

EARLY MEDIEVALS

OLD WESTERN CULTURE READER

VOLUME 9

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OLD WESTERN CULTURE READER

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Companion to *Christendom: Early Medievals*,
a great books curriculum by Roman Roads Press



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- VOLUME 15 *The Enlightenment*
- VOLUME 16 *The Novels*

CONTENTS

Saint Benedict

The Rule of Saint Benedict 1

Procopius

Wars of Justinian 49

Gregory of Tours

History of the Franks 59

Gregory the Great

Book of Pastoral Rule 77

The Dialogues 121

Saint Patrick

The Confession of St. Patrick 163

Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus 179

Adomnan of Iona

Life of Saint Columba 185

Anonymous

Voyage of Brendan 279

Anonymous

Beowsulf. 291

The Venerable Bede

Ecclesiastical History of the English People 391

Einhard

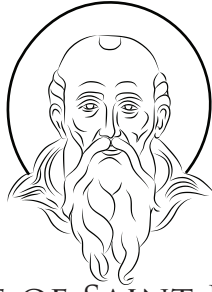
Life of Charlemagne 521

Asser

Life of Alfred 539

John of Damascus

The Fount of Knowledge. 581



THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT

SAINT BENEDICT

TRANSLATED BY ANONYMOUS

PROLOGUE Hearken, my son, to the precepts of thy Master, and incline the ear of thy heart willingly to hear, and effectually to accomplish, the admonition of thy living Father, that by the labour of obedience thou mayest return to Him, from Whom thou didst depart by the sloth of disobedience. To thee therefore is my speech now directed, who, renouncing thy own will, dost take upon thee the strong and bright armour of obedience, to fight under the Lord Christ our true King. First of all whatever good work thou dost begin, beg of Him with most earnest prayer to perfect; that He Who hath now vouchsafed to reckon us in the number of His children, may not be saddened by our evil deeds. For we must at all times so serve Him with the goods He hath bestowed upon us, that He may not either as an angry Father disinherit us His children, or as a dread Lord, exasperated by our offences, deliver us up to perpetual punishment as wicked servants, who would not follow Him to glory. Let us therefore arise, the Scripture stirring us up and saying, "It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep", and our eyes being opened to the deifying light, let us with wondering ears attend to the admonition with the Divine Voice daily addresseth to us, saying: "Today if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts". And again: "He that hath ears, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches." And what saith He? "Come, ye children, and hearken unto Me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." "Run while ye have the light of life, that the darkness of death overtake ye not." And our Lord seeking His labourer among the multitude to whom He here speaketh, saith again: "Who is the man that will have life, and desireth to see good days?" If

Saint Benedict

thou, hearing this, dost answer: "I am he": God saith unto thee: "If thou wilt have true and everlasting life, refrain thy tongue from evil, and thy lips, that they speak no guile. Decline from evil, and do good; seek after peace and pursue it." And when you have done this: My eyes shall be upon you, and My ears shall be open to your prayers. And before you can call upon Me, I will say: "Behold I am present." What, dearest brethren, can be sweeter, than this voice of the Lord, inviting us? Behold how in His loving kindness He showeth unto us the way of life! Our loins therefore being girt with faith and the observance of good works, and our feet shod with the guidance of the Gospel of peace, let us walk in His ways, that we may deserve to see in His kingdom Him Who has called us. If we desire to dwell in the tabernacle of this kingdom, it can only be by running the way of good works, whereby alone it can be reached. But let us ask our Lord with the Prophet saying to Him: "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest on Thy holy hill?" After this question, Brethren, let us hear our Lord answering and showing us the way to His tabernacle, saying: "He that walketh without spot and worketh justice. He that speaketh truth in his heart, that hath not forged guile with his tongue. He that hath not forged guile with his tongue. He that hath not done evil to his neighbour and hath not received reproach against him." He that rejecting out of his mind the malignant devil with his suggestions, hath brought them all to nought, and taking his thoughts while they are still young, hath dashed them against the rock Christ. All they who fearing the Lord, take not pride in their good observance, but knowing that all the good they have, or can do, proceedeth not from themselves, but from the Lord, magnify Him, thus working in them, and say with the Prophet: "Not to us O Lord, not to us, but to Thy Name give glory." Thus the Apostle Paul imputed not anything of his preaching to himself, saying: "By the grace of God I am what I am." And again he saith: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Hence also our Lord saith in the Gospel: "He that heareth these My words and doth them,—I will liken him to a wise man that hath built his house upon a rock. The floods came, the winds blew, and beat against that house, and it fell not; because it was founded upon a rock." Our Lord fulfilling these things, daily waiteth for us to answer by our deeds, these His holy admonitions. Therefore the days of our

Lives are prolonged for the amendment of our evil deeds, according to

The Rule of Saint Benedict

those words of the Apostle: “Knowest thou not that the patience of God leadeth thee to repentance?” For our loving Lord saith: “I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.” Having therefore, my Brethren, enquired of our Lord who shall be the dweller in this tabernacle, we have heard the precept to the one dwelling, and if we fulfil the functions of this habitation we shall become heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, our hearts and bodies must be prepared to fight under the holy obedience of His commands, and we must beg our Lord to supply that, by the assistance of His grace, which our nature is unable to perform. And if flying the pains of hell we will to attain to everlasting life, we must, while yet time serves, and we live in this flesh, perform all these things by the light of faith, and haste to do that now which will be expedient for us forever hereafter. We are therefore now about to institute a school of the service of God; in which we hope nothing will be ordained rigorous or burdensome. But if in some things we proceed with a little severity, sound reason so advising, for the amendment of vices or preserving of charity; do not straightway for fear thereof, flee from the way of salvation which is always strait and difficult in the beginning. But in process of time and growth of faith, when the heart has once been enlarged, the way of God’s commandments is run with unspeakable sweetness of love; so that, never departing from His teaching, but persevering in the monastery in His doctrine until death, we share now by patience in the sufferings of Christ, that we may deserve afterwards to be partakers of His kingdom.

I

Of several kinds
of monks

Of the several kinds of Monks. It is well known that there are four kinds of Monks. The first are Cenobites, that is Monastics, living under a Rule or Abbot. The second are Anchorites or Hermits, who, not in the first fervour of conversion, but after long probation in the monastic life, have learnt to fight against the devil, and taught by the encouragement of others, are now able by God’s assistance to strive hand to hand against the flesh and evil thoughts, and so go forth well prepared, from the army of the Brotherhood, to the single combat of the wilderness. The third and worst kind of Monks are the Sarabiaites, who have never been tried under any Rule, nor by the experience of a master, as gold is tried in the furnace, but being soft as lead, and by their works still cleaving to the world, are known by their tonsure to

Saint Benedict

lie to God. These in twos or threes, or perhaps singly, and without a shepherd, are shut up, not in our Lord's sheepfolds, but in their own: the pleasure of their desires is to them a law; and whatever they like or make choice of, they will have to be holy, but what they like not, that they consider unlawful. The fourth kind of Monks are called "Gyrovagi," or wanderers, who travel about all their lives through divers provinces, and stay for two or three days as guests, first in one monastery, then in another; they are always roving, and never settled, giving themselves up altogether to their own pleasures and to the enticements of gluttony, and are in all things worse than the Sarabites. Of their miserable way of life it is better to be silent than to speak. Therefore leaving these, let us, by God's assistance, set down a Rule for Cenobites, or Conventuals, who are the most steadfast class of Monks.

What kind of
man the Abbot
ought to be

II

What kind of man the Abbot ought to be. An Abbot who is worthy to have charge of a Monastery ought always to remember what he is called, and in his actions show forth the character of ancient. For in the Monastery he is considered to represent the person of Christ, seeing that he is called by His name, as the Apostle saith: "Ye have received the spirit of the adoption of children, in which we cry, Abba, Father." Therefore the Abbot ought not (God forbid) to teach, ordain, or command but what is conformable to the commands of our Lord: but let his commands and doctrine be mingled in the minds of his disciples with the leaven of diving justice. Let the Abbot always be mindful that, in the dreadful judgment of God, he must give an account both of his doctrine and of the obedience of his disciples, and let the Abbot know that any lack of profit which the Master of the family shall find in his sheep, will be laid to the shepherd's fault. But if he have bestowed all diligence on his unquiet and disobedient flock, and employed the utmost care to cure their corrupt manners, he shall then be acquitted in the judgment of the Lord, and may say with the Prophet: "I have not hidden thy justice in my heart, I have told thy truth and thy salvation, but they contemned and despised me." And then finally, death shall be inflicted as a just punishment upon the disobedient sheep. When, therefore, anyone receives the name of Abbot, he ought to govern his disciples with a twofold doctrine; that is, he ought first to show them all virtue and sanctity, more by deeds than by

The Rule of Saint Benedict

words: hence, to such as are intelligent, he may declare the commandments of God by words; but to the hard-hearted, and to those of the ruder sort, he must make the divine precepts manifest by his actions. In the next place, let him show by his own deeds, that they ought not to do anything which he has taught them to be unfitting, lest, having preached well to others, “he himself become a castaway,” and God say unto him thus sinning: “Why dost thou declare My justices, and take My testament in thy mouth? Thou hast hated discipline, and cast My speeches behind thee, And,—“Thou, who didst see the mote in thy brother’s eye, hast thou not seen the beam that is in thine own?” Let him make no distinction of persons in the Monastery. Let not one be loved more than another, except he be found to surpass the rest in good works and in obedience. Let not one of noble parentage, on coming to Religion, be put before him who is of servile extraction, except there be some other reasonable cause for it. If, upon just consideration, the Abbot shall think there is such a just cause, let him put him in any rank he shall please, but otherwise, let every one keep his own place; because “whether bondman or freeman, we are all one in Christ”, and bear an equal burthen of servitude under one Lord: “for with God there is no accepting of persons.” On one condition only are we preferred by Him, and that is, if in good works and in humility we are found better than others. Therefore let the Abbot bear equal love to all; and let all be subject to the same discipline, according to their deserts. For the Abbot ought always, in his doctrine, to observe that apostolic form wherein it is said; “Reprove, entreat, rebuke.” That is to say, he ought, as occasions require, to temper fair speeches with threats: let him show the severity of a master and the loving affection of a father: those who are undisciplined and restless he must reprove sternly, but with such as are obedient, mild and patient, he should deal by entreaty, exhorting them to go forward in virtue. But the stubborn and negligent we charge him to severely reprove and chastise. Let him not shut his eyes to the sins of offenders, but, as soon as they show themselves, use all possible endeavours utterly to root them out, remembering the fate of Heli, the Priest of Silo. With the more virtuous and intelligent, let him for the first or second time use words of admonition; but the stubborn, the hard-hearted, the proud and the disobedient, even in the very beginning of their sin, let him chastise with stripes and bodily punishment, knowing that it is written: “The fool is not corrected with words.” And again: “Strike thy son with the rod, and thou shalt deliver his soul from

Saint Benedict

death.” The Abbot ought always to remember what he is, and what he is called, and know that unto whom more is entrusted, from him more is exacted, and let him consider how difficult and hard a task he hath undertaken, to govern souls, and to accommodate himself to the humours of many, some of whom must be led by fair speeches, others by sharp reprehensions, and others by persuasion. Therefore let him so adapt himself to the character and intelligence of each one, that he may not only suffer no loss in the flock committed to him, but may even rejoice in the increase and profit of his virtuous flock. Above all things, let him take heed not to slight or make little account of the souls committed to his keeping, and have more care for fleeting, worldly things than for them; but let him always consider that he hath undertaken the government of souls for which he shall also have to give an account. And that he may not complain for want of temporal means, let him remember that it is written: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all things shall be given ye.” And again: “Nothing is wanting to such as fear Him.” Let him know that the man who undertakes the government of souls must prepare himself to give an account of them. And how great soever the number of brethren may, let him know certain that at the day of judgment he will have to give to the Lord an account for all their souls as well as for his own. Thus, by fearing the examination which the shepherd must undergo for the flock committed to his charge, he is made solicitous on other men’s account as well as careful on his own; and while reclaiming them by his admonitions, he is himself freed from all defects.

Of calling the
brethren to
council

III

Of calling the brethren to council. As often as any weighty matters have to be debated in the monastery, let the Abbot call together all the Brethren, and himself declare what is the point under deliberation. Having heard their counsel, let him prudently weigh it with himself, and then do what he shall judge most expedient. The reason why we ordain that all be called to Council, is because the Lord often revealeth to the younger what is best. And let the Brethren give their advice with all subjection and humility, and presume not stiffly to defend their own opinion, but rather leave it to the discretion of the Abbot; and what he shall think more expedient, to that, let them all submit; for, as it becometh the disciples to obey their master, so doth it behove

The Rule of Saint Benedict

the master to dispose all things with forethought and justice. In all things, therefore, let all follow the Rule as their master, and from it let no man rashly swerve. Let no one in the monastery follow his own will. Neither let anyone presume, within or without the monastery, to contend insolently with his Abbot. If he do so, let him be subjected to regular discipline. Let the Abbot, however, do all things with the fear of God, and in observance of the Rule, knowing that he shall undoubtedly give an account of all his judgments to God, the most just Judge. If any matters of less moment have to be done for the benefit of the monastery, let him take counsel with the seniors only, as it is written: "Do all things with counsel, and thou shalt not afterwards repent thee of it."

IV

What are the instruments of good works

What are the instruments of good works. First of all, to love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength.

2. Then our neighbour as ourself.
3. Then not to kill.
4. Not to commit adultery.
5. Not to steal.
6. Not to covet.
7. Not to bear false witness.
8. To honour all men.
9. Not to do to another what we would not have done to ourselves.
10. To deny ourselves, in order to follow Christ.
11. To chastise the body.
12. Not seek after delights.
13. To love fasting.
14. To relieve the poor.
15. To clothe the naked.
16. To visit the sick.
17. To bury the dead.
18. To help those that are in tribulation.
19. To comfort the sad.
20. To withdraw ourselves from worldly ways.
21. To prefer nothing to the love of

Christ.

22. Not to give way to anger.
23. Not to harbour revenge in our mind.
24. Not to foster guile or deceit in our heart.
25. Not to make a feigned peace.
26. Not to forsake charity.
27. Not to swear at all, lest we forswear ourselves.
28. To speak the truth with heart and mouth.
29. Not to render evil for evil.
30. Not to do any injury; yea, and patiently to bear an injury done to us.
31. To love our enemies.
32. Not to speak ill of such as speak ill of us, but rather to speak well of them.
33. To suffer persecution for justice sake.
34. Not to be proud.
35. Not given to wine.
36. Not a great eater.
37. Not drowsy.
38. Not slothful.
39. Not a murmurer.
40. Not a detractor.
41. To put our trust in God.

Saint Benedict

42. When we see any good in ourselves let us attribute it to God and not to ourselves.
43. But let us always know that evil is done by ourselves, therefore let us attribute it to ourselves.
44. To fear the day of judgment.
45. To be afraid of hell.
46. To desire life everlasting with spiritual thirst.
47. To have death always before our eyes.
48. To observe at every hour the actions of our life.
49. To know for certain that God beholdeth us in every place.
50. To dash at once against Christ the evil thoughts that rise in the mind.
51. To reveal all such to our spiritual Father.
52. To keep our mouth from evil and wicked words.
53. Not to love much talking.
54. Not to speak vain words, nor such as move to laughter.
55. Not to love much and boisterous laughter.
56. Willingly to hear holy readings.
57. To pray often devoutly.
58. With tears and sighs, daily to confess our past evils to God in prayer and to amend them for the time to come.
59. Not to fulfil the desires of the flesh, and to hate self-will.
60. To obey in all things the commands of the Abbot, though he him-

self (which God forbid) should do otherwise, being mindful of that precept of our Lord: "What they say, do ye; but what they do, do ye not."

61. Not to desire to be called holy, before we be so, and first to be holy, that we may truly be called so.
62. Daily to fulfil in deeds the commandments of God.
63. To love chastity.
64. To hate no man.
65. To flee envy and emulation.
66. Not to love contention.
67. To flee Haughtiness.
68. To reverence the Elders.
69. To love inferiors.
70. For Christ's sake to pray for our enemies.
71. To make peace with adversaries before the setting of the sun.
72. Never to despair of God's mercy. Behold these are the tools or instruments of our spiritual profession: if we constantly employ them day and night, and have them signed with approval in the day of judgment, that reward shall be given us by our Lord as a recompense "Which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those that love Him." The workshop where all these things are to be done is the cloister of the monastery, and steadfast abiding in the Congregation.

Of the obedience of disciples. The first degree of humility is obedience without delay. This besemeth those who, either on account of the holy servitude they have professed, through fear of hell or for the glory of life everlasting, count nothing more dear to them than Christ. These, presently, as soon as anything is commanded them by the Superior, make no delay in doing it,

The Rule of Saint Benedict

just as if the command had come from God. Of such, our Lord saith: "At the hearing of the ear he hath obeyed me." And to teachers He saith: "He that heareth you, heareth me." Therefore, such as these, leaving immediately everything, and forsaking their own will, leave unfinished what they were about, and with the speedy foot of obedience follow by deeds the voice of him who commands. And thus, as it were in one and the same moment the command of the master and the perfect work of the disciple in the speed of the fear of God, go both jointly together, and are quickly effected by those who ardently desire to advance in the way of eternal life. These take the narrow way, of which the Lord saith: "Narrow is the way which leadeth to life." They live not according to their own will, nor follow their own desires and pleasures, but, abiding in monasteries, walk according to the command and direction of another, and will to have an Abbot over them. Without doubt these fulfil that saying of our Lord: "I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him Who sent me." This obedience will then be acceptable to God and pleasing to men, if what is commanded be not done fearfully, slowly, coldly, or with murmuring, or an answer showing unwillingness; because the obedience which is given to superiors is given to God, Who hath said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me." Hence it ought to be done by the disciples with a good will, because God "loveth a cheerful giver" If the disciple obey with ill-will, and murmur, not only in words, but also in heart, although he fulfil what is commanded him, it will not be acceptable to God, Who considereth the heart of the murmurer. For such a work he shall not have any reward, but rather incurreth the penalty of murmurers, unless he amend and make satisfaction.

VI

Of Silence

Of silence. Let us act in accordance with that saying of the Prophet; "I have said: I will keep my ways, that I offend not with my tongue. I have been watchful over my mouth: I held my peace and humbled myself, and was silent from speaking even good things." If therefore, according to this saying of the Prophet we are at times to abstain, for silence sake, even from good talk, how much more ought we to refrain from evil words, on account of the penalty of sin. Therefore, because of the importance of silence, let leave to speak be seldom given, even to perfect disciples, although their words be of good and holy matters, tending unto edification; because it is written: "In

much speaking, thou shalt not escape sin." And in another place: "Death and life are in the hands of the tongue." For it befitteth a master to speak and teach; and it beseemeth a disciple to hold his peace and listen. If, therefore, anything must be asked of the Prior, let it be done with all fitting humility and the subjection of reverence. But as for buffoonery, idle words, or such as move to laughter, we utterly condemn and exclude them in all places, nor do we allow a disciple to open his mouth to give them utterance.

Of humility

VII

Of Humility. The Holy Scripture crieth to us, Brethren, saying: "Everyone who exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted." By these words it declares to us, that all exaltation is a kind of pride, which the Prophet showeth must carefully be avoided when he says: "Lord, my heart is not exalted, neither are my eyes lifted up: neither have I walked in great things, nor in wonders above myself." But why? "If I did not think humbly, by exalted my soul: as a child weaned from his mother, so wilt Thou reward my soul." Wherefore, Brethren, if we would attain to the highest summit of humility, and speedily reach that heavenly exaltation, which is won through the lowliness of this present life; by our ascending actions a ladder must be set up, such as appeared in sleep to Jacob, whereon he saw Angels descending and ascending. That descent and ascent signifieth nothing else, but that we descend by exalting, and ascend by humbling ourselves. The latter thus erected, is our life here in this world, which through humility of heart is lifted up by our Lord to heaven. The sides of this ladder we understand to be our body and soul, in which the Divine Vocation hath placed divers degree of humility and discipline, which we must ascend. The first degree, then, of humility is that a man always have the fear of God before his eyes, and altogether fly forgetfulness. Moreover to be mindful of all that God hath commanded, and remember that such as contemn God fall into hell for their sins, and that everlasting life is prepared for such as fear Him. And keeping himself every moment from all sin and vice, of thought, word, eyes, hands, feet, and self will, let him thus hasten to cut off the desires of the flesh. Let him think that he is always beheld from Heaven by God; that all his actions, wheresoever he may be, lie open to the eye of God, and are at every hour presented before Him by His Angels. The Prophet declareth this,

The Rule of Saint Benedict

when, in these words, he saith that God is always present to our thoughts: "God searcheth the heart and reins." And again: "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vain." He also saith: "Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off," and: "The thought of man shall confess to Thee." In order therefore that the humble Brother may be careful to avoid evil thoughts, let him always say in his heart: "Then shall I be without spot before Him, if I shall keep me from my iniquity." The Scripture also forbiddeth us to do our own will, saying: "Leave thy own will and desire." And again: "We beg of God in prayer, that His Will may be done in us." With good reason, therefore, are we taught to beware of doing our own will, when we keep in mind that which the Scripture saith: "There are ways which to men seem right, and end whereof plungeth even into the deep pit of hell." And again when we fear that which is said of the negligent: "They are corrupted, and made abominable in their pleasures." But in the desires of the flesh, we ought to believe God to be always present with us, according to that saying of the Prophet, speaking to the Lord: "O Lord, all my desire is before Thee." Let us then take heed of evil desires, because death sitteth close to the entrance of delight. Wherefore the Scripture commandeth us: "Follow not thy concupiscences." If then the eyes of the Lord behold both good and bad; if He ever looketh down from heaven upon the sons of men to see who is understanding or seeking God: if our works are told to Him day and night by our Angels; we must always take heed, Brethren, lest, as the Prophet saith in the Psalm, "God behold us some time declining to evil, and become unprofitable;" and though He spare us for the present, because He is merciful, and expecteth our conversion, He may yet say to us hereafter: "These things thou hast done, and I have held My peace." The second degree of humility is, if anyone, not wedded to his own will, seeks not to satisfy his desires, but carries out that saying of our Lord: "I came not to do My own Will, but the Will of Him Who sent Me." The scripture likewise saith: "Self-will engendereth punishment, and necessity purchaseth a crown." The third degree of humility is, that a man submit himself for the love of God, with all obedience to his superior, imitating thereby our Lord, of Whom the Apostle saith: "He was made obedient even unto death." The fourth degree of humility is, that if, in obedience, things that are hard, contrary, and even unjust be done to him, he embrace them with a quiet conscience, and in suffering them, grow not weary, nor give over, since the Scripture saith: "He only that persevereth to the end shall be saved." And

Saint Benedict

again, "Let thy heart be comforted, and expect the Lord." And showing that the faithful man ought to bear all things for our Lord, be they never so contrary, it saith in the person of the sufferers: "For Thee we suffer death all the day long; we are esteemed as sheep for the slaughter." And being assured by hope of a reward from God's Hands they go on rejoicing and saying: "But in all things we overcome by the help of Him Who hath loved us." Likewise in another place the Scripture saith: "Thou hast proved us, O Lord, Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried, with fire. Thou hast brought us into the snare; Thou hast laid tribulation upon our backs." And to shew that we ought to be under a Prior it goes on to say: "Thou hast placed men over our heads." Moreover, in order to fulfil the precepts of the Lord by patience in adversities and injuries: "When struck on one cheek, they offer the other; to him who taketh away their coat, they leave their cloak also; and being constrained to carry a burthen one mile, they go two." With Paul the Apostle they suffer false Brethren and persecutions, and bless those who speak ill of them. The fifth degree of humility is to manifest to the Abbot, by humble confession, all the evil thoughts of his heart, and the secret faults committed by him. The Scripture exhorteth us thereunto, saying: "Reveal thy way to the Lord, and hope in Him." And again: "Confess thy way to the Lord because He is good, because His mercy endureth for ever." Furthermore the Prophet saith: "I have made known unto Thee mine offence, and mine injustices I have not hidden. I have said, I will declare openly against myself mine injustices to the Lord; and Thou hast pardoned the wickedness of my heart." The sixth degree of humility is, if a Monk be content with all that is meanest and poorest, and in everything enjoined him, think himself an evil and worthless servant, saying with the Prophet: "I have been brought to nothing, and knew it not. I have become as a beast before Thee, and I am always with Thee." The seventh degree of humility is, not only to pronounce with his tongue, but also in his very heart to believe himself to be the most abject, and inferior to all; and humbling himself, to say with the Prophet: "I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. I have been exalted, humbled, and confounded." And again: "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy commandments." The eighth degree of humility is, that a Monk do nothing but what the common rule of the Monastery, or the examples of his seniors, exhort him to do. The ninth degree of humility is, for a Monk to refrain his tongue from speaking, and be silent till a question be

The Rule of Saint Benedict

asked him, remembering the saying of the Scripture: "In many words thou shalt not avoid sin," and "a talkative man shall not be directed upon the earth." The tenth degree of humility is, not to be easily moved and prompt to laugh, for it is written: "The fool exalteth his voice to laughter." The eleventh degree of humility is that when a Monk speaketh, he do so, gently and without laughter; humbly, with gravity or few words, and discreetly; and be not clamorous in his voice; for it is written: "A wise man is known by few words." The twelfth degree of humility is, that a Monk not only have humility in his heart, but show it also in his exterior, to all the behold him; so that whether he be at the work of God, in the Oratory, the monastery, the garden, on the way, in the field or wherever he may be, whether he sit, walk, or stand, let him always, with head bent down, and eyes fixed upon the earth, think of himself guilty for his sins, and about to be presented before the dreadful judgment of God, ever saying to himself with the Publican in the Gospel: "Lord, I a sinner am not worthy to lift up mine eyes to heaven." And again with the Prophet: "I am bowed down and humbled on every side." Thus, when all these degrees of humility have been ascended, the Monk will presently come to that love of God which is perfect and casteth our fear; to that love, whereby everything, which at the beginning he observed through fear, he shall now begin to do by custom, without any labour, and as it were naturally; not now through fear of hell, but for the love of Christ, our of a good custom, and a delight in virtue. All this our Lord will vouchsafe to work by the Holy Ghost in His servant, now that he is cleansed from defects and sins.

VIII

Of the divine
office at night
time

Of the Divine Office at night-time. In winter, that is from the first of November till Easter, they shall rise at that time which reasonable calculation shall indicate as the eighth hour of the night, in order that having rested till a little after midnight, they may rise refreshed. As for the time that remains after Matins, let it be employed in study, by those Brethren who are somewhat behind-hand in the psalter and lessons. But from Easter till the first of November, let the hour for Matins be so arranged, that after a short interval during which they may go forth for the necessities of nature, Lauds may presently follow about the break of day.

How many
psalms are to be
said in the night
hours

IX

How many psalms are to be said in the night-hours. In winter, having first said the verse, “O God incline unto mine aid, O Lord make haste to help me,” the words, “O Lord open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise,” are next to be repeated three times. After this the third Psalm is said, with a “Glory be to the Father,” at the end. Then the ninety-fourth Psalm is to be recited or sung with an antiphon. Let hymn follow next, and then six psalms with antiphons. These being said, and a versicle added, let the Abbot give a blessing, and then, all being seated, let three lessons be read by the Brethren in turns, from the book lying on the lectern. After every lesson, let a responsory be sung. Let two of them be without a “Gloria,” but after the third let it be added by the Cantor, and as soon as he has begun it, let all rise from their seats out of honour and reverence to the Holy Trinity. Let the divinely inspired books, both of the Old and New Testament, be read at Matins, together with the expositions made upon them by the most famous, orthodox, and Catholic Fathers. After these three lessons and their responsories, let six other psalms follow, to be sung with an Alleluia. Then let a lesson from the Apostle be said by heart, and after that a verse and the supplication of the Litanies, that is, “Kyrie eleison.” And thus let the Matins or Night-watches be brought to an end.

How Matins, or
Night-office, is
to be celebrated
in Summer

X

How Matins, or Night-office, is to be celebrated in Summer. From Easter till the first of November, let the same number of psalms be recited, as we have before appointed; but let not the lessons be read, because of the shortness of the nights. Instead of these three lessons, let one out of the Old Testament be said by heart, followed by a short responsory, and let all the rest be performed as we have before arranged, so that without counting the third, and the ninety-fourth psalms, there be never fewer than twelve psalms said at Matins.

XI

How Matins, or
Night-office is to
be celebrated on
Sundays

How Matins, or Night-office, is to be celebrated on Sundays. On Sunday, let them rise more seasonably for Matins, and therein observe the following order. When six psalms and the versicle have been sung, as we before arranged, let all sit down in a becoming and orderly manner, and let four lessons with the responsories be read from the book; to the fourth responsory only, let the Cantor add a “Gloria,” at the beginning of which all shall rise out of reverence. After these lessons, let six more psalms follow in order, with their antiphons and versicle as before. Then let four other lessons with their responsories be read in the same way as the former. Next, let three canticles be said out of the Prophets, such as the Abbot shall appoint; these must be sung with “Alleluia.”

When the versicle has been said, and the Abbot has given his blessing, let four other lessons out of the New Testament be read, in the same order as before. After the fourth responsory, let the Abbot begin the Hymn “Te Deum laudamus,” and this being said, let him read a lesson from the Gospel, with reverential fear while all stand. At the end of this let all answer “Amen”, and then let the Abbot go on with the Hymn: “Te decet alius.” Then, after the giving of the blessing, let Lauds begin. This order is always to be observed in singing Matins on Sundays, both in summer and in Winter, except perchance (which God forbid) they rise late, for then the lessons or responsories must be somewhat shortened. But let good care be taken that this do not happen; and if it do, let him, by whose negligence it comes to pass, make satisfaction for it in the Oratory.

XII

How the solemnity
of Lauds is
to be performed

How the solemnity of Lauds is to be performed. For Sunday’s Lauds, first, let the sixtieth Psalm be said plainly, without an antiphon; after which, say the fiftieth with an “Alleluia;” then the hundred-and-seventeenth, and the sixty-second; then the “Blessings,” and “Praises”, one lesson out of the Apocalypse said by heart, a responsory, a hymn, a versicle with a canticle out of the Gospel, and the Litanies, and so conclude.

XIII

How Lauds are
to be celebrated
on ferial or week
days

How Lauds are to be celebrated on ferial or week days. On ferial days, let Lauds be celebrated thus: Let the sixty-sixth Psalm be said as on Sunday, plainly and without an antiphon, and also somewhat more slowly, in order that all may be in their places for the fiftieth, which must be said with an antiphon. After which, let two other psalms be said according to custom; that is, on Monday, the fifth and thirty-fifth. On Tuesday, the forty-second and fifty-sixth. On Wednesday, the sixty-third and sixty-fourth. On Thursday, the eighty-seventy and eighty-ninth. On Friday, the seventy-fifth and ninety-first. On Saturday, the hundred-and-forty-second and the Canticle of Deuteronomy, which must be divided into two “Glorias.” But on other days, let the Canticle out of the Prophets be said, each on its own day, according to the practice of the Roman Church. After these, let the Praises follow; then a lesson from the Apostles, to be said by heart, a responsory, hymn, and versicle, a Canticle out of the Gospel, the Litanies, and so conclude. Let not the celebration of Lauds, or Evensong, ever terminate, unless at the end, the Lord’s prayer be said by the Prior, in the hearing of all, because of the thorns of scandal which are wont to arise; that the Brethren, being reminded by the covenant of this prayer, in which they say: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them the trespass against us”, may purge themselves from these faults. But in celebrating the other hours let the last part only be said aloud, that all may answer: “But deliver us from evil.”

In what manner
the office of
Matins is to be
celebrated on
the feast days of
Saints

XIV

In what manner the Office of Matins is to be celebrated on the Feast days of Saints. On Saints’ days, and upon all solemnities, let the same order be observed as upon Sundays, only that psalms, antiphons, and lessons be said, proper to the day itself. Their method, however, shall remain the same as before determined.

At what seasons
“Alleluia” must
be said

XV

At what seasons “Alleluia” must be said. From the holy feast of Easter until Whitsuntide, let “Alleluia” be said without intermission, as well with

The Rule of Saint Benedict

the psalms, as with the responsories. From Whitsuntide till the beginning of Lent, let it be said at all the Night-Offices, with the six last psalms only. But on every Sunday out of Lent, let the Canticles, Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext and None, be said with “Alleluia.” Let Even-song, however, be said with antiphons. Let the responsories never be said with “Alleluia,” except from Easter till Whitsuntide.

XVI

In what manner
the Work of God
is to be done in
the day time

In what manner the Work of God is to be done in the day time. Seven times a day”, saith the Prophet. “have I sung praises unto Thee.” This sacred number of seven shall be accomplished by us if at the times of Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Even-song, and Complin, we perform the duties of our service. It was of these hours the Prophet said: “Seven times in the day I have sung praises to Thee.” For of the Night-watches, the same Prophet says: “At midnight I did arise to confess to Thee.” At these times therefore, let us give praise to our Creator for the judgments of His justice; that is at Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Even-song, and Complin; and in the night let us rise to confess unto Him.

XVII

How many
psalms are to be
said during the
aforesaid hours

How many psalms are to be said during the aforesaid hours. We have already arranged the order of the Office for the Nocturns, or Lauds; let us now dispose of the Hours that follow. At Prime, let three psalms be said separately, and not under one “Gloria.” Presently after the verse: “O God incline unto mine aid,” let the hymn of the same Hour follow, before the psalms be begun. At the end of the psalms, let there be recited one lesson, a versicle, and “Kyrie eleison,” and let that Hour conclude with a collect. Tierce, Sext, and None, are to be recited in the same way; that is, the prayer, versicle, and hymns of these same Hours, three psalms, then a lesson, versicle, and “Kyrie eleison”, and let the Hour conclude with a collect. If the community be great, let the Hours be sung with antiphons; if, however, it be small, let them be only recited. Let EvenSong be said with four psalms and antiphons; after these let a less on be recited, then a responsory, the hymn, versicle, and canticle, our of the Gospel—the Litany, the Lord’s Prayer, and a collect to conclude.

Saint Benedict

For Complin, let three psalms be recited straight on without antiphons. After these, the hymn for that Hour, the lesson, versicle, “Kyrie eleison”, and blessing, and so let the Hour terminate.

In what order
the psalms are to
be said

XVIII

In what order the psalms are to be said. In the day Hours, let the verse “O God incline unto mine aid, O Lord make haste to help me,” always be said first, and after it a “Gloria.” Then the hymn proper to each Hour. On Sundays, at Prime, there must be said four divisions of the hundred-and-eighteenth Psalm. At the rest of the Hours, to wit, at Tierce, Sext and None, let there be said three divisions of the same hundred-and-eighteenth Psalm. But on Monday at Prime, let three psalms be said, that is, the first, second, and sixth. In the same way at Prime, let three psalms be said in order every day, till Sunday, as far as the nineteenth Psalm: yet in such a way that the ninth and seventeenth Psalms be divided into two “Glorias.” Thus it will fall out that on Sunday at Matins we shall always begin from the twentieth Psalm. At Tierce, Sext, and None, on Mondays, let the remaining nine divisions of the hundred-and-eighteenth Psalm be said, three at a time, during these same Hours. On two days therefore, to wit, Sunday and Monday, the hundred-and-eighteenth Psalm being gone through, let the psalms at Tierce, Sext, and None, on Tuesdays be sung in order, three at a time, from the hundred-and-nineteenth to the hundred-and-twenty-seventh, that is nine psalms. These psalms are always to be repeated at the same Hours for the rest of the week till Sunday; a uniform order also of the hymns, lessons, and versicles, being sung every day observed, so that every Sunday they may begin with the hundred-and-eighteenth Psalm. Even-song is to be sung every day with four psalms, which are to begin from the hundred-and-ninth, and go on to the hundred-and-forty-seventh, such only being excepted as are set apart for other Hours, that is, from the hundred-and-seventeenth, to the hundred-and-twenty-seventh, and from the hundred-and-thirty-third to the hundred-and-forty-second; all the rest are to be said in Even-song. And because there fall three psalms short, those of the aforesaid number that are longer, must be divided, that is, the hundred-and-thirty-eighth, the hundred-and-forty-third, and the hundred-and-forty-fourth. But let the hundred-and-sixteenth, because it is short, be joined with the hundred-and-fifteenth. The order, therefore, of

The Rule of Saint Benedict

the psalms for Evensong being set down, let other matters such as lessons, responsories, hymns, versicles, and canticles, be arranged as before. At Complin let the same psalms be repeated every day: the is, the fourth, ninetieth, and the hundred-andthirty-third. The order of the day office being thus disposed of, let all the psalms which remain be equally portioned out into seven NightWatches, or Matins, and such of them as are too long, divided into two. Let twelve psalms be appointed for every night. If this arrangement and distribution of the psalms displease anyone, let him, if he think good, order them otherwise, provided however he take care, that every week the whole psalter of one hundred-and-fifty psalms be sung; and that on Sunday at Matins, they begin it again; for Monks show themselves to be over negligent and indevout, who do not in the course of a week sing over the psalter with the usual canticles, since we read that our holy Fathers courageously performed in one day, what, God grant, that we who are negligent and tepid, may perform in a whole week.

XIX

Of the order and discipline of singing

Of the order and discipline of singing. We believe that the Divine Presence is everywhere, and that the eyes of the Lord behold both the good and the bad, in all places; but we believe this especially and without any doubt, when we assist at the Word of God. Let us, therefore, always be mindful of what the Prophet saith: "Serve ye the Lord in fear." And again: "Sing ye His praises with understanding." And: "In the sight of Angels I will sing praise unto Thee." Therefore, let us consider in what manner it behoveth us to be in the sight of God and of the Angels, and so let us sing in choir, that mind and voice may accord together.

XX

Of reverence at prayer

Of reverence at prayer. If, when we wish to make some suggestion to the powerful, we presume not to speak to them except with humility and reverence; with how much greater reason ought we to present our supplications in all humility and purity of devotion, to the Lord God of all things? And let us bear in mind, that we shall be heard, not for our many words, but for our purity of heart, and our penitential tears. Our prayer, therefore, ought to be

Saint Benedict

short and pure, unless perchance it be prolonged by the inspiration of Diving Grace. Yet, let all prayer made in common be short, and when the sign has been given by the Prior, let all rise together.

Of the Deans of
the Monastery

XXI

Of the Deans of the Monastery. If the Community be large, let men of good repute and saintly lives be chosen from among the Brethren and appointed Deans, to be careful over their Deaneries in all things, according to the command of God, and the precepts of their Abbot. Let such men be chosen for Deans as the Abbot may safely rely upon to share his burthens; and let them not be chosen by order, but according to the merit of their lives and learning. And if perchance any of them, being puffed up with pride, shall be found blameworthy, and being thrice rebuked, shall show no sign of amendment, let him be put out of office, and a more worthy man substituted in his place. Concerning the Provost, we make the same ordinance.

How the Monks
are to sleep

XXII

How the Monks are to sleep. Let them sleep, each in separate beds, and receive, according to the appointment of the Abbot, bedclothes befitting their condition. If it be possible, let them all sleep in one place; but if the number do not allow of this, let them repose by tens or twenties in one place with their Seniors who have care of them. And let a candle burn constantly in that same cell until morning. Let them sleep clothed, and girt with girdles or cords, but let them not have knives by their sides while they sleep, lest perchance they be hurt therewith; and thus let the Monks always be ready, that when the sign is given they may rise speedily, and hasten, each one, to come before his Brother to the Work of God, but yet with all gravity and modesty. Let not the younger Brethren have beds in a place apart by themselves, but separated among the Elders. And when they rise to the work of God, let them gently encourage one another, because of the excuses of those who are sluggish.

XXIII

Of excommunication for offences

Of excommunication for offences. If any Brother be found stubborn, disobedient, proud, murmuring, or in any way gainsaying the holy Rule, or contemning the orders of his Elders, let him, in accordance with the precept of the Lord, be once or twice secretly admonished by them. If he amend not, let him be reprehended publicly before all. But if in spite of all this he do not correct himself, let his be subjected to excommunication, provided he understand the nature of the punishment. But if he remain obstinate, let him undergo corporal chastisement.

XXIV

What the manner of excommunication ought to be

What the manner of excommunication ought to be. The measure of excommunication or punishment should be meted out according to the quality of the faults; but the estimation of their gravity shall depend upon the judgment of the Abbot. If any Brother be found guilty of small faults, let him be deprived of eating at table with the rest. The manner of his punishment shall be as follows: In the Oratory he shall not intone a psalm or antiphon, nor read a lesson, until he has made satisfaction. He shall take his portion of food after the Brethren have taken theirs, in such quantity, and at such time as the Abbot shall deem fit. If, for example, the Brethren take their refectio at the sixth hour, let him take his at the ninth; if the Brethren take theirs at the ninth, let him take his in the evening, until by due satisfaction he obtain pardon.

XXV

Of more grievous faults

Of more grievous faults. Let that Brother who is guilty of more grievous faults be denied both the table and the Oratory. Let none of the Brethren discourse with him nor keep him company. Let him be alone at the work enjoined him, continuing in penance and sorrow, knowing that terrible sentence of the Apostle, who saith, "That such a one is delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord." Let him take his portion of food alone, in such measure and at such time as the Abbot shall think fit: let not anyone bless him as he passes by, not the

food that is given to him.

Of those who
keep compa-
ny with the
excommunicated
without the
command of the
abbot

XXVI

Of those who keep company with the excommunicated without the command of the Abbot. If any Brother shall presume, without the command of the Abbot, to join himself in any way to the excommunicated Brother, or to talk with him, or send him a message, let him incur the same penalty of excommunication.

How the abbot
ought to care for
the excommuni-
cated

XXVII

How the Abbot ought to care for the excommunicated. Let the Abbot have a special care of the offending Brethren, for, "They that are well need not the physician, but they that are sick." He ought, therefore, like a wise physician, to use every means in their regard, and covertly send them as comforters, some elderly and discreet Brothers to console, as it were secretly, the wavering one, and win him to make humble satisfaction. Let them comfort him, that he be not swallowed up by overmuch sorrow, but as the Apostle saith: "Let charity be confirmed towards him, and let all pray for him." The Abbot ought especially to have care, and with all prudence and industry, to see that he lose none of the sheep committed to his charge. Let him know that he hath undertaken the care of sick souls, and not a tyrannical authority over such as are well. Let him fear the threat of the Prophet, by whom God saith; "What ye saw to be fat, that ye took to yourselves, and what was diseased, that ye threw away." Let him imitate the loving kindness of the "Good Shepherd," Who "leaving ninety-nine sheep in the mountains, went to seek one that had gone astray, on whose infirmity He took such compassion, that He vouchsafed to lay it on His own sacred shoulder, and thus carry it back to the flock."

Of those who,
being often
corrected, do not
amend

XXVIII

Of those who, being often corrected, do not amend. If any Brother after being corrected, or even excommunicated for any fault, doth not amend, let a sharper correction be administered to him: that is to say, let him be

The Rule of Saint Benedict

punished with stripes. But if for all that he do not correct himself, or being puffed up with pride (which God forbid) shall also defend his doings; then let the Abbot act like a wise physician, and after applying the fomentations and ointments of exhortation, the medicines of the Divine Scriptures, and last of all the punishment of excommunication and of scourging; then, if he find that his labours have no effect,—let him add what is more than all this,—his own prayer, and the prayer of the Brethren for him, that the Lord, Who can do all things, would vouchsafe to work a cure upon the infirm Brother. If he be not healed and corrected by this means, then let the Abbot use the sword of separation, according to that saying of the Apostle: “Put away the evil one from among you.” And again: “If the faithless one depart, let him depart,” lest one diseased sheep should infect the whole flock.

XXIX

Whether the Brethren who leave the monastery ought to be received again. If that Brother, who through his own fault leaveth, or is cast out of the Monastery, be willing to return, he shall first promise to amend the fault for which he went forth; then let him be received into the lowest rank, that by this, his humility may be tried. If he go out again, let him be received back till the third time. But after this let him know that all entrance will be denied him.

Whether the Brethren who leave the monastery ought to be received again

XXX

How children are to be corrected. Every age and understanding ought to have a measure of government suitable to it. As often therefore as children, or those under age, commit faults, and are incapable of understanding the greatness of the punishment of excommunication, let them be punished by rigorous fasting, or sharp stripes, that so they may be corrected.

How children are to be corrected

XXXI

What kind of man the Cellarer of the monastery ought to be. Let there be chosen out of the Community as Cellarer of the Monastery, a man who is wise, ripe in manners, and sober; not a great eater, not haughty, nor hasty, nor insulting; not slow, nor wasteful, but fearing God, and acting as a father

What kind of man the Cellarer of the monastery ought to be

Saint Benedict

to the whole Brotherhood. Let him have care of all things, and without the command of the Abbot do nothing. Let him take heed of all that is ordered, and not sadden his Brethren. But if any Brother shall perchance ask anything of him that is not reasonable, let him not, by contemptuously spurning, grieve him, but reasonable and with all humility refuse what he asks for amiss. Let him have regard for his own soul, mindful of that rule of the Apostle: "They that have ministered well, shall purchase for themselves a good degree." Let him care diligently for the sick, the children, the guests, and the poor; knowing, without doubt, that for all these he shall give an account on the judgment day. Let him look upon all the vessels and goods of the Monastery as if they were the sacred vessels of the Altar. Let him neglect nothing; neither let him be covetous, nor prodigal, not wasteful of the goods of the Monastery, but do all things with moderation, and according to the command of his Abbot. Above all things, let him have humility, and give at least a gentle answer unto him, on whom he hath nothing else to bestow; for it is written: "A good word is above the best gift." Let him have under his care all that the Abbot shall appoint, and presume not to meddle with anything from which he shall forbid him. Let him give to the Brethren their appointed allowance of food, without arrogance or delay, that they be not scandalised; mindful of that divine word which tells what punishment he deserves "Who shall scandalise one of these little ones." If the Community be large, let there be given to him helpers, by whose aid he may quietly perform the office committed to his charge. Let such things as are to be given or asked for, be given and asked for at suitable hours, that no one may be troubled or saddened in the House of God.

Of the iron tools,
or goods of the
monastery

XXXII

Of the iron tools, or goods of the monastery. For keeping the iron tools, clothes, or other goods belonging to the Monastery, let the Abbot appoint Brethren, of whose life and conversation he may be sure, and to them let him allot all things to be kept, as he shall judge most expedient. Of these let the Abbot keep a list, that as the Brethren succeed each other in their various occupations, he may know what he gives and what he receives. If anyone shall use the property of the Monastery in a slovenly or negligent manner, let him be rebuked. If he does not amend, let him be subjected to regular discipline.

XXXIII

Whether monks ought to have anything of their own

Whether monks ought to have anything of their own. Especially let this vice be cut away from the Monastery by the very roots, that no one presume, without leave of the Abbot, to give, or receive, or hold as his own, anything whatsoever, either book, or tablets, or pen, or anything at all; because they are men whose very bodies and wills are not in their own power. But all that is necessary they may hope for from the Father of the Monastery; nor can they keep anything which the Abbot has not given or allowed. Let all things be common to all, as it is written: "Neither did any one say to think that aught was his own." If any one shall be found given to this most wicked vice, let him be admonished once or twice, and if he do not amend, let him be subjected to correction.

XXXIV

Whether all ought equally to receive what is needful

Whether all ought equally to receive what is needful. As it is written: "Distribution was made to every one, according as he had need." By this, we do not say that there should be accepting of persons, which God forbid, but that due consideration should be shown to each one's infirmities. Therefore, let him who needeth less, give God thanks, and be not grieved; and let him who needeth more, be humbled for his infirmity, and not lifted up for the mercy that is shown him; and thus all the members shall be in peace. Above all things, take heed there be no murmuring, by word or sign, upon any occasion whatsoever, If any one shall be found faulty in this respect, let him be subjected to most severe discipline.

XXXV

Of the weekly servers in the kitchen

Of the weekly servers in the kitchen. The Brethren are so to serve each other, that no one be excused from the office of the kitchen, unless he be hindered by sickness or other business of more profit; because a greater reward is gotten thence. But let the weaker Brethren have help, that they may do their work without sadness; and let all generally have help according as the number of the Community, and the situation of the place, shall require. If the Community be great, let the Cellarer be excused from the kitchen, and as we

Saint Benedict

have said before, such as are employed in matters of greater profit. Let the rest serve each other in charity. On Saturday, let him who endeth his week in the kitchen make all things clean. Let him wash the towels wherewith the Brethren wipe their hands and feet, and let both him who goeth out and him who cometh in, wash the feet of all. He shall hand over to the Cellarer, clean and whole, all the vessels of his office, and the Cellarer shall deliver them to him who entereth upon his office, that he may know what he giveth and what he receiveth. Let these weekly Officers, one hour before refection, take each a draught of drink and a piece of bread over and above the appointed allowance, that at the hour of refection they may serve their Brethren without murmuring or great labour. Nevertheless, on solemn days let all forbear till after Mass. On Sunday, immediately after Lauds both the out-going and the incoming officers for the week, shall cast themselves upon their knees before all, and ask to be prayed for. Let him that hath ended his office say the verse: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, Who didst help me, and console me," which being thrice repeated, he shall receive the blessing. Let him who entereth upon his office follow immediately after and say: "O God incline unto mine aid, O Lord make haste to help me." Let this likewise be thrice repeated by all, and having received the blessing, let him enter upon his office.

Of the sick
Brethren

XXXVI

Of the sick Brethren. Before all things, and above all things, special care must be taken of the sick, so that they may be served in very deed, as Christ Himself, for He saith: "I was sick, and ye visited Me." And "What ye did to one of these My least Brethren, ye did to Me." But let the sick themselves bear in mind that they are served for the honour of God, and must not grieve the Brethren who serve them by their extravagant demands. Nevertheless, they must patiently be borne with, because there is gotten from such a more abundant reward. Therefore let the Abbot take special care they be not neglected. Let a separate cell be set apart for their use, and an attendant that is God-fearing, diligent and careful. As often as it shall be expedient, let the use of baths be allowed the sick; but to such as are in health, and especially to the young, let it be seldom granted. Moreover the sick and weakly may be allowed the use of flesh meat for their recovery. As soon, however, as they get better, they must all, after the accustomed manner, abstain from meat.

The Rule of Saint Benedict

Let the Abbot take special care that the Cellarer or attendants neglect not the sick, because whatever is done amiss by his disciples, is imputed to himself.

XXXVII

Of old men and children

Of old men and children. Although man's nature is of itself drawn to feel pity for these two ages, that is, for the old and for children, yet it is fitting that the authority of the Rule should provide for them. Let their weakness therefore be always taken into account, and the rigour of the Rule with regard to food, be by no means kept with them. Let a kind consideration be had for them, and let leave be granted them, to eat before the regular hours.

XXXVIII

Of the weekly reader

Of the weekly reader. Reading ought not to cease while the Brethren eat at table. Neither ought anyone presume to read, who shall take up the book at haphazard; but let him who is appointed to read for the whole week, enter upon his office on Sunday. After Mass and communion, let him ask all to pray for him, that God may keep from him the spirit of pride. And let this verse be thrice repeated in the Oratory by all, the Reader first beginning it: "O Lord Thou wilt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise;" and thus having received a blessing, let him enter upon his duty. The greatest silence shall be kept, so that no muttering, or voice, shall be heard, except the voice of the Reader. Such things as are necessary for meat and drink, let the Brethren so minister to each other, that no one need ask for anything. Yet should anything be wanted, let it be asked for rather by a sign than by a word. Nor let anyone presume to ask questions, about what is being read, or about anything else, lest occasion be given to the evil one. Should the Prior, however, think fit, he may make some brief exhortation for the edification of the Brethren. And let the Brother who is Reader for the week take a little pottage before he begin to read, on account of Holy communion, and lest perchance it be grievous for him to fast so long. Afterwards let him eat with the weekly Officers and servers of the kitchen. The Brethren must not read or sing in turns, but such only as may edify the hearers.

Of the measure
or quantity of
meat

XXXIX

Of the measure or quantity of meat. We think it sufficient for daily refection, both at the sixth and ninth hour, that there be at all seasons two dishes, because of the infirmities of different people; so that he who cannot eat of one, may make his meal of the other. Let therefore two dishes of hot food suffice for the Brethren, and if there be any apples or young vegetables, let them be added as a third dish. Let one pound weight of bread suffice for the day, whether there be one refection, or both dinner and supper. If they are to sup, let a third part of that pound be reserved by the Cellarer, to be put before them at supper. If their labour be great, it shall be in the power of the Abbot to add what he shall think fitting to their ordinary allowance; taking care always to avoid surfeiting, that the Monks be not overtaken with indigestion, because there is not sin more contrary to a Christian than gluttony, as our Lord saith: "Take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness." But to children to tender age, let not the same quantity be given, but less than to the older, in all things preserving frugality. Let all, except the very weak and the sick, abstain from eating the flesh of four-footed beasts.

Of the measure
of drink

XL

Of the measure of drink. Every one hath his proper gift from God, one thus, another thus." Therefore it is not without some misgiving, that we appoint the measure of other men's victuals. Yet considering the condition of those in weak health, we think that one pint of wine will be sufficient for each one every day. But let those upon whom God bestows the gift of abstinence know, that they shall receive the proper reward. It, however, the situation of the place, labour, or the heat of summer, require more, let the Prior do what he thinketh good; ever having a care that fullness, or gluttony creep not in. And although we read :that wine is not at all the drink of Monks," yet, because in these our times, they will not be so persuaded, let us at least agree to this, not to drink to satiety, but sparingly, "Because wine maketh even the wise to fall away." Where, however, the poverty of the place will not allow the appointed measure, but much less, or perhaps none at all, let those who live there praise God and murmur not. This we admonish above all things, that

The Rule of Saint Benedict

there never be any murmuring.

XL I

At what hours
the brethren
are to take their
reflections

At what hours the Brethren are to take their Reflections. From the holy Feast of Easter until Whitsuntide, let the Brethren take their refectation at the sixth hour, and their supper at night. But from Whitsuntide, throughout the whole summer, let them fast on Wednesdays and Fridays till the ninth hour, unless they have to labour in the fields, or the extremity of the heat oppress them; but on other days let them dine at the sixth hour. This hour for dinner shall be continued at the discretion of the Abbot, if they have work in the fields, or the heat of summer be great. Let him so moderate and dispose all things that souls may be saved, and that what the Brethren do, may be done without just complaint. But from the thirteenth of September till the beginning of Lent, let the Brethren always take their meal at the ninth hour. From the beginning of Lent till Easter, they shall take their meal in the evening; yet, let things be so ordered, that there be no need of lamps during the refectation, but that all be done by daylight. At all times let the hour for supper and for dinner be so arranged that all things be done by daylight.

XLII

That no one
may speak after
compline

That no one may speak after Compline. Monks ought to keep silence at all times, but especially during the hours of the night; and therefore on all days, whether of fast or not, let them all come together, presently after supper if it be not a fastingday, and let one read the "Collations," or Lives of the Fathers, or something else which will edify the hearers; nor, however, the Heptateuch, or Book of Kings, for it will not be profitable for weak understandings to hear this part of Scripture at that hour; yet at other times it may be read. But if it be a fasting-day, let them, as we have said come to the reading of the Collations shortly after Even-song. Then let them read four or five pages, or as many as the time will allow, in order that during reading, all, even such as have had some work enjoined them, may have assembled together. All being gathered together, let them say Complin, after which no one shall be permitted to speak. If anyone shall be found to break this rule of silence, let him be liable to the most severe punishment; except there be some necessary cause, such

Saint Benedict

as the arrival of guests, or the command of the Abbot. Yet, even in that case, let it be done with the greatest gravity and moderation.

Of those who
are late to the
work of God or
to table

XLIII

Of those who come late to the work of God or to table. As soon as the signal for Divine Office shall be heard, each one, laying aside whatever occupation he may happen to be engaged in, shall hasten with all speed, and yet with gravity, lest an occasion be given for light behaviour. Let nothing, therefore, be preferred to the Work of God. If any one shall come to Matins after the “Gloria” of the ninety-fourth Psalm, which we would have said slowly and leisurely for this very purpose, let him not stand in his order in the choir, but last of all, or in a place which the Abbot shall have set apart for such negligent people; that he may be seen by him and by all the rest, till the Work of God be ended, thus and do penance and make public satisfaction. We have judged it fitting they should stand in the last place, or apart, for this reason; that being seen by all, they may for very shame’s sake amend. For if they remain outside the Oratory, some one will perchance either return to his cell and sleep, or at least sit without, and, abandoning himself to idle talk, give an occasion to the evil one. Let him therefore enter in, that he may not lose all, and may be amended for the time to come. In the day Hours, let him that shall come to the Work of God, after the verse “Deus in adjutorium,” and “Gloria” of the first Psalm, stand last, as directed above, and not presume to join himself to the choir of singers until he has made satisfaction, unless the Abbot shall, by his permission, give him leave; on condition, however, that he afterwards make amends for his fault. He that cometh not to table before the verse, “Oculi omnium,” or, “Edent pauperes,” so that all may say the verse and pray, and all at once sit down to table together, shall be corrected once or twice, if this have happened through his own fault or negligence. And if he do not afterwards amend, let him not be admitted to a share of the common table, but being separated from the company of his Brethren, let him eat alone, and let his portion of wine be taken away from him, till he make satisfaction and amend his ways. He shall suffer the like penalty, who is not present at the verse “Confiteantur,” or, “Memoriam,” that is said after meat. And let not any one presume to take meat or drink before or after the appointed time. Moreover, if anything be offered to a Brother by the Prior and that Brother

The Rule of Saint Benedict

refuse it, but afterwards have a mind for it, he shall receive neither that, nor anything else, until he have made suitable atonement.

XLIV

How those who are excommunicated, are to make satisfaction

How those who are excommunicated, are to make satisfaction. At the hour when the Work of God is being celebrated in the Oratory, let him, who for more grievous offences is excommunicated from the table or Oratory, lie prostrate before the doors thereof saying nothing; only with his head upon the ground, let him lie at the feet of all who go out of the Oratory. This he shall do until the Abbot think he hath given sufficient satisfaction. When ordered by the Abbot, he shall cast himself at the Abbot's feet, and then at the feet of all the Brethren that they may pray for him. Then, if the Abbot shall order it, let him be received into the Choir, and stand in that rank which he shall appoint; yet so that he presume not to intone a psalm, or read a lesson in the Oratory, or do anything else unless the Abbot again order him. After each Hour, when the Work of God is finished, let him cast himself upon the earth in the place where he stands, and in this manner make satisfaction, until the Abbot commands him to cease therefrom. But let such as for slight faults are excommunicated only from the table, make satisfaction in the Oratory as long as the Abbot shall command, and let them continue their satisfaction until he bless them and say:—"It is enough."

XLV

Of those who commit any fault in the Oratory

Of those who commit any fault in the Oratory. If any one, while reciting a psalm, responsory, antiphon, or lesson, shall make any mistake and not forthwith atone for it before all, let him be liable to greater punishment, as one who will not correct by humility, what he hath done amiss through negligence. But for such a fault, let children be beaten.

XLVI

Of those who offend in lighter matters

Of those who offend in lighter matters. If any one, while engaged in labour, either in the kitchen or the cellar, or in the service of others, in the bakehouse, the garden, or in any other occupation, shall do anything amiss,

Saint Benedict

or break or lose anything, or offend in any other way, and do not come presently before the Abbot or Community, and of his own accord confess and make satisfaction for his offence; when that is made known by another, he shall be more severely punished. But if the fault be a secret sin, let him manifest it to the Abbot only, or to his spiritual Seniors, who know how to heal their own wounds, and not to disclose or publish those of others.

Of making
known the hour
for the work of
God

XLVII

Of making known the hour for the work of God. Let the Abbot take care, both night and day, to signify the hour for the Work of God, either by announcing it himself, or by intrusting the duty of so doing to some watchful Brother, in order that all things may be done at their appointed times. But after the Abbot, let such as have been appointed, each in his own order, intone the psalms or antiphons. Let not any one presume to sing or read unless he have skill enough to do so, unto the edification of the hearers. Whomsoever the Abbot shall appoint to do this, let him do it with humility, gravity, and the fear of God.

Of daily manual
labour

XLVIII

Of daily manual labour. Idleness is an enemy of the soul. Therefore the Brethren ought to be employed at certain times in labouring with their hands, and at other fixed times in holy reading. Wherefore we think that both these occasions may be well ordered thus: From Easter till the first of October, let them, on going forth from Prime, labour at whatever they are required till about the fourth hour. From the fourth, till close upon the sixth hour, let them be employed in reading. On rising from table after the sixth hour, let them rest on their beds with all silence, or if perchance any one shall desire to read, let him read in such a way as not to disturb any one else. Let None be said seasonable, at about the middle of the eighty hour, and after that let them work at what they have to do till the evening. If the situation of the place, or their poverty require them to labour in reaping their corn, let them not be saddened thereat, for then are they Monks in very deed, when they live by the labour of their hands, as our Fathers and the Apostles did before us. Yet let all things be done with moderation for the sake of the fainthearted. From the

The Rule of Saint Benedict

first of October till the beginning of Lent, they shall be employed in reading till the second hour complete, when Tierce shall be celebrated, and from that till the ninth hour, let them labour at whatever work is enjoined them. At the first signal of the ninth hour, let them all leave off work, so as to be ready when the second signal is given. After their refection they shall be employed in reading spiritual books, or the psalms. But in Lent they must read from morning till the third hour complete, then let them work till the end of the tenth hour, at what is enjoined them. In these days of Lent, let each one have a book from the Library, and read it all through in order. The books must be given at the beginning of Lent. Let one or two Seniors be specially appointed to go about the Monastery at the hours in which the Brethren are employed in reading, and see that no one be slothful or give himself up to idleness or foolish talk, and neglect his reading, being thus not only unprofitable to himself, but also a hindrance to others. If such a one be found (which God forbid!) let him be reprehended once or twice, and if he do not amend, let him be so severely corrected, that others may take warning by it. Neither let one Brother associate himself with another at unseasonable times. On Sunday all shall devote themselves to reading, except such as are deputed for the various offices. But if any one shall be so negligent and slothful as to be either unwilling or unable to meditate or read, let him have some work imposed upon him which he can do, and thus not be idle. To the Brethren who are of weak constitution or in delicate health, such work or art shall be given as shall keep them from idleness, and yet not oppress them with so much labour as to drive them away. Their weakness must be taken into consideration by the Abbot.

XLIX

Of the observance of Lent

Of the observance of Lent. Although a Monk's life ought at all times to resemble a continual Lent, yet because few have such virtue, we exhort all in these days of Lent to live in all purity, and during this holy season to wash away all the negligences of other times. This we shall worthily accomplish if we refrain from all defects, and apply ourselves to tearful prayer, to reading, to compunction of heart, and abstinence. In these days, therefore, let us add something over and above to our wonted task, such as private prayers, and abstinence from meat and drink; let every one offer to God, of his own free

Saint Benedict

will, with joy of the Holy Ghost, something above the measure appointed him; that is to say, let him withhold from his body something in the way of food, drink, sleep, talk, laughter, and with spiritual joy and desire, await the holy feast of Easter. Nevertheless, let each one acquaint the Abbot with what he offers, and do it at his desire and with his consent; because whatever is done without the permission of the spiritual Father, shall be imputed to presumption and vain glory, and merit no reward. All things, therefore, must be done with the approbation of the Abbot.

Of the Brethren
who work at a
great distance
from the Oratory,
or are on a
journey

L

Of the Brethren who work at a great distance from the Oratory, or are on a journey. The Brethren who work at a great distance; and, in the Abbot's judgment, are unable to come to the Oratory in due time, shall fall upon their knees in the place where they are labouring, and there perform the Work of God with divine fear. Also, those who are sent on a journey shall not allow the appointed hours to pass by, but perform them on the way as they are best able, and omit not to accomplish their task of Divine Service.

Of the Brethren
who do not go
far off

LI

Of the Brethren who do not go far off. Let not the Brother who goes forth upon any errand, and intends to return that same day to the Monastery, presume to eat while abroad, even though invited to do so, unless perchance he has the Abbot's orders. If he do otherwise, let him be excommunicated.

Of the Oratory of
the Monastery

LII

Of the Oratory of the Monastery. Let the Oratory be what its name signifieth, and let nothing else be done or treated of there. When the Work of God is ended, let all go forth with exceeding great silence, and let respect be paid to the presence of God, in order that the Brother who wishes to pray privately, may not be hindered from so doing by the misconduct of another. If any other Brother should also wish to pray secretly, let him enter without ostentation and pray, not with a loud voice, but with tears and earnestness of heart. Therefore, let not any one remain in the Oratory after the Work

The Rule of Saint Benedict

of God is ended, except for the purpose of prayer, lest he be a hindrance to others.

LIII

Of the manner
of entertaining
guests

Of the manner of entertaining guests. Let all guests who come to the Monastery be entertained like Christ Himself, because He will say: "I was a stranger and ye took Me in." Let due honour be paid to all, especially to those who are of the household of the Faith, and to travellers. As soon, therefore, as a guest is announced, let the Prior or the Brethren go to meet him with all show of charity. First let them pray together, and so be associated to each other in peace. The kiss of peace shall not be offered till after prayer, because of the illusions of the devil. And in the salutation itself let all humility be shewn. By bowing the head or prostrating on the ground before all the guests who come or go, let Christ Who is received in their persons be also adored in them. When the guests have been received, let them be brought to prayer, and after that, the Prior, or any one whom he shall order, shall sit with them. Let the Divine Law be read before the guest, that he may be edified, and afterwards let all courtesy be shown them. For his sake, the Prior shall break the fast ordained by the Rule, unless perchance it be one of those special days, on which it cannot be broken. The Brethren, however, shall keep their accustomed fast. Let the Abbot pour water on the hands of the guests, and let both him and the whole Community wash the feet of the same, after which they shall say this verse: "We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple." But let the poor, and strangers especially, be diligently entertained with all care, because in them Christ is more truly received. For the simple fear of the rich doth beget them honour. Let the kitchen for the Abbot and the guests stand apart, in order that the latter, who are never wanting in a monastery, may not disquiet the Brethren by their untimely arrivals. Into this kitchen let two Brothers, who can perform its duties well, enter for a year. They shall have assistance when they need it, in order that they may serve without murmuring. When they have less labour, let them go forth to work where they shall be appointed. And not only in these, but in all other offices of the Monastery, let consideration be shown them, so that when they need help, it be given, and when they are without work, they obey and do what is commanded them. Let the care of the guest-room be entrusted to

Saint Benedict

a Brother, whose soul the fear of God possesseth. Let there be a sufficient number of beds there, and let the House of God be by wise men wisely governed. By no means let any one, unless appointed thereunto, either mix with, or speak to the guests; but if he shall meet or see them, after humbly saluting and asking their blessing, he shall pass on, saying that it is not lawful for him to talk with a guest.

Whether it be
lawful for a
Monk to receive
letters or pre-
sents

LIV

Whether it be lawful for a Monk to receive letters or presents. By no means let any Monk, without the Abbot's permission, receive from his parents or from anyone else, or give to another, letters, tokens, or any gifts whatsoever. And if anything be sent to him, even from his parents, let him not presume to receive it, unless it be first told the Abbot. If he order it to be received, it shall be in his power to appoint the person to whom it shall be given; and let not the Brother, to whom perchance it was sent, be grieved, lest an occasion be given to the devil. Whosoever shall presume to do otherwise, shall be subjected to regular discipline.

Of the clothes
and shoes of the
Brethren

LV

Of the clothes and shoes of the Brethren. Let clothing be given to the Brethren suitable to the place where they live, and to the temperature of the air; because in cold countries more is needed, and in warm, less. The arrangement of all this shall be left to the discretion of the Abbot. Nevertheless we believe that for temperate places, it will be sufficient for each Monk to have a cowl and tunic: the cowl in winter to be of thicker stuff, but in summer finer and worn thin; also a scapular for work, and shoes and stockings to cover their feet. Let not the Monks find fault with the colour or coarseness of things; they shall be such as can be procured in the country where they live, or bought at the cheapest rate. Let the Abbot take care of their dimensions, that they be not too short, but of a size suitable to those who wear them. On receiving new clothes, let them always give up the old ones at once, to be laid by in the wardrobe for the poor. For it is sufficient for a Monk to have two tunics and two cowls, as well for change at nights, as for the convenience of washing. Anything beyond this is superfluous and must be cut off. Also, they shall give

The Rule of Saint Benedict

back their shoes, and whatever is worn out, when they receive anything new. When sent on a journey, they shall receive drawers from the wardrobe, and on their return shall restore them washed clean. Let their cowls and tunics on such occasions be somewhat better than those they ordinarily use. They shall receive them on setting out, and restore them to the wardrobe on their return. Let a straw mattress, a blanket, coverlet and pillow, suffice for their bedding. This the Abbot shall frequently examine, to prevent the vice of proprietorship; and if any one be discovered to possess anything which he hath not received from the Abbot, let him be subjected to the severest correction. To root out this vice, let all things be given them by the Abbot which shall be necessary, that is, a cowl, a tunic, shoes, and stockings, a girdle, a knife, a pen, a needle, a handkerchief, and tablets, that all pretence of necessity may be taken away. However let the Abbot always bear in mind that sentence from the Acts of the Apostles: "And distribution was made to every one according as he had need." Let him, therefore, consider the infirmities of such as are in need, and pay no regard to the ill-will of the envious. In all his ordinances let him always think on the retribution of God.

LVI

Of the Abbot's
table

Of the Abbot's Table. The Abbot shall always take his meals with the guests and strangers. But as often as there are few guests, it shall be in his power to invite any of the Brethren he may choose. Let him take care, however, that one or two Seniors be always left with the Brethren, for the sake of discipline.

LVII

Of the artificers
of the Monastery

Of the artificers of the Monastery. If there be Artificers in the Monastery, let them exercise their crafts with all humility, provided the Abbot shall have ordered them. But if any of them be proud of the skill he hath in his craft, because he thereby seemeth to gain something for the Monastery, let him be removed from it, and not exercise it again, unless, after humbling himself, the Abbot shall permit him. But if any of their work is to be sold, let those who make the bargain take heed and presume not to defraud the Monastery in any way. Let them remember Ananias and Saphira, lest they, or any who

defraud the Monastery, should incur the death of their soul, and these did the death of their body. And in the prices themselves, let not the vice of avarice creep in, but let things always be sold somewhat cheaper than by Seculars, that in all things God may be glorified.

Of the manner of
receiving Brothers
of Religion

LVIII

Of the manner of receiving Brothers to Religion. Let not an easy entrance be granted to one who cometh newly to Religious life, but, as the Apostle saith: "Try the Spirits if they be of God." If, therefore, the newcomer persevere knocking, and continue for four or five days patiently to endure both the injuries offered to him and the difficulty made about his entrance, and persist in his petition; leave to enter shall be granted him, and he shall be in the guest Hall for a few days. Afterwards he shall be in the Novitiate, where he shall meditate, and eat, and sleep. Let a Senior who has the address of winning souls, be appointed to watch over him narrowly and carefully, to discover whether he truly seeks God, and is eager for the Work of God, for obedience and for humiliation. Let all the rigour and austerity by which we tend towards God be laid before him. And if he promise stability and perseverance, at the end of two months, let the whole Rule be read to him, with the addition of these words: "Behold the law under which thou desirest to fight; if thou canst observe it, enter in; if thou canst not, freely depart." If he shall still persevere, let him then be brought back to the aforesaid cell of the Novices, and be again tried in all patience. After the lapse of six months, let the Rule be read to him again, that he may know unto what he has come. If he still persevere, after four months, let the same Rule be read to him once more. If he shall then promise, after due deliberation, to observe all things and to do everything commanded him, let him be received into the Community, knowing that he is from that time forward under the law of the Rule, so that he can neither leave the Monastery nor shake off the yoke of the Rule, which, after so long a deliberation, he might have accepted or refused. And when they admit him to profession, he shall, in the presence of all, make a promise before God and His saints, of stability, amendment of manners, and obedience, in order that if at any time he shall act contrariwise he may know that he shall be condemned by Him Whom he mocketh. He shall draw up the form of this promise in the name of the Saints whose relics are on the Altar, and of the

The Rule of Saint Benedict

Abbot there present. With his own hand shall he write it, or if he knoweth not how, another at his request shall write it for him, and the Novice shall put his mark to it, and lay it with his own hand upon the Altar. After doing this, let him presently begin the verse: "Uphold me O lord according to Thy Word, and I shall live, and let me not be confounded in my expectation." Let the whole Community repeat this three times, adding at the end, "Glory be to the Father." Then let the new Brother cast himself at the feet of all, that they may pray for him, and from that hour he shall be counted as one of the Community. If he hath any property, he shall either first bestow it upon the poor, or by a formal gift, hand it over to the Monastery, without any reserve for himself; because for the future he must know that he hath not so much as power over his own body. Let him therefore presently, in the Oratory, be stripped of his own garments and be clothed in those of the Monastery. But the garments of which he is divested shall be kept in the wardrobe, that if (which God forbid) he should consent, by the persuasion of the devil, to leave the Monastery, he may be stripped of his habit and expelled. But he shall not have again the writing of his profession which the Abbot received from him at the Altar; that shall be kept in the Monastery.

LIX

Of the sons of nobles, or of the poor that are offered

Of the sons of nobles, or of the poor that are offered. If any nobleman shall perchance offer his son to God in the Monastery, let the parents, if the child himself be under age, make the aforesaid promise for him, and together with the oblation let them wrap that promise and the hand of the boy in the Altar Cloth, and thus dedicate him to God. But with regard to his property, they shall, in the said document, promise under oath, that they will never either give or furnish him with an occasion of having anything, either by themselves, or by any other person or means whatsoever. If they will not do this, but wish to offer something as an alms to the Monastery, by way of acknowledgment, let them make a donation of whatsoever they please, and reserve the income of it to themselves. Let matters be so managed that no expectation remain with the child, whereby being deceived he may perish (which God forbid). As we have learnt by experience in the case of others. Let those who are poorer act in the same way. But such as have nothing whatever, shall simply make the promise, and with the oblation give up their

son, before witnesses.

Of priests who
desire to dwell in
the Monastery

LX

Of priests who desire to dwell in the Monastery. If any one of the priestly order shall request to be received into the Monastery, let not permission be speedily granted even unto him. However, if he shall still persist in his request, let him know that he will have to keep all the discipline appointed by the Rule, and that no relaxation will be made in his favour, according to that which is written: "Friend, for what art thou come?" Nevertheless he shall be allowed to stand next after the Abbot, to give the blessing, and to say Mass, provided the Abbot order him. Otherwise he shall presume to do nothing, knowing that he is subject to regular discipline, and particularly obliged to give unto all examples of humility. If his position in the Monastery shall have been given to him on account of his Order, or for any other reason whatsoever, let him remember that his true place is the one fixed by the time of his entrance, and not that which was yielded to him out of reverence for his Priesthood. But if any Cleric shall likewise desire to be admitted into the Monastery, let him be put in a middle rank, but only on condition that he promise observance of the Rule and stability in it.

Of monks that
are strangers,
how they are to
be received

LXI

Of monks that are strangers, how they are to be received. If any Monk who is a stranger shall come from distant places and desire to dwell in the Monastery as a guest, and being content with the customs he findeth there, doth not trouble the Monastery by his superfluous wants, but is satisfied with what he findeth, let him be entertained for as long a time as he desireth. And if he reasonable, and with loving humility, reprehend or point out any abuse, let the Abbot prudently take notice of what he saith; for the Lord hath perchance sent him for that very reason. But if, after a time, he should desire to take up his abode there, let him not be refused; especially since they had ample opportunities for discovering his manner of life, during the time he lived among them as a guest. If, however, during that time he was found troublesome or faulty, not only shall he not be incorporated with the Community, but even be told with all civility to depart, lest others should be corrupted by

The Rule of Saint Benedict

his bad behaviour. But if he doth not deserve to be sent away, not only let him be received into the society of the community, when he makes the request, but let him even be persuaded to stay, that by his example others may be instructed; because in every place we serve one God, and fight under one King. The Abbot may also put him in a somewhat higher rank, if he shall find him well deserving of it. And not only may the Abbot exalt a Monk to a higher place than is his due, but also any of the aforesaid Priests or Clerics, if their lives be such as to deserve it. Let the Abbot, however, beware never at anytime to receive a Monk into his Community from a known Monastery, without the consent of his Abbot, or letters of commendation from him, because it is written: "What thou wilt not have done to thyself, do not thou to another."

LXII

Of the priests of
the Monastery

Of the priests of the Monastery. If any Abbot desire to have a Priest or Deacon promoted to Holy Orders, let him choose from his Monks, one who is worthy to fill the office of Priesthood. But let him that is ordained beware of haughtiness and pride, and presume not to do anything except what is ordered by the Abbot; well aware, that he is now much more subject to the discipline of the Rule. Let him not, by reason of his priesthood, forget the obedience and discipline of the Rule, but rather strive to advance more and more in the service of God. He shall, however, take his rank from the time he entered the Monastery, except in his office at the Altar, and also, in case the Community's choice and the Abbot's desire be to advance him higher for his holiness of life. He must, nevertheless, observe the rules prescribed by the Deans or Provosts, and if he presume to act contrariwise, he shall be judged, not as a Priest, but as a rebel. If after frequent admonitions he do not amend, the Bishop shall be informed of his behaviour. If even after this he grow not better, and his faults become notorious, he shall be thrust out of the Monastery, provided his disobedience be such that he will not submit and obey the Rule.

LXIII

Of the order of the Community. The Brethren shall hold that rank in the Monastery which is fixed for them by the time of their conversion, by the merit of their life, or by the appointment of the Abbot. And let not the Abbot disquiet the flock committed to him, not, as it were by an arbitrary use of power, arrange anything unjustly; but let him always consider that he is to give an account to God of all his judgments and of all his works. Therefore, let the Brethren receive the Pax, approach to Communion, intone a psalm, and stand in choir, according to that order which he shall appoint, or which they hold among themselves. In all places without exception, let not order be decided by age, neither let it be a prejudice to any man; for Samuel and Daniel, though mere youths, sat in judgment upon the elders. With the exception, therefore, of those whom for special reasons the Abbot shall advance or loser, let all the rest keep the order of the conversion. For example: He who cometh to the Monastery at the second hour of the day must know that he is lower than the man who came at the first hour, no matter what his age or dignity may be. But with regard to children, let them be kept under discipline on all occasions, by all indiscriminately. Let the Juniors, therefore, honour their Seniors, and the Seniors love the Juniors. But in addressing each other by name, no one shall call another by his simple name; let the Seniors call the Juniors Brothers, and let the Juniors call the Seniors Fathers out of reverence. But because the Abbot representeth the person of Christ, he shall be called “Domnus,” and “Abbot,” not as if he took this title upon himself, but out of honour and love of Christ. Let him remember to conduct himself in such a way, as to be worthy of so great honour. Wheresoever the Brethren meet each other, let the Junior ask a blessing from the Senior. When the Senior passeth by, let the Junior rise, and give place to him to sit down. Nor shall the Junior presume to sit with him, unless his Senior bid him do so, in order to accomplish that which is written: “In honour preventing one another.” Little children, youths, shall keep their respective places in the oratory or at table with due discipline. Elsewhere, careful watch shall be kept over them, till they come to the age of understanding.

Of the election of the Abbot. In the election of an Abbot let the following method always be observed; that he be constituted Abbot whom either the whole Community by common consent shall elect in the fear of God, or whom a small part of the same, shall choose with greater wisdom. Let him who is to be raised to this dignity be chosen on account of his virtuous life, his learning, and his wisdom; even though he be the last in the Community. But although the entire Community (which God forbid) shall with one accord choose a man who supports them in their evil practices, and these, by some means become known to the Bishop in whose diocese that place is situated, or to the Abbots, or to the neighbouring Christians; let them nullify the election of these wicked men, and appoint a worthy steward over the House of God; knowing that for this they shall receive a good reward, if they do it with a pure intention, and through zeal for God; and, on the contrary, that they sin if they neglect to do so. When once established in his office, let the Abbot always reflect how weighty a burthen he hath received, and unto Whom he must give an account of his stewardship. Let him also know that it is more becoming in him to do good unto others, than to hold sway over them. He must therefore be learned in the Divine Law, that he may know whence to “bring forth new things and old;” he must be chaste, sober, and merciful, and always prefer mercy to justice, that he himself may obtain mercy. He shall hate vice, and love the Brethren. Even in his corrections he shall act with prudence, and be guilty of no excess, lest, while too eagerly scouring off the rust, the vessel itself be broken. Let him bear in mind his own frailty, and remember that “the bruised reed must not be broken.” By this, we do not mean that he should allow vices to grow up, but, as we have said before, with prudence and charity, seek to root them out in such a way as shall be expedient for each case; and let his aim be rather to excite love, than to inspire fear. He must not be truculent and anxious; neither let him be over exacting, not headstrong, nor jealous, nor over suspicious, for then he will never be at rest. Even in what he orders, whether it pertain to God or to temporal matters, let him be prudent and considerate. Let him be discreet and moderate in the works which he enjoins, bearing in mind the discretion of holy Jacob who said; “If I shall cause my flocks to be overdriven, they will all die in one day.” Therefore adopting these and the like principles of discretion, which is the mother of

Saint Benedict

all virtues, let him so temper all things that the strong may have somewhat to strive after, and the weak, nought from which they may flee away. Especially let him observe this present Rule in all things, that after having ministered well, he may hear from the Lord what the good servant heard, who gave corn to his fellow servants in due time; “Amen, I say unto you, over all his goods will he place him.”

Of the Provost of
the Monastery

LXV

Of the Provost of the Monastery. It often happens that by the appointment of a Provost great scandals arise in Monasteries; because some, so appointed, being puffed up with the malignant spirit of pride, and esteeming themselves to be second Abbots, take upon themselves to tyrannise over others, to foster scandals, and to promote dissensions in the Community; and especially in those places where the Provost is instituted by the same Bishops of Abbots as the Abbot himself. How foolish this custom is, may easily be perceived; for a handle for pride is given to the Provost from the very beginning of his appointment, because his thoughts suggest to him that he is now released from the power of his Abbot, since he is instituted by the very persons by whom the Abbot himself is instituted. Hence arise envy, quarrels, detractions, rivalries, dissensions, and disorders; and while the Abbot and Provost are at variance with each other, it must of necessity follow, that their souls are imperilled during this dissension; those also who are under their charge run to destruction by adhering, some to one side, and some to the other. The sin of this danger lieth principally upon those who were the authors of such an appointment. Therefore, we foresee that it is expedient for the preservation of peace and charity, that the entire government of the Monastery depend upon the will of the Abbot. As we have before arranged, let all the business of the Monastery be transacted, if possible, by the Deans, according as the Abbot shall have determined, in order that, many being sharers in the same office, no one may become proud. But if either the circumstances of the place require a Provost, or the Community with reason and humility ask for one, and the Abbot think it expedient, he shall with the advice of such of the Brethren as have the fear of God before them, nominate and appoint one himself. Let the Provost do with reverence what shall be enjoined him by the Abbot, in no way going against his will or ordinance; because the higher

The Rule of Saint Benedict

he is advanced above the rest, the more carefully ought he to observe all the precepts of the Rule. If the Provost be found viciously inclined, or deceived by the haughtiness of pride, or a contemner of the Holy Rule, let him be warned by word of mouth four times; if he do not amend, let the correction of regular discipline be applied to him. If with this he do not grow better, he shall be deposed from the dignity of the Provostship, and a worthier man put in his place. If after this he be not quiet and obedient in the Community, let him be expelled from the Monastery. The Abbot shall nevertheless bear in mind, that for all his judgments he shall have to give an account to God, lest perchance his soul burn with the flame of envy and jealousy.

LXVI

Of the porter of
the Monastery

Of the porter of the Monastery. At the gate of the Monastery, let there be stationed a wise old man, who knows how to receive and to give an answer, and whose ripeness of age will not suffer him to wander from his post. He ought to have a cell near the gate, that such as come may always find him at hand, ready to give them an answer. As soon as any one shall knock, or a poor man cry for aid, let him presently answer: "Thanks be to God," or invoke a blessing; and with all mildness of the fear of God, let him reply speedily in the fervour of charity. If he need help, he shall have a junior Brother with him. The Monastery ought, if possible, to be so constructed as to contain within itself all necessaries, that is, water, a mill, a garden, and a bakehouse; also that the various crafts be exercised within it, so that there be no occasion for Monks to go abroad, because it is in no wise expedient for their souls. We wish this rule to be frequently read in the Community, that no Brother may excuse himself on the score of ignorance.

LXVII

Of the brethren
who are sent on
a journey

Of brethren who are sent on a journey. Let those who are to be sent on a journey commend themselves to the prayers of all the Brethren and of the Abbot, and always at the last prayer of the Work of God let a commemoration be made of all the absent. When they come back, they shall, on the very day of their return, lie prostrate on the ground of the Oratory during all the Canonical Hours, while the Work of God is being fulfilled, and beg the

Saint Benedict

prayers of all, on account of the faults they may have committed on the way, by sight or hearing of evil things, or by idle discourse. Let no one presume to relate unto others what he has seen or heard outside the Monastery; because this is a fruitful source of evil. If any one shall presume to do so, let him be liable to the penalty prescribed by the Rule. In like manner shall he be punished who shall presume to break the enclosure of the Monastery, or go anywhere, or do anything, how trifling soever without leave of the Abbot.

If a brother be
ordered to do
impossibilities

LXVIII

If a brother be ordered to do impossibilities. If any hard or impossible commands be enjoined a Brother, let him receive the injunctions of him who biddeth him with all mildness and obedience. But if he shall see that the burthen altogether exceedeth the measure of his strength, let him patiently and in due season state the cause of this inability unto his Superior, without manifesting any pride, resistance, or contradiction. If after his suggestion, the Prior shall still persist in his command, let the Brother know that it is for his good, and trusting in the assistance of God, let him obey through love for Him.

That no one pre-
sume to defend
another in the
Monastery

LXIX

That no one presume to defend another in the Monastery. Special care must be taken, that on no occasion one Monk presume to uphold or defend another in the Monastery, even though they be very near of kin. In no way whatsoever let any Monk presume to do this, because exceeding great occasion of scandal may arise from thence. If anyone shall transgress in this point, let him be severely punished.

That no one to
presume to strike
another

LXX

That no one presume to strike another. Let every occasion of presumption be avoided in the Monastery. We ordain and decree, that no one, unless the Abbot hath given his authority, shall be allowed to excommunicate or to strike any of his Brethren. Such as trespass in this respect shall be reprehended in the presence of all, that the rest may be inspired with fear. But let all have strict discipline and care over children, until their fifteenth year; yet this

The Rule of Saint Benedict

also must be done with moderation and discretion. For he who shall, without the Abbot's leave, presume to chastise such as are above that age, or to be unduly severe even towards the children, shall be liable to regular discipline, because it is written: "What thou wouldst not have done to thyself, do not thou unto another."

LXXI

That the Brethren be obedient to each other

That the brethren be obedient to each other. The service of obedience by all is not to be rendered to the Abbot only, but the Brethren shall also mutually obey each other, knowing that by this path of obedience they shall go unto God. Therefore, when the command of the Abbot, or of other Superiors constituted by him, have been first obeyed, (to which we suffer no private orders to be preferred), the Juniors shall obey their Seniors with all charity and diligence. If anyone be found contentious, let him be rebuked. But if a Brother be rebuked for event he least thing by the Abbot, or by any of his Seniors; or if he shall perceive that the mind of his Senior is even slightly, be it never so little, moved against him, he shall, without delay, prostrate himself at his feet, and remain there till that commotion be appeased and he receive a blessing. If any one be too proud to do this, let him be liable either to corporal punishment, or if he prove contumacious, let him be expelled from the Monastery.

LXXII

Of the good zeal which Monks ought to have

Of the good zeal which Monks ought to have. As there is an evil zeal of bitterness which separateth from God, and leadeth to hell, so there is a good zeal, which separateth from vices and leadeth to God and life everlasting. Let Monks, therefore, exercise this zeal with most fervent love; that is to say, let them "in honour prevent one another." Let them bear patiently with each other's infirmities, whether of body or of mind. Let them contend with one another in the virtue of obedience. Let no one follow what he thinketh profitable to himself, but rather that which is profitable to another; let them show unto each other all brotherly charity with a chaste love. Let them fear God, love their Abbot with sincere and humble affection, and prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may He bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

LXXIII

That the whole
observance of
perfection is not
contained in the
Rule

That the whole observance of perfection is not contained in this Rule. We have written this Rule, that by its observance in Monasteries we may show that we possess, in some measure, uprightness of manners, or the beginning of a good Religious life. But for such as hasten forward to the perfection of holy living, there are the precepts of the holy Fathers, the observance whereof leadeth a man to the height of perfection. For what page, or what passage is there in the divinely inspired books of the Old and New Testament, that is not a most perfect rule of man's life? Or what book is there of the holy Catholic Fathers that doth not proclaim this; that we may by a direct course reach our Creator? Moreover, what else are the Collations of the Fathers, their Institutes, their Lives, also the Rule of our Holy Father Basil, but examples of the good living and obedience of Monks, and so many instruments of virtue? But to us who are slothful and lead bad and negligent lives, they are matter for shame and confusion. Therefore whosoever thou art that dost hasten to the heavenly country, first accomplish, by the help of Christ, this little Rule written for beginners: and then at length thou shalt come, under the guidance of God, to those loftier heights of doctrine and of virtue, which we have mentioned above.

The end.

Whosoever shall follow this rule,

Peace on them.



WARS OF JUSTINIAN

PROCOPIUS

Translated by H.B. Dewing

BOOK ONE

XXIV

[Jan. 1, 532] At this same time an insurrection broke out unexpectedly in Byzantium among the populace, and, contrary to expectation, it proved to be a very serious affair, and ended in great harm to the people and to the senate, as the following account will shew. In every city the population has been divided for a long time past into the Blue and the Green factions; but within comparatively recent times it has come about that, for the sake of these names and the seats which the rival factions occupy in watching the games, they spend their money and abandon their bodies to the most cruel tortures, and even do not think it unworthy to die a most shameful death. And they fight against their opponents knowing not for what end they imperil themselves, but knowing well that, even if they overcome their enemy in the fight, the conclusion of the matter for them will be to be carried off straightway to the prison, and finally, after suffering extreme torture, to be destroyed. So there grows up in them against their fellow men a hostility which has no cause, and at no time does it cease or disappear, for it gives place neither to the ties of

marriage nor of relationship nor of friendship, and the case is the same even though those who differ with respect to these colours be brothers or any other kin. They care neither for things divine nor human in comparison with conquering in these struggles; and it matters not whether a sacrilege is committed by anyone at all against God, or whether the laws and the constitution are violated by friend or by foe; nay even when they are perhaps ill supplied with the necessities of life, and when their fatherland is in the most pressing need and suffering unjustly, they pay no heed if only it is likely to go well with their "faction"; for so they name the bands of partisans. And even women join with them in this unholy strife, and they not only follow the men, but even resist them if opportunity offers, although they neither go to the public exhibitions at all, nor are they impelled by any other cause; so that I, for my part, am unable to call this anything except a disease of the soul. This, then, is pretty well how matters stand among the people of each and every city.

But at this time the officers of the city administration in Byzantium were leading away to death some of the rioters. But the members of the two factions, conspiring together and declaring a truce with each other, seized the prisoners and then straightway entered the prison and released all those who were in confinement there, whether they had been condemned on a charge of stirring up sedition, or for any other unlawful act. And all the attendants in the service of the city government were killed indiscriminately; meanwhile, all of the citizens who were sane-minded were fleeing to the opposite mainland, and fire was applied to the city as if it had fallen under the hand of an enemy. The sanctuary of Sophia and the baths of Zeuxippus, and the portion of the imperial residence from the propylaea as far as the so-called House of Ares were destroyed by fire, and besides these both the great colonnades which extended as far as the market place which bears the name of Constantine, in addition to many houses of wealthy men and a vast amount of treasure. During this time the emperor and his consort with a few members of the senate shut themselves up in the palace and remained quietly there. Now the watch-word which the populace passed around to one another was Nika, and the insurrection has been called by this name up to the present time.

The praetorian prefect at that time was John the Cappadocian, and Tribunianus, a Pamphylian by birth, was counsellor to the emperor; this person the Romans call "quaestor." One of these two men, John, was entirely without

the advantages of a liberal education; for he learned nothing while attending the elementary school except his letters, and these, too, poorly enough; but by his natural ability he became the most powerful man of whom we know. For he was most capable in deciding upon what was needful and in finding a solution for difficulties. But he became the basest of all men and employed his natural power to further his low designs; neither consideration for God nor any shame before man entered into his mind, but to destroy the lives of many men for the sake of gain and to wreck whole cities was his constant concern. So within a short time indeed he had acquired vast sums of money, and he flung himself completely into the sordid life of a drunken scoundrel; for up to the time of lunch each day he would plunder the property of his subjects, and for the rest of the day occupy himself with drinking and with wanton deeds of lust. And he was utterly unable to control himself, for he ate food until he vomited, and he was always ready to steal money and more ready to bring it out and spend it. Such a man then was John. Tribunianus, on the other hand, both possessed natural ability and in educational attainments was inferior to none of his contemporaries; but he was extraordinarily fond of the pursuit of money and always ready to sell justice for gain; therefore every day, as a rule, he was repealing some laws and proposing others, selling off to those who requested it either favour according to their need.

Now as long as the people were waging this war with each other in behalf of the names of the colours, no attention was paid to the offences of these men against the constitution; but when the factions came to a mutual understanding, as has been said, and so began the sedition, then openly throughout the whole city they began to abuse the two and went about seeking them to kill. Accordingly the emperor, wishing to win the people to his side, instantly dismissed both these men from office. And Phocas, a patrician, he appointed praetorian prefect, a man of the greatest discretion and fitted by nature to be a guardian of justice; Basilides he commanded to fill the office of quaestor, a man known among the patricians for his agreeable qualities and a notable besides. However, the insurrection continued no less violently under them. Now on the fifth day of the insurrection in the late afternoon the Emperor Justinian gave orders to Hypatius and Pompeius, nephews of the late emperor, Anastasius, to go home as quickly as possible, either because he suspected that some plot was being matured by them against his own person, or, it may

be, because destiny brought them to this. But they feared that the people would force them to the throne (as in fact fell out), and they said that they would be doing wrong if they should abandon their sovereign when he found himself in such danger. When the Emperor Justinian heard this, he inclined still more to his suspicion, and he bade them quit the palace instantly. Thus, then, these two men betook themselves to their homes, and, as long as it was night, they remained there quietly.

But on the following day at sunrise it became known to the people that both men had quit the palace where they had been staying. So the whole population ran to them, and they declared Hypatius emperor and prepared to lead him to the market-place to assume the power. But the wife of Hypatius, Mary, a discreet woman, who had the greatest reputation for prudence, laid hold of her husband and would not let go, but cried out with loud lamentation and with entreaties to all her kinsmen that the people were leading him on the road to death. But since the throng overpowered her, she unwillingly released her husband, and he by no will of his own came to the Forum of Constantine, where they summoned him to the throne; then since they had neither diadem nor anything else with which it is customary for a king to be clothed, they placed a golden necklace upon his head and proclaimed him Emperor of the Romans. By this time the members of the senate were assembling,—as many of them as had not been left in the emperor's residence,—and many expressed the opinion that they should go to the palace to fight. But Origenes, a man of the senate, came forward and spoke as follows: "Fellow Romans, it is impossible that the situation which is upon us be solved in any way except by war. Now war and royal power are agreed to be the greatest of all things in the world. But when action involves great issues, it refuses to be brought to a successful conclusion by the brief crisis of a moment, but this is accomplished only by wisdom of thought and energy of action, which men display for a length of time. Therefore if we should go out against the enemy, our cause will hang in the balance, and we shall be taking a risk which will decide everything in a brief space of time; and, as regards the consequences of such action, we shall either fall down and worship Fortune or reproach her altogether. For those things whose issue is most quickly decided, fall, as a rule, under the sway of fortune. But if we handle the present situation more deliberately, not even if we wish shall we be able to take Justinian in the

palace, but he will very speedily be thankful if he is allowed to flee; for authority which is ignored always loses its power, since its strength ebbs away with each day. Moreover we have other palaces, both Placillianae and the palace named from Helen, which this emperor should make his headquarters and from there he should carry on the war and attend to the ordering of all other matters in the best possible way.” So spoke Origenes. But the rest, as a crowd is accustomed to do, insisted more excitedly and thought that the present moment was opportune, and not least of all Hypatius (for it was fated that evil should befall him) bade them lead the way to the hippodrome. But some say that he came there purposely, being well-disposed toward the emperor.

Now the emperor and his court were deliberating as to whether it would be better for them if they remained or if they took to flight in the ships. And many opinions were expressed favouring either course. And the Empress Theodora also spoke to the following effect: “As to the belief that a woman ought not to be daring among men or to assert herself boldly among those who are holding back from fear, I consider that the present crisis most certainly does not permit us to discuss whether the matter should be regarded in this or in some other way. For in the case of those whose interests have come into the greatest danger nothing else seems best except to settle the issue immediately before them in the best possible way. My opinion then is that the present time, above all others, is inopportune for flight, even though it bring safety. For while it is impossible for a man who has seen the light not also to die, for one who has been an emperor it is unendurable to be a fugitive. May I never be separated from this purple, and may I not live that day on which those who meet me shall not address me as mistress. If, now, it is your wish to save yourself, O Emperor, there is no difficulty. For we have much money, and there is the sea, here the boats. However consider whether it will not come about after you have been saved that you would gladly exchange that safety for death. For as for myself, I approve a certain ancient saying that royalty is a good burial-shroud.” When the queen had spoken thus, all were filled with boldness, and, turning their thoughts towards resistance, they began to consider how they might be able to defend themselves if any hostile force should come against them. Now the soldiers as a body, including those who were stationed about the emperor’s court, were neither well disposed to the emperor nor willing openly to take an active part in fighting, but were

waiting for what the future would bring forth. All the hopes of the emperor were centred upon Belisarius and Mundus, of whom the former, Belisarius, had recently returned from the Persian war bringing with him a following which was both powerful and imposing, and in particular he had a great number of spearmen and guards who had received their training in battles and the perils of warfare. Mundus had been appointed general of the Illyrians, and by mere chance had happened to come under summons to Byzantium on some necessary errand, bringing with him Erulian barbarians.

When Hypatius reached the hippodrome, he went up immediately to where the emperor is accustomed to take his place and seated himself on the royal throne from which the emperor was always accustomed to view the equestrian and athletic contests. And from the palace Mundus went out through the gate which, from the circling descent, has been given the name of the Snail. Belisarius meanwhile began at first to go straight up toward Hypatius himself and the royal throne, and when he came to the adjoining structure where there has been a guard of soldiers from of old, he cried out to the soldiers commanding them to open the door for him as quickly as possible, in order that he might go against the tyrant. But since the soldiers had decided to support neither side, until one of them should be manifestly victorious, they pretended not to hear at all and thus put him off. So Belisarius returned to the emperor and declared that the day was lost for them, for the soldiers who guarded the palace were rebelling against him. The emperor therefore commanded him to go to the so-called Bronze Gate and the propylaea there. So Belisarius, with difficulty and not without danger and great exertion, made his way over ground covered by ruins and half-burned buildings, and ascended to the stadium. And when he had reached the Blue Colonnade which is on the right of the emperor's throne, he purposed to go against Hypatius himself first; but since there was a small door there which had been closed and was guarded by the soldiers of Hypatius who were inside, he feared lest while he was struggling in the narrow space the populace should fall upon him, and after destroying both himself and all his followers, should proceed with less trouble and difficulty against the emperor. Concluding, therefore, that he must go against the populace who had taken their stand in the hippodrome—a vast multitude crowding each other in great disorder—he drew his sword from its sheath and, commanding the others to do likewise, with a

shout he advanced upon them at a run. But the populace, who were standing in a mass and not in order, at the sight of armoured soldiers who had a great reputation for bravery and experience in war, and seeing that they struck out with their swords unsparingly, beat a hasty retreat. Then a great outcry arose, as was natural, and Mundus, who was standing not far away, was eager to join in the fight,—for he was a daring and energetic fellow—but he was at a loss as to what he should do under the circumstances; when, however, he observed that Belisarius was in the struggle, he straightway made a sally into the hippodrome through the entrance which they call the Gate of Death. Then indeed from both sides the partisans of Hypatius were assailed with might and main and destroyed. When the rout had become complete and there had already been great slaughter of the populace, Boraedes and Justus, nephews of the Emperor Justinian, without anyone daring to lift a hand against them, dragged Hypatius down from the throne, and, leading him in, handed him over together with Pompeius to the emperor. And there perished among the populace on that day more than thirty thousand. But the emperor commanded the two prisoners to be kept in severe confinement. Then, while Pompeius was weeping and uttering pitiable words (for the man was wholly inexperienced in such misfortunes), Hypatius reproached him at length and said that those who were about to die unjustly should not lament. For in the beginning they had been forced by the people against their will, and afterwards they had come to the hippodrome with no thought of harming the emperor. And the soldiers killed both of them on the following day and threw their bodies into the sea. The emperor confiscated all their property for the public treasury, and also that of all the other members of the senate who had sided with them. Later, however, he restored to the children of Hypatius and Pompeius and to all others the titles which they had formerly held, and as much of their property as he had not happened to bestow upon his friends. This was the end of the insurrection in Byzantium.

BOOK FOUR

IX

Belisarius, upon reaching Byzantium with Gelimer and the Vandals, was counted worthy to receive such honours, as in former times were assigned to those generals of the Romans who had won the greatest and most noteworthy victories. And a period of about six hundred years had now passed since anyone had attained these honours, except, indeed, Titus and Trajan, and such other emperors as had led armies against some barbarian nation and had been victorious. For he displayed the spoils and slaves from the war in the midst of the city and led a procession which the Romans call a "triumph," not, however, in the ancient manner, but going on foot from his own house to the hippodrome and then again from the barriers until he reached the place where the imperial throne is. And there was booty,—first of all, whatever articles are wont to be set apart for the royal service,—thrones of gold and carriages in which it is customary for a king's consort to ride, and much jewelry made of precious stones, and golden drinking cups, and all the other things which are useful for the royal table. And there was also silver weighing many thousands of talents and all the royal treasure amounting to an exceedingly great sum (for Gizeric had despoiled the Palatium in Rome, as has been said in the preceding narrative), and among these were the treasures of the Jews, which Titus, the son of Vespasian, together with certain others, had brought to Rome after the capture of Jerusalem. And one of the Jews, seeing these things, approached one of those known to the emperor and said: "These treasures I think it inexpedient to carry into the palace in Byzantium. Indeed, it is not possible for them to be elsewhere than in the place where Solomon, the king of the Jews, formerly placed them. For it is because of these that Gizeric captured the palace of the Romans, and that now the Roman army has captured that the Vandals." When this had been brought to the ears of the Emperor, he became afraid and quickly sent everything to the sanctuaries of the Christians in Jerusalem. And there were slaves in the triumph, among whom was Gelimer himself, wearing some sort of a purple garment upon his shoulders, and all his family, and as many of the Vandals as were very tall and fair of body. And when Gelimer reached the hippodrome and saw the emperor sitting upon a lofty seat and the people standing on either side and

Wars of Justinian

realized as he looked about in what an evil plight he was, he neither wept nor cried out, but ceased not saying over in the words of the Hebrew scripture: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." And when he came before the emperor's seat, they stripped off the purple garment, and compelled him to fall prone on the ground and do obeisance to the Emperor Justinian. This also Belisarius did, as being a suppliant of the emperor along with him. And the Emperor Justinian and the Empress Theodora presented the children of Ilderic and his offspring and all those of the family of the Emperor Valentinian with sufficient sums of money, and to Gelimer they gave lands not to be despised in Galatia and permitted him to live there together with his family. However, Gelimer was by no means enrolled among the patricians, since he was unwilling to change from the faith of Arius.

[Jan. 1, 535 A.D.] A little later the triumph was celebrated by Belisarius in the ancient manner also. For he had the fortune to be advanced to the office of consul, and therefore was borne aloft by the captives, and as he was thus carried in his curule chair, he threw to the populace those very spoils of the Vandalic war. For the people carried off the silver plate and golden girdles and a vast amount of the Vandals' wealth of other sorts as a result of Belisarius' consulship, and it seemed that after a long interval of disuse an old custom was being revived. These things, then, took place in Byzantium in the manner described.



HISTORY OF THE FRANKS

GREGORY OF TOURS

Translated by Ernest Brehaut

Editor's note: this text is pulled from the abridged translation of Ernest Brehaut. The text that Brehaut omitted is indicated in the original text and this reader by brackets, which include the section number and a short mention of what occurs or who is discussed in the omitted sections.

BOOK ONE

36. Constantine was the thirty-fourth emperor of the Romans, and he reigned prosperously for thirty years. In the eleventh year of his reign, when peace had been granted to the churches after the death of Diocletian, our blessed patron Martin was born at Sabaria, a city of Pannonia, of heathen parents, who still were not of the lowest station. This Constantine in the twentieth year of his reign caused the death of his son Crispus by poison, and of his wife Fausta by means of a hot bath, because they had plotted to betray his rule. In his time the venerated wood of the Lord's cross was found, through the zeal of his mother Helen on the information of Judas, a Hebrew who was called Quiriacus after baptism. The historian Eusebius comes down to this period in his chronicle. The priest Jerome continues it from the twenty-first year of Constantine's reign. He informs us that the priest Juvencus wrote the gospels

Gregory of Tours

in verse at the request of the emperor named above.

[37. *James of Nisibis and Maximin of Trèves.* 38. *Hilarius bishop of Poitiers.*]

39. At that time our light arose and Gaul was traversed by the rays of a new lamp, that is, the most blessed Martin then began to preach in the Gauls, and he overcame the unbelief of the heathen, showing among the people by many miracles that Christ the Son of God was the true God. He destroyed heathen shrines, crushed heresy, built churches, and while he was glorious for many other miracles, he completed his title to fame by restoring three dead men to life. At Poitiers, in the fourth year of Valentinian and Valens, Saint Hilarius passed to heaven full of sanctity and faith, a priest of many miracles; for he too is said to have raised the dead.

[40. *Melania's journey to Jerusalem.*]

41. After the death of Valentinian, Valens, who succeeded to the undivided empire, gave orders that the monks be compelled to serve in the army, and commanded that those who refused should be beaten with clubs. After this the Romans fought a very fierce battle in Thrace, in which there was such slaughter that the Romans fled on foot after losing their horses, and when they were being cut to pieces by the Goths, and Valens was fleeing with an arrow wound, he entered a small hut, the enemy closely pursuing, and the little dwelling was burned over him. And he was deprived of the burial he desired. And thus the divine vengeance finally came for shedding the blood of the saints. Thus far Jerome; from this period the priest Orosius wrote at greater length.

[42. *The pious emperor Theodosius.* 43. *The emperor Maximus with capital at Trèves.* 44. *Urbicus, second bishop of Clermont, and his wife.* 45. *Hilidius, third bishop of Clermont, and his miracles.* 46. *Nepotian and Arthemius, fourth and fifth bishops of Clermont.* 47. *Legend of the two lovers of Clermont.*]

48. In the second year of the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, Saint Martin, bishop of Tours, departed this life at Candes, a village of his diocese, and passed happily to Christ in the eighty-first year of his life and the twenty-sixth of his episcopate, a man full of miracles and holiness, doing many services

History of the Franks

to the infirm He passed away at midnight of the Lord's day, in the consulship of Atticus and Cæsarius. Many heard at his passing away the sound of psalmsinging in heaven, which I have spoken of at greater length in the first book of his Miracles. Now as soon as the saint of God fell sick at the village of Candes, as we have related, the people of Poitiers came to be present at his death, as did also the people of Tours. And when he died, a great dispute arose between the two peoples. For the people of Poitiers said: "As a monk, he is ours; as an abbot, he belonged to us; we demand that he be given to us. Let it be enough for you that when he was a bishop on earth you enjoyed his conversation, ate with him, were strengthened by his blessings and cheered by his miracles. Let all that be enough for you. Let us be permitted to carry away his dead body." To this the people of Tours replied: "If you say that the working of his miracles is enough for us, let us tell you that while he was placed among you he worked more miracles than he did here. For, to pass over most of them, he raised two dead men for you, and one for us; and as he used often to say himself, there was more virtue in him before he was bishop than after. And so it is necessary that he complete for us after death what he did not finish in his lifetime. For he was taken away from you and given to us by God. If a custom long established is kept, a man shall have his tomb by God's command in the city in which he was ordained. And if you desire to claim him because of the right of the monastery, let us tell you that his first monastery was at Milan." While they were arguing in this way the sun sank and night closed in. And the body was placed in the midst, and the doors were barred and the body was guarded by both peoples, and it was going to be carried off by violence by the people of Poitiers in the morning. But omnipotent God was unwilling that the city of Tours should be deprived of its protector. Finally at midnight the whole band from Poitiers were overwhelmed with sleep and no one remained out of this multitude to keep watch. Then when the people of Tours saw that they had fallen asleