divorced from the world, from father, mother, and kindred, and married to poverty, to which from this time forth he devoted his life. An incident is recorded of him here which was indicative of one portion of his great work. He was out alone on a certain day, when a wretched leper crossed his path. Francisco instinctively shrunk from the sight, but suddenly recollecting that his object was to subdue himself, he ran after the leper, seized his hand, and kissed it.

From that time he resolved to adopt the care of the lepers as a peculiar portion of his work, and we find him shortly afterwards entering the leper hospital and devoting himself to their service, washing their sores with his own hands, dressing them, and even kissing them.* Then he returned once more to Assisi, the scene of his youthful revelry, and in the garb of a

* Bonaventura says : "Educebat plagarum putredinem et saniem abstergebat."

mendicant begged in the streets from those who once knew him in luxury, for money to rebuild the church of St. Damian, as he felt the injunction to do so was still upon him.

His enthusiasm told upon men's minds, and money flowed in rapidly, so that he not only rebuilt that church, but another also, St. Mary of Porzioncula, which he then frequented, and to which he was ever afterwards deeply attached. One day, when attending mass in this church, the gospel was read, and the words "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves nor scrip, neither bread nor money, neither have two coats apiece," sank deep into his soul. He went out of the church, took off his shoes, laid aside his staff, threw away his wallet, contented himself with a small tunic and a rope for a girdle, struck out for the strict apostolic rule, and endeavoured to persuade others to follow his example.

The first instance of the mighty contagion of that example occurred in the conversion of one Bernard de Quintavalle, a man of wealth and repute, who came to Francisco, and offered himself and his all to him. The saint proposed that they should go to the Church of St. Nicholas and seek for guidance. They did so, and when the mass was over, the priest opened the missal, after making the sign of the cross. The first response was, "If thou wilt be perfect go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor;" the second, "Take nothing for your journey;" and the third, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." "Let us obey the Divine command," said Francis. Bernard immediately did so to the letter, and adopted the same dress as his master.

Thus was the foundation laid of that great order of

Minor Brethren. It is possible that St. Francis, for we must call him now by his canonized name, had not dreamed of such a thing as founding an order, but converts increased ; Peter of Catania, and four others, Egidius Sabbatini, John de Capella, and Sylvester were then added, and they all retired to a hut in the plain of Rivo Torto.

When they numbered eight St. Francis gave them a solemn charge, and dismissed them by twos in different directions to preach the Gospel of peace and forgiveness. They met after a short time, and as their numbers increased so rapidly, St. Francis drew up his first rule, which differed very little from that of the Benedictines, save that it enjoined at the outset a solemn injunction, ingeniously evaded afterwards, that they should have no property, but live in obedience and chastity. “*Regula et vita istorum fratrum hæc est, scilicet vivere in obedientia et in castitate et sine proprio.*” Their clothing was to be of the poorest kind ; for novices for one year, “*duas tunicas sine caputio et cingulum et braccas et caparonem usque ad cingulum ;*” for those who were finally admitted, “*unicam tunicam cum caputio et aliam sine caputio, in necesse, fuerit et cingulum et braccas.*” No brother should be called “*prior,*” but all should be termed Minor Brethren, “*fratres minores,*” and the one should wash the other’s feet.

Humility was strictly enjoined. They were to live on charity ; to beg their bread if necessary, and not to be ashamed, but rather to remember that our Lord Jesus Christ was not ashamed, was poor and a stranger, and lived on charity, both He and His disciples. They were stringently cautioned against women, or, as St. Francis ungallantly puts it, “*A malo visu et frequentia*

mulierum." Wherever they went they were to remember that, and no one of them was to counsel women in secret. They were to travel on foot; not to have any beast, save from extreme infirmity, or the most urgent necessity.*

Having drawn up this rule, St. Francis, with two or three of his followers, went to Rome to procure the Pope's sanction to the order. They met the Pope on a terrace of the Lateran Palace, and threw themselves at his feet. He, annoyed at the interruption, turned away indignantly from these men with bare unwashed feet and coarse attire, and bade them begone. They retired to pray, whilst Innocent III., in the night had a vision, which induced him to send the next morning for those strange men whom he had repulsed. He received them graciously, approved of their rule, and they departed in joy to Assisi. His march back was a triumph. The people came out to meet him from the villages, and many deserted their homes to join him on the spot. The next step taken by St. Francis was to make a modification in his rule: he found many people were converted to his views, but from the ties of children and business occupations could not possibly follow him.

To meet such wants, he instituted what was called an Order of Penitents, by which those who joined were compelled to pray, to fast, and to live according to certain rules, and wore beneath their ordinary garb the penitential girdle. This Order included both sexes, and people of all classes. One member of it was, however, destined to greater things, the young

* Quod nullo modo apud se nec apud alium, nec aliquo modo bestiam aliquam habeant.

and beautiful Clara, a daughter of the house of Ortolana. She had, from childhood, been brought up most religiously by her mother, and the weird eloquence of St. Francis finished the task.

An interview was arranged, and the saint suggested an elopement, which was successfully effected, and Clara was abducted by St. Francis to the Church of Porzioncula. Many other young ladies soon followed, and it was then necessary to institute new rules for these fair converts. The Church of St. Damian, which St. Francis had rebuilt, was turned into a convent, with Clara (who was afterwards canonized as St. Clara) as its Abbess. A letter is extant in the works of the saint, which runs as follows : "Francis, to his very dear Sister Clara, and the Convent of the Sisters of St. Damian, health in Christ. Because, by the inspiration of our Lord ye have made yourselves daughters and handmaidens of the Highest, of the most high King and Heavenly Father, and have betrothed yourselves to the Holy Spirit to live according to the teaching of the Gospel ; it is my will, and I promise that I and my brethren will have always for you the same diligent care and special solicitude as for ourselves. Farewell in the Lord."

In the year 1216, the first General Council of the new order was held in the Porzioncula, when Tuscany, Lombardy, Provence, Spain, and Germany, were assigned to the principal followers of St. Francis as mission grounds. The saint himself took France as his own field of operations. At this point a meeting took place between St. Francis and one who stands in the Church almost on an equality with him, Dominic, the founder of the order of Friars Preachers, the chief inquisitor in after times, whose institution, though it is

associated with much that is beautiful in art, yet is deeply stained with the blood of martyred Christians. After their meeting, St. Dominic was anxious for an amalgamation of the two orders, but St. Francis refused. Intrigues were then begun against the Franciscans, when they sought the protection of Cardinal Ugolino, who was delegated for that purpose by Pope Honorius.

Three years after the first, the second Council was held, and a grand sight it was—five thousand brethren encamped around the church. To this great body, infused with the spirit of one man, Ugolino was introduced, and made such a flattering speech, and gave such glowing predictions of their future power and glory, that St. Francis became alarmed, and quickly perceived that if the protector were allowed to have free play he would soon ruin his charge. He therefore interfered, reiterated the severity of their rule which forbade all dreams of glory or power, told them they must always be the Minor Brethren, the poor of the world, and after redistributing them amongst several countries, broke up the assembly, never more to venture on another gathering into one spot of such inflammable materials. When they were all dispersed, their great founder went upon a holy mission to the army then under the walls of Damietta. He advised the Christians not to engage with the Saracens, and predicted their defeat if they did, but the army were too eager for plunder and bloodshed. They engaged, and six thousand slaughtered Christians fulfilled the prophecy.

Then St. Francis resolved upon taking a step which made his name still more famous in history. Confiding his project to only one, who was to accompany him,

Illuminatus* by name, St. Francis, although a reward was set upon the head of every Christian, wandered up to the lines of the enemy, was seized, and taken before the Sultan. Strange to say, instead of ordering him to be executed, the Sultan received him courteously, listened to his preaching patiently, and asked him to remain with him in his tent. St. Francis replied, "I will remain willingly with you, if you and your people will only become converted to Christ; but if you doubt, order a fire to be kindled, and I will enter into it with your priests, and see who is right." The Sultan, who had perceived that one of the chief priests had vanished at these words, replied: "I do not think any of my priests would submit to the torture for the sake of their religion." Then, said St. Francis, "If you will promise for yourself and your people to adopt the Christian religion if I come out uninjured, I will enter it alone." The Sultan, however, declined, and after vainly offering rich presents to St. Francis, sent him back in safety to the Christian camp.

After this memorable interview, St. Francis returned, preaching in all the countries as he passed through. One day after his return, as he was praying in the Church of St. Mary Porzioncula, a vision of our Saviour appeared, and promised that, to all who should thereafter confess their sins in that church, plenary remission should be granted. St. Francis immediately went to the Pope at Perugia, and procured the granting of the indulgence, in consequence of which a ceremony is held to this day annually, in the church of St. Mary

* It is sometimes stated that St. Francis went alone; but the lives by St. Bonaventura, by the Tres Socii, and by St. Thomas of Celano, all mention this Illuminatus as his companion.

of the Angels, when the peasantry assemble to confess their sins and receive the promised indulgence.

Then comes the last great tradition of his life--the receiving the stigmata. It is recorded, and firmly attested by the great men who wrote his biography, that, on a certain morning, at the hour of the holy sacrifice, when St. Francis was praying on the side of Mount Avernia, Jesus Christ appeared to him under the form of a seraph crucified on the cross, and when the vision had disappeared, St. Francis was marked with the wounds of Christ in his hands, his feet, and his side.*

Various grave discussions arose amongst the faithful about the truth of this legend. Only nineteen years after its presumed occurrence a Dominican preacher had openly declared his disbelief of it, but then he was a Dominican. The Bishop of Olmutz, however, followed in the wake, when Pope Gregory IX. (Ugolino of old) wrote, reproaching them with their want of faith; and Alexander IV., who succeeded, declared he had seen with his own eyes the stigmata of St. Francis.

Shortly after this incident, St. Francis sickened, and, exhausted by long fastings and vigils, wasted gradually, until, as Bonaventura says, he was only skin and bone—"quasi sola cutis ossibus cohæreret." One day, during his illness, a companion said to him, "Brother, pray to God that He may have mercy upon thee, and not lay His hand so severely upon thee." St. Francis

* The author of this book has been solemnly assured by the "Suisses," in foreign cathedrals where there are images of St. Francis, that the Saint died the

death of Christ, and upon his mentioning the canonized version of the story, has been looked upon as a heretic and blasphemer.

reproved him for such a speech, and though he was very weak, threw himself on the ground, and, kissing the earth, said, "I thank thee, O Lord God, for all my pains; and I pray Thee, if it be Thy will, multiply them a hundred fold, because it will be most acceptable to me, for the fulfilment of Thy will in me will be my supreme consolation." And his brethren noticed that as his bodily pains increased, his joy was greater. He predicted the day of his death, and begged to be carried to his beloved Porzioncula, that he might yield up his spirit at that spot where he had first received divine grace. It was done, and he insisted upon being laid naked upon the bare ground, when he turned to his companions and said, "I have done my part: what yours is, may Christ teach you." When his last hour was come he had all the brethren on the spot called to him, addressed them kindly on preserving their vows of poverty, and upholding the faith of the Catholic Church; he then laid his hands upon them, and pronounced his blessing upon all present and absent. "Farewell," said he, "all my sons, be strong in the fear of God, and remain in that always, and since future temptation and tribulation are near, blessed are they who continue in the things they have begun. But I hasten to God, to whose grace I commend you all." Then he called for a copy of the Gospels, and asked them to read him that of St. John, beginning at the words, "Before the day of the passover," &c., when he suddenly broke out into the psalm, "Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi, voce mea ad Dominum deprecatus sum," continued to the words, "Me expectant justi donec retribuas mihi," when, as they died away on his lips, the spirit of the great founder passed gently out of his poor emaciated body, and returned to its Maker.

Thus died St. Francis, in the odour of sanctity; and perhaps we cannot more appropriately conclude this brief outline of his life than by giving a translation of a sketch of his character and personal appearance, as written by one who knew him, Thomas of Celano, the author of the "Dies Iræ." It forms a graphic portrait of the man, and may serve as a fair specimen of hagiography. In his life of the saint he thus writes: "O how beautiful, how splendid, how glorious did he appear in the innocence of his life, in the simplicity of his words, in the purity of his heart, in his love of God, in brotherly charity, in fragrant obedience, in angelic aspect! Gentle in manners, placid in nature, affable in conversation, faithful in undertakings, of admirable foresight in counsel, able in business, gracious to all, serene in mind, gentle in temper, sober in spirit, stable in contemplation, persevering in grace, and in all things the same; swift to indulge, to anger slow, free in intellect, in memory bright, subtle in dissertation, circumspect in choice, simple in all things; rigid towards himself, pious towards others, discreet to everybody; a most eloquent man, of cheerful aspect and benevolent countenance, free from idleness, void of insolence. He was of the middle stature, rather inclined to shortness; his head was of the medium size, and round, with an oblong and extended face, a small smooth forehead, black and simple eyes, dark brown hair and straight eyebrows; his nose was thin, well proportioned, and straight; his ears erect and small, and his temples were smooth; his tongue was placable, though fiery and sharp; his voice was vehement, though sweet, clear, and sonorous; his teeth well set, regular, and white; his lips of moderate size; his beard was black, and not very thick; his neck thin; his shoulders straight, with

small arms, thin hands, long fingers and nails; he had thin legs, small feet, a delicate skin, and very little flesh. He wore a rough vest, took very little sleep, and, though he was most humble, he showed every courtesy to all men, conforming himself to the manners of every one. As he was holy amongst the holy, so amongst sinners he was as one of them." *

Before we advance further, we must say a few words upon a subject well known to all who have investigated the originals of ecclesiastical history—the miracles attributed to the saints. Their biographies are spangled with miracles—that of St. Francis especially. The *Acta Sanctorum* is a compilation of some fifty or sixty folio volumes, containing sometimes five or six different lives of each saint, written by men in different ages and countries, ranging from the eighth to the fourteenth century.

All these writers unite in one thing, the ascription of miraculous powers to the saints. The question then arises, can this be wholly and entirely false? can it be utterly without one grain of truth in it?—a tissue of falsehoods—wilful, wanton falsehoods, consistently written by men at vastly different times, and in remotely distant countries? We must premise at once that we do not intend for a moment to defend the absolute truth of the wonders attributed to the saints. We do not believe for an instant that their bodies were sometimes lifted from the earth, and carried up into the sky, like St. Francis; or that they walked dryfooted over the sea, as did St. Birin, when he left the corporalia behind him at Boulogne; nor that commands and directions were given them direct from heaven,

* Thomas de Celano in *Vita Sti. Francisci*. *Acta Sanct.*

through the medium of crosses, images, or pictures ; but we cannot help reflecting as to whether it is possible for such a systematic body of history to be handed down to posterity in one continuity of falsehood for some eight or nine centuries ; or whether we may come to the conclusion that it is a superstructure of exaggeration built upon some basis of truth. It may help us, perhaps, at the outset, to notice what were the characters of the writers of these lives ; were they men likely to be deluded by fanaticism, or likely to lend themselves to the perpetration and perpetuation of wanton falsehoods ?

If we turn over the volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, we shall find, on the contrary, some of the brightest names in the annals of literature, piety, and philanthropy ; some of the deepest scholars, the most acute reasoners, the most elaborate thinkers recorded in the annals of fame ; of men whose works have been and still are the guiding lights of theological and philosophical investigation. There are Bridferth, Eadmer, Lanfranc, Anselm, William of Malmesbury, Thomas à Kempis, Bonaventura, and many others, all distinguished for intellect and piety. Some of them, too, were honoured by a personal acquaintance with the subjects of their memoirs, as in the case of Bridferth, the contemporary of Dunstan, of Eadmer of Anselm, of Thomas of Celano and St. Francis. Can it be that these scholars, trained to philosophical investigation—these profound thinkers—these holy archbishops and bishops, should connive together to delude posterity with a tissue of lies—of wanton lies, which might have been easily contradicted by contemporary writers, many of whom were bitter enemies both of the authors and their religion ; yet we find no such contradiction.

We have plenty of contemporary history handed down tolerably perfect as regards incidents, dates, accurate reports of great councils, descriptions of battles and sieges, lives of statesmen, warriors, and scholars, with views of both sides, debated, refuted, or confirmed. And are we to believe that in this matter of the lives of the saints only have all contemporary writers, friends and foes, scholars, holy men, great benefactors of their age, conspired successfully together to hand down an enormous fabric of falsehood, and at the same time secure the silence of all contemporary history. This is the great difficulty.

A distinguished English writer, the elder D'Israeli, has endeavoured to account for these strange tales in the lives of the saints by suggesting they were written as exercises and religious theses, when each student filled up his outline with all the wonders he could invent to invest his subject with greater glory. That is a theory accepted by many who are already prejudiced towards its acceptance; but it is a frivolous theory, to which we object the improbability of these great men whose names are already mentioned, being set down, some of them in the maturity of their lives, to write religious exercises of that nature. Is it not rather possible that there may be something in all this history which we can neither understand nor explain?

Let us examine for a moment into what we may venture to call the natural history of miracles. We find the Bible itself is an immense repertoire of miracles from Moses down to the Apostles, and it contains no distinct announcement of a withdrawal of that power from the Church. It was confirmed by Christ, who endowed His Apostles with the same power, and who said one or two things in His addresses to them which,

we think, will throw some light upon this vexed question.

It is quite certain that there have never been any miracles wrought in the world by any who did not receive the power from God. We are not prepared to estimate what degree of change was produced in the relations between man and God by the Fall; we are certain of this, that a gap was placed between the two, so wide that Christ was sent to bridge it over; that an apostasy ensued, and a disunion so complete that His death alone was able to provide the means of reunion and reconciliation. Then it follows that faith was the only possible mode to man of recovery of what was lost by man; faith before the promise and faith after its fulfilment, and in the proportion of the strength of that faith, and the consequent change of life in the heart and nature of him who possessed it, was the reunion with God promised. But how does this bear upon miracles? In this way. Turn to the Bible, and it will be seen that of every man who is recorded to have performed miracles, it is also recorded that he had this immovable faith, and that his life was ordered accordingly. Faith, prayer, and fasting, have ever been the elements of the life necessary to miracles, and we are not prepared, nor are we able to estimate what would be the result of such a course of severe discipline as some of the saints went through towards a recovery of that lost union with God. It is a singular fact, that in the life of Christ, we find it was only after His fasting and prayer in the wilderness, that He began to perform miracles, as though during that severe trial of temptation, fasting, and prayer, the perfect union between Himself and His Father had been sealed by the final gift of miraculous power. And thus was it, that when

in after times his disciples were unable to cast out the devils, and appealed to Him for the reason of their inability, He replied : " This sort goeth not out but by fasting and prayer ;" and we are told elsewhere that the disciples of Jesus did not fast. So that we find in the Bible there is a close connexion between the active development of the spiritual, and the subjugation of the corporeal life, and the working of miracles.

All the prophets led that life, they were given to prayer, fasting, and solitude. It was the peculiar life of Jesus ; He retired to the mountains, the deserts, and bye places for prayer, and He attributed the miraculous power to the results of this life.* Is it then possible for a man, by strong faith, accompanied by fasting and prayer, in these later days to regain that close, mysterious communion with his Maker which should give him a supernatural power? We reply that we have not the means of answering the question, for the simple reason that we never have an opportunity of seeing it tried. Without wishing to insinuate anything invidious, have we any record in ecclesiastical or other history, of bishops, priests, or men of any class during the last 400 years, spending whole nights in prayer, or consecutive days in fasting, such as we read, upon indisputable authority, was the practice in the olden time of the prophets, and the later times of men who devoted their lives to the imitation of Christ? † There are plenty of hints scattered throughout the Bible and

* In the life of St. Francis we are told that " solitaria loca quærebat," " una die dum sic sequestratus oraret," " cum die quadam egressus ad meditandum in agro," " dum per sylvam iter faciens."

† Our Protestant fasts are a "*lucus*

a non lucendo," consisting of fish of various descriptions, curiously prepared by the Protean art of cookery, with very substantial adjuncts, and accompanied by good wine. No miracles were ever wrought upon that diet.

Testament that there is a mysterious connexion yet to be recovered between man and God, if men will only fulfil the required condition, and we repeat that it is not in our power to estimate the results of such a life as we have mentioned—a life of spiritual discipline, of development of the soul, and subjugation of the body—because we have no examples around us; but we ask, if such life were pursued, what is there to prevent our believing that to some extent the words of our Divine Master, who led that life Himself, would yet be verified, and “this sort” would still “go out through fasting and prayer.” Nay, further, we may add in illustration that the phenomena which are recorded as attending the careers of such men as Whitfield, Wesley, and Irving, have never yet been explained away by any scientific theory or law; so that, in conclusion, as we find in the Bible an emphatic and reiterated record of miraculous power accorded to persons of a certain habit of life and thought—as our Lord, when on earth, attributed that power to the pursuing of that peculiar life—as in every instance where miracles are attributed to men, they are proved to have led such lives—it cannot be thought too much to suggest that, making great deductions and allowances for exaggeration, there may be some basis of truth underlying that fabric of historical and traditional record of the lives of the saints.

Many of those incidents described so mysteriously are capable of explanation. It is often recorded of these men that they saw visions and heard voices. For instance, it is said of St. Francis that on one occasion, when he was long praying in a solitary place, the Lord appeared to him as if on the cross, and so visible was this *φαινόμενον* to him that ever afterwards, when any

thought of Christ's sufferings came into his mind, he could not help bursting into tears ; also, that one night the Lord appeared to him, and said, "Francisce, quis potest melius facere tibi dominus aut servus?" And again, on another occasion—"Francisce, vade et repara domum meam." Within the range of our own experience, who is there amongst us who has not had similar visions in the slumbers of the night, or heard similar voices in the day? Have we not had sweet converse with dear departed friends, and heard voices that have long been silent? What bereaved mother has not often heard the cry of her lost infant, or solitary widow seen the form of a lost husband in the phantasms of the night? If such things happen to ordinary men, we submit that we are unable to estimate the result of the mode of life and the severity of spiritual training which those men underwent, because it is foreign to our habits, and not within the range of our experience. Here we must take our farewell of the saint. Willingly would we devote more space to him ; but we have much yet to say about his work, especially as it influenced the destinies of our own land. He was a great man, an enthusiast in the highest sense of the word ; his character and career remind us forcibly of John the Baptist ; his food was locusts and wild honey, his raiment was scanty, he was a voice crying in the wilderness of a wicked world, and his name will last for ever.

CHAPTER XV.

The Franciscans in England.*

A.D. MCCXIX—MCCC.

BUT we advance to investigate the doings of the Order in England. At the second General Chapter held by St. Francis, at Porzioncula, in the year 1219, when the brethren were divided into parties and sent out on their missions, England was one of the first mission stations assigned. France was the first, then came England, chiefly, it is thought, through the influence of an Englishman, one William, who was a follower of St. Francis. The honour of leading this mission was assigned to Brother Angnellus de Pisa, who was made Minister-General of the Order in England. His authority was as follows: "Ego Frater Franciscus de Assisio Minister Generalis præcipio tibi Fratri Angnello de Pisa per obedientiam, ut vadas in Angliam et ibi facias Officium Ministeriatus. Vale. Anno 1219. Franciscus de Assisio. †

They were also fortified with letters recommendatory from Pope Honorius, addressed to all "Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Priors, and other prelates of the Church," enjoining them to receive the bearers as

* *Authorities.*—Eccleston MS., "De Adventu Minorum," in "Monumenta Franciscana," published by the Master of the Rolls; Wood's *Antiquities of Oxford*; *Anglo-Minoritica*, Matt. Paris Opera; Mura-

tori, *Rer. Ital.*; Bonaventura Opp.; Adam of Marisco's *Epis.*, in "Monumenta Franciscana."

† *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica*, p. 5.

Catholics and true believers, and to "show them favour and courtesy." The actual date of their landing in England is disputed. Eccleston in his MSS. "De Primo Adventu Minorum," gives the year 1224, but the more probable date is 1220, which is given by Wadding, the annalist of the Order, and confirmed by Matthew Paris, who, under the year 1243, speaks of the Friars Minors, "who began to build their first habitations in England scarcely *twenty-four* years ago." As they had no money of their own, and lived upon what was given them, they were transported to England from France by the charity of some monks of Fécamp. They were nine in number, four clergymen and five laymen. The former were *Anagnellus*, a native of Pisa, *Richard de Ingeworth*, *Richard of Devonshire*, and *William Esseby*. The laymen were *Henry de Cernise*, a native of Lombardy, *Laurence de Belvaco*, *William de Florentia*, *Melioratus*, and *James Ultramontanus*. They landed at Dover, and proceeded to Canterbury, where they were hospitably received and stayed two days at the Priory of the Holy Trinity. Then four of them set out for London to present the apostolical letters to Henry III., who received them very kindly, which, as they did not want any money, he would be most likely to do.

The other five were housed at Canterbury, at the Priests' Hospital, where they remained until a place could be procured for them; such accommodation was found in a small chamber beneath the school-house, where they remained shut up all day, and at evening, when the scholars had gone home, they entered the room, kindled a fire, and sat round it. The four monks who went to London were kindly received by the Dominicans, with whom they stayed a fortnight,

until John Travers hired a house for them in Cornhill, which they divided into cells by stuffing the interstices with straw.

The citizens, at the instigation of one Irwin, who afterwards became a lay brother, removed them to the butchery or shambles of St. Nicholas, in the ward of Farringdon within, close to a place called Stinking-lane, where they built a convent for them. The foundations were laid at Christmas, 1220, and it was five years in course of building. The different portions were built by different citizens. William Joyner built the choir, William Walleys the nave, Alderman Porter the chapter-house, Bartholomew de Castello the refectory, Peter de Haliland the infirmary, and Roger Bond the library; even in those days the citizens, when they did anything in the way of charity, did it royally. Two brethren, however, were sent on to Oxford, where they were also kindly received by Dominican friars, according to Eccleston; but a story is told in the annals of the order that the two brethren who were making their way towards Oxford, arrived at a sort of manor-house, about six miles from that city, which was a cell of Benedictine monks, belonging to the abbey of Abingdon.

Being very hungry and tired, they knocked at the gate; and the monks, from their strange dress and extraordinary appearance, taking them for masqueraders, admitted them, hoping for some diversion. But when they found they were a new order of friars they turned them out of doors; but one, more gentle than the rest, went after them, brought them back, and persuaded the porter to let them sleep in the hay-loft. Both versions may be right, as this circumstance occurred outside Oxford; and Eccleston's account

commences with their advent in that city, when they were received by the Dominicans, with whom they remained for about eight days, until a rich citizen, Richard Mercer, let them a house in the parish of St. Ebbs. Then the two brethren went on to Northampton, where they were received into an hospital. They procured a house in the parish of St. Giles, over which they appointed one Peter Hispanus as guardian.

Then they went to Cambridge, where the townspeople gave them an old synagogue, adjoining the common prison; but, afterwards, ten marks being given them from the king's exchequer, they built a rough sort of oratory on a plot of ground in the city. After that another settlement was made in Lincoln, and gradually in many other cities; so that, in thirty-two years from their arrival, they numbered 1,242 brethren in forty-nine different settlements. Their first convert was one Solomon, of good birth and connections.

When only a novice, he was appointed procurator of his house; that is he had to go out and beg for it. The first place he went to was the residence of a sister, who gave him some bread, with the following remark: "Cursed be the hour when I ever saw thee!" So strict was their poverty, that one of the brethren being ill, and they having no means to make a fire, got round him, clung to him, and warmed him with their bodies, "sicut porcis mos est."*

The second convert was William of London; then followed Jocius of Cornhill, a clerk, who went to Spain, laboured and died; John, another clerk; Philip, a priest, who, being a good preacher, was sent to Ireland,

* Eccleston, "De Adventu Minorum."

and died there. Then came several magistrates, amongst whom were Walter de Burg, Richard Norman, Vincent of Coventry, Adam of Oxford; but one of the greatest accessions was in the person of Adam Marsh, better known as Adam de Marisco, who was destined to found that distinguished school at Oxford, which boasts such names as Scotus, Occam, Roger Bacon, and others. Adam was called Doctor Illustris. After him came John of Reading, abbot of Ozeney, and Richard Rufus. Then came some military men, Dominus R. Gobion, Giles de Merc, Thomas Hispanus, and Henry de Walpole.

As their numbers continued to increase, people built churches and convents for them in all parts of the country. The Master of the Priest's Hospital at Canterbury built them a chapel, Simon de Longeton, archdeacon of Canterbury, helped them; so Henry de Sandwyg, and a certain noble lady, Inclusa de Baginton, who cherished them in all things, as a mother her sons—"quæ sicut mater filios sic fovit eos in omnibus."

Angnellus now set out upon an inspection of the different settlements, and after pausing for a time at London, came on to Oxford, where, as things were promising and converts gradually coming in, he founded a community, over which he placed William Esseby as guardian of the house, which Ingeworth and Devonshire had hired. Adam of Oxonia joined the company, and then Alexander Hales, whom St. Francis, it is thought, admitted in the year 1219, as Hales passed through France on his way to England. Angnellus then conceived the idea of having a school of Friars at Oxford, and built one near their house. He first addressed himself to Doctor Robert Grostete, one of

the most distinguished lecturers in the University, and beg him to instruct the brethren. Grostete consented, and the school was soon thronged with ardent Franciscan converts, who listened with delight to the lectures of that man, who, as Bishop of Lincoln, was destined to such a glorious career.*

And now Angnellus was instant in encouraging the brethren to attend the lectures, and make progress in the study of the Decretals and Canon Law, and as he found them very diligent he thought he would honour them with his presence at one of their meetings and see how they progressed; but when he arrived there he was horrified to hear that the subject under discussion by these young monks was, whether there was a God! *Utrum esset Deus?* Frightened out of his propriety, the good man exclaimed, "Alas! alas! simple brethren are penetrating the heavens, and the learned dispute whether there may be a God!"† It was with great difficulty they calmed his agitation; he only submitted upon their promise, that if he sent to Rome for a copy of the Decretals, they would avoid such mighty questions, and keep to them.

The first Franciscan who taught in the school was William Eton, under the direction of Grostete, who was not a Franciscan: he was succeeded by Adam de Marisco, who is sometimes called the first of the Order who taught; he was, however, the first who taught alone, the others teaching under the direction of

* He was far in advance of his age, and opposed its vices: he assiduously and firmly resisted the encroachments of Rome, consequently, when after his death his canonization was proposed, no Pope would ever consent, and so Gros-

tete, who really deserved it, was excluded from the calendar.

† "Hei mihi, hei mihi, fratres simplices cœlos penetrant et literati disputant utrum sit Deus." See Wood, *Antiq. Oxon.* lib. i., p. x.

Grossete. Sixty-seven distinguished men filled this chair, some of whose names have been immortalized.

The influence of the study of Aristotle was telling vitally upon the theology of the schools. At first his writings were consulted through very imperfect translations made from the Arabic, with Arabic commentaries—then a mixture of Neo-Platonism was infused, and the devotees of scholastic theology at Paris fell into such errors that the study of his works was prohibited by the Synod of that place in the year 1209. Six years afterwards, this prohibition was renewed by the Papal Legate; but as men began to find that there was a great difference between the philosophy of Aristotle, filtered through Arabic commentators and Arabic translators, and Aristotle himself, a revival took place in favour of the Stagyrite, and Gregory IX., in 1231, by a bull, modified the restriction. Fresh translations were now made and purged from errors.

A new era in scholasticism commenced; the two rival orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, began to apply the Aristotelian method to theological questions; Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas* taking the lead in the former order, in opposition to the teaching of Alexander Hales, † the Franciscan, who lectured at Paris. Bonaventura ‡ endeavoured to amalgamate scholasticism with mysticism; but at length appeared John Duns Scotus, § who lectured at Oxford, Paris, and Cologne, a Franciscan, and worthy opponent of the Dominican, Thomas Aquinas. We must not omit another distinguished member of the Oxford school who flourished at the same time, Roger Bacon, || perhaps the most distinguished man of the age.

* Doctor Angelicus. † Doctor Irrefragabilis. ‡ Doctor Seraphicus.
§ Doctor Subtilis. || Doctor Mirabilis.

He taught at Oxford. He, however, saw the prominent errors of the disputation of the times, and has left on record, in the preface to his "Opus Majus," the following criticism, which is worthy of attention :—“ There never was such an appearance of wisdom, nor such activity in study in so many faculties, and so many regions, as during the last forty years, for even the doctors are divided in every state, in every camp, and in every burgh, especially through the two studious orders, (Dominicans and Franciscans,) when neither, perhaps, was there ever so much ignorance and error. The students languish and stupify themselves over things badly translated, they lose time and study; appearances only hold them, and they do not care what they know so much as to maintain an appearance of knowledge before the insensate multitude.”

Again, in lib. ii., he says :—“ If I had power over the books of Aristotle, I would have them all burnt, because it is only a loss of time to study them, a cause of error and multiplication of ignorance beyond what I am able to explain.” We must give Roger Bacon the credit of speaking more particularly of the wretched translations in use, though his view of Aristotelian philosophy was strangely confirmed centuries afterwards by his still greater namesake, Lord Bacon, who said, after many years' devotion to Aristotelianism, that it was “ a philosophy only strong for disputations and contentions, but barren of the production of works for the benefit of the life of man.” Thus were ranged under two scholastic standards the two great orders of Mendicant Friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans; the former being called Thomists, and the latter Scotists. A fierce doctrinal controversy then raged between them, the animosity of which was heightened by a jealousy

which had always existed on the part of the Dominicans from the time when St. Francis rejected their founder's overtures to unite the two orders.

In the meantime the Franciscans flourished, especially in England. It is a strange fact that the most fanatical order of monasticism flourished most in this the least fanatical country in Europe; but the fanaticism was not the point of attraction. There was much in the free, bold way in which these reformers preached the Gospel, attacked the indolence and vices of the older orders, exposed the listlessness of the clergy, which was calculated to enlist the sympathies of Englishmen, who were already beginning to recoil upon episcopal tyranny.

They imagined that in these humble, disinterested benefactors they saw the means of purifying the Church, and of effecting their emancipation from abuses and extortions. That their expectations would be realized to a certain extent in the self-defensive activity aroused in the native clergy, soon became clear; but in their hopes of emancipation from papal tyranny, through the Franciscan reform, they were bitterly disappointed, as the sequel will show. No less than forty years after their first coming to England, when Bonaventura, then General of the Order, held a Chapter at Narbonne, 1258, England was returned as having been divided into seven custodies, London, York, Cambridge, Bristol, Oxford, Newcastle, and Worcester.

In the year 1400 these same custodies were maintained, and included sixty convents; and at the time of the dissolution, the Franciscans alone of the Mendicant Orders had ninety convents in England, besides vicarships, residences, and nunneries. The excitement which prevailed all over the country can scarcely be imagined.

To a generation of men who had heard no preaching,

or, if any, nothing they could understand, the enthusiastic discourses of these men were like refreshing showers on a parched soil; for in the thirteenth century the sermon had fallen into such disuse, that an obscure and insignificant preacher created a great sensation in Paris, although his preaching was rude and simple. Both doctors and disciples ran after him, one dragging the other, and saying, "Come and hear Fulco, the presbyter, he is another Paul."* The Franciscans diligently cultivated that talent, and from the general favour in which they were held by nearly all classes of the community, especially by the common people, we may conclude that the style they adopted was essentially a popular and engaging style, in direct contradistinction to the scholastic discourses delivered at rare intervals from the pulpits of the half empty churches. Then a Franciscan mingled amongst the poor; he too was poor, one of the poorest, and the poor saw their condition elevated to an apostolic sanctity; his raiment was coarse like theirs; his food also as coarse, for it was their food shared often with him at their own tables; they sat at his feet and listened to him, not in trembling servitude, as at the feet of one whom they had been taught to regard with superstitious awe, but as at the feet of a dear brother, one of themselves, who had hungered with them and sorrowed with them.

Then the Franciscan preached everywhere—at the street corner, in the fields, on the hill-side; his portable altar was set up, the sacrament administered to the people, and the Gospel preached as in the old apostolic times, by the river-side, in the high roads and by-ways, under the bare heavens. No wonder that they won

* Vide Jacobi, a Vitriaco Hist. Occident, c. 6.

the hearts of the degraded populations of the countries in which they settled, that the poor ran to them and flocked round them, and that the good and great were soon drawn over to their side; it was the revival of apostolic simplicity, and as the excited crowds were swayed under their fervent eloquence, and myriads of tearful eyes were turned up to their gaze, it was like the miracle in the wilderness, the rock had been smitten, and the waters gushed forth. Of that marvellous influence we shall have much more to say presently, for it ultimately led to their destruction; but we must note here, that when its operations began to be manifest, the jealousy of the old established clergy was aroused, and every means used to stay the torrent of people who flocked from the churches to the pulpits of the Franciscans. Worse than this, the rights of the parish priests were in peril; the spiritual consolations of the new order were so much more effectual that the people fled to them, and deserted their own pastors.

Although we must accept the evidence of Matthew Paris upon this subject with caution, he being a Benedictine, and therefore a rival, still we can glean from his history much to assist us in our investigation. As early as the year 1243 he charges them with interfering in the duties of the settled clergy, drawing away their flocks, building mansions like palaces for themselves, and hoarding money.* They even went to dying people's bedsides if they were rich, and intimidated

* The exaggeration of this statement was proved at the dissolution, when many of their houses disappointed the Government inspectors, for they had no rents, goods, nor money to be seized. As we

shall see in the sequel what money they did collect went out of the country. They were infatuated slaves of the Pope, but it is unjust to accuse them of hoarding money and plate like the Benedictines.

them into bequeathing their property to the Church ; they were solicitous after privileges ; they were the king's advisers, chamberlains, and treasurers ; they were bridesmen at marriages which they had intrigued to arrange. He also accuses them with being the agents of papal extortion, and of that there can be little doubt. They were eminently useful to the Pope as collectors of money, and active servants to his purposes. But the sums, enormous as they were, wrung from the churches and the people by the mellifluous eloquence of the Franciscans were insufficient, for in the year 1240, the Pope commanded his Legate to have collections made for him in England. The Franciscan friars were enjoined to persuade the people to give, and that money was to be procured wherever it could be found. In addition to this the Pope even went so far as to propose a levy on the fifth part of the revenues of foreign beneficed clergy in England, when even the best friends of the king entreated him to resist. Thus was England drained of her wealth for years for the purposes of papal intrigue, and the money wrung from the country was spent by his Holiness in maintaining the enemies of the emperor, with whom he was not friendly, in a continual state of animosity. Not all, however, for imperial intrigue outwitted infallibility.

As soon as Frederick discovered what a stream of wealth was flowing to the coffers of his Holiness from England and thence transferred to the Landgrave, he put guards at all the bridges and gates, and laid traps for everyone who should be found taking money and other things to the Landgrave, and cut off a great deal from the Pope. Then his Holiness found the Mendicants of service, who in various disguises were employed successfully in transferring the necessary aid. The

greatest grievance, however, was their importunity in pushing their way into churches and trying to seduce the congregations from their pastor; addressing one they would ask, "Have you confessed?" if the reply were in the affirmative, they would say, "To whom?" and when the stranger rejoined, "To my pastor," they broke out at once into denunciations, "Who is that idiot? He has never listened to theological lectures; never studied the Decretals, never learned to dispute on difficult questions. They are blind leaders of the blind. Come to us who know how to distinguish leper from leper, to us to whom all difficulties, all hard things, the secrets of God, are revealed; confess to us to whom such power is conceded." In consequence of this, many people, even nobles, especially noble ladies, left their parish priests and confessed to these Franciscans, so that the established clergy fell into contempt. It was a common saying among the people, "Let us do what we like, and we can go to a Franciscan, whom we have never seen before, and shall never see again, and confess."

Representations were then made to the Pope of their encroachments, and shortly before his death, Innocent IV. abolished their privileges, by commanding each bishop, as to parishioners, that they should be required not to leave their churches for divine worship, or to take the sacraments, or for any other purpose, and that the brethren of either order should not do anything to the prejudice of those who had the care of souls by receiving confessions of the parishioners or in any other way performing the offices proper to the stated clergy towards their parishioners without having first obtained the consent of their respective priests. Soon after the issue of this command, which was conveyed by letter,

he issued a bull to the same effect, directed to all orders of monks. In the latter end of the same year, 1254, Innocent died, and the Mendicants at once saw in this stroke the hand of God in answer to their prayers. Patavinus,* the monk, said that they had prevailed with the Virgin to intercede with her Son for them, and the opinion fastened itself so firmly upon people's minds, that it became a proverb at court, "*A litanis Prædicatorum libera nos, Domine*" (from the prayers of the Dominicans, good Lord, deliver us). To Innocent succeeded a friend of the Mendicants, Alexander IV., who soon after his succession revoked the decree of his predecessor, and declared that, "As formerly certain rashly thinking people, not appreciating sobriety, did impudently declare, that on account of opposition of the bishops you could not exercise your office nor hear confessions without the consent of the parish priests, we in confutation of such have long ago expressed in our letters that you may freely preach to the people, hear confessions, and impose penances, without in any way requiring the consent of the parish priests."

From this time they gradually departed from the apostolic simplicity of their original condition. They procured from the Popes a milder form of interpretation of their great founder's rule; they began to take part in political matters, to build fine houses, and to haunt the palaces and courts of kings. But a jealousy of the most active character subsisted between the two great orders, the Dominican and Franciscan, and continued to increase until a circumstance of common peril brought about a hollow unwilling reconciliation.

* Muratori Rer. ital. tom. viii.

As early as 1230 the Dominicans had held a chair of Theology in the University of Paris, and soon afterwards the Franciscans acquired one also. This was the signal for a contest between the two for every chair in the University as it became vacant, until the disputes and contentions becoming unbearable, the matter was vigorously taken up by William St. Amour on the part of the University, who, from writing upon their academical ambition, advanced to a very severe criticism upon their conduct as monks who professed so much humility and holiness. The Generals of both orders instinctively felt the danger, and suggested a reconciliation for mutual defence. A meeting was held and terms were drawn up, from which we glean how fierce the competition had been. It was enjoined that if the brother of one order found a brother of another having a lingering wish to leave his order, instead of encouraging him to do so he should persuade him to remain : that they should not endeavour to exclude each other from ground which had been given for building : that they should not attempt to interfere with each other's preaching, nor try to draw away each other's congregations : that if any brother of one order should hear anything to the disparagement of a brother of the other order, he should not divulge it ; and many other similar stipulations.

These effeminate squabbles were thus settled with all solemnity, but the conditions had once more to be renewed twenty years after, when they found it more than ever necessary to avoid quarrelling amongst themselves, for all the settled clergy were arousing themselves against the innovations made in their parishes by these Mendicant Friars.

They who had been the leaven in a corrupt mass

were rapidly becoming corrupt themselves. In the year 1257, less than fifty years after their establishment as an order, we find Bonaventura, the child upon whose head rested one of the last benedictions of St. Francis, writing, in his capacity as General of the Franciscan Order, a circular to all the chiefs of the brethren, in which he gives a very sorry picture of their condition, which he traces to these causes:—a multiplicity of business, by which money, above all things most opposed to the professed poverty of the order, had become an object of eager search, was incautiously received and more incautiously used; an idleness and love of ease which had crept over the brethren, which, as it were, fed on the vitality of their souls; much travelling about by many who, through bodily recreation, left amongst those with whom they tarried not an example of good life, but of scandal; the building of sumptuous edifices, which disgusted the brethren, grieved their friends, and exposed them continually to the unfriendly judgments of their enemies; an increase of familiarities forbidden by the rule, which had given rise to suspicions, defamation, and scandal; an eager invasion into the domestic secrets of people, their rights of burial and will-making, not without much contention of the clergy, and chiefly of the parish priests; continual change of residence, and increased expenditure. The pious Bonaventura then predicted their ultimate fate in the words—“Since the brethren will not be content with little, and the charity of men has cooled, we are become a burden to everybody, and shall be more so hereafter unless some remedy can be found.”

In the midst of this gathering corruption there were, however, some who clung fondly to the ideal of their

great founder, but so numerous were the dissentients that this party was at once distinguished by a name—"the Spirituales." In 1254, their views were published at Paris in the introduction of a work which bore the title of the Eternal Gospel. The University, eager for anything against the friars, selected the most salient portions of this introduction, and sent them to the Pope, Alexander IV., who was the friend of the relaxed party, and, as we have before mentioned, had just authoritatively sanctioned the interference of the friars in Church discipline. Alexander then pronounced sentence of excommunication against all who should have the book, and not expunge these passages, after a certain date to be fixed by the Archbishop of Paris; but they were secretly preserved, and the spiritual party increased. Twenty years afterwards, the difficulty was solved for all parties by Pope Nicholas III., who issued a bull in which he declares, with easy philosophy blended with a shrewd regard to his own interest, that as in temporal matters the principal considerations are property, possession, increase, and right of using them, it is not incumbent upon any profession to exclude itself from the use of necessary maintenance. But as regards a profession which voluntarily devotes itself to the poverty of Christ, it must abandon all dominion over possessions, and content itself with an allowance for necessaries. So that whilst the brethren individually cannot become possessors, yet collectively as an order they may; and, therefore, when anything is offered them in the name of God, the intention of the person offering may be interpreted to mean that they, the recipients, should transfer it to others for the sake of God, and there was no person to whom in the place of God the dominion

of this kind of thing could more appropriately be transferred *than to the person of the Roman Pontifex, the Vicar of Christ.** “In order, therefore, that these things might be under no uncertain dominion, we decree by this constitution, that the proprietorship of all the utensils and books, and their present and future moveables, these, and the interest on these, shall belong fully and freely to us and the Roman Church.” And what concession was made to the poor monks by Pope Alexander? Nothing but *an extra tunic!* for the bull continues, “Although it is enjoined in the rule that the brethren should have one tunic with a cowl and one without, we declare that the brethren may, with the consent of their ministers and guardians, conjointly and separately, as may seem fit to them in the administration of their affairs, use more, and yet not deviate from the rule, for it is expressly said that the ministers and guardians shall have regard to the necessities of the infirm brethren, and the regulation of their clothing according to places, seasons, and climates.”

After being thus taken under the ample shelter of Papal protection, the fate of the Franciscans in England ran rapidly to its goal. From the latter part of the thirteenth century to the Reformation, scarcely a book or a poem was written, or a manuscript illuminated, without containing some satirical allusion to the friars.

Our review terminates with the dawn of the 14th century, and we take our leave of these wandering children of St. Francis at this point. They were sent into the world as a “salt,” and the salt was good ; its

* “Nec sit persona in quam loco Dei congruentius hujus modi rei dominium transferat quam persona *Romani Pontificis, Christi Vicarii.*”

operations were effective. As they penetrated into the very heart of a Church which had become corrupt, and mingled with a neglected people who had sunk into a state of benighted, half-heathen ignorance, the reviving influence was manifest; men awoke under their fervid exhortations, flocked round the true cross, gazed once more at a lifting up of that Christ of whom they had heard, but of whom they knew little. The gospel was again preached to the poor by the poor; the carpenter and the fisherman again spoke to the tentmaker and the tanner; men who felt themselves degraded and enslaved by their poverty, and had shrunk from the sight of a priest, now felt that there was something priestly in the very poverty they had loathed; and that through their hunger, their rags, their self-negation, and their wretched isolation, lay a narrow path leading to the unspeakable glory of heaven. The poor had the gospel preached to them; but in addition to this greatest result there was another, almost equally grand, which issued from this movement—freedom of speech and inquiry. Out of the discussions raised by them in the schools came a new intellectual life. A spirit of inquiry was infused into the thought of the country which led the intellect of the educated through many a devious way in that wilderness of speculation up to truth; which developed itself through such men as Hales, Aquinas, Bonaventura, Scotus, Bacon, leading up to Wiclif, Tyndale, and Luther.

It has been well said that Wiclif was but a Franciscan friar turning upon them with their own weapons. They had preached the doctrine of apostolic humility, but had wandered from its practice; in their hearts they thirsted after wealth surreptitiously acquired, and by subterfuge held it; they still wore the garb of

poverty, but that garb became a mockery and a by-word ; they still kept the demure aspect and downcast look, but men jibed at them as they passed in the streets ; they sank from being the apostles of a new life and the regenerators of a rising civilization, and became the lacqueys of tyrants and the slaves of a spiritual usurper ; the Church in England was lifeless, and people turned, as from the cold helplessness of a dead mother, cried to these men for bread, and were given a stone. The marvellous words of our Divine Master were fulfilled in their case : " Ye are the salt of the earth ; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? IT IS THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE CAST OUT AND TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT OF MEN."

CHAPTER XVI.

The Wiclif Period.*

A.D. MCCC—MCCCCXXVIII.

THE most marked feature of the fourteenth century in the history of England is the marvellous resurrection of Saxon life which then took place in the thought, the habits, and the speech of the people. From the time when the last exile band of Saxons had furtively left their native shores to fight and fall under foreign banners in eastern climes, up to this dawn of the fourteenth century, the Saxon in England had been an outcast: his person was despised, his manners derided, his language forbidden, and himself enslaved under the iron rule of a foreign foe. But the germ of life was vital in the Saxon, the spark never went out, but smouldered even under the very heel of the Norman. For nearly one hundred years after the Conquest, the great national "Saxon Chronicle" was kept up, and though the writers boldly recorded the tale of their own calamities, they still spoke with noble generosity of their conquerors. Although their brethren had been expelled from bishoprics, abbacies, and all

Authorities:—Fasciculi Zizaniorum, Rolls Publications; Le Bas; Lewis; Vaughan; Matthew Paris Hist. Major; Walsingham Historia Anglicana; Cotton MSS. Caligula A ix.; Biblia Regia, MSS. E. v.; Harleian MSS., 322; Augustini Cypriani Chrysostomi Opera; Gregory's Epistles; Ambrosii Opp.; Eusebii Demonst. Evangel; Martene Thesaurus Anecdotorum; De Antiquis Monachorum Ritibus.

offices, and they themselves degraded to the lowest depth of the social scale, yet these honest Saxons can still record in their national "Chronicle," though it may be written with their tears, that William restored such order in the country, that any man might travel over the kingdom with a bosom full of gold unmolested, and no man durst kill another, however great the injury he might have received from him. They could still tell us good-naturedly that William "loved the tall stags as if he were their father," and could put up the Christian prayer, "May Almighty God show mercy to his soul, and grant him the forgiveness of his sins." But in the year 1154, about eight-eight years after the Conquest, this most noble national "Chronicle" breaks off suddenly, in broken fragments like sobs, with something about the new king, Henry II., being received at Peterborough with great respect, and in full procession, and at Rumsey, at Morney, and at . . . and Spalding, and . . . and then some broken words about a building which the Peterborough monks were beginning, when it breaks off, as though the last Saxon chronicler had died with the pen in his hands.

By this time, however, the Saxon language had already so changed as to approach closely to something like the English of the present day, such a near approach that almost any Englishman of to-day can read the following passage, which is a portion of the last record of the "Saxon Chronicle," written in the year 1154:—"On this yær wærd the King Stephen ded and bebyried thær his wif and his sune wæron bebyried æt Trauresfield. That ministre hi makiden. Tha the king was ded tha was the eorl beionde sæ. And ne durst man other bute god for the micel eie of him." It will be seen by this that it was in the language the first resurrection of

Saxon life appeared, and in this it was with England as with other nations of antiquity.

The language of a country is to a great extent made up of the results of its history—results of events of which perhaps there is no record, only a dim tradition. Far away in ancient times, before any civilization or literature, even bardic, existed, changes must have come over the fate and fortunes of states, the results of which we can only trace in the language, so that verbs with fragmentary tenses may indicate great political disruptions unrecorded. Invasion, emigration, conquest, and subjugation must have had their influence upon the original tongues, broken fragments of which linger in all modern languages. And as with all languages, so especially with that of our country. There is in our tongue the evidence of bygone conflict stamped indelibly upon it in its irregularities and lawlessness. There are in it echoes of the tramp of close marshalled Saxons, the wild cry of barbarian Danes, the ring of Norman mail.

As this gradual resuscitation of Saxon life is the key to the subsequent history of the country, and first manifested itself in the language, it will not be inappropriate at this point, before we examine the work of the great Saxon, Wiclif, to endeavour to establish a point which is frequently overlooked altogether by historians of our literature, that the Saxon language never died out entirely, but from the time of the Conquest to the dawn of the fourteenth century was gradually developing itself into the modern English. So palpable is this fact that any ordinary English scholar can read much of the early English, or rather Saxon-English, of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries.

The influence of glosses upon the early efforts of the Saxons to establish a national literature has been

adverted to in a former chapter. The ninth century was especially the age of glosses, at first mere interpretations of a passage, and then a running commentary, developing itself under Alfred into an interlinear translation. From writing interlinear translation the desire would naturally arise to write original matter, and this fact is admirably exemplified in the translations of King Alfred, who, carried away by the subject, often interpolates whole passages of his own composition.

But although the Saxon language was consigned to a certain obscurity under the Normans, although it ceased to be the general language of the country, and was banished from law courts and state records, yet we shall be able to show that there was still maintained a struggle after a vernacular national literature—a struggle never once abandoned. We have already shown that the "Saxon Chronicle" was kept up in the native tongue down to the year 1154—that is eighty-eight years after the Conquest—but, independently of this public record, there were still Saxons who, in their obscurity, penned their thoughts and fancies in the old idiom, and some of these remains, sufficient to prove that much more has been lost, have been rescued from destruction, and are being brought to light by the lynx-eyed diligence of modern research.

In the history of Ely there is recorded a song sung by Canute. The monk wrote in 1166.

In the British Museum are manuscript poems of St. Godric, the hermit of Finchale, near Durham, who died in 1170. In his retirement he wrote a hymn which he used to chant. Some of the MSS. contain the musical notes in accompaniment.*

* Biblia Regia, MSS. E. v., Harleian MSS., 322.

Another of his compositions was a stanza supposed to be sung by the spirit of his sister. The words, and even the music, are preserved in the MS.* in the British Museum. In the same MS. is a hymn to St. Nicholas by him, with the music.

John de Guildevord wrote "The Passion of Jesus Christ," in English verse, beginning, "I hereth you one lutele tale that ich 'eu wille telle;" another poem called "The Contention of the Owl and Nightingale," beginning, "Ich was in one sumere dale;" and another on "The Woman of Samaria."† Henry, a monk of Saltry, in Huntingdonshire, of a "Knight called Sir Owen visiting St. Patrick's Purgatory." Layamond in 1155 translated the history of Brut into English from the French of Wace, and Orm wrote his paraphrase of Evangelical history called "Ormolum."

In the thirteenth century, about 1278, Robert of Gloucester wrote his "Chronicle," and Grostête an "English Treatise."

In the Harleian MSS. are several songs in English, with the music, written during the reigns of Henry III., Edward I., II., III., and Richard II.

Such are the scanty remains of the first efforts in English literature. The progress was rapid, but this is not the place to delineate it. We only point it out as the evidence of that resurrection of Saxon life which ushered in the fourteenth century in England, when Saxon names once more appeared on the rolls of abbots, in the Church and the State; and no better impersonation of that spirit can be found in the history of the period than in the life and work of the man

* Biblia Regia, F vii., 5.

† MS. No 76, Jesus Coll., Oxon. Cotton MSS.. Calig. A ix.

whose influence upon the Church we are about to examine.

It would be difficult to find another character in English history whose individuality is so thoroughly lost in his deeds as in the case of John Wiclif, the Reformer. We know him as the indefatigable Oxford student, as the humble parish priest, as the controversial disputant, as the first complete English translator of the Scriptures, as a voice which made itself heard in a dark time, as a witness for the pure Gospel of Christ when that Gospel was hidden from men's eyes by the interpolation of many human errors and human vices; as the philosopher, the divine, the faithful Reformer of a corrupt Church, we know John Wiclif—but of the incidents of his life, of his origin, his childhood, his domestic being, we know nothing; and so great is the magnitude and so vitally important to the destinies of the country is the work which he accomplished, that the natural curiosity we have for prying into the interior life of great men is extinguished in the case of John Wiclif.

The light which is gradually being poured upon the obscure page of past history by the labours of those patient scholars who work under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, is of such an intensity, reveals so many new facts and corrects so many old errors, that it will soon be an absolute necessity to rewrite a considerable portion, if not the whole, of the history of this country. By the publication of old political songs, private letters, state papers, year books, and other documents, only now being dragged from the mouldering obscurity of dungeons and chests, we get more exact views of the various phases of thought in vogue amongst all classes of the community—of motives

which led the nation up to important achievements, causes of changes, and, in fact, the secret machinery which moves the panorama of a nation's exterior life. And so in the case of the remarkable man whose work as regards monasticism and the Church generally we are about to investigate, we find there are many things which have hitherto been handed down by one historian to another which must now be for ever discarded. It appears that there was another John Wyklif, contemporary with the Reformer, who was nominated by Archbishop Islep to the vicarage of Mayfield in July, 1361. In 1356, John Wyklif was seneschal of the week at Merton College, which implies that he was a Fellow of some standing, but in 1361 John Wiclif, the Reformer, was Master of Balliol; and the Bursar's Rolls of Queen's College prove his residence there in various years, from 1363 to 1380, which will be seen at once to be very improbable, if he had been a Fellow of Merton. In addition to this there is the extreme improbability that a Fellow of Merton would be chosen for the Mastership of Balliol, consequently it is clear that the John Wyklif who was a Fellow of Merton in the year 1356, and who was nominated to the vicarage of Mayfield in 1361, cannot be the same person as John Wiclif who was Master of Balliol in 1361. The investigation is too long to be dwelt upon here, but its results teach us this—that Wiclif, the Reformer, was not in Merton College, as his biographers have stated—that he was not the Warden of Canterbury Hall, for that being given by Archbishop Islep to John Wyklif, the gift was not to the Reformer, but to the John Wyklif to whom he had formerly given the vicarage of Mayfield, and the deed of the appointment is dated from Mayfield. Wiclif the Reformer was, then, never at

Merton nor at Canterbury Hall. What was his college? It is not improbable, nay, it appears to be the only reasonable supposition, that Wiclif was at Balliol, from the fact that he appears as Master of that College in 1361. The editor of the "Fasciculi Zizaniorum" mentions in a note the curious fact that Leland quotes from a list of Fellows of Merton the following statement:—"Wiclif, Doctor in Theologia, nec erat socius istius domus nec annum probationis habuit plenarie in eodem." It follows, then, that Wyklif the Fellow of Merton and Warden of Canterbury Hall was the Wyklif of Mayfield, and not the Reformer.

It is generally stated in the biographies of Wiclif that he was born at the village of Wiclif, about ten miles from Richmond, in Yorkshire. This appears to be a perversion of the statement of Leland, who in one passage says that he was born at Spreswell, a poor village, a good mile from Richmond; and in another, that he "*drew his origin*" from the village of Wiclif, some ten miles distant, where a family of that name lived. This village of Spreswell has since been identified with Hipswell, which is one mile from Richmond.

The mistake about his having entered as a commoner at Queen's College arose, very likely, from entries which have been discovered on the Bursar's Rolls of that College, which prove only that he rented rooms there at various times during the years 1363 to 1380; not an unusual thing. It has been asserted that a list was extant with his name as a commoner, but it cannot be found, nor is there the slightest probability that it ever existed.

The book on the "Last Age of the Church," which, like many of the controversial pamphlets of that time, has been assigned to Wiclif, must be abandoned.

Contemporary writers declare that he had nothing to do with the controversies of 1360, the year of its publication, and there is no internal evidence in his other works to support the theory of his being the author. Others of his works are doubtful. The "Poor Caitiff" is said to be by a friar, and the "Abomination Desolationis" is appended to the works of Huss, though it was written by Matthias.

It is related of Wiclif—not improbably, though with no particular authority—that whilst at college he was an ardent student of Aristotle—most Oxford men were in his day, nor do they neglect him now—and that he used to commit all the most intricate passages to memory. He also plunged into the sea of scholastic philosophy, but neither the profundities of Aristotelian investigation, nor the subtleties of scholastic controversy, prevented him from devoting the greater portion of his time to the study of the Scriptures, where he found the solution to many a problem which had bewildered the Stagyrice, and which the schoolmen of his day were laboriously complicating. The emphatic distinctive title of the Evangelical Doctor, which he afterwards acquired from this love of Biblical study, would lead us to suppose that it was not very common in Oxford in the 14th century.

In 1361, on the 10th May, he was appointed to the Rectory of Fyldingham, and he resigned his Mastership to take it, and went there to reside.

The first authentic appearance of Wiclif in public matters is in the year 1366, when Pope Urban, in defiance of all historical teaching, sent in a claim upon the English Church for thirty-three years' arrear of tribute. The Parliament met to consider this claim, and the reply was that, neither King John, nor any

other king, could impose such a liability upon the country without the consent of Parliament; that what John had done in that case was in violation of his oath and the constitution, and that every resistance would be made by the king, the Parliament, and the country, to any attempt on the part of the Pope to enforce his illegal claim. Some obscure monk, it appears, ventured, in spite of this decision, to defend the claims of the Pope, and this brought Wiclif at once into the arena of politics as the defender of the king.

About six years afterwards he took his Doctor of Divinity's degree, and read lectures at Oxford. In these lectures he used to castigate the corruptions of the Friars Mendicant, who were becoming more degenerate than ever, but before 1371, little is known concerning him, only that, amongst the Mendicants, a strong enmity against him was daily increasing. In 1369, the war with France broke out, and after two years the treasury began to fail. Hitherto the Church had been exempt from taxation, but in this hour of perilous necessity a feeling was excited that she ought to bear her share of the country's burden. It was resolved that from her treasures the expenses of the next campaign should be disbursed.

This was a bold step, but the day for ecclesiastical monopoly of state offices was waning. It was a good thing when monarchs were semi-barbarians that the servants of Christ should have an influence over state matters, and the world owes much to the wisdom of those great ecclesiastical statesmen who flourished in the remote periods of history; but a change had come over the world, kings had learned to govern; people were learning, also, to govern themselves, that is, the laws were more willingly and systematically obeyed

for the sake of the common peace. At this point it behoved the Church to retire from state offices and devote herself more entirely to her spiritual work, but in England she did not; she preferred maintaining an undignified futile struggle for the temporals of state office, to retiring from that office with dignity.

In 1375, Wiclif was presented to the Rectory of Lutterworth, which he held until his death. But he was not destined to enjoy the quiet of his rectory in peace. The clergy took up the cause of their brother the Bishop of Winchester, who had been exiled from the court, met in convocation, and laid his case before the king. A compromise was arranged, and Wykeham was permitted to appear in convocation.

They next arraigned Wiclif's doctrines as heresies, and appointed William of Wykeham as one of the judges. Wiclif appeared accordingly at St. Paul's, on the 23rd February, accompanied by the Duke of Lancaster and the earl marshal. The crowd was so great that they could scarcely force their way through. The bishop, annoyed at the interruption, made a remark to the duke, to the effect that, if he had contemplated such a scene, he would have kept him out, and an angry defiance came from the duke. Then when they arrived at the Lady Chapel, where the archbishop and others were sitting to hear the trial, Wiclif remained standing, but the earl marshal offered him a seat, and bade him sit down. The Bishop of London interfered, and declared that he should not sit there, being cited to appear before them. The duke at once defended the marshal, an angry colloquy ensued, when the fiery John of Gaunt ventured to whisper to some one near that he would pluck the Bishop by the hair of his head out of the church rather

than submit to such an insult. These words were overheard and carried outside to the people, who became so tumultuous that the assembly was obliged to be broken up without doing anything. An endeavour was made to renew the process. The monks cared nothing about politics, they only wanted to silence Wiclif, the convocation wished to humble John of Gaunt, and thus Wiclif and the duke were by the force of opposite streams driven together. An application made to the Papal Court renewed the process; but before the bulls reached England, the king died, 21st June, and his grandson, Richard II., succeeded. The duke retired, probably from consciousness of his extreme unpopularity, and the fact that his enemies were spreading a pernicious rumour that he was plotting against the young king for the crown. By leaving the scene of action he upset their machinations.

Then came the papal bulls which had been issued from Rome on the 30th of May previously, four in number, and a special one to the University of Oxford, sent by a special messenger, urging upon the authorities the necessity of arresting Wiclif. In this bull there occurs a sentence to the effect that the Pope wondered and lamented that, through a sort of sloth and laziness, they had allowed "tares to spring up among the pure wheat of the glorious field of their University."

The University hesitated for some time as to whether they should obey the papal bull, but external pressure was brought to bear upon them, and Wiclif was not arrested, but cited to appear at St. Paul's on the 30th December, which citation was afterwards changed for a later date, and to Lambeth Palace. He appeared before the ecclesiastics, but a message was

sent from the Princess of Wales forbidding the proceedings. The bishops hesitated, but the rabble, who were now in favour of Wiclif, broke in upon them and drove them out; and, as Walsingham records it, with his bitter rancour against Wiclif, "by such occasions or devices the pseudo-prophet and real hypocrite for the time escaped."

In or about the year 1381, Wiclif began to move in the great work of his life. There can be no doubt that he had been long engaged upon it, for it was produced soon after his moving in the matter.

He announced to the world his intention of translating the Scriptures into English, so that men and even women might read them. In an instant the pens and the tongues of the Romanists were busy in denouncing heresy so fearful and so dangerous as this. "The Gospel pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under foot of swine," they said. "The jewel of the Church is turned into the sport of the laity." They had nothing to do but to throw up their orders, for the Church had no need of them. Wiclif merely replied that, "the laws which prelates made are not to be received as matters of faith; and more, that the apostles converted the most part of the world by making known to them the Scripture in the language most familiar to the people."

It has always been the policy of the Romish Church to place a gulf between the revealed will of God and the people, and to establish in its place the will of the Church; and the advocates of that system point to the many dissensions and sects of the Reformed Church as a proof of the deleterious result of the throwing open the page of Divine Truth to the inspection of the vulgar, forgetting that schism, and even heresy, are

less injurious to the spiritual and temporal interests of the human race than blind ignorance; for freedom of inquiry leads towards liberty and faith, but the oracular domination of priestcraft has never led to anything but slavery and infidelity. It has been aptly said that, "He who embraces Christianity on authority without reasoning, has the religion which may satisfy but not elevate the mind. He who rejects authority altogether, is in danger of being misled by his own presumption. He who hears the Church, and is convinced by authority and evidence united, arrives at the just medium between the belief that may be contented with ignorance, and the presumption which may lead to error." *

As the process of the distortion of the simplicity of Gospel teaching (*doctrina*) into sharply defined human dogmas advanced, and with it a sensuous and mysterious ritualism, an absolutely necessary accompaniment, a notion sprang up in the Church, instinctively, as an absolute necessity, that the Scriptures must be kept locked up in the Church, to be read only in an unknown tongue before the people, and doled out to men in such portions and with such explanations as may suit the judgment of the priest. The rise of this feeling is the line of demarcation between the purity of what is called the Primitive Church, and the Church dogmatic and ritualistic.

It was always the practice of the Primitive Mission Church to translate the Scriptures into the vernacular of every converted country. When Greek was universally spoken, Origen laboured at the revision of the Septuagint, which had become corrupt by the

* Townsend, Eccles. and Civil Hist., vol. i., p. 154.

interpolations of the Jews, and when the Latin tongue prevailed, then for Latin Christianity was prepared the version of Jerome, the Vulgate. Rome has always paid the deepest homage to this version, which refutes her own theory, for it was written in the vulgar tongue, for the vulgar, as its name implies. But before this version, between the Septuagint and it, there appeared the ancient Syriac for the converted people of Syria, a tongue spoken also by the country people of Palestine. In Egypt, though the Greek prevailed amongst the educated classes, yet for the poor, the vulgar, who spoke the Coptic and Thebaic, there was a version of the Scriptures as early as the second century. It was translated into Ethiopian and Gothic in the fourth, into Armenian in the fifth, into Arabic in the seventh, into Georgian in the eighth, and into Slavonian in the ninth centuries.

So that it was the practice of the early Church to give the Bible to every converted country in its own tongue. And this practice is confirmed by the opinions of the great Fathers of that Church, who, although they had faults common to humanity, and differed from each other on minor points, were vitally in accord on the great truths of Christianity, and afford the strongest proofs that the Church of their days was a very different structure to that of later times. They were great men, and are fairly entitled to the affection of all Christians; their voluminous works contain rich treasures of devotion and instruction, and some of them justly deserve, next to the Scriptures, to which they themselves subjected their own authority, our reverential attention. They pleaded for the right of private inquiry and individual study of the Bible. Cyprian said: "If Christ alone is to be heard, we are

not to attend to what any one has thought proper to be done before us, but rather what Christ did who is before us all. We should not follow human custom but Divine Truth."* St. Augustine said: "The Church ought not to place herself before Christ, who always judges truly, but ecclesiastical judges, like other men, are often deceived."† Chrysostom said: "Scripture is the interpreter of itself;"‡ and Irenæus also, long before him: "The lawful and most secure exposition of Scripture is according to the Scriptures themselves." St. Augustine, in his excellent work, "De Doctrina Christiana," which has been erroneously translated, "Christian *Doctrine*;" but means "Christian *Learning*," (that knowledge which belongs to a Christian,) has given in the early chapters of the third book directions for the private study of the Scriptures, which might be appended with advantage to every Bible printed; in which he repeatedly insists upon the possible solutions of all difficulties which may arise in certain places by an appeal either to the circumstances of the moment when what is described took place, an examination of the context, or a search into other parts of the Scripture bearing upon the same subject. The language of Constantine, at the Council of Nice, is emphatic: "The Books of the Evangelists and the Apostles, and the Oracles of the Prophets, plainly inform us what apprehensions we ought to have concerning divine matters; therefore, laying aside all hostile discord, let us decide the questions that are brought before us by the testimony of the divinely inspired writings."

And yet these very Fathers, who thought so healthily

* Cyp., lib. ii., epist. 3.

† August. cont. Crescon., lib. ii., c. 21.

‡ Chrysost. Hom. in Johann., et in Psalm iii.

of the use of the Scriptures, were the first instruments placed by the Church between the people themselves and the Bible. They were for centuries the final appeal in controversy, the supreme authority, although those who put them in this false position might have read in their works their protest against such an act. St. Augustine, speaking of the writings of himself and the Fathers, said : " This sort of literature is not to be read under the necessity of believing, but with the full liberty of judging ;" * and in another remarkable passage he says of the Fathers : " Every reader or hearer of the Fathers has free power of judgment by which he may approve of whatever pleases him in their writings or reprove whatever offends." † Again : " We therefore venerate the testimony of an old, more pure, and more learned antiquity ; but in such a manner that we do not submit ourselves to the yoke of servitude, and believe whatever any one may interpret or teach from the Fathers ; but, using the liberty into which we are called by Christ, we judge of all writings by the canonical Scriptures, and whatever we find agreeing with that authority we accept with reverence and praise." ‡ That is the language of a noble spirit imbued with true Christianity, not a whit different from Wiclif who, nine centuries afterwards, when he set about giving the oracles of God to his benighted countrymen in their own tongue, declared : " Seeing the truth of the Faith shines the more by how much the more it is known, it seems useful that the faithful should themselves search out or discover the sense of the faith by the Scriptures in a language which they know and understand. He, therefore, who hinders

* August. de Trinit., lib. ii.

† August. cont. Donat., c. iii.

‡ August. cont. Crescon., c. 31.

this, or murmurs against it, does his endeavour that the people should continue in a damnable and unbelieving state ;” and he appeals himself to Augustine : “ The laws, therefore, which prelates make are not to be received as matters of faith, nor are we to believe their words or discourses any further or otherwise than they are founded on the Scripture, since, according to the constant doctrine of Augustine, the Scripture is all the truth, therefore the translation of the Scripture would do this good, that it would render priests and prelates unsuspected as to the words of it which they explain.”

He finished the translation of the Bible and Testament, though, in all probability, he was assisted in it by others, and by doing so gave to England what had been long kept from it—the first complete version of the Bible in the native tongue.

It is the repeated assertion, though historically a false one, that we owe our Christianity to monks and popes, and only recently it has been asserted that when Augustine landed in England not a single native was a Christian, and this by one who goes on to describe the directions given by the Pope who sent Augustine as to his treatment of native bishops.* It would be more true to assert that the reason why England never had a complete translation of the Scriptures until the fourteenth century is due to the fact that the Augustinian foundation, although it did convert the Pagan Saxons, and in that did immense good, yet it also brought the Church of the country under Papal dominion, and that power has always been most adverse to a circulation of the Scriptures.

* Montalembert, “Moines de l'Ouest.”—Augustine. (See Appendix v.)

In the year 1080, the King of Bohemia wished to have the offices of the Church translated into Slavonic; but he was told by Gregory that he knew not what he asked, and that the Word of God to be revered must be concealed. In 1229, the Council of Toulouse decided that no layman should have the books of the Old and New Testament—only a “Psalter, a Breviary, and the Hours of the Virgin.” Then, when the Reformation came, and Tyndall and Luther began to translate the Bible, the monasteries awoke first to the danger; and an inspection of the statutes passed by the different Orders at that time will show how jealous they were of these translations.*

Fourteen years rolled by, and Rome, palsied to her centre, rallied her forces together to make a combined stand against heresy at Trent. In that Council it was decreed that the version known as the Vulgate was the only authentic version, that the Church alone had the right of determining the true meaning of Scripture, and it ordered the Scriptures to be taken from the people in every place where they could be found. In the struggle which ensued to preserve the Bible, it is estimated that more than a million and a quarter lost their lives in about half a century. The French massacres, in three months, swept off one hundred thousand people; Julius VII., in seven years, was the means of sacrificing two hundred thousand; the Jesuits, in forty years, nine hundred thousand; in the Netherlands thirty thousand were put to death by the Duke of Alva, and in thirty-six years the Inquisition, that blot on monkery, destroyed one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

It was with the blood of the martyrs the Church of

* Statut. Cap. Gen. Ordinis Cisterc., anno. 1531, in Martene's Thesaurus Anecdot., tom. iv. col. 1643, B.

Christ was built up on Paganism, and with the same blood was it rebuilt upon corruption.

The next important act of his life was his vigorous attack upon the doctrine of Transubstantiation. We shall endeavour to show that, although he reduced the doctrine very much, yet he did not go so far as to totally deny it. This doctrine of the actual bodily presence of Christ in the Sacrament, His very flesh in the bread and His very blood in the wine, not figuratively but substantially, so that the recipient takes not mere bread and wine as a remembrance, but eats of the very body and drinks of the very blood of Christ, was first mooted in the middle of the ninth century by Paschasius Radbertus.* He was at once met with vigorous opposition, at the head of which was Rabanus Maurus, who was joined by nearly all the respected theologians of the times; but though the controversy ceased the doctrine quietly made progress, and in the year 1007 it was again made a subject of contention by the declaration of Berengarius against it. The only opponent of any consequence he met with was Lanfranc; he was cited frequently before Papal authorities, but managed to elude them by continual recantations; however he died peacefully in his bed, cherishing the same opinion. The matter went on, still being a subject of controversy, and it was not formally made a dogma of the Church, nor was the term Transubstantiation canonically adopted till the fourth Lateran Council, 1215, under Innocent III. The first appearance of the word "Transubstantiare" occurs in a letter on the "Sacrament of the Altar," by Stephen, Bishop of

* The fact that the first dispute arose out of an *assertion* of the doctrine, and not a *denial*, proves that it could not have been the universal belief of the Church.

Autun, early in the twelfth century, *circa* 1129; the words are, "Panem quem accepi in corpus meum *transubstantiavi*." In the Confession of the Synod of the fourth Lateran Council, the word is made canonical by the following sentence :—

"There is only one universal Church, beyond which no man can in any way be saved. In which Jesus Christ is himself the priest and sacrifice, whose body and blood are really contained in the sacrament of the altar, under the form of bread and wine, being *transubstantiated*, the bread into the body and the wine into the blood, by divine power."*

When once established it led to many ridiculous ceremonies. The idea of the real presence lent a mysterious awe to the consecrated elements, and they began to devise means for administering the wine so that none might be spilt; and we find Gregory II. ordering the use of one cup, for "it was not fitting that there should be two or three cups on the altar."† The one cup being too large, they used a "*fistula*." From the end of the eleventh century the practice of dipping the bread in the wine used for children was extended to others; this was forbidden in different councils,‡ but it was retained in England until forbidden by the Council of London, 1175. The cup was occasionally withheld from the laity altogether. The first who advocated depriving them of it was Rudolphus, Abbot of St. Trudo, and later, in 1140, Robert Pulleyn; but before the time of Bonaventura it was not the universal practice of the Church. They were in great perplexity as to whether the souls of the people might not be imperilled by this step, and a furious discussion was raised as to whether the sacrament was effective if the body only was in the bread

* "Transubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina."

† Gregory Epist. 14, ad. Bonif.

‡ Conc. Braccarenensis, 675, and Clarmontan, 1095. Gieseler's Ecc. Hist., vol. ii.

and the blood in the wine; and they consoled the people with the notion that if they took the body of Christ in the bread, they must take His blood also, which drove them to the necessity of admitting that the body was also present with the blood in the wine, and this produced the necessary inference that the priests took, in two forms, the body and blood of Christ, both being present in the bread and both in the wine. But this was not the catastrophe of Transubstantiation, for in the thirteenth century the custom arose of *worshipping* the sacred elements, and a festival in their honour, first observed in the diocese of Liege (Festum Corporis Christi), was incorporated with the general Festivals of the Church by Urban IV.; then after his death it was suspended, but was permanently re-established in 1311 by Clement V.

We have said that this doctrine was first mooted in the ninth century, so that if we appeal to the works of the Fathers we shall expect to find a very different version of the sacrament of their day.

First of all, we must notice that the adoption of the words altar and priest in the Christian Ritual led to the ideas of a sacrificer, and then to the sacrifice of the Eucharist. The word priest is, strictly speaking, only a word of honour. Fathers of families and princes have been called priests; the leaders of the old philosophies were also called priests.* Ovid called a poet a priest of the Muses, and a Professor of Civil Law had the title given him by Justinian. Lord Bacon has also pointed out that the defective translation of the two words *πρεσβυτέρου* and *ίερευς* by the word priest has led to confusion—the one being only a minister, whilst the

* Diogenes Laert. Proem.

other in Scripture use means a sacrificer. Then, as regards the word *altar*, the Apostle Paul shows clearly the distinction, and that there was no necessity for an altar in a Christian church, there being no sacrifice. When he speaks of the Jewish altar in 1 Cor. x. 18, he calls it “*θυσιαστηρίον* ;” but in verse 2, when he compares with it what had been substituted for it in the churches of Christianity, he calls it distinctively a table—“the table of the Lord”—*οὐ δύνασθε τραπέξης Κυρίου μετέχειν*.

The testimony of the Fathers is clear upon sacrifices. Justyn Martyr said that prayers and thanksgiving were the only sacrifices of Christians, and that the Christians of his time used to bring with them bread and wine for the Lord's Supper to be taken “in memorial of the suffering which the Son of God suffered.” Eusebius says : “Christ made a sacrifice unto his Father for our salvation, giving command to us to offer a remembrance instead of a sacrifice.”* St. Ambrose is emphatic—“Do we not offer daily? We offer but as making remembrance of His death. Not a sacrifice like a priest, but what we offer is as a record of a sacrifice.”† Chrysostom also calls the Eucharist a “remembrance of a sacrifice,” “*ἀναμνησις τῆς θυσίας*.”‡ St. Augustine sums up the whole matter in a sentence—“The sacrifice of flesh and blood before the coming of Christ was set forth by the victims as a similitude : in the suffering of Christ the sacrifice was in very truth completed, but after the ascension of Christ it is celebrated as a sacrament of remembrance, *sacramentum memoriæ*.”§ He

* Euseb. *Demonst. Evangl.*, lib. ii., c. 10.

† Ambrose in *Epist. ad. Hebr.* c. x., v. 4.

‡ Chrysost. *Hom.* 17 in *Ep. ad Heb.*

§ August. lib. i. cont. *Advers. Leg. et Proph.* c. 18.

elsewhere says that very often a sacrament, from being a similitude of the thing called to mind, takes the name of the thing itself.* But we will leave the Fathers and go to the words of One who was higher than they; and I think we can find in the words of our Lord himself a contradiction to the theory that when He said this is my body and this is my blood, He meant that in those two matters were His very body and blood. First of all, we remark in passing, that our Lord at the institution of the Supper, when *He partook Himself of the consecrated elements* after He had uttered the words, this is my body and this is my blood, added in the next sentence whilst the cup was still in His hands, "But I say unto you that I will not drink henceforth of *this fruit of the vine* until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." Would He, if He had really meant the vine to be His very blood, have immediately spoken of it as the "fruit of the vine."†

But we proceed to give His own answer to the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

When the Jews asked Him, after He had declared Himself to be the bread of life, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" He continued the allegory, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Then, even His very disciples began to be amazed, still understanding Him to mean literally His real body and blood; and Jesus, noticing it, hastens to

* August. Epist. 23.

† Since writing the above, I have found a notice of this fact in the works of Clement of Alexandria, who, like others of his day, advo-

cates the memorial view of the sacrament, and produces the above incident against the material presence.—Pæd. lib. ii. c. 2.

explain His words : "Doth this offend you? It is the spirit that quickeneth, the *flesh* profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." Eating of the flesh and blood then, is to be understood spiritually. Finally, we may add the testimony of St. Paul, Heb. x. 8. He explains why there is no sacrifice necessary now to Christians since Christ has been sacrificed once for all. "When he said sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law. Then said he, Lo! I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first (*i.e.* the old sacrifice) that he may establish the second (*i.e.* the sacrifice of Christ, as it is explained in the next sentence)—By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of *the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*" He then declares that through this sacrifice we have remission of sins; but there can be no necessity for any more sacrifice, for "where remission of these is there is no offering for sin." And again, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there *remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.*"

What becomes of this wanton theory, which has been set up as a great instrument of superstition by men, in contradiction to the plain teaching of the Gospel, and the emphatic declaration of Christ Himself and the reasoning of the apostles? Does it not verge upon blasphemy to assert, in the face of their statements, that by the consecration of the priest the real body and blood of Christ can be called down from heaven?

If Christ really meant that the bread became His very body and the wine His very blood, it was the only miracle He ever performed where the spectators had not visible proof of what He said. In all His

miracles there was a visible change effected—the dead man *lives*—the disease *vanishes*—the sick man *becomes healthy*—the lame *walk*—the blind *see*—the dumb *speak*—the water *becomes real wine*; but in this case the bread does not become flesh, neither does the wine become blood under the hands of Christ; for He Himself spoke of the wine after the blessing as the fruit of the vine; still less does it under the benediction of the priest; but the elements remain as they were before, real bread and real wine, sanctified by being used in remembrance of the great sacrifice of His real flesh and real blood on the cross *once for all*.

A miracle is something done of which the senses have proof, though they may not be able to understand the mode of operation; but here nothing is done by the priest, only something asserted to be done, of which the senses have proof positive to the contrary.

To deny that there is a virtue in sacraments ordained by God would be impious; there is a virtue in them, as is proclaimed by the instinctive yearning of humanity after them; but that virtue is only awarded to the consistent life of the participator. It is the solemn asseveration of Scripture that "if a man eat and drink of it unworthily, he eateth and drinketh damnation to himself;" which we could not affirm of the Lord's body and blood. What do we mean when we gather round the Lord's table but to testify, by the act of eating the bread and drinking the wine, as He enjoined we should do in remembrance of Him—not eating and drinking Him, but in remembrance of Him; that we are in our daily lives striving to get into closer communion with Him—to get nearer to Him—to imitate His life—to walk in His footsteps—to become as near as possible like Him; and thus as it were to take Him into our

bodies, and so live that we may ever bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our bodies. That is the real presence, not in the bread and wine, but in the soul of every true believer who bears in his heart the dying of the Lord Jesus, and manifests in his living the life also of Jesus.

Wiclif, as we have said, did not wholly deny the doctrine, though there can be little doubt as to what his real opinion was; but when, after the publication of his "Conclusions," which spoke rather clearly, the chancellor of the University and a meeting of doctors condemned them, Wiclif first appealed to John of Gaunt, who, however, having no political purpose to serve, coincided with the decision of the doctors, and advised Wiclif to keep his peace upon that vexed question. He, however, replied by issuing his "Confession;" in which he makes such a statement, refining away the reality of the appearance, and yet retaining a sort of appearance so intricate and so scholastic that it would be difficult either to fix heresy or found faith upon it. It was to the following effect, that he had always confessed and did still confess "that the same body of Christ which was taken from the Virgin, which suffered on the cross, is truly and really sacramental bread; the proof of which is that Christ, who cannot lie, asserts it; but I do not dare to say that the body of Christ is especially, substantially, bodily, or identically that bread. For we believe that there is a triple mode of eating the body of Christ in the consecrated host, virtually, spiritually, and sacramentally. Virtually, by which it benefits through its whole power, according to the good things of nature and grace. But the spiritual mode of eating is that by which the body of Christ is

in the Eucharist, and in the saints by grace ; and the third mode of eating, the sacramental, is where the body of Christ is singularly in the consecrated host. But, besides these three modes of eating, there are other three modes, more real and true, namely, substantially, corporally, and dimensionally. And those who think in a material way, do not understand any other mode of eating a natural substance besides these ; but they are very indisposed to conceive of the secrets of the Eucharist, and the subtlety of Scripture."

Unintelligible as this scholastic refining may be to untrained ears, it was perfectly understood by the authorities, who raised the cry of heresy. Just at that moment, however, there was a very strong hatred excited amongst the secular clergy in the University of Oxford against the monks, and they all joined the side of Wiclif. The authorities appealed to the archbishop, who assembled a Provincial Council at Blackfriars in May, 1382. To this Wiclif was not summoned to appear, but twenty-four conclusions were selected from his works and condemned ; a search was ordered to be made in Oxford for copies of his works, and he was banished the University. He retired to the quiet of his Lutterworth Rectory, but his bitter foes summoned him once more to appear before the Papal Court. The citation reached him not before 1384, but his health was giving way ; the fire which had burned so steadily within was consuming him, and he was obliged to seek aid in the discharge of his duties. The citation came too late, but he replied to the Pope, excusing himself on account of his sickness. On the 29th December, during the celebration of mass, just before the elevation of the host, he was again seized with paralysis, and deprived of speech ; on the 31st he died, leaving behind

him as a legacy to posterity his last work, the "Triologus," a summary of the results of all his investigations into ecclesiastical and theological subjects. His death was the signal for a shout of rejoicing amongst the friars, and the very peculiar circumstances attending it were at once pointed out by them as the judgment of God. But they found that, although Wiclif was dead, there was yet a vitality in his work which spread more and more daily, until it embraced amongst its followers most of the higher and cultivated classes. They received the name of Lollards, a word of German origin, which has ever been applied by the people to an order of Franciscan monks called Tertiaries or Lollards; then it was applied in derision to heretics or fanatics, and thus it became the distinguishing appellative of Wiclif's followers.

In 1401 the Franciscans commenced an attack upon Wiclif's Bible; and in the year 1413, under Henry V., an active persecution was commenced in England against the Lollards, at the instigation of his confessor. The first victim was Lord Cobham, John Oldcastle, who escaped from the Tower, but was retaken, hung in chains, and burned. The persecution went on bloody and severe; the doctrines of Wiclif were again condemned at the Council of Constance, 1415, where it was decreed "that his books should be burned, and that his bones or body, if they could be discerned from those of the faithful, should be exhumed and thrown away far from ecclesiastical sepulture." There appears to have been some difficulty in executing this sentence, for it was again and again repeated, and as late as 1427 Pope Martin V. had to urge its execution more than once upon the Bishop of Lincoln. At length, in 1428, just thirteen years after the Council, some bones

were dug up, supposed to have been those of Wiclif, though they were just as likely to have been those of one of his enemies, publicly burnt, and the ashes thrown into the Severn. But the impotency of human opposition to truth was never more manifested than in the instance of Wiclif. Though not a trace of his body can be found, though little is known of his private life, yet he lives, and his soul lives now, even in these days when voices are being raised again, echoing back the very thoughts and sentiments which he uttered, and in the same resolute spirit of remonstrance and denunciation against a Church corrupted with heresy and divided by schism.

CHAPTER XVII.

Internal History of the Abbey.

A.D. MCCXIX.—MDXXIV.

AFTER the settlement of the disputes at Glastonbury by the intercession of Honorius, and the two messengers, William and Michael, had returned from Rome, one of them, *William Vigor*, was elected abbot and presented to the Bishop of Bath, who consecrated him on the day after the Vigil of St. Benedict, 1219. Shortly after this ceremony, Jocelin the Bishop visited Glastonbury, when the convent seal was put to the composition which had been arranged, though some of the brethren still opposed it as a settlement prejudicial to the interests of the Church. William behaved very kindly to the monks during his short abbacy, and is immortalized in the "Chronicles" for having ceded half a load of grain to each brewing, *to make the beer better*: he also increased their provisions altogether, gave general grants, and, after many kindnesses to his brethren, died 14th October, 1223, scarcely five years after his elevation. The old difficulty then arose as to finding a successor: the monks could not decide upon any one; and at last, by the interposition of Jocelin, they agreed to abide by the decision of David, Abbot of St. Augustine's at Bristol, Giles, Prior of the Carthusians, and William, Archdeacon of Wells, stipulating, however, that they would not submit to the election of Robert, Prior of

Bath. The promise was given by the Archdeacon of Wells, who appears to have been the agent in the matter ; but the poor monks were again to be deceived. Scarcely had they given these delegates their letters of permission to choose an abbot, when Jocelin, who had won them all over to his views, at once placed the dreaded

Robert, Prior of Bath, over them, against their wish, in the year 1223. The wily archdeacon is said to have expressed a wish that the gout might seize him if he broke faith with the monks. In any case he died of that disease shortly afterwards at Domerham. Robert, however, though not canonically elected, proved to be a very good abbot ; he did all he could for the temporal and spiritual comfort of the monks, restored observances which had fallen into disuse from absence of regular discipline, gave up out of his own purse one hundred shillings yearly to the monastery, which used to be paid to the abbots for their clothing ; he gave them bread and wine on All-souls Day ; he undertook a law suit against the Lord of Alre, and recovered the moor of Alre from him for the monastery ; but these implacable monks were moved neither by his care for their souls nor his kindness to their bodies, the idea that he had been forced upon them by fraud still rankled in their bosoms, and Robert, who deserved better treatment, perceiving their perversity, voluntarily resigned his abbacy in Passion Week, 1234, and retired to Bath, with an allowance from the monastery of £60 yearly in gold.

Michael of Ambresbury then succeeded by a unanimous election, and he was consecrated by Bishop Jocelin at London, on the Feast of St. Mark, 1235. He was universally respected, being well versed in ecclesiastical affairs, and a devoted friend to the

monastery, having, as we have seen, gone through many dangers in its cause in the company of the late William Vigor; or, as the "Chronicle" records it, "he had undergone dangers of ways, dangers of rivers, dangers of seas, and dangers of robbers." His first act was to buy several ploughs, and set to work to cultivate the lands of the monastery; he then built many houses within and without it, and recovered several possessions from people who had obtained them illegally; he turned out all holders of sinecures and restored the money to the monastery; he recovered the fishery at Meare, and other possessions, from the Dean of Wells; after many lawsuits, and by dint of perseverance, he procured letters from Gregory IX., concerning the recovery of four manors and other lands which through the composition had remained to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, but unfortunately the Pope died before the summons could be issued: Bishop Jocelin died at the same time. Innocent IV. succeeded to the chair at Rome, and two monks were despatched to procure letters in favour of Glastonbury; but when they were produced, the Bishop Roger, who had succeeded Jocelin, had already forestalled them, by procuring the king's letters forbidding them to go to trial on a lay question in an Ecclesiastical Court which properly belonged to the King's Court. The abbot went there, and won his cause; but before the matter could be settled Bishop Roger died, and his successor procured letters from Rome, forbidding the abbots to go into a secular court at all. In consequence of this, Abbot Michael, seeing no hope of settlement, thought of resigning the monastery to younger hands; and after many donations to it in the month of March, 1252, he resigned it to his diocesan, and delivered him up the seal. He was provided for

in the following manner: he had a lodging for the remainder of his life within the monastery, he had a double allowance of wine, metheglin, beer, and dressed meat from the kitchen, as also £40 per annum to be paid quarterly, and a monk to be always in attendance upon him. After his death everything was to be restored to the monastery. He presided over it eighteen years, and left it out of debt, in capital condition, having lands well tilled, and the following stock: 892 oxen, 60 bullocks, 23 colts, 223 cows, 19 bulls, 153 heifers and young oxen, 26 steers, 126 yearlings, 6,717 sheep, 327 swine; also wheat enough for the whole year till the harvest. He only lived one year after his retirement, and died on John the Baptist's Day, 1253, leaving his gold and silver plate to his successor.

Roger Forde, the chamberlain, a native of Glastonbury, was elected. He was advanced in years, of great learning and eloquence. He was elected after a sharp contest with the sacrist, only three votes being found in the majority after the scrutiny. Under those circumstances it was questioned whether he could reasonably accept the election; and, after much debate, both parties withdrew their claims, when the monks held another chapter, which ensued in the election of Roger Forde. He was consecrated at Wells, March, 1252. Though he had always been favourably disposed towards Wells, yet, when he became abbot, he maintained his rights firmly.

Henry III. about this time had occasion for the services of the Bishop of Bath to go to Spain to bring over the Spanish King's daughter, who was to marry Henry's eldest son. The bishop then managed to get letters from the king to the sheriffs to cause his charters

to be observed. Upon this the bailiffs of the bishop, who was absent in Spain, demanded aid of the Abbot of Glastonbury for the king, and upon his not complying, they by concert distrained many of the manors, seizing them all on the same day after a sharp fight. The king was in Aquitaine, so that there was no redress; but the abbot managed to get the case brought before him, when the bishop was ordered to restore the cattle and repay the abbot £40, and 49 pence for damage. In consequence of the great expense he was put to in this suit, the abbot was obliged to retrench in his monastery, which he did with so much vigour that the monks consulted together about having him deposed; but, not being able to bring a sufficient charge against him, they wrote to their old enemy the bishop to make a visitation to Glastonbury and look into matters, a thing he was only too willing to do. Accordingly he appeared at Glastonbury, and, after making an oration in the chapter-house, began the inquisition. At this point Abbot Roger objected that, as he had already made one visitation that year, he could not legally make a second; but he was overruled, and the inquiry went on for two days, when the bishop summoned a chapter, read his report, solemnly deposed the abbot, and absolved the monks from their obedience to him. Abbot Roger, however, was not to be so easily annihilated; he went out of the chapter-house into the cloisters, where he had ordered all his servants, and many others, to be in readiness with their arms; then they fell upon the bishop's people, beat them, and drove them out of the monastery. That day the bishop was obliged to share the monks' meagre fare in the refectory, not daring to venture forth, which was a severe infliction for him,

because just then the table of Glastonbury was in a very poor state, whence the disturbance.

Meantime, however, the abbot, after partaking of some refreshment with his party, made them pack up everything they could in the time—all the charters, vessels of silver and gold, documents relating to the Church property, and left the abbey to await the decision of the King's Court. The next day the convent, with the consent of the bishop, met in the chapter-house for the purpose of electing an abbot. For this purpose they chose five monks to decide for the rest, and their choice fell upon Robert Pederton, who was at once consecrated at Wells, solemnly installed, and celebrated mass as an abbot. The day after, he presided in chapter, removed some persons from offices, appointed others, and received the oath of fidelity from the town of Glastonbury. In the meantime, Roger had obtained an order from the king to certain justices to restore him to his abbey. They came to Glastonbury, produced the king's letter, and announced their determination to effect their execution. The bishop replied that Roger had been judicially deposed on account of offences, and excommunicated him in their presence for carrying away the goods and documents of the abbey. The justices then entered the hall, and, calling the porter and other officers, took the keys from them, and delivered them to Roger's steward. Then Roger himself arrived with a great retinue, and, entering the hall, received the homage and fealty of the servants, took possession, and enforced his authority upon the monks, who were terrified by the excommunication pronounced by the bishop. They, however, through their prior, appealed to Rome, and the bishop, after laying the town of

Glastonbury under an interdict, appealed also. The king favoured Roger, who went to his Court to further his cause; but the bishop, seeing no chance of a settlement through the King's Court, took it to the Court Apostolical, and caused Roger and the convent to be cited there. For five years the litigation went on, until at last the case was heard at Rome, and the two abbots, with the bishop, appeared before his Holiness. A long altercation ensued, but the case appeared to go against Robert and the bishop; so they proposed to Roger's party to submit the matter to the decision of the Pope. He consented, assisted to such a decision not a little by the enormous expenses he had been put to in the cause. A compromise was effected, and the Pope reinstated Roger on the condition of his giving Robert two manors during his life. The abbot then, by way of revenge, revived the old point of contention with the bishops of Bath about the four manors ceded to him by force, but he was snatched away by death just as the Archbishop of Canterbury began to intercede for peace. Abbot Roger died at Bromley, in Kent, on 6th October, 1261, and was buried at Westminster. The prior and convent at once re-elected

Robert Pederton, in November, 1261, and he was consecrated at Wells. He was of middle age, and a good scholar: he reformed the regular observances, and as the abbey was indebted to several foreign merchants to the extent of ten thousand marks, he set to work, and, by diligently cultivating the land, paid it off. Threats being held out of excommunication by the Bishop of Bath against all who had taken part in the disturbances during Abbot Roger's time, many of those who were

implicated left money, and conferred estates upon the abbey, to avoid the ban.

William Button, the Bishop of Bath, then died, and Walter Giffard, who succeeded, tried to get back the episcopal power over the monastery, and subject the monks to himself. In this, as he was a friend of King Henry, it was feared he would succeed, but Henry died, and Edward I. came to the throne. He took the part of the monks. They sent a messenger to him: the king told him to inform the monks that it was his wish they should not give up the monastery to any one, nor ask any person's leave to elect an abbot, save his own. Shortly after this good news, Robert died, in the year 1274. The bishop's party then violently seized the monastery, but the king was firm, turned them out, and placed a guard over it. Then his Majesty sent letters to the monks, permitting them to choose an abbot: they deputed seven of their number to elect for the rest, and the decision fell upon

John of Taunton, who was sent to the king, with others, for the royal assent. They crossed the sea to him, and he gave his assent, and appointed a day for them to appear before him in England to hear their case. The king, at the same time, cited the bishop to appear also; they did so, and the matter was discussed, the king deciding for Glastonbury. The bishop, however, though he did not refuse to consecrate the abbot, procrastinated until death removed him on St. Andrew's Day. The abbot-elect then went to the archbishop, and the parties had to appear before him, and the matter was discussed, when the archbishop vacated the election, but, on his own authority, reinstated the elect John of Taunton. He then wrote

to the king, telling him what he had done, and begging him to restore to the abbot his temporalities. But by this time one Robert, a favourite of the king, had been consecrated to the see of Bath; another difficulty arose, and another lawsuit was incurred, as the king, in order to please the bishop, gave him a remuneration for the patronage of Glastonbury, but endeavoured to take it out of the monks' hands. A suit was instituted, and not settled until they had wrung from the convent a thousand marks. Then, in the year 1278, on Wednesday before Easter, an event happened which brought great glory and ultimate peace to Glastonbury, and is recorded by the "Chronicles" in glowing colours. King Edward and Queen Eleanor paid a visit to Glastonbury, where they were received with every honour by a long procession, and the abbot, refusing to allow the deputy-marshal to procure lodging for them when he arrived for that purpose, had the best in the monastery fitted up for his royal guests. Then came Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, and was solemnly received, and on the same day, with the consent of the convent and abbot, he made the holy chrism, the Archdeacon of Wells furnishing the oil and balm. Even then the Wells men would have disturbed the peace of the reception, for they raised an objection to the sacred ministration being confined to the monks, but the archbishop overruled it, and replied that it was only becoming that they should minister in their own church. On the Eve of Easter, the convent, with the abbot's consent, gave deacon's orders to the king's vice-chancellor and treasurer, and ordained two priests; on Easter Day, the archbishop performed Divine service, and the king appointed Monday for the assizes to be held at Glastonbury, as he was there, but the

monks begged him not to do so, as it would be an infringement of their privileges. Willing to please his hosts, the king ordered them to be held at Street. During the visit, an incident occurred which illustrates the power of the abbots at this time. One of the king's body-guard had a misunderstanding with a certain Philip Cogan, who drew his knife upon him; he was apprehended, and put into prison on a charge of high treason. The matter was investigated, and he was delivered up to the abbot, to be punished by his bailiffs, he being the lord of the island.

On the Tuesday the king caused the tomb of Arthur to be opened early in the morning, when, in two chests painted with their figures and arms, they found the bones of the king and queen; and on the Wednesday following, Edward wrapped up the bones of Arthur in a rich cloth, and the queen did the same with those of Guinevera: they were then restored to their chests, sealed, replaced in the tomb, which the king desired should be solemnly removed and placed before the high altar: the skulls and cheek-bones, however, were kept out to satisfy the devotion of the people. The following inscription was then added—"These are the bones of the Most Noble King Arthur, which in the year of Our Lord's Incarnation, 1278, in the month of May, were thus collected here by the Lord Edward, the illustrious King of England, in the presence of Her Most Serene Highness Eleanora, Consort of the King, and daughter of the Lord Ferdinand, King of Spain; William Myddleton, the elect of Norwich; Thomas de Bec, then Archdeacon of Dorset and Treasurer of the King; Lord Henry de Lacy of Lincoln, Lord Amadius of Sabandia, and many other English magnates." The king before leaving renewed the

privileges of the monastery, arranged the affairs of the abbot, and gave them a new charter.*

John of Taunton was very liberal to the monastery ; he gave many things to it, amongst them a crystal cross to the church, with cups and vestments, and he enriched the library with the following volumes :— Questions on the Old and New Law ; St. Augustine on Genesis ; Ecclesiastical Dogmas ; Bernard's Enchiridion and " Flowers ;" The Book of Wisdom with glosses ; Postils upon Jeremiah and the Lesser Prophets ; Concordances of the Bible ; Albertus' Postils upon Matthew, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, with the Sum of Penance, and other Postils upon Mark and John, and a Treatise on the Epistles throughout the year ; Br. Thomas's New and Old Gloss on the Gospels ; Moralities on the Gospels and Epistles throughout the year, with Postils on the Apocalypse and the Canonical Epistles ; St. Augustine on the Trinity, and " Of the Uniformity of the Gospels ;" The Epistles of St. Paul glossed ; St. Augustine's " City of God ;" Kylwardesley upon the Letter of the Sentences ; Questions concerning Evil and Mortal Crimes controverted by Br. Thomas ; The Concordances of the Decrees and the Decretals ; The first part of the Second Book of Br. Thomas's Sum, the second, third and fourth part ; a book called " La Perspective ;" Mauricius' Distinctions ; Books on Natural History, in two vols., and a Book on the Properties of Things. He was succeeded by

John Kent, in 1291, who enjoyed a very quiet abbacy, gave many presents to the Church, and released the monastery from a debt of £6,000.

* Steeven's Cont. of Dugdale, vol. ii., No. 103.

After presiding thirteen years he died, and was succeeded by

Geoffrey Fromund, on St. Thomas the Martyr's Day, 1303. This abbot caused the conventual church to be dedicated, and gave the monks a charter, which provided for things to be given to them on certain feasts, such as his own anniversary, and more particularly on the anniversary of the dedication of the church. In this charter it is enjoined that the sacrist, on the Feast of St. Michael, shall yearly furnish wax to the value of 20 shillings, of which six candles shall be made of three pounds weight each, to be lit on the anniversary of the dedication only while the obsequies are being performed, and a seventh candle of one pound weight to burn day and night from the beginning of the obsequies till the end. Of the remainder of the wax the sacrist was to make two candles, and renew them when necessary, to be lighted daily in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin, and at the elevation of the Body of Our Lord at the high altar, at the midnight mass at the Nativity, and to be carried in procession at the Resurrection of Our Lord. He also ordered that each brother who died should have the same allowance to his chamber for the year as if he were alive, such allowance to be laid out by the almoner at the discretion of the abbot and prior on friars mendicants,* and poor priests to say masses for his soul. He died in January, 1322, in the twentieth year of his government, when

Walter Taunton, the prior, was chosen and consecrated, but died on the 10th of February following,

* This is a remarkable instance when a *Benedictine* monastery of the reverence in which the mendicants were held at that time, bought their masses for the souls of *Benedictines*!

having been abbot only eleven days. In that short time he, however, enriched the monastery with a pulpit with ten images about it, and gave to the treasury the following embroidered copes, from which we may form an idea of the splendour of ecclesiastical vestments in the fourteenth century. The first and second were the richest of these copes; they contained the history of Christ's passion, the ground being gold and of a jasper colour. The third was called the velvet cope, and was of a scarlet colour, embroidered with images. The fourth was of a reddish satin, with a crucifix and the histories of St. Katherine and Margaret. The fifth of red satin, with the apostles on it; the sixth was similar. The seventh was of red satin, with the histories of St. Dunstan, St. David, and St. Aldhelm. The eighth of red satin, with the history of St. Dunstan with leopards and escallops. The ninth, of red, with griffons; and the tenth of purple satin, embroidered with images. To the library also he gave the Book of Sentences, Gaudanus, Sum, and Quodlibets, Decrees, and Decretals, and a New Digest of Civil Law, with clasps.

On his anniversary the convent was served with wine, bread, and a plate of fish, and twenty shillings were distributed among the poor. This was done according to the arrangement made by Geoffrey Fromund, who left the money that it might be always provided on John of Taunton's anniversary, on his own, and on that of Walter of Taunton, who was then only the prior.

Adam of Sodbury, the day before the Nones of March, when *Lætare Jerusalem* was sung in the church, was blessed by the bishop. It appears that Edward III. visited the abbey in the tenth year of his presi-

dency ; for amongst the things he bequeathed to the monastery was a water vessel to the refectory, curiously enamelled, which that monarch had given him in return for the magnificent entertainment of himself, his queen, and his nobles, when they visited Glastonbury in the year 1331. He also gave to the library, now becoming one of the richest in the kingdom, a valuable Bible, some Scholastic Histories, a Book on the Properties of Things, New Legends of the Saints, two Psalters, and a Benedictional. He concluded the great contention between Glastonbury and Wells at the expense of one thousand marks. He assigned to the office of the sacrist twenty marks yearly* for the maintenance of four priests who could sing well, who with two formerly ordained for the Galilee, and two more to be furnished by the sacrist and almoner, should daily serve singing in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin in surplices and aumunces, and should also assist in the solemn masses in the choir. He died in the thirteenth year of his rule, and was succeeded by

John Brainton, Prior of Glastonbury, in the year 1334, who finished the Abbot's Great Hall, began the Abbot's Chapel, and left timber and glass for the completion of it. He died in the year 1341, and was succeeded by

Walter Mornington, who was a great benefactor to the abbey, and made the vault in the choir. He died in 1374, and

John Chinnock was elected, who finished what Mornington had begun, built the cloisters, dormitory, and fraterly, and perfected the Great Hall and Chapter-

* Equal to £260 16s. 8d. I may mention that in the first half of the fourteenth century the mark was equal to 4 livres, and the livre to £3 5s. 2½d. of English money of to-day. In the second half the mark was equal to 6 livres, and the livre to £2 3s. 5¼d. English.

house begun by Abbot Fromund. He enjoyed the abbacy for nearly fifty years, and died in 1420. He was honoured with burial in the chapter-house he had been so instrumental in completing.

Nicholas Frome then succeeded, and died 24th April, 1445, when

Walter Moore was elected and consecrated on the 4th May, 1445, and upon his death

John Selwood succeeded, and died in the year 1493, when*

Richard Beere succeeded on the 12th November of the same year. He was a great scholar and a most courtly abbot; he was sent to Italy by Henry VII. as ambassador. He built an almshouse on the north side of the abbey for seven or ten poor women; and also the Manor-house of Sharpham, which before his time was nothing but a poor lodge. In the church towards the east end he built also Edgar's Chapel. He made a survey of the lands and possessions of the abbey, which is called his Terrier, and after a prosperous abbacy he died on the 20th January, 1524, and was succeeded, on the 3rd March following, by the ill-fated and ever-lamented Abbot Whiting, whose destiny it was to be the last of the lordly race of abbots who ruled at Glastonbury.

* The incidents of the lives of the Abbots of Glastonbury, from the time of John Brainton to the Dissolution, are buried in an oblivion as complete as that of the kings of some of the divisions of the Saxon Heptarchy. The only authentic version of the internal history of the abbey is in the Cottonian MS., Tiberius, A. v., which we have followed throughout this work. It was written in the monastery. Unfortunately it breaks

off in the middle of a sentence, during the abbacy of John Brainton, 1334. The remainder, which must have been considerable, has been torn away. It was probably one of those MSS. rescued by Sir Robert Cotton, at the time of the Reformation, from some ignorant person who had already used it for common purposes. This will account for the scanty record of the Abbots of Glastonbury from 1334, to the time of Richard Whiting.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Fall of the Monasteries.*

A.D. MDI.—MDXXXIX.

ON a certain Thursday in the middle of November, 1501, all London was making its way towards Westminster Hall.

The open space in front of the Hall and Palace had been gravelled and sanded, and a tilt had been stretched over nearly the whole length, from the Watergate up to the entrance of the gate that opened into King's-street towards the Sanctuary.

At the upper end of this tilt or tent an artificial tree had been erected, decorated with leaves, flowers, and fruit, and enclosed with a paling. Upon rails under this tree were suspended the shields and escutcheons of lords and knights. At the opposite end of the tent there was a stage with a partition in the midst. The part on the right hand was decorated with hangings and cushions of gold intended for the king and his lords, and the part on the left was prepared for the queen and her ladies. A flight of stairs led from the king's portion down to the area, by which his messengers

Authorities—Harleian and Cotton MSS.; Camden Soc. Public., vol. iv.; Leland's Works, by Hearne; Life of Leland, &c.; State Papers, Henry VIII.; Mariana Hist.; Zurita Annal.; Poli. Opp.; Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adv. Mart. Luth. ab. Hen. VIII., Paris ed., 1521; Lingard Hist.; Lutheri Opp.; Wilkins' Concilia; Rymer's Fœdera; Acta Regia; Godwin de Præsul.; Tanner Notitia Monastica; Burnet's Collect.; Strype's Memor.; Burnet's Hist. Ref.; Erasmii Colloq. et Epist.; Rapin and Tyndall.

might pass to any part of the building with his orders. There was a private entrance for the king and queen through Westminster Hall by the Exchequer Chamber on to their stage. On the north side, opposite to that of the king, was another stage, covered with red silk, for the mayor, the sheriffs, the aldermen, and city dignitaries. All round the sides of the tents, and upon the walls, were double stages, very firmly built, for the general public, who were admitted at a high price. These were already filled with a gay crowd of people, closely packed together, and eagerly expecting the commencement of a scene of festivities of which we can form scarcely a just conception.

There were to be jousts, banquets, and disguisings for a whole week, for the occasion was an important and an ominous one, though they did not know it; for the nation an important one, for the young heir to the throne had just married a beautiful Spanish princess, and the country's chivalry came out to rejoice over the hopeful event. It was an ominous one, for that youthful princess, with her dark eyes and long hair flowing over her shoulders, was destined to be the fountain of a vast change in the civil and religious economy of the whole country: such a change as can occur but once in a country's history. Little did she imagine, as she sat amongst the splendid chivalry of the English court, that in only a few short years all Europe would be ringing with her name, and statesmen, ambassadors, nuncios, proud monarchs, and a trembling pope, would be busy with the wrongs of Catherine of Arragon.

At the moment we are describing, she was not quite fifteen years of age, and her youthful husband, Arthur, the Prince of Wales, had just completed his fourteenth year. He was a prince of great promise, and at that

early age had manifested those signs of intellectual activity and love of scholarship which were the characteristics of the Tudors. We read that he was already familiar with the principal Latin authors, and with Homer and Thucydides in the Greek. The scene we are endeavouring to sketch was the tournament held as a commencement to a whole week of festivities in honour of his nuptials.

As soon as the dinner was finished in the court, and when the patience of the multitude was nearly exhausted, the queen, accompanied by the king's mother, the Princess Catherine, the Lady Margaret and her sister, the king's daughters, with many other ladies of honour, entered upon the scene from Westminster Hall, and took up their position upon the stage allotted to them, amid the acclamations of the multitude. Shortly after another thunder of applause broke out upon the appearance of his Majesty Henry VII., with the Prince, the Duke of York, the Earl of Oxford, the Earls of Derby, Northumberland, and others; Spanish nobles, followed by the esquires, gentlemen, and yeomen of the guard in waiting. When they were seated the Mayor of London, with all his company, entered and took up their position.

In a few moments a loud blast of trumpets announced that the field was ready for the champions. Then for the challengers proceeded out of Westminster Hall Sir George Herbert, Sir Rowland Knight, Lord Banners, and Lord Henry of Buckingham, armed and mounted on good coursers decked out in gay trappings. At this moment the proceedings were interrupted by the entrance of the Duke of Buckingham, carried in a pavilion of white and green silk, being square in form and having turrets at each corner; these turrets were decorated with red roses, the king's badge. The

pavilion was carried by a great number of his servants, who were dressed in jackets of black and red silk, followed by many others well horsed, and their horses decorated with rich trappings, and bells and spangles of gold. The procession moved down the tent to the king, when the duke paid his reverence, and was then carried to the end near the hall, where they remained.

Again the trumpeters blew a blast, and there came out of King-street, in at the gate which opened toward the Sanctuary, the defenders, Guillam de la Rivers, in a pavilion in the form of a ship, borne by men; then Sir John Pechey, Knight, in a pavilion of red silk; the Lord William of Devonshire, in a red dragon led by a giant, and with a great tree in his hand; the Earl of Essex, in a mountain of green, which served for his pavilion, with many trees, rocks, herbs, stones, and marvellous beasts on the sides. On the height of this mountain was a fair young lady. They made their passage about the field, doing courtesy to the king till they came to the place of entrance; then, as soon as they were out of their pavilion, the king gave the sign, and the tournament began.

At this first course the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Essex engaged, and the duke broke his staff upon the earl; and at the second course the earl broke his upon the duke, and the others engaged in turn with varied fortunes, a staff being broken in every course, "so that," says the chronicler, "such a joust and field royale so nobly and valiantly done hath not been seene ne heard." After the fight came the feast, which was followed by an entertainment, during which allegories were enacted, and these amusements, alternate feasts, fightings, and carousals continued through the week, from Friday to the second Sunday following,

when we are told that a magnificent service was held to the "honor of Almighty God, with pricked songe and organes and goodlye ceremonies in the queere and aulters;" and it is added that in the afternoon they played at chess, dice, and cards; the butts were got ready for the archers; there were bowling-alleys and "disports for every person." After praying and gambling they had another final feast, when the nobles received their presents, retired to rest, and the next morning the feasting, masquerading, sporting, knights and nobles were things of the past.

On the 2nd of April, 1502, only four months after this motley banqueting and carousal, that promising young prince lay at Ludlow Castle, beyond the reach of worldly pleasures and cares. A severe winter, and not improbably the jousting and feasting into which he had been forced, completed the work which disease had already begun in a constitution naturally feeble.

With his death began those complications, which in their development were made the means of effecting a vast religious and social change in the constitution of the country. We are compelled to begin at this distant period in order to get at the root of the tree; for the dissolution of the monasteries, which was its fruit, was connected in some way by the mysterious chain which links all human events together, with the lonely young stranger widow, still a child, in the shelter of the English court. The parents of that child, Ferdinand and Isabella, then proposed to the English king a marriage between the widow and the younger son, Henry, now heir apparent to the throne. It was important to them to maintain friendly relations with England as a counterbalance to the enmity of France. After some hesitation, and assisted to a determination

by an application from Ferdinand to send back his daughter with the one hundred thousand crowns, the half of her marriage portion which had been paid, Henry decided upon accepting the offer, upon condition that Ferdinand should send him another hundred thousand crowns, the remaining half of Catherine's portion. He would then procure a dispensation from the Pope to enable the prince to marry the young widow, and the marriage should be celebrated when he had completed his fourteenth year.

Matters were settled, though, for some reason unexplained, young Henry, the day before his fourteenth year had expired, was taken by his father's orders to the Court of the Bishop of Winchester, and there declared that as he was then at the age of puberty (fourteen), he revoked the contract, in order that he might not be supposed to have given his consent to the marriage between him and the Princess Catherine, and affirmed that he did not intend by anything which he had done or might do to confirm it.

After such a declaration he was legally entitled to marry another woman. The law of compact was that a contract of marriage could not be made before the male was fourteen and the female twelve years of age, but a preliminary contract might be made before that time which could be binding, provided neither party before the coming of age should annul the contract. The motive for making the prince take this step can only be reasonably explained by the father's subsequent conduct.

It will be evident to the readers of English history that a considerable period elapsed between the time when Henry was to have married Catherine (*i.e.*, 28th June, 1505) according to the contract and his actual



marriage, which did not take place until he was on the throne, on the 3rd of June, 1509.

The delay is passed over by most English historians without being accounted for, but the father's actions clearly furnish at once the reason of it and the cause of the annulling of the contract. There was no disposition on the part of either father or son to practically annul the contract, but the father had other plans.

During those five years he himself made offers of marriage to three ladies. We must premise, first, that ten months after Arthur's death, Elizabeth, the queen, his mother, died. Henry then first made an offer of marriage to the widow of the king of Naples, who was reputed to be very rich, but finding, upon inquiry, that the reigning monarch refused to carry out the will of his predecessor, he abandoned his suit, and made an overture, under very peculiar circumstances, which almost amount to a threat, for the hand of Margaret of Savoy, sister of Philip of Castile. After a very troublesome negotiation matters were arranged, but before the marriage could be consummated, Philip himself died, and Henry, thinking Johana, his widow, a still better match, turned his attentions in that quarter, but to his disappointment it was discovered that this unfortunate lady was mad, too mad even to be remarried, and Henry, disgusted with disappointments, then reverted to the original arrangement for the marriage of his son with Catherine. He appealed to her father, Ferdinand, and promised the marriage should take place if the Spanish monarch would pay up the hundred thousand florins in four half-yearly instalments. It was agreed to, and three instalments had been paid by September, 1508, when the king died, and Henry VIII. coming to the throne consummated the marriage

himself, though free to abandon it if he had chosen, on the 3rd June, 1509. That there was an attachment between Henry and Catherine cannot be doubted, and the idea that he was sacrificed to her for state purposes is exploded for ever. If any sacrifice were made it was on the part of Catherine, who, after her youthful husband's death, was kept in England in a sort of durance by the vacillation of Henry and the political fear of her father. According to the Spanish historians she had no inclination for another marriage in England.* In a matter of this kind, which is so obscured by religious dissension of the most violent kind, we can only get a probable idea of the truth by carefully comparing the statements of both sides. The Protestant historians are apt to overlook the extreme probability that the marriage of Catherine to Arthur was never really consummated. The prince was only fourteen years of age, and in very delicate health. There is, then, a natural probability, independent of the statements made by such men as Pole and Peter Martyr, to the effect that Henry had himself confessed to the fact, and the opinion that such was the case was universally held in Spain. The marriage ceremony also asserted the same fact, Catherine being dressed not after the mode of a widow, but as a virgin, with her hair loose and dressed in white.†

* See Lingard, who quotes a passage from Mariana, "No gustaba la Princesa de casar segunda vez en Inglaterra. Asi le dio a entender al rey su padre : enando le suplicaba en lo que tocaba a su casamiento no minase su gusto ni comodidad sino solo lo que a el y sus cosas conveniese bien."—Hist. Lib. xx. c. 17.

† The passage in Pole quoted by Dr. Lingard is as follows:—He says in a letter to the king, very naturally, for Henry was fond of him, "Tu ipse hoc fassus es virginem te accepisse, et Cæsari fassus es"—that he had even confessed it to the emperor.

But we must proceed to the change which came over Henry with regard to his marriage with Catherine. An impression, created by the negligence with which history is sometimes written with regard to chronology, has obtained amongst many people, that Catherine was much older than Henry. It was not so, even Dr. Lingard contradicts himself, when in one place* he says, "When Henry married the Princess Catherine she was in her twenty-sixth year;" consequently, as Henry was only eighteen, she must have been eight years his senior. But this is inconsistent with his previous statement, that, in 1501, she was fourteen years and nine or ten months old,† which is correct; and, therefore, when Henry married her, 3rd June, 1509, she could not possibly be more than twenty-two years and eleven months old, only at the most four years and eleven months older than Henry, who had not quite completed his eighteenth year in April, 1509.

For several years their married life was happy. Henry himself acknowledged it, and Pole says that during the first part of his reign no man could show greater love towards a wife than he.‡ But about sixteen years after we find an uneasiness coming over his mind as to his marriage with his brother's widow; all her children had died except one girl, Mary; she was in ill health, and he confided his pious scruples to Wolsey, who promised aid, believing him, no doubt, to be sincere.

The origin for the desire of divorce on the part of Henry must always remain open as a matter of opinion. It is possible that it might have originated in a suspicion

* Vol. iv., cap. 8.

† Vol. iv., cap. 5.

‡ Poli Apol., ad. Car., v. p. 162.

of illegality, but if we take into consideration the circumstances of his life we cannot help fancying that it arose from a more worldly cause. He was not faithful to his wife, though he acknowledged his affection for her in every other way, by word and act; his carnal passions were stronger than his love, stronger than himself, even at the best: to humanity such a state of being is unfortunately not impossible. It is quite clear, beyond all question, that he had a mistress in Elizabeth, the relict of Sir Gilbert Tailbois, who bore him the son of whom he was so fond, and who, had he lived, might have worn the crown of England.

It is not so clearly ascertained, though there is a great probability, that Mary Boleyn, the sister of Anne, succeeded to the place of Elizabeth: it is doubted by Burnet, but Cardinal Pole reproached Henry with it in his private letters. No one can read the letters of Pole without being assured that, whatever that man's opinions were, he was a good man. No one had a higher reputation for integrity and honour—even Henry esteemed him, and tried most assiduously to get him on his side—he might have had honours, wealth, distinction, but he chose exile, and never hesitated to speak and write to the king as, being connected with him in relationship, he might do, with the greater plainness; so that his evidence is worth listening to, and on points of Henry's life, those points which Protestant historians love to overlook, most valuable.

In one of his letters to Henry, written in 1535, speaking of Anne Boleyn, he says, "She had learned, I think, if from no other source, yet from the example of her sister, how quickly you tire of your concubines:" and, again, "it was her sister whom you first seduced and for a long time afterwards kept as a mistress,"

and, "you strive to induce the Pope to allow you to marry the sister of a woman who has been your mistress."

In any case it is quite clear that Henry, though he loved his wife, was not free from the stain of adultery, and it is the natural result of that crime to satiate its victim with the purer feeling, by kindling the impure fire of lust. That at a certain point in their married life, and from no fault of her own, Catherine, who had always been wronged, lost the heart of her husband, is evident by his subsequent acts.

If it could be clearly ascertained that he had taken steps in his divorce before paying marked attention to Anne Boleyn, we might acquit him of acting wholly under the dictates of passion, but there is no proof and little probability of the truth of such an assertion, though it is sometimes made; but it is not of vital importance: if it were proved that he had not conceived any passion for Anne Boleyn before he began to be uneasy about his marriage we should still be inclined to believe that uneasiness arose more as a natural consequence of his unchaste life than from any religious scruples about affinity, the vital point which he had already conceded, by admitting the non-consummation of the marriage between Catherine and Arthur.

The conception of a criminal purpose is one of the most subtle phenomena of our moral nature; who can ever trace it back to the first faint flush of guilt upon the soul? One who has written more wisely upon that subject than any other uninspired mortal, has said, "The beginning of all evil temptations, is *inconstancy of mind* * * * for first there occurs to the mind a simple thought, then a strong imagination, then

delight, and an evil impetus, and then consent"*—such was the case with Henry, his inconstancy led him up to temptation, and under temptation he fell. But at the time when he was in this vacillating state about his marriage, and he was struggling to tear from himself the only pure affection of his life, the world was undergoing one of her great transitions. The cause of that we need not dwell upon here, but only endeavour to show how the domestic disorders and perplexities of a solitary individual may be caught up by the tornado of public affairs and made instruments of action in promoting the great purpose.

In such crises of the world's history, when a great work is to be achieved, men of the most opposite characters and habits, and men's purposes of the most contradictory nature, are made subservient by the Supreme ruling power to the accomplishment of His designs. The tyrant on the throne, the minister who acts upon a carefully devised plan, based upon invariable laws; the ordinary every-day man working in his groove with mathematical precision, a subservient power in the complicated machinery of business; the idler waiting for the wind, his only motive of action; the peasant vegetating on the soil, watching his flocks amid the balmy solitudes of nature, all are liable to be caught up by the mysterious impetus of public event and made the unconscious instruments in the accomplishment of work of which they never had a conception. Like the Spirit in "Faust" is the course of human action—

* "De Imitatione Christi," lib. i. c. 13, § 5. "Initium omnium malarum tentationum inconstantia animi est. . . . nam primo occurrit

menti simplex cogitatio, deinde fortis imaginatio, postea delectatio et motus pravus et assentio."

In Lebensfluthen im Thatensturm
 Wall'ich auf und ab
 Webe hin und her !
 Geburt und Grab,
 Ein ewiges Meer
 Ein wechselnd Weben
 Ein glühend Leben

So schaff'ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit
 Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.*

We look upon nature and life as subject to certain well ascertained laws, but there is something beyond even law; for, after all, our idea of law is simply the result of observation, and is only a limited apprehension of phenomena. We observe the regular succession of phenomena in nature, and we call that regularity a law, but that it has remained unbroken as long as we have examined it, is certainly a probability, but *no demonstration*, that under certain circumstances it may not be interrupted or modified. We submit to the "reign of law," but it tells us nothing about its own origin or the causes of the phenomena over which it rules; at that point it is silent, and observation is met by a barrier beyond which it cannot penetrate. So in history we see certain results ensue with tolerable regularity from certain courses of event, each in its own order; but there come times when, as it were, a bias is given to the whole of the many currents which make up the ocean of life, when from north, south, from east and

* In the swelling flood of life,
 In the storm of action going,
 Up and down in endless strife,
 Here and there for ever flowing :
 Mine is birth and mine the grave,
 An ocean of unending wave,
 Change on changes I assume
 In life that glows in star and clod :
 So work I at Time's rushing loom
 And weave the living robe of God.

west, they slowly begin to flow into one common centre, and as that impetus increases we see everything in its course carried away by it and diverted to the one common object.

There was just such a concentration of human thought and energy in Europe at the time when Henry VIII. of England began to have his pious scruples about his marriage with Catherine of Arragon; before long, he and his scruples, his intrigues, and his jealousies, were all drawn into the current then setting in from all points towards Germany.

It will not be necessary for us to examine into that vexed question of Henry's divorce; the two facts are sufficient for us that he married Anne Boleyn and procured his own divorce by taking upon himself the supremacy of the Church in England.

In 1521, when Luther's name began to be loudly noised abroad, and his followers to increase, the world of controversy was surprised by the appearance of a royal combatant, no less a personage than Henry VIII. of England, then a strict and bigoted Roman Catholic, who came forward to crush this insignificant "*fraterculus*" who had so disturbed the Church. His book was called "*Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum ædita ab Invictissimo Angliæ et Franciæ Rege et Domino Hybernici Henrico cujus nominis octavo.*" It is dedicated to "Sanctissimo Domino Nostro, Domino Leoni X." The style of the book is vituperative, as, indeed, was much of the controversial theology of that period; he heaps upon Luther plenty of the "*odium theologicum*;" he is an "enemy, who, with the instinct of a demon, under the pretext of charity, but stimulated by hatred, has vomited his viperous poison against the Church and the Catholic

faith." * He calls upon all the powers of Christendom to unite against this common enemy, to arm themselves with the double weapons of celestial and earthly power: celestial, that he who was perverting others might be brought back to the light of truth; and earthly that if he refused to yield, "despised holy counsels and contemned holy correction," he should be punished and made an example of to warn others.

He complains very much of Luther's irreverence, that he called the Holy Roman See "*Babylon*," and the Church of Rome the kingdom of Babylon and the power of Nimrod the *mighty hunter*.† Luther had declared in his work, when speaking about the supremacy of the Pope, that he had established a tyranny by mere violence; and Henry, in reply, after calling him "a snake," sneers at Luther's expression of pity for the people who were the "slaves of Babylon," and says:—"So this merciful man offers liberty to all who will separate from the Church and be corrupted by the contamination of this putrid amputated member." He then proceeds to defend the sacraments, more especially those of confession, penance, extreme unction, etc., but his arguments are weak, and partake rather of the character of invective than reasoning. His argument for the Real Presence is simply a bare repetition of the words of Christ, "*Hoc est corpus meum*." "Who can, therefore, doubt," says Henry, "that he was present in the sacrament, for how could he more clearly assert that nothing remained of the bread than when he said,

* Hostis . . . demonis instinctu charitatem prætexens, ira atque odio stimulatus, et contra ecclesiam et contra Catholicam fidem vipereum virus evomuit.—Paris ed., 1521.

† "Sacrosanctam sedem Romanam Babylonem appellat;" and of the Church he thought it nothing else than. "regnum Babylonis, et potentiam Nebroth robusti venatoris."—Paris edit., 1521.

'*Hoc est corpus meum?*' For he did not say, 'In this is my body, nor with this is my body, but *Hoc est corpus meum.*'"

The work, however, is written with vigour and strength of style, its invective is sharp, and sometimes pointed with a malignancy that speaks of the ecclesiastic; and gives some show of reason to the insinuation of Luther, who, in his letter to Henry, attributed the authorship to Wolsey, whom he calls "*Monstrum et publicum odium Dei et hominum, pestis illa regni tui,*" that monster and public hate of God and man, that pest of your kingdom.

Luther inveighed boldly against the efficacy of masses for the dead, and said they did more good to the living than the dead: he insisted also that there were now no sacrifices, and Henry concludes his book by saying: "We might as well expect the Æthiop to change his colour and the leopard his spots as to attempt to change Luther." The book then concludes with an exhortation to all Christians to bury their dissensions, and "with the same courage as they did against Turks, Saracens, and infidels, to unite together against this ridiculous friar, imbecile in strength, but in mind more injurious than all Turks, Saracens, or infidels."

This production, of which Henry was proud, was taken to Rome by Clarke, the dean of Windsor, who submitted it to the Pope, who accepted it with many praises. It is said that the title "Most Christian King" had been given to Henry by Pope Julius, but never formally acknowledged, and when Clarke presented the book to the Pope he demanded from His Holiness the title "Defender of the Faith" for his master. It was conceded, after opposition, but only

for life. Henry, however, always retained it, and annexed it to the crown in the Parliament held in the thirty-fifth year of his reign. At this time, then, the king was a zealous and rather bigoted Roman Catholic, and the fact may be proved by the number of Lollards burned in the early part of his reign; in fact, he burned men for Protestantism up to the year 1543. It is an expressive fact, that in 1533, Latimer was forbidden to preach in London, but in 1535 was made Bishop of Worcester. This circumstance alone will illustrate the sudden change which came over Henry; in so short a time he had become the patron of heretics.

Latimer left London and went to Bristol, where he created a great sensation by preaching against the Romish abuses. He was, however, closely watched by the emissaries of Cromwell, acting of course under Henry's order. Two letters* are extant which throw great light upon this incident. A commissioner was sent down to watch both Latimer and his rival Hubberdin, who, though a Roman Catholic, was opposed to the king's doings. In the letter written to Cromwell, we read that Latimer had preached such doctrines as "Yn hell to be no fyer sensyble : the sowles that be yn purgatory to have no nede of our prayers, but rather to pray for us : no sayntes to be honoryd, no pylgrymage to be usyd : our blessyd Lady to be a synner: as it hath been reportyd and taken by the herers;" and of Hubberdin we read that he "preachyd scharply agenste Latimer's artycules;" and the city between them was thrown into confusion.

The other letter is from John Hylsey, the prior of the Friars' Preachers of Bristol, to Cromwell. He con-

* Cotton MSS., Cleopatra, E iv. folios 56 and 140.

firms the report of the commissioners, and speaks of Latimer as "a man nott unknowne;" he says, "I wrote unto youe that hytt came by the prechyng of owne Mr. Latymer, a man nott unknowne; I wrote alsoe that he spake of pylgrimages, worshyppyng off ymages, off purgatory," &c. And yet after this vigilant supervision, before a year was over, Latimer was made Bishop of Worcester. But that year, 1534, was an eventful one for England; in it the whole spiritual government of the country was changed. The Parliament met on the 15th January and sat till the 31st March, and during that short period they effected the following vital changes: they disqualified the bishops from taking cognizance of the crime of heresy; they ordered the Ecclesiastical Constitutions to be examined into, to select such as were worth preserving, and to abolish the rest, and the king for this purpose was to appoint sixteen members of Parliament and sixteen of the clergy; they abolished the annates, first-fruits of bishoprics paid by English prelates to Rome; they abolished for ever the authority of the Pope in England, and settled the mode of electing and consecrating bishops without appeal to the Pope; they abolished Peter's Pence, and all manner of bulls and mandates sent from Rome.

What had caused this sudden change? Was it conviction of the truth of Luther's teaching which he had opposed? conviction of the fallacy of the doctrines he had held all his life and defended? had he become a convert to the Reformation? We are afraid other circumstances can be found in such close juxtaposition with this change as to look so like causes that we are almost forced to abandon the idea of anything like religious conviction or sympathy with the Reformation.

He had some time before privately married Anne Boleyn,* and the ceremony was conducted by one of whom we shall presently have to speak, for he figured prominently in the preliminary work of ecclesiastical destruction and spoliation,—that man was Roland Lee, afterwards Bishop of Coventry and Lord President of the Principality of Wales.

After this, finding all negotiation with Rome to be futile, he had prevailed on Cranmer to pronounce sentence of divorce between himself and Catherine,† and to secure the efficacy of all this, he, it is thought at the instigation of Cromwell, renounced the authority of the Pope, took upon himself the supremacy of the English Church, and indicted all the clergy for submitting to the legantine court of Wolsey. They then offered to pay him a hundred thousand pounds, which he would not accept until, after much cavil, they had inserted in the grant a clause which virtually acknowledged him as supreme head of the Church. It was done—the last link in the chain which bound England to Rome for so many centuries was broken, and this Parliament of which we have been speaking added to its acts the annulling of the king's marriage with Catherine of Arragon, and the confirmation of that with Anne Boleyn; then commissioners were sent into the counties by its injunction, that all subjects might be sworn to the observance of this Act, in which was a clause declaring the king's supremacy, under pain of being indicted for high treason.

Through disobedience to this injunction, Sir Thomas More, and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, lost their heads. We fear the coincidences in this case of Henry are too

* 14th Novem., 1532.

† 10th May, 1533.

great to leave any room as yet for conviction. He had a wife whom he wished to divorce, the power necessary to effect it was not willing; but at the moment the world was in rebellion against both the spirituality and temporality of that power, its influence in the shape of secret agents had already reached England, and an outcry had been raised,—what more likely than the absorption of a monarch so situated in the general current of events?—and it was by this coincidence that he was enabled, by throwing off the jurisdiction of the Pope and taking upon himself the supreme direction of the Church, to effect his purposes. That he was acting under the influence of religious conviction is too untenable to be accepted for a moment. That in the course of his subsequent proceedings he discovered much to alter, or at least to modify his opinions of the state of the Church, is certain, but there is no evidence to prove that he was what is now termed a Protestant. He persecuted real Protestants all through his reign; and, in fact, the Reformation was not consummated in England until the rise of the Puritans, whose long and bloody crusade was at length crowned with victory. We may here remark that the last act of Henry's life proved him to be no Protestant. In his will he supplicated the "Virgin Mary and all her holy company of heaven;" he endowed an altar at Windsor to be honourably kept up with all things necessary for a daily mass there to be "read perpetually while the world shall endure;" and he endowed the poor knights of Windsor upon condition that they should repeat eternal masses for his soul.

But we must return from Henry's motives to his acts. Clement VII. died in September, 1534, and Paul III. succeeded. Parliament met and passed other

acts which tended to break every remaining connection with Rome. It acknowledged the king's title as Supreme Head of the Church; it enacted against those who had spoken evil of the king; it deprived persons charged with high treason of the benefit of the sanctuaries; it established a form of oath with respect to the act for settling the succession of the crown; it gave the king the annates which had been taken from Rome, and granted to him one-tenth of the revenues of the benefices; it ordered the establishment of twenty-four suffragan bishops, with power to each diocesan to nominate two persons, of whom the king should choose one, and it condemned Fisher and More to perpetual imprisonment; they were also specially exempted by the king from a general pardon he afterwards granted. When it had broken up, the king ordered by proclamation that the name of the Pope should be expunged from all the books that could be found, and then the bishops expressly renounced their obedience to the see of Rome.*

He had now committed himself to a course of action, and was resolved to maintain it by every means in his power.

His most bitter opponents were the monks: they preached and plotted against him; and one of them, Peyto, a Cordelier, told him to his face that the dogs would lick his blood like Ahab's. But the fate of the Charter-house fraternity was a terrible example to them, and indicated what they were to expect who opposed Henry. A commissioner, Bedyll, was sent to them, to submit to them some books against the primacy of Rome and other subjects, and to get from

* Acta Regia.

them their opinions. He says in his letter to Cromwell, "I demanded of hym whether he and the vicar and others of the sennors had seen or herd the said annotations . . . and he answered that the vicar and he and Nudigat had spent the tyme upon thaim tyl ix or x of the clok at night, and they saw nothing in thaim whereby they wer moved to alter thair opinion." The result of the investigation was that on the 27th April, 1535, John Houghton, the prior, was executed; on the 18th June two others, Exmoor and Newdigate; and on the 4th of August nine more. The execution of the prior was attended with the foulest cruelty.*

The dissolution of a religious house was not such a new idea as has been represented. We must acquit Wolsey too of being the prime cause in this case. The general representation of historians is, that he first gave the notion of dissolving monasteries when he procured from the king and the Pope permission to dissolve several small priories to build with their revenues his college at Oxford; but from the fourteenth century that had been repeatedly done by others when occasion required. In 1390, William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, with the Pope and king's permission, bought the priories of Hornchurch and Writtle, in Essex, and settled their revenues on his new college at Oxford; and some time after he managed to get for this same foundation Takley in Essex and Hamell in Hampshire; Andover was also settled upon his college at Winchester.

* He was first half hanged, then cut down, when he said, "Most Holy Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me in this hour. The executioner then pulled out his heart, and his

last words were, "Good sirs, what will ye do with my heart?" When dead, he was quartered, and one of his arms set over his monastery.

At the revival of letters in the fourteenth century there was no difficulty in getting small priories or monasteries if a noble or an ecclesiastic wished to found a school or college; this is a significant fact of an insensible change of feeling as regards cloister life in England. In 1437 Archbishop Chicheley founded All Souls' College, Oxford, upon the revenues of several alien priories.* Magdalen College, founded by Bishop Wainfleet, of Winchester, 1459, arose from the ruins of the priories of Sele in Sussex, and Selbourne in Hampshire. The nunnery of St. Rhadegunde, in Cambridge, was suppressed in 1497, by John Alcock, the Bishop of Ely, to found Jesus College. Margaret, Countess of Richmond, founded in 1505 Christ College, Cambridge, by the suppression of the Abbey of Creyke, in Norfolk, and in 1508 she turned the Priory of St. John the Evangelist into St. John's College, and her executors carried on the design. Fisher, who was one, procured the dissolution of the nunneries at Heynham, in Kent, and Bromhall, in Berks, and the Hospital of Regulars, at Osprey, was suppressed, and its revenues settled upon St. John's.† In 1515, Brazen Nose College, Oxford, was founded by William Smith, Bishop of Lincoln, who, after purchasing the Priory of Cold Norton, Oxfordshire, of the abbot, and Convent of Westminster, endowed this college with its lands.‡ So that Wolsey, whatever else he might have done, must be acquitted of being the first innovator upon monastic privileges.

Circumstances were long tending towards such a

* Alien priories were small foreign monasteries, whose monks were generally foreigners, and therefore their fate was varied: in war they were seized, and in peace restored;

the work of dissolution first began with them.

† The Johnians are still proud of the title "Lady Margaret's Men."

‡ Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*.

necessity. Without endorsing the atrocious libels which were circulated and palmed off on the people about the atrocities perpetrated in the monasteries, there could be no question that there was a great deal of irregularity, especially amongst the friars. The satirists of that period find an ample subject in the mendicant and preaching orders for their wit. Erasmus has left to posterity some of the most severe animadversions levelled at them, and he was no reformer.* The Benedictines were lazy, rich, and careless; the friars were only too active; wherever a man was thriving, the friar was about his house, when he died they hovered about his bed, persuaded him to leave his ill-gotten money to the Church, and die in one of their "shirts," which would be a safe passport to bliss; they wandered all over the country selling charms and relics to the people, and preaching to them about the marvels of the saints their adventures and miracles. Each one drained the people of their pence for his house, and, not content with this, they were always active agents for papal extortion and intrigues. For a long time before any notion had been entertained of a doctrinal reform, there had existed a conviction in people's minds that the time had come when the world could exist without monkery, and we must make some allowance for the acts of Henry and his ministers when we reflect upon this growing tendency to a new life. The world, as we have said, was in a transition state, the day of contemplation had gone, and the present busy life of intellectual and physical activity was just manifesting its first symptoms.

It is not improbable that Henry had some notion in

* See his Colloquies *passim*.

his mind of such a change long before even he had thought of his divorce—at the very time when he was composing his theological thunderbolt against Luther.

One of his favourite chaplains was John Leland, a man who may be fairly called the Father of English antiquities; he studied both at Oxford and Cambridge, and for his age was a great linguist, being familiar, according to Bishop Bale, with “sondrye languages, as Greke, Latyne, Frenche, Italion, Spanyshe, Brityshe, Saxonyshe, Walshe, Englyshe, and Scottyshe.” There is evidence in an old Proctor’s Book of Cambridge, that he paid his fees for the degree of B.A. in 1522, being then about sixteen years old. He was soon made king’s chaplain, but the exact date of the appointment cannot be ascertained; it was probably a few years after the degree, as he then went to France to study at Paris under the celebrated Francis Sylvius, and was away some years. On his return he took orders, was made king’s chaplain, then given the rectory of Popeling in Calais, made library keeper to the king, and in 1553 by a commission under the Broad Seal, appointed king’s antiquary, by which commission he was authorised to “search after England’s antiquities, and peruse the libraries of all cathedrals, abbeys, priories, colleges, &c., and all places wherein records, writings, and secrets of antiquity were re-posed.” Whatever the motive of this appointment, its results were beneficial, for Leland went into every corner of the country, gathered together an immense store of extracts from, and complete transcriptions of, old documents, which really form the basis, not only of our national antiquities, but our national history, for antiquities are the foster-mother of history. It resulted also in a geographical triumph, for in his Itinerary,

written after his return, we have the first complete physical description of our country.

But the facts we want to point out are these. The office of king's antiquary was never heard of before the appointment of Leland, nor has ever been maintained since, and it is a singular coincidence that, just before the commencement of the dissolution of monasteries, Henry, who was a great lover of learning, as is proved by his continued patronage of this unfortunate scholar, should send him out to search the monasteries. It is probable that Leland did not start upon this expedition till 1536, for there is extant a royal dispensation bearing that date, giving him liberty to appoint a curate at Popeling, in order that he might devote himself to his research. In this research he spent six years, and on his return, the king, on 3rd of April, 1542, presented him to the rich Rectory of Haseley, in Oxfordshire, then in the diocese of Lincoln, and the year after he was given a prebend of King's College, now Christ Church, Oxford, and then the prebend of East and West Knowle, near Salisbury.

It is probable that at this time, when nearly all the monasteries had fallen into the hands of the king, that he must have applied to his majesty to be allowed once more to go out on an expedition to save some of the valuable works which were being so wantonly sacrificed; for in his New Year's gift, which was a treatise presented to the king in 1546, one year before Henry's death, Leland speaks of "youre most gracious commission in the xxxv. yeare of your prosperouse reygne, to the entente that monumentes of ancient wryters myghte be brought out of deadly darknesse to lvely light." This would be in the year 1544, and certainly cannot be the same expedition for which the

royal dispensation was issued in 1536, but it has led to great confusion, especially amongst the encyclopædists, who, with reckless disregard to chronology, unite in saying that Leland was appointed to search the monasteries in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Henry VIII., (1544), and that he spent six years in collecting materials; but by that time all the monasteries were cleared and disposed of, and Henry died in 1547, so that he could not have been living when Leland returned, which is impossible, because we have it in Leland's own writings, that at the return from the expedition he was given the two rich prebends. There must then have been two expeditions, the one in 1536, whilst the smaller monasteries were being visited, and the other in 1544, to rescue what could be found in their libraries, which were then being cleared out. But the idea of sending Leland to them was mooted in 1533, when he was made king's antiquary, so that it appears probable that Henry contemplated such a measure even then.

The first step taken openly was in 1535, when it was moved in the Council to suppress the monasteries, and debated with much warmth, Cranmer and Cromwell looking upon it as a great step towards reforming the Church, but the Bishops of Winchester, Lincoln, and others, and the Duke of Norfolk, opposed it. Henry therefore resolved, as Cromwell had previously advised him, upon doing it himself gradually. He then ordered a general visitation of the monasteries, to ascertain their internal condition, how their rules were kept, and especially to gather information as to the extent and title of their possessions, their revenues, &c. It was a wise step. How many institutions even in the present day could stand a sudden and searching

investigation by hired inspectors to whom a certain bias had already been given? Henry knew very well that many discoveries would be made of moral dereliction, of lax discipline, even of crime, which when publicly announced would pave the way for the final measures he had in view. To this end a general visitation was appointed, and we may here mention for clearness' sake that the whole work was carried on in this way. First there was a general visitation and report issued, then there was a suppression of the smaller monasteries, and afterwards a suppression of the larger. Cromwell, who was now rising into favour, was appointed Visitor General; and chose as sub-visitors, amongst others, the following, who appear more prominently in the work, Richard Layton, Thomas Leigh, and William Petre, Doctors of Law; John London, Dean of Wallingford, Roland Lee, who had been one of the king's chaplains, and performed the marriage ceremony between Henry and Anne Boleyn, and Thomas Bedyll. The actual visitation did not commence until the autumn of 1535, and its work was to release all religious persons under the age of twenty-four years, and confine the rest to the monastery, the abbot giving those who departed a priest's gown and 40 shillings of money. A passage from a paper written by the Abbot of Wardon, containing his reasons for resigning, will illustrate this point. He says: "Furste, immediatele after the kinge's grace's visitacion was executed by his commissioners, master Doctor Leigh and master Jo. ap Reece . . . mi saide bretherne toke occasion agenste me therat, and said amongst them that I was the cause whi that thei were enclosed within ther monasteri."*

* Cotton MSS. Cleop. E. iv., 163, quoted also in Camden Soc. Pub.

The visitors received instructions in eighty-six articles, the principal of which were, that they were to collect the monks in their chapter-house, and every one should be compelled to give in his obedience to Henry and Anne, his wife, to confess the Pope had no authority in the country, to call him bishop only, to find out how many preachers there were, and to examine the sermons, and if not orthodox to burn them, to admonish the preachers to commend to God and the people the king as supreme head of the Church. After thus caring for their spiritual welfare, they were to make them produce all their gold and silver plate and other movable goods, and give up a true inventory of them. The subsequent steps taken by the visitors will prove also that they must have had private instructions to induce the monks in some way to resign and deliver up their monasteries to the king in hope of a pension, for we find that urged upon the abbots always, and mostly with good result.

Still Henry at this time was anxious that the idea should not spread that he was going to dissolve the monasteries, for letters began to pour in from abbots who were thoroughly alarmed. The king replied by apprehending those who had circulated the report and sending them to prison; the suspicion, however, continued, and to satisfy them a circular letter was sent round to assure them that if they lived in due order and acknowledged the king's supremacy they should not be interfered with.* Meantime the visitation went on and the first house surrendered was that of Langdon, in Kent, on 13th November, 1535,† where Doctor Layton declared in his letter to Cromwell

* Strype's Memor., vol. i., pt. i, p. 321. † Rymer Fœdera xiv., p. 555.

that he caught the abbot, William Sayer, in bed with his concubine; he knocked at the door of the sleeping apartment but received no answer, he then proceeded to force it open with a pole-axe, but "his hore, *alias* his gentlewoman, bestyred hir stumpis towards hir starting hoilles (holes), and then Bartlett (the man who was put to watch) tooke the tendre damoisel, and affter I had examined hir to Dover, ther to the maire to sett hir in some cage or prison for viii dais, and I brought the holy father abbot to Canterbury, and there in Chrestechurche I will leve hym in prison."* Others soon followed; the Priory of Folkestone on November 15, and the next day that of Dover, and in February, 1536, that of Bilsington, in Kent, and Merton, in Yorkshire.

When the Parliament met in 1536 they passed the Act for the suppression of all monasteries whose revenues were under £200 per annum, and gave the king the estates. Of this number 376 were dissolved, by which Henry acquired a revenue of £30,000, and a capital in plate and goods of £100,000.

The report which had been presented by the visitors was the pretext for this step. That a body of gentlemen, clergymen, and scholars could be found ready to do this very dirty work does not speak well for the state of things. That they were prejudiced in their business we shall show from their own letters, that they were venal we shall also show. Their report was filled with revelations of the most vile and obscene character; charges were made against the monks of crimes which degraded them below the level of beasts; and, according to them, monasteries, instead of being

* Cotton MSS., Cleop. E. iv., p. 127.

places of refuge for holy men, were dens of iniquity for which no other term could be found than that of the city of Sodom. It is said all copies of this report were destroyed in the reign of Mary, but Burnet says he saw an extract of part of it concerning 144 houses which contained the most revolting revelations. We shall be able to show from the letters of these visitors, which have been collected from the Cottonian and Harleian MSS., and published by the Camden Society, that they dwelt with great emphasis upon the horrible vices of the monks; but their evidence is much impaired when we find them catering for bribes for Cromwell, seizing on plate and valuables, in fact, acting like hired spoilers and licensed rogues. We cannot accept their testimony as to the foul charges they made against the monks; that there was irregularity there can be no question whatever, that here and there a case of immorality occurred is equally certain, but to believe that they were sunk so low as to be worse than beasts of the field, we must have better evidence than that of hired spies, bailiffs and depredators. The whole system was rotten to the core, but we must make a vast distinction between the friars who wandered about all over the country, went into people's houses with the greatest freedom, and were, therefore, thrown more into temptation; and those monks who remained within the walls of their monasteries, seldom venturing beyond them, and then only by special leave. Let us remember always, as a matter of justice, before we accept all that these visitors report, that they were men who were paid to do a certain work well delineated for them; they were hired to break in upon the privacy of aged abbots, to lay violent hands if necessary upon their persons, to rifle their desks and drawers, to read

their private letters, to peep into dormitories, to cross-question servants, to watch, pry, listen; and, in fact, to play the most contemptible part that could be allotted to men, for which tyrants generally employ bullies, felons, and rogues.

The dissolution of the smaller monasteries was only the first part of the programme. In 1536 an Act was passed (27 Hen. VIII.), entitled "An Acte whereby Religeous Houses of Monkes, Chanons, and Nonnes, whiche may dyspend Manors, Landes, Tenements, and Heredytaments *above* the clere yerly value of £200, are geven to the kinge's highness, his heires, and successors for ever."

In 1538 there were 21 suppressed, in 1539 there were 101, a list of which is given in Rymer.* There were suppressed in 1539, fifty-seven surrenders, thirty-seven of which were abbeys or priories and twenty nunneries, and by this visitation the king acquired revenues to the amount of £160,000, besides gold and silver, precious stones, furniture, and materials, found in the monasteries. Henry then, at the instigation it is said of Gardiner, published a law called the Six Articles, in order to convince the people that, though he suppressed the monasteries, he had no intention of interfering with the religion of the country. This Act is also known by the title of the Bloody Statute, for it sentenced to death by burning or hanging all who should deny the doctrine of Transubstantiation, who pleaded for the necessity of administering the sacrament to the people in both kinds—who urged that it was lawful for priests to marry or to break the vow of chastity, or that private masses were of no

* Rymer Fœd., xiv. 590.

service, and auricular confession not necessary to salvation.

When the work of devastation was completed, there was naturally a great outcry in the country as to what Henry would do with the immense wealth suddenly turned out of its channel towards his treasury. The hungry poor who depended upon the invariable charity of the monasteries, that virtue which they preserved in the darkest period of their history, began to feel that they were suddenly cast adrift, and then hunger raised its hoarse voice and made itself heard in the palace. The king, to quiet the awakening apprehension on the part of the ecclesiastics, in December, 1540, turned the Abbey of Westminster into a bishop's see, with a deanery, twelve prebends, officers for the cathedral, and a quire, and Thomas Thirlby was appointed bishop.* In 1541, August 4th, he made three bishopricks, Chester, out of the Monastery of St. Werburgh, with a deanery and six prebends;† on 3rd September, Gloucester was made a bishoprick, with a deanery and six prebends, out of the Monastery of St. Peters, and John Wakeman, who had been Abbot of Tewkesbury, was first bishop;‡ on the 4th September, Peterborough Abbey was made a bishoprick, with a deanery and six prebends, with John Chambers, the last abbot, as bishop.§ The next year the Abbey of Osney was made a bishoprick, with a deanery and six prebends,|| and Robert King, the late abbot, became Bishop of Oxfordshire, the abbey church being his cathedral—the see was then removed to Oxford—Christ Church being the cathedral.

* Rymer Fœd., i. p. 705.

† Rymer Fœd., i. p. 724.

‡ Rymer Fœd., i. p. 718.

§ Rymer Fœd., i. p. 731.

|| Rymer Fœd., i. p. 748.

On June 4th, 1542, the bishoprick of Bristol was made, with a deanery and six prebends, out of the Monastery of St. Augustine in that city.* The priories at most cathedrals, such as Canterbury, Winchester, Durham, Worcester, Carlisle, Rochester, and Ely, were converted into deaneries and colleges of prebends, but this was very far short of what Cranmer had designed, or even of what the king had intended, for he had projected that in every cathedral there should be readers of divinity, Greek, and Hebrew, and a number of students maintained and instructed in theology, whom the bishop might ordain and settle in his diocese.† The original MS. of this project shows, in addition to what is mentioned by Burnet, that “olde servantes decayed to have lyfynges, allmeshouseys for pour folke to be sustayned in . . . dayly almes to be mynstrate, mendyng of highwayse, and exhybission for mynsters off the chyrche.”‡ This peace offering cost the king it is said only seven or eight thousand pounds per annum, out of money drawn from the ruin of nearly seven hundred religious houses.§

An inspection of the sale lists of goods, utensils, &c., will satisfy any one that his majesty's emissaries were most zealous in his service. We give a few quotations. ||

“*Bordesley*—Sales there made the xxiii day of September, anno regni regis Henrici viii, 30 mo., at the survey there.

* Rymer Fœd., i. p. 748.

† Burnet, tom. i., pages 300, 301.

‡ Cotton MSS., Cleop. E. iv. 305. The commencement of which, written in the king's hand, is quoted by Mr. Wright in his excellent collection of letters before referred

to, published by the Camden Soc. vide page 262.

§ Rapin's Hist., vol i., p. 829.

|| Full lists may be seen in the work of Mr. Wright before alluded to, and to which I am indebted for the quotations. The MS. is Addit. MSS., Brit. Mus., 11,041 fo. 86.

“Fyrste, sold to Raffe Sheldon, esquyer, and Mr. Markeham, the iron and glasse in the wyndowes of the north side of the cloyster, xiijs. viijd.

“Item, received of Mr. Grevyll for a lytle table and the pavyng stone ther, iijs. iiijd.

“*Grey Friars of Stafford*—Sold to the warden ii brasse bolts, viiis.

“Sold to the town of Stafford ii church candlesticks, vs.

“To the warden, vi plattes, ijs.

“A frying panne and a payre of pot-hangles, vjd.”

It is quite clear that the commissioners of the king did their work well, and cleared everything out of the monastery. Nothing escaped their vigilance; stained glass, iron work, bells, altar cloths, altar candles, books, images, copes, brewing-tubs, troughs, brass, bolts, spits for cooking, stew-pans, trivets, plates, basons, and even frying-pans, all were seized, turned into money and recorded, if only sixpence; nay, we even find that at the monastery of Grey Friars, at Lichfield, a “presse, a bedstede, and a dore,” were sold to one Mr. Dobson for fourpence.

But the damage done to literature can scarcely be estimated. Bale, Bishop of Ossory, although an enemy to the monks, laments with the sorrow of a scholar over the desolation caused by the wanton ignorance of the commissioners. Writing in 1549, he tells us that they would not have reproached the king with the loss of their libraries if only the valuable books they contained had been saved, if only, he says, “there had bene in every shyre of Englande but one solemyne lybrary to the preservacyon of those noble workes . . . but to destroye all without conyderacyon is and wyll be unto Englande for ever a most horrible infamy among the grave senyours of

other nations." The jewels and gold and silver clasps were torn off the volumes and kept aside, whilst the books themselves were sold for waste paper—it was sufficient if it were illuminated to ensure its fate—the illuminations were torn out and the book cast away to the general recess to be sold for what it would fetch. In this way, according to Bale, they came to base uses, they were used by servants to scour their candlesticks, to rub their boots, some were sent abroad to the foreign book-binders, and he tells us he knew a case where a tradesman bought the contents of two noble libraries for 40 shillings, and had been using them for nearly ten years for waste paper, and had enough left to last him many years more. It is not a matter of surprise then, that when we read Leland's account of the monastic libraries we read of books seen by him which are not now extant, and the best proof perhaps of what we have lost is in the richness of what little has been saved, and which now forms the valuable collections—the Cottonian in the British Museum, and the MSS. in the Bodleian at Oxford, collected by Cotton and Parker. Those of the Cotton Library numbered originally 100,000 MSS., and those of the Bodleian 30,000.

But the king was not allowed to rest, he was besieged with applications by hungry nobles for estates wrested from the Church, and a practice sprang up which is immortalized by the name of "Praying for an estate." They used to kneel and specify what lands they wanted: they bribed Cromwell. The Chancellor Audeley bargaining with the secretary for the Abbey of Osney, sent one day a letter with "twenty pounds with my poor hearty goodwill for some present trouble in this suit." He, however, failed, but was consoled with

two rich monasteries, from the spoils of which he built a magnificent mansion, Audeley End. Sir Thomas Elyot promised, when begging for a share, "Whatsoever portion of land that I shall attain by the king's grace I promise to give your lordship the first fruits, with my assured faithful heart and service." They even wanted Henry to spoil the colleges, but he was disgusted with their unholy avarice, and rebuked them: "I perceive the abbey lands have fleshed you and set your teeth on edge to ask those of the colleges. We pulled down sin by defacing the monasteries, but you desire to throw down all goodness by subversion of colleges."

At length a commission was issued to Thomas Cromwell and others, dated 12th March, 1540, empowering them to sell the estates of the monasteries, which were not given away to the nobles, at the rate of twenty years' purchase.

But we must leave this scene of desolation and advance to the delineation of the last tragedy played out under the walls of that great monastery, which we have made the central figure in this History of the Influence of English Monasticism.

Of all the Benedictine monasteries in England Glastonbury Abbey was the most flourishing and the least corrupt at the time when the great change came. It had weathered a storm of legal contention against tyrannical simony which had lasted for nearly three centuries, and a fire which had nearly razed it to the ground; its churches were rebuilt and redecorated, its outbuildings were extended, it was at peace within itself, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells was effectually kept at bay. Richard Beere, who died on the 20th January, 1524, was one of the most splendid and

distinguished of the abbots who had presided at Glastonbury from the time of Dunstan. He was the friend of Henry VII., and went to Rome as his ambassador to convey his congratulations to Pius IV. on his elevation to the chair. He was also a great friend of Erasmus, who corresponded with him, consulted him on literary matters, and even refrained at his advice from publishing a work he had written upon theology.

Upon his death the convent met, and decided upon paying Wolsey the compliment of choosing an abbot for them. Wolsey had been Bishop of Bath and Wells, and therefore was well acquainted with Glastonbury and the Glastonbury monks. To the surprise of the brotherhood, but to their entire satisfaction, he fixed upon Richard Whiting, who was then only the camerarius or chamberlain, having charge over the wardrobe, the lavatory, the tailory, and the dormitory of the monks; a useful, but not a dignified position. Still Whiting was a great favourite and no mean man; he was well born, a scholar, and a good Christian; he was spoken of in the commission of induction, as "*probum et religiosum virum; virum itaque providum et discretum, vita moribus et scientia commendabilem.*"

It was a grand promotion. From the simple occupation of looking after the most ordinary domestic matters, he was advanced to a position little inferior to that of a prince. He was a mitred abbot of one of the richest monasteries in the kingdom; he had a seat in the House of Peers, where he was present in the Parliament of 1539, where he sat robed and mitred as the 2nd Abbot*

* He took precedence of all other abbots until the year 1154, when Pope Adrian IV. gave that honour to the Abbot of St. Albans, he having been educated at that monastery.

in the kingdom—at one time his office was endowed with the power of conferring knighthood; his residence was equal to a palace; he had four manor houses, rural retreats, parks, gardens, and fisheries; when he went abroad on state occasions to attend Parliament, Councils, or Church ceremonies, he was attended by a retinue of 100 persons—the sons of noblemen and gentlemen were entrusted to his care to train, and of these he brought up more than 300—his table hospitality was profuse; he often entertained 500 people of fashion at once, and every Wednesday and Friday the poor of the surrounding neighbourhood were relieved out of his own charity at the almonry.

In 1539, as we have already mentioned, we find the Abbot of Glastonbury was present at the Parliament summoned to assemble on the 28th of April. A letter,* however, is extant, the only one written by him to Cromwell, begging him to get him excused through his many infirmities and increasing age. We shall give it as collated with the original, as it forms a good portrait of Richard Whiting drawn by himself.

“Right Honourable my singler good Lord,

“My dewty in reccommendations in right humble
 “wise remembered unto youre goode Lordshipp.
 “Pleaseth it you to be advertised, that I have received
 “the Kynge’s writte, commanding me to cumme unto
 “his Graceis High Parleament, to be holden at West-
 “minster, the 28th daye of this present moneth of
 “Aprile. My goode Lord, the trewth is this, as
 “knoweth our Lorde God; I have been greatlye
 “diseased with dyvers infirmities more then this halffe
 “yere, insomoche that for the more parte of the tyme,

* State Papers, Hen. VIII.

" I have not been able to labour fourthe of my housse,
 " and I cannot ryde, nother yett goo well, but wyth the
 " helpe of my staffe in veray greate payne ; by reason
 " whereof I am not able to do my most bonden dewtie
 " unto the Kinge's Majeste; as with my hoole harte and
 " wille I would do, and that right moche grievith me
 " as knoweth God. In consideration whereof, goode
 " my Lorde, in whom is my singler truste, I hartlie and
 " right humblie beseke you, be good Lorde unto me, as
 " ye always hitherto have been ; and if your Lordship
 " thinke it so to be best, it may please you of your
 " great charitie and goodness to move the Kinge's
 " Highness for me, that of his most abundant grace and
 " pitie, it may pleas his Highness moste graciously to
 " pardon me, and to be absent at this time from this
 " his Graceis said Parliament, wherein your goode
 " Lordship may do towards me a right mercifull and
 " charitable acte as knoweth God. But if the Kinge's
 " pleasure be so, I will be gladlye carried thither in a
 " horsse-litter to accomplishe his Graceis pleasure and
 " commandment, rather then to tarry at home. My
 " goode Lorde, I am not able to make you recompense
 " accordinglye, otherwise then with my moste hartye
 " prayer which of my veraye dewtie, I am bounden to
 " render unto Almightye God for the greate goodness
 " your goode Lordship hath alwayes doon to me here-
 " bifore. As knoweth God, who alwayes preserve your
 " goode Lordshippe in honour. At Glastonbury, the
 " 7th day of April,

" Yr. Lordshipp's Bedisman assured,

" *Ric. Abbatt.*"

Four years before the date of this letter, Glastonbury Abbey had been visited, for we have an incidental mention of the fact in a letter written by Dr. Layton

to Cromwell on St. Bartholomew's Day, in 1535, in which he says.* "Yesternyght late, we came from Glassynburie to Bristowe," and amongst the relics sent from Maiden Bradley are "two flowers," that on Christmas Eve *hora ipsa quâ Christus natus fuerat* will spring and burgen (bud). This was probably a slip of a transplant from the Holy Thorn of Glastonbury. Towards the end of the letter there is a testimony as to the morality of Glastonbury, which coming from such a quarter we may accept. "At Bruton and Glassenburie ther is nothyng notable, the brethren be so strait keppide that they cannot offende;" and there is still further evidence in a letter written by John Fitz James to Cromwell, who also testifies to the good order of the monastery. He says: "I have spoken with my lorde Abbot of Glaston, concernynge suche injunccions as weer geven hym and his covent by your deputie at the last visitation there." He then says, that the abbot objected to four of the articles, which, if obeyed, would very much interfere with the discipline of the house, and be very inconvenient to him. He urges Cromwell to leave it to the discretion of the abbot, and says: "I dowte not they will kepe as goode religion as any house of that order withyn this realme."†

It is quite clear, however, that the letter of old Abbot Whiting to Cromwell, to excuse him from attending the Parliament of 1539, was unsuccessful, for all the historians unite in saying that there were eighteen of the Parliamentary abbots present, and his name is mentioned amongst them.‡ In the month of June, that Parliament passed an Act for assigning all

* Cleop. E. iv., fo. 249.

† Cleop. E. iv., fo. 39.

‡ It will be seen by his letter to

Cromwell, already quoted, that he offered the secretary *no bribe*, like other abbots, but merely *his prayers!*

such monasteries as had been dissolved or should be *dissolved hereafter* to the king. It is possible that these noble abbots thought they were certain to be exempted, for it passed the Peers on the first reading, though there were eighteen abbots present, and on the second, twenty being present, and on the third, though seventeen were present, amongst whom are more particularly mentioned the abbots of Glastonbury, Colchester, and Reading. As there were only twenty-eight Parliamentary abbots, this was a very strong muster. This was in June, 1539. The abbot, when the Parliament broke up shortly after, returned to Glastonbury in peace, but was astonished at receiving another visit in the month of September, when in the peaceful retirement of his rural seat of Sharpham, where no doubt he had gone to solace and recruit himself after the terrible journey to and from London in the "horse-litter." The visitors first went to the monastery, as we learn from their letter to Cromwell, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, and finding the abbot was at Sharpham, they went there without delay, disturbed him in his rest, and examined him upon "certain articles," after telling him of the object of their visit. We must here mention the fact that Abbot Whiting was willing to do all he could, consistently with his own honour and the honour of his monastery, to please the king. We have seen how, in the sickness and imbecility of age, he undertook a long journey of about 260 miles to be present at the Parliament, and it is upon record that, when the visitors went round for the first time to administer the oath we have already mentioned, as to the king's supremacy, Abbot Whiting signed it at the head of his monks.*

* This fact has given rise to an absurd statement made by some

He was ready to do everything consistent with his duty as a subject : he received the visitors always with friendly hospitality, but now they had come to try him upon the rights of his monastery, he became at once a changed man ; from being tottering and feeble, he grew strong at the indignity, and neither bribes, promises, nor threats, could induce him to yield to the extortionate demands of the visitors. They, upon his refusal, arrested him on the spot, carried him back to the abbey, and, in their own language, "proceeded that night to search his study for letters and books." They declared they found, secreted in his study, a written book of arguments against the king's divorce, with bulls, pardons, and a "Life of Becket," but "*we could not find any letter that was materiall.*" They then examined the abbot once more, and took down his answers, which they compelled him to sign. After this he was taken to the Tower and confined, "*being but a very weak man and sickly.*" Now comes the grand point of their visit, and the truth appears. We must give their own words, as being more emphatic evidence of what we have stated as to their rapacious energy. "We have in money £300 and above, but the certainty of plate and other stuffe there, as yet we know not, for we have not had opportunity for the same, but shortly we intend, (God willing,) to proceed to the same, whereof we shall ascertain your lordship so shortly as we may. This is also to advertise your lordship that we have found a fair chalice of gold and divers other parcels of plate, which the abbot had hid secretly from all such commissioners as have been

writers, that he resigned his monastery to the king with the consent of the whole convent. How such a

statement can be made consistently with his death we cannot imagine.

there *in times past*, and as yet he knoweth not that we have found the same. We assure your lordship it is the goodliest house of that sort that ever we have seen. We wold that your lordship did know it as we do, then we doubt not but your lordship would judge it a house mete for the kinges majesty and for no man else: which is to our great comfort, and we trust verily that there shall never come any double hood within that house again."*

They spent a week in searching over this great abbey, and on the 28th September, they wrote another letter to Cromwell, giving him an account of their success. "We have dayly founde and tryede oute bothe money and plate hyde and muryde up in wallis, vaultis, and other secrette placis, as well by the abbott as other of the coventt, and also convaide to diverse placis in the countrye. And in case we shoulde here tarry this fortnyghte, we do suppose daily to increase in plate and other goods by false knaves convayde." They then declare that they found the two treasurers of the church, who were monks, with two clerks of the vestry, who were temporal men, in open robbery, and had committed them to prison.

"At our first entree into the threser-house, and vestre also, we nether founde jewellis, plate, nor ornamentis sufficient to serve a pour parishe church, wherof we colde not a littel marvill." After a diligent search in every corner of the monastery, they at length found all the plate and ornaments of the church and another sum of money, how much they could not tell, but were sure it was of considerable value, and they felt certain there was more. They declared

* State Papers, Hen. VIII., and Camden Soc. Pub.

the abbot and monks had stolen and hidden as much plate and ornaments as would have sufficed to have begun a new abbey. "What they mentte therby we leve itt to your judgmentt." They then inquire what is to be done with these four persons, and add that the house was great, goodly, and princely, such as they had never seen the like, with four parks adjoining, the furthest of them, but four miles from the house, a great mere* five miles in compass, well replenished with pike, breme, perch, and roach; four fair manor houses, the furthest being only three miles distant, and one in Dorsetshire, twenty miles distant. They then discharged the servants with a half-year's wages, the monks also with a small sum and pensions according to the scale laid down, who, they said, were glad to go, and were grateful for the king's kindness. They were about to sell the cattle for ready money, and let out the pastures and demesnes from Michaelmas, quarterly, in order that *the king might lose no rent*, for the abbot had much pasture land in his hands.

The book they found, containing arguments against the king's divorce, was sent by them to Cromwell, with information that they had "come to knowledge of dyvers and sundrye treasons commytted and done by the Abbot of Glastonbury." The result was not long coming: a charge of high treason was got up against the abbot, and he was tried at Wells, the fourteenth of November, and condemned with two other monks for robbing the abbey, so the letter of Lord Russell says; but the probability is he was charged with high treason, as suggested to Cromwell by the commissioners. The

* The Fishery.

trial must have been illegal, since the Abbot was allowed no time to seek advice or prepare his defence.

The next day, the fifteenth November, he was taken with the two monks from Wells to Glastonbury. Here, as a last indignity, he was drawn through the town upon a hurdle to the Tor Hill, where he was to be executed. He then asked pardon of God, and submitted to his fate patiently. He was hanged, and after he had been cut down, his head was struck off; his body divided into quarters, the head being placed over the gate of his abbey, and a quarter sent to each of the four towns, Wells, Bath, Ilchester, and Bridgwater. The two monks suffered with him, and the memory of that deed is not extinct amongst the peasantry to this day, the Tor being still pointed out as the spot where "poor Abbot Whiting *was murdered.*"

Thus fell the celebrated Monastery of Glastonbury, which is connected with the very earliest records—mythical and real—of Christianity in England. Its lands found their way principally into the possession of the Duke of Somerset, the buildings fell into ruin, and the magnificent library was scattered; as late even as ten years ago a fragment of an illuminated missal was found in a peasant's house, whose children had gradually torn up the rest. Even now, for miles round the country, in farm houses, here and there, are to be found portions of sculpture torn from the abbey, and used for the purposes of building.

Like Glastonbury, so fell all English monasticism, amid the terror and the apprehension of Europe, whose eyes were turned towards the strange doings in England. We must take our farewell of that noble Mother Church of Avalon, whose career we have endeavoured to trace,

and whose fate was so sad, and conclude by summing up in a few words what we may submit to be the truth as regards monasticism generally. We have endeavoured to show its influence upon life, literature, and art, and also the influence of political circumstances upon itself. That it was at one time pure is supported by the clearest historical testimony, but that it went the sad way of all human things is the merciless teaching of its later history.

As it terminated in a crisis of social life, so it commenced in one. It sprang up in the wake of that early Church, at the time when, after ages of persecution, it went forth to do the Master's work with those fierce barbarian races who were overturning all the kingdoms of Europe and settling on their ruins. In one vast march of extermination they came down from the wilds of the North, slaying and destroying as they advanced, sending before them the terror of that doom which might be seen in the desolation which lay behind them; but they fell, vanquished by the power of the army of God, who sallied forth in turn to reconquer the world, and fighting, not with the weapons of fire and sword, but, like Christian soldiers, girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, subdued these wild races, who had crushed the conquerors of the earth, and rested not until they had stormed the stronghold, and planted the cross triumphantly upon the citadel of an ancient paganism. Time rolled on, and the gloom of a long age of darkness fell upon a world whose glory lay buried under Roman ruins. Science had gone, literature had vanished, art had fled, and men groped about in vain in that dense darkness for one ray of hope to cheer them in their sorrow. The castle of the power-

ful baron rose gloomily above them, and with spacious moat, dense walls, and battlemented towers, frowned ominously upon the world which lay abject at its feet. In slavery men were born, and in slavery they lived. They pandered to the licentiousness and violence of him who held their lives in his hands, and fed them only to fight and fall at his bidding. But far away from the castle there arose another building, massive, solid, and strong, not frowning with battlemented towers, nor isolated by broad moats, but with open gates and a hearty welcome to all comers stood the monastery, where lay the hope of humanity, as in a safe asylum. Behind its walls was the Church, and clustered around it the dwelling-places of those who had left the world, and devoted their lives to the service of that Church, and the salvation of their souls. Far and near in its vicinity the land bore witness to assiduous culture and diligent care, bearing on its fertile bosom the harvest hope of those who had laboured, which the heavens watered, the sun smiled upon, and the winds played over, until the heart of man rejoiced, and all nature was big with the promise of increase. This was the refuge to which religion and art had fled. In the quiet seclusion of its cloisters, science laboured at its problems and perpetuated its results, uncheered by applause, and stimulated only by the pure love of the pursuit. Art toiled in the Church, and whole generations of busy fingers worked patiently at the decoration of the temple of the Most High. The pale, thoughtful monk, upon whose brow genius had set her mark, wandered into the calm retirement of the library, threw back his cowl, buried himself in the study of philosophy, history, or divinity, and transferred his thoughts to vellum, which was to moulder and waste

in darkness and obscurity, like himself in his lonely monk's grave, and be read only when the spot where he laboured should be a heap of ruins, and his very name a controversy amongst scholars.

We should never lose sight of the truth, that in this building, when the world was given up to violence and darkness, was garnered the hope of humanity; and these men who dwelt there in contemplation and obscurity were its faithful guardians; and this was more particularly the case with that great Order to which Glastonbury belonged.

The Benedictines were the depositaries of learning and the arts; they gathered books together, and reproduced them in the silence of their cells, and they preserved in this way not only the volumes of sacred writ, but many of the works of classic lore. They started Gothic architecture—that matchless union of nature with art; they alone had the secrets of chemistry and medical science; they invented many colours; they were the first architects, artists, glass-stainers, carvers, and mosaic workers in mediæval times. They were the original illuminators of manuscripts, and the first transcribers of books; in fine, they were the writers, thinkers, and workers of a dark age, who wrote for no applause, thought with no encouragement, and worked for no reward. Their power, too, waxed mighty; kings trembled before their denunciations of tyranny, and in the hour of danger fled to their altars for safety; and it was an English king who made a pilgrimage to their shrines, and prostrate at the feet of five Benedictine monks, bared his back, and submitted himself to be scourged as a penance for his crimes. It was a mighty system, and did good work in the world, as we have endeavoured to show; but it went the way of all

human things and human institutions; it became intoxicated with its power, blinded with its own splendour, and corrupted by its own wealth; its abbots grew avaricious, its monks voluptuous; they lost their noble simplicity; the golden rule of their founder existed no longer in the activity of their husbandmen, their scholars, and their artists, but was to be found only in the words of the sentences mechanically read in the chapter-house where they assembled together to debate upon the best means of aggrandizing their power and filling their coffers; they forgot their glorious traditions, they lost sight of their heavenly commission, they became of the earth, earthy, and its native corruption fastened on them and consumed them; from being the glory of the world and the triumph of the Church, they sank into a mockery and a by-word; a mockery on the lips of the profane, and a by-word for licentiousness; they had sold the truth and become a lie, and human nature rose against them, as it always will against a lie; men grew sick of falsity, and pined after truth; they pointed with indignant looks at priestly splendour, and spoke with indignant voice of priestly vice; the storm was long brewing, but it gathered and grew; daily and hourly the rumble of the distant thunder was heard, but they heeded it not; the faint flashes of lightning were seen, but they regarded them not, until at length, in one mighty burst, its full and terrible power fell upon them, consumed them as they were, red in their sins and rioting in their wantonness—hurled the stately edifice to the earth, scattered their treasures to the winds, and drove them forth, the degenerate children of a mighty race, fleeing in abject terror before the fury of the tempest. It was not the Reformation which destroyed monasticism—it

was not the covetousness of a powerful monarch, nor the fury of a lawless insurrection—but it fell from natural causes and by the operation of natural laws; it was healthy, active, and vigorous; it became idle, listless, and extravagant; it engendered its own corruption, and out of that corruption came Death!

APPENDIX.

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I.

The Ancient British Church.

There can be no question that in the early part of the fourth century the British Church had a complete organization, and consisted of a succession of bishops duly elected and settled in their sees, subjected to three metropolitans. We have noted the significant fact that Constantius, the father of Constantine, favoured that Church; that Constantine visited his father in Britain; and that afterwards, when he wrote to the Churches of the Empire about a dispute concerning Easter, he quoted the British Church as an example of orthodoxy; and so does Athanasius, who mentions it by name. (See p. 57, Note. This would be more than two centuries before the Augustinian mission.)

We must say concerning Lucius and the Roman delegates, without attributing any authority to the supposed letter of Eleutherius, that there is every reason to believe that such delegates did come from some cause or another. Bede confirms it; the Welsh records confirm it; the old Book of Llandaff records it. Baronius acknowledges it, and two of the most ancient churches in Somerset bear the names of the delegates.

The way in which the Diocletian persecution affected Britain shows that Christianity must have been firmly planted here, for there are authentic accounts of many Christians who were persecuted at York, London, and Verulam: the names of Alban, Amphibalus, Julius, and Aaron have come down to us.

St. Hilary mentions the British bishops who attended the Council of Sardica, in an epistle from Phrygia; and at the subsequent Council of Ariminum it is recorded that a bishop of Britain, with others, declined receiving the allowance made for their support whilst there, and lived at their own expense.

The succession of British metropolitans has been preserved by Godwin, Heylin, and Ussher. The bishops of York were Samson,

Taurinus, Eborius, Pirannus, and Tadiacus, who fled to Cornwall in the persecution by the Danes, and the see remained vacant until Paulinus was appointed.

The bishops of London were Theanus, Eluanus, Cadar, Ovinus, Conan, Palladius, Stephen, Iltuțe, Theodwyn, Thedred, Hillary, Guitilene, Restitutus—of whom the Magdeburg Centuriators say: “Restitutus, a British bishop, *a married man*, and acquainted with Hilary, of Poitiers, went to the Council of Arles for religion’s sake. He was a man of great learning for his age, and of a modest and courteous demeanour. He wrote a book on the subject of the Council of Arles for his countrymen, and several letters to Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers.”

The next bishop was Fastidius, in 420: a treatise by him is extant called, “*De Vita Christiana et Viduitate servanda.*” He is mentioned by Gennadius, of Marseilles, who wrote about 490, and Trithemius says in his “*De Scriptis*,” “He was a person very learned in the Holy Scriptures, an admirable preacher and of exemplary life.” Bale says of him that he preached all over Britain. An edition of the work of Fastidius on “*De vita Christiana, &c.*” was published by Holstein at Rome, 1663, and may be found in the Benedictine edition of the works of Augustine; being, as were many other works, falsely attributed to him.

The fifteenth bishop of London was Vodinus, slain by Hengist, according to Ussher; and the sixteenth was Theonus, 553, who also in the Danish persecution fled to Wales.

We must remark that at the time of the Augustinian mission the British Church was not extinct in the country, for indeed there is clear historical evidence that the conversion of eight of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy was effected not by the Roman missionaries, but by members of the old British Church.

Bede, in his “*Ecclesiastical History*,” lib. iii., c. 1, tells us that Ethelfrid, king of Bernicia, one of the divisions of Northumbria, with his three sons, had been during the reign of Edwin, the king of Deira (the other division), exiled in Scotland, and whilst there they were instructed according to the doctrine of the Scots, and received the grace of baptism. Upon the death of the king they returned home, and Eanfrid, one of the sons of Ethelfrid, became king of Bernicia, but he, with his brother Osric, lapsed from the faith; but Oswald, the third brother, who was also converted in Scotland, established Christianity in Bernicia by sending, not to Kent, but to Scotland, for a missionary of the British Church there, and Aidan, the one selected, completed the work, and was made bishop of Lindisfarne. (Bede, *Ecc. Hist.*, iii. c. 2 & 3.) To him succeeded Finan, another

British monk from the same Scotch monastery of Hir, and when he died Colman was sent out of Scotland to fill the see.

The whole centre of the south of Britain was converted by British clergy, not Saxon nor Roman. Peada, king of the Mercians, offering marriage to a Northumbrian princess, was accepted upon the condition of embracing Christianity, and was baptized by the *British* bishop Finan, above mentioned; and the first bishop of his nation (Middle Angles and Mercia, Bede, iii. 21) was Diuma, a British priest, who had been sent with three others to carry on the work of conversion in Mercia. Diuma was succeeded by Ceollach, another Briton sent from Scotland, and the third—Bishop Trumhere—was also a member of the British Church, and was consecrated by a British prelate.

Essex was also converted by the British Church. Sigebert, the king, was a constant visitor to the court of Northumbria, and in his time Essex had sunk into paganism, after the failure of Mellitus. Whilst at the Northumbrian court, he was converted and baptized by the British Bishop Finan, before mentioned. He and one Cedd, or Chad, a member of the ancient British Church, who had been sent from Scotland with Diuma (Bede iii. 21), and another priest as a companion returned, and Chad preached the Gospel, and converted the people of Essex. He was also consecrated Bishop by Finan.

Christianity was spread in East Anglia principally by the labours of another priest of the British Church, Fursey (Bede iii. 19), so that the actual conversions by the Augustinian missionaries, effected independently, may be limited to only two countries north of the Thames, Norfolk and Suffolk. No better historical evidence can be had for anything than exists in proof of these facts recorded by Bede. It is the evidence of an authentic historian, and one who was no friend to the British Church. For further and fuller particulars I may refer the reader to "Soames' Anglo-Saxon Church."

II.

Provinces of Britain.

There is evidence of the rising state of towns in the fourth century. Bede says there were twenty-eight cities in Britain in the third century, and Ussher gives a list of them collated by him with nine manuscripts. This would be sufficient, were there no other evidence, to prove there must have been many bishops. We have seen there were three bishops present at Arles; these

were metropolitans, and must have had bishops under them, because, according to Hilary, the general testimony of ecclesiastical historians is that the practice was to send a bishop to a general council from every province. Britain had been divided by the Romans into three provinces—Maxima Cæsariensis, whose capital was York; Britannia Prima, whose capital was London; and Britannia Secunda, with a capital, Carleon, where there were two united colonies—Colonia Divana and Civitas Legionum, as may be seen by the coin of Septimus Geta (Bede ii. c. 2). From this Britannia Secunda came the Bishop Adelphius. The three metropolitan bishops who represented these three provinces were Eborius of York (Maxima Cæsariensis), Restitutus of London (Britannia Prima), and Adelphius “de civitate Colonia” * (Britannia Secunda.)

Ussher gives, as we have remarked, a list of twenty-eight towns: he says, “We have copied them from two most ancient MSS. of the Cottonian Collection, and have collated them with nine other MSS.” He adds that the metropolitan of York presided over seven bishops, the metropolitan of Carleon over seven bishops, and the metropolitan of London over fourteen. Spelman says the suffragans of Carleon were Hereford, Llandaff, Llandbardon, Vawr, Bangor, Asaph, Worcester, Margan or Caer Keby.

III.

King Arthur.

Few historical characters have become so completely the sport of myth and legend as the renowned King Arthur of English history. The glowing fancies of ancient Welsh bards and the enthusiastic praises of monkish chroniclers have clouded his fame with so many marvels, that just as in the tenth and eleventh centuries there were people who solemnly believed that he would return to this life again, so in these days there are some who deny his existence.

Now, as regards King Arthur, these monkish chroniclers, although they shed a miraculous halo about his history, have yet transmitted to us circumstantial accounts of incidents in his life so matter-of-fact as to do away with his mythical character altogether. He had a

* Concil. Arelat. i. Subscrip. Post Canones; Spelman Concilia, tom. i., p. 43; Stillingfleet, p. 74; Ussher, De Primord,

cap. 8, p. 195; British Eccles. Antiq., 104; Sirmont, Concil. Antiq. Gallix, tom. i., p. 79.

wife, like many other men from that time to this, who caused him much vexation. She eloped with Melva, King of Somersetshire, but was afterwards reconciled; and again subsequently with Medrawd, her husband's nephew, when he was absent in Gaul. By these common vicissitudes of life he is so firmly linked to humanity as to ruin his reputation as a myth. We will now proceed to give, to the best of our ability, all that can be accepted with any degree of confidence, gathered from ancient historians, of the career of this extraordinary king, not the Arthur of bardic poetry and imaginative romance, but Arthur the king, the "Inclutus Rex," with his vicissitudes, his bravery, his domestic infelicities, and all that we can glean about him which will help to prove that he was no myth, but one of the most substantial specimens of humanity embalmed in history. It must be remembered that at the period of Arthur's existence England was divided amongst a number of petty kings: a system which prevailed even under the Romans, who were unwilling to disturb the order of things as long as these petty monarchs paid their tribute and kept themselves quiet. This was another instance of the remarkable amenity of the Roman government to states it had conquered; her conduct was never better characterised than by her own illustrious poet—

"Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos."—*Virg. En. vi.* 854.

Gildas confirms this fact of the number of petty sovereigns, and mentions some of them, giving also a confirmation of the existence of such a being as Melva, the King of Somersetshire, by mentioning another king of the same neighbourhood, who had earned the cognomen of the "Tyrannical Whelp of the Unclean Lioness of Damnonia." Still, there was one of these kings who was always regarded as the superior, and bore the title of Pendragon; and this was the position of Uther, Arthur's father, who is often spoken of as Uther-Pendragon. The exact year of Arthur's birth, or, in fact, of most events in those remote periods, it is impossible to ascertain. The chronology of those times is so uncertain as to render it quite a futile argument as to the truth or falsehood of events. If any one wish to be convinced of this, let him peruse the works of Archbishop Ussher, who goes into that subject deeply, and he will see how utterly impossible it is to harmonise the chronology of a dozen or twenty historians, who, however, agree upon the line of event. There is considerable variety in the periods assigned by historians to Arthur. Myer (*Annal. Fland.*) states that he flourished in the year 458. Vincentius says he began to reign in the eleventh year of Leo, the Emperor, about 468; and, in his "*Speculo Historiali*," he adds that, "on the death of Uther-Pendragon, his son Arthur was raised

to the throne, whose marvellous deeds have occupied the mouths and tongues of the people, though they seem to be for the most part fabulous. He was endowed with much probity, and made himself beloved by all; for to great bravery of person he united a wonderful liberality of mind.* Radulphus Niger, Valerius Anselmus Rhyd, Huldricus Mutius, declare that he began to reign in the time of Zeno, who was not made emperor till the year 474. William of Malmesbury, Galfrid, and Matthew "Florilegus," say he ascended the throne when fifteen years of age; but Ranulphus, in his "Polychronicon," Johannes Tinmuthensis, in the "Aurea Historia," George Buchanan, in his "Rerum Scotarum," declare it was in his eighteenth year; Radulphus de Baldoc and Thomas Radburn agree that it was in the year 516; Matthew Florilegus and David Ponelus, 516; Buchanan, 528; and Hector Boethius, a Scotch historian, 522.

These dates vary, but still not so much as to prevent our being able to get to something like the truth. The greatest discrepancy is on the part of the writers; Vincentius, who states that he reigned in the eleventh year of the Emperor Leo, that is, about 468; and those who declare that he reigned during the life of Zeno, who was Emperor from 474 to 491. We may set these aside as being impossible dates, because it is universally admitted that Arthur was the bold defender of the West Country against Cerdic; and that a settlement was effected between them which led to the establishment of the West Saxon Monarchy. Now, Cerdic landed in 495, and twenty-four years of fighting elapsed before the settlement took place (519); so that it becomes impossible that Arthur could have ascended the throne in 468 or 474, according to the writers quoted; for, if we allow that he was from fifteen to eighteen when he was made king, this would make him over sixty years of age at the time of the settlement of the West Saxon Kingdom. But from the other historians, with all their differences, we can glean this one fact, which is supported by the "Saxon Chronicle," and by the testimony of William of Malmesbury, one of the most reliable and cautious historians,—that, at the close of the fifth century, Arthur was born, and during the first quarter of the sixth he succeeded to the throne of his father, and was Pendragon of Britain. We find by the "Saxon Chronicle" that Cerdic came to England in the year 495, and was crowned twenty-four years after (519): this date would serve as a ground of reconciliation between the various dates above quoted. Radburn, in his "Chronicle,"

* Mortuo Uther Pendragon Rege sublimatus est in regno filius ejus Arthurus cujus mirabiles actus etiam ora linguæve personat populorum; licet plura esse fabulosa videan-

tur. Qui multa probitate pollens cunctis se amabilem exhibebat quia cum virtute animi etiam mira liberalitate affluebat.—*Vincen. Spec. Histor.*

also tells us that Cerdic was crowned at Winchester with pagan rites, the monks having been killed, and the church dedicated to Dagon in the second year of Arthur's reign, which would give 517 as his ascension. It is probable that the last battle fought by Arthur against the Saxons was that of Badon Hill, or, as Bede calls it, Baddesdown Hill: it is mentioned as the last by Nennius; and it is the general testimony of the chroniclers, that, after a decisive battle at that period, an arrangement was come to between Arthur and Cerdic, by which the former ceded to the Saxon, "*Hametschiram et Somersetsam quam partem vocavit West Sexam.*"* Also, William of Malmesbury declares that Cerdic arrived in Britain in the year 495, and reduced the Britons to such a condition that they willingly came to terms with him; so that after "*crebros circumquaque victorias extendentem, post adventum suum vicesimo quarto (519) anno in Occidentali parte insulæ quam illi West Sexam vocant monarchiam adeptum esse.*"†

The next event we meet with in the life of Arthur is the very unromantic and unmythical one of the elopement of his wife with Melva, King of Somerset, who fled with her to Avalonia. It is supported by many historians, who agree, in the main, with the version of Caradoc of Llancarvon, that it happened in the way he describes; and that Arthur, mustering his friends together from Cornwall and Devonshire, marched against the ravisher, up to the very walls of Glastonbury Abbey. The monks, in alarm, interposed, and persuaded Melva to restore the lady to her husband, which was done, when both the kings, in gratitude to the ecclesiastics, left substantial proofs of their sincerity in the coffers of Glastonbury Abbey. We have mentioned that although Arthur's actual kingdom was confined to what is called the West Country, yet he had the jurisdiction of the Pendragon over the whole kingdom. The extent of that jurisdiction it is now impossible to ascertain; but that it involved rights of no mean value we may infer, from the fact that we find Arthur on one occasion fighting against Huel, a king over some portion of North Britain, and glorying over his defeat, he having been, according to Caradoc, his most powerful enemy. It is more than possible, therefore, that the twelve battles mentioned by Nennius were not all fought against Saxons. Nennius says they were fought in conjunction with other British kings. There is, also, a great consistency in the version of Arthur's death. It is said, that after doing many mighty things, he entrusted his kingdom to the care of Medrawd, or Mordred, his

* Ranulphus, who speaks of it with the words, "*in quibusdam chronicis legitur.*"

† Guliel. Malms., *Gesta Regum*, lib. i. c. 2.

nephew, and went to Gaul on some fighting expedition. In his absence his nephew won the affections of his wife, and began to aspire to the kingdom. But as he feared the power of Cerdic, he first bought over his favour by conceding to him some portion of his uncle's dominions. Intelligence of this treachery being conveyed to Arthur, he returned, and pursued Medrawd into Cornwall, where an engagement took place between them at a place called Camlan, which has been dignified by the designation of the Battle of Camlan, though probably it was only a private quarrel and general fight, common enough in those times. In this brawl Medrawd fell, and Arthur, seriously wounded, was rescued from the fight, taken into Somerset, where they put out into the Channel, and, sailing along the coast, reached Uzella, where Arthur was given into the hands of his friends.

A certain noble lady and relative then took him to Glastonbury Abbey, to be sheltered and tended by the monks. Giraldus Cambrensis mentions the name of this lady: "Corpus ejusdem in insulam Avaloniam quæ nunc Glastonia dicitur a nobili matrona ejusdem cognata et *Morgani* vocata est delatum;"* but, in spite of the assiduous attention shown him, the wounds proved fatal, and Arthur died in the monastery; when the monks, for fear of the Saxons, buried him deep in the earth, and kept the locality of his grave a profound secret. Shortly after, his wife having died was laid upon him.

This conflict at Camlan is stated to have taken place in the year 542 in the "Anglia Sacra;"† and Ussher quotes many authors who confirm it; which date agrees with the supposition that Arthur was born at the end of the fifth and began to reign during the first quarter of the sixth century.

The strict secrecy with which the grave of the king was concealed led, not unnaturally in those times of superstition, to the belief amongst the common people that Arthur was not dead, and would appear again; and that feeling was not extinct even as late as the Conquest. The obscurity which lingered about the last resting-place of Arthur was never cleared away until the twelfth century, when Henry II. was on the throne of England, and Henry de Soliac in the abbatial chair of Glastonbury.

Leland has fallen into a very extraordinary error in his account of Arthur. He has confounded two Abbots Henry, who ruled over Glastonbury; and says that the bones were discovered in the Abbacy

* Girald. Camb. Specul. Eccl. ii. c. 9.

† Anglia Sac., vol. ii. p. 648.

of "Henricus Blessensis, alias Soliac;" but Henricus Blessensis was one man, and Henricus Soliac another. The former was abbot in the time of Henry I., and died, 1171; but the latter, Henry de Soliac, lived in the time of Henry II., was made abbot in 1193, and died 1195. The circumstances which led to the discovery of the bones are the following. Henry II. was in the habit of visiting Wales, and some of the bards of that country had told him that there was a tradition amongst them that Arthur and his queen were buried in Glastonbury Abbey, near some pyramids which then stood there, of which we have a particular account in "William of Malmesbury's History."

When he returned to England after one of these excursions, Henry II. made a communication to Abbot Henry de Soliac upon the subject, and requested him to make a search amongst these pyramids for the bones of King Arthur. The Welsh bards had also told him that Arthur would be found buried, not in a stone chest, as was supposed, but in a hollowed oak. Acting upon this information, the abbot appointed a day for the search to be instituted in the presence of the whole convent. Giraldus Cambrensis was one of those privileged to be present, and it is from him we glean the particulars of the examination. The monks dug for some time all round the pyramids, and at last they came to a large leaden cross lying upon a stone. It was brought up, and found to bear the following inscription: "Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthurus in insula Avaloniæ cum Guinevera uxore sua secunda."

The slab was then removed, and a stone coffin discovered, which, being opened, was found to contain the bones of the queen. Her rich golden hair still lay about the remains, but, touched by one of the monks, it fell into dust. They continued to dig lower, until they had reached about sixteen feet below the surface, when they came across what appeared to be a huge oak, just as the Welch bards had predicted. This was opened, and in it they found the bones of the king, which were of an enormous size. Giraldus tells us, one of the shin bones was taken out and placed against the leg of the tallest man present, and it reached above his knee by three finger lengths. "Os tibiæ ipsius oppositum tibiæ longissimi viri et juxta pedem terræ illius adfixum large tribus digitis trans genu ipsius se porrexit."* The skull, he says, was of a colossal size, and they could count ten or more wounds upon it, all of which, except one mortal wound, had cicatrised over.

Abbot Henry then ordered the monks to gather the remains

* Giraldus Cambrensis, in Speculo Ecclesiæ.

together, which they did, and with great solemnity conveyed them to the church, where a mausoleum was afterwards erected for them with two divisions, the whole splendidly carved. At the head of this mausoleum they placed the king's remains, and at the foot those of Guinevera. Over them were these verses:—

“Hic jacet Arthurus flos regum, gloria regni
 Quem mores probitas commendant laude perenni.
 “Arthuri jacet hic conjunx tumulata secunda
 Quæ meritis cælos virtutum prole fecunda.”

In this mausoleum the relics of the two remained in peace until the visit of Edward I. and his Queen to the Abbey, of which Master John of Glastonbury* gives such a glowing account in his “Chronicle.” The shrine was opened at the King's request, who was anxious to see the remains of his great predecessor, when he enclosed the bones of Arthur in a rich shroud, and the Queen did the same with those of Guinevera. They were then replaced in the shrine, which was once more closed up, and removed to a position before the High Altar.

Such are the very scanty records of this darling of romance. That he was a brave king there can be no question, although his achievements have been greatly exaggerated. This account of the finding the bones, as rendered by Giraldus Cambrensis, agrees with that of a monk of Glastonbury, who was also present, whose version is cited by Ussher in his “Antiquities,” and transcribed by Leland in his “Assert. Arthuri.” It is also mentioned by William of Malmesbury in his “Hist. Glastoniæ.”

We submit these records, scanty though they be, as sufficient historical evidence of the actual existence of a renowned British King, who fought bravely for his country, but fought in vain against a race destined, after many vicissitudes, to hold that country for five centuries, and to be in turn conquered, oppressed, degraded, crushed, but still marvellously preserved to a resuscitation in the life of the present dominant people in the world—the modern English—*From a letter to the “Gentleman's Magazine,” September, 1866.*

IV.

St. Patrick's Visit to Glastonbury.

The visit of St. Patrick to Glastonbury Abbey has been disputed by many, and disputed with much vituperation from the fact that the

* Cotton. MSS., Tiber. A. v.

Charter to Glastonbury, which bears his name, is dated 430 A.D., just one year before the mission of Palladius to Ireland, who is recorded to have preceded St. Patrick.

We would premise, however, that any effort to upset evidence upon the slender ground of difference in date as regards events of that period is futile, insomuch as the chronology is so disturbed that very few dates are to be relied upon. A proof of this may be drawn from Ussher's Antiquities, where these questions are investigated with the most laborious minuteness; there it will be seen that when ten men say one year, ten others declare for a different one, and then follows a list of several more who differ from both. It is quite certain that the dates and very names of the popes up to the tenth or twelfth century are very uncertain. There are several versions of the death of Augustine, the slaughter of Bangor, and especially of the incidents of St. Patrick's life. Ussher says he died in 493, Tillemont, in 455, Nennius, 464; whilst opinions are divided as to whether Palladius died in 431, according to Ussher, or, as Butler has it, in 450. But, however, the point stands thus: the charter is dated 430, one year before Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine to Ireland, and consequently two years before Patrick could possibly have had any similar commission from the same Pope. Palladius, then, was appointed in 431, and that is the date given by Ussher, who, with all the authorities, agrees to the fact that Patrick was sent by Pope Celestine to succeed Palladius. Now Celestine died in 432; Palladius also died in 431; so that upon these data we are to believe that during the years 431 and 432, Palladius must have gone from Rome to Ireland, preached among the natives, built three churches, and finding his mission did not succeed have left the country, crossed over to North Britain, preached and died there; all this must have been done and the news taken to Rome in that space of time, because Celestine died in the middle of the year 432, and as it is probable that Palladius could not have left for Ireland until the spring or summer of 431, the journey, the preaching, and the return, or death, must have been accomplished in that time. I think this is a sufficient ground for supposing that the year 431 is not the date of Palladius's mission.

Archbishop Ussher accepts it (431); but from his style we may conclude he doubted it; for he adds, "anno enim 432, Celestinum Romanum Pontificem mortem obiisse constat, à quo post Palladium missum huc fuisse Patricium," leaving only, as we have shown, about one year for all these transactions to be effected. Then, when he comes to speak of the Charter of St. Patrick, the Archbishop reverts to the subject, and compares dates with the Glastonbury version,

which marvellously fits in to the age of St. Patrick, &c. William of Malmesbury, in his "Hist. Glaston." says St. Patrick died in the year 472, forty-seven years after being sent to Ireland, which would make the date of his mission 425; and we find, also, that he was sixty-four years of age when he was sent, which, added to the year of his birth, 361, gives us again 425. This is, of course, assuming the dates to be correct, which I am far from doing; but it is a much clearer account than the other, and, if true, would confirm the probability that, five years after his arrival, he may have reasonably found his way to Glastonbury, and in 430 have granted his charter. Ussher, who dwells minutely upon this, however, abandons it with the remark, "This cannot be admitted, unless we admit that Patrick was sent to Ireland before Palladius, which is contrary to all versions." Strange that he did not think of the impossibility of Palladius being appointed in 431, undertaking the long journey to Britain, preaching there, founding churches, dying, and being succeeded by St. Patrick, in the short space of one year. This would explain the difficulty. I think we may fairly assume that 431 cannot be the date of Palladius's mission; certainly it cannot if Celestine also appointed Patrick, which is universally accepted. It would come to this, that very likely the date of Palladius's death has been adopted as that of his mission; probably taken from some old hagiology, where the date of death is always given first, or in any case it is not the true date; that he must have been sent by Celestine some years before, and as the accounts agree, his mission not being a successful one, he went from the Scoti in Ireland to the Scoti in Britain, where he ultimately died; but that Patrick was sent to Ireland as a missionary in his lifetime, probably about the year adopted by the Glastonbury historians, 425, and then coming to Glastonbury, 430, granted his charter. So that the date 430, affixed to the charter, so far from proving it to be a spurious document, is the only way of accounting for the possibility of Celestine appointing both Palladius and Patrick as missionaries to Ireland. Both could not have been sent in one year, and therefore Palladius must have been despatched some years previous to 431.—*Letter to the "Athenæum," 3rd March, 1866.*

V.

Montalembert's "Monks of the West."—(Augustine.)

In spite of a necessary contradiction, M. de Montalembert still struggles for a Roman planting of Christianity in Britain, and has

declared in his last volume that, in Britain, it (Christianity) disappeared under the pressure of alien conquest, no traces of Christianity remained in the districts under Saxon sway when Rome sent her missionaries. Here and there a ruined church might be found, but "*no one living Christian amongst the natives; conquerors and conquered alike were lost in the darkness of paganism.*"

But, at the time when Augustine landed, there were, in provinces under Saxon sway, the flourishing monastery of Glastonbury Abbey, the renowned monastery of Bangor, the blood of whose monks has been laid to the charge of the Roman missionary, unjustly, we hope, but the suspicion of instigating the Saxons to this deed, in fulfilment of his prediction, still clings to his name. Although some had fled, there were yet several bishops, true to their Church, who were living at their sees; or where did they come from of whom Augustine wrote to Gregory for instructions as to his demeanour towards them; who met him under the tree, at the place now called St. Augustine's Oak, whom he so proudly received on the second interview?

Surely there must have been Christians amongst the conquered; at least there could not have been "*no one living Christian among them,*" or why the bishops?

The other assertion is equally inaccurate that, "no country ever received the *gift of salvation* more directly from *popes and monks*, and none, alas, *so soon and so cruelly betrayed them.*"

In that sublime chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, cap. v., where he treats of Justification by Faith, which may be regarded as the charter-roll of Protestantism, we are emphatically told that the "*gift of salvation*" is from God, not from popes nor monks; but there is clear historical evidence, not only that the Gospel was preached through Britain long before the time of Augustine, that the British Church was quoted as a model of orthodoxy by Constantine and Athanasius; but as to the unalterably implacable behaviour of the English Church to the Roman it is quite true. The popes and the monks never could subdue the Saxon Church; the Norman-English resisted its encroachments; and from the time of the Saxon revival, in the fourteenth century, up to the sixteenth, papal power, such as it was, fell away before the Saxon vigour of Wiclif and his Lollard followers, and was for ever banished the country by the subsequent efforts of such essentially Saxon men as Tyndall, Latimer, and the Puritans.

M. de Montalembert also asserts of Augustine that "no incident of his life recorded in his history indicates any opposition to or departure from the rules laid down for him by the prudence and charity of Gregory. He was faithful to these rules in his relations

with the British bishops placed by the pope under his jurisdiction as well as in all other respects."

But M. de Montalembert must have already forgotten that he has just asserted that amongst the conquered there was "*not one living Christian.*" We pass over this, but we must assert that the conduct of Augustine, on more than one occasion, did not harmonize with Gregory's views, for he reproved him; and that, on another occasion, Augustine did actually depart from Gregory's rules.

One of the questions sent to Gregory by Augustine was, "How are we to deal with the bishops of *France* and Britain?" This was an assumption of more authority than Gregory had allotted him, for he is told in reply, "We give you no authority over the bishops of France, because the bishop of Arles received the pall in ancient times from my predecessor, and we are not to deprive him of the authority he has received." Then Gregory writes to him and cautions him against being "puffed up" by his *miracles*, which is not a flattering evidence of his opinion of Augustine's character, however strong an evidence it may be of his penetration.

We come to the question, did he depart from the rules laid down for him? It can be clearly shown that he did, and that such behaviour was the great cause of the difficulty he met with in the dissensions between him and the British Church. One of the questions he put to Gregory was on the very tender subject of ritual. "Whereas the faith is one and the same, why are there different customs in different churches, and why is one custom of masses observed in the holy Roman Church and another in the Gallican Church?"

The answer of Gregory is characteristic of his liberality and toleration, and if Augustine had followed it, instead of departing from it, the two Churches would have been united at once. Gregory advised him to do something very different from what he did; he told him to make a selection from the different customs: "Choose, therefore, from every church those things that are pious, religious, and upright, and when you have, as it were, made them up into one body, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto." "For," he adds, "things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things."

What was the conduct of Augustine? He placed the whole acceptance of the British Church into communion with himself upon the instant abandonment by the British of their mode of keeping Easter and administering baptism, and because they declined, he, in a threatening manner, foretold to them that, in case they would not

join in unity with their brethren, they should be warred upon by their enemies.

We ask if this conduct is in strict keeping, or a departure from the rules laid down by Gregory, and we ask if, with all this evidence, the jealousy of Augustine of British bishops, his prejudice against British customs and the ceremonies of British churches, the statement of this well-known ecclesiastical historian can be true, to the effect that at the moment when Rome sent her missionaries to Britain, there could be found "*not one living Christian amongst the natives; conquerors and conquered alike were lost in the darkness of Paganism.*"

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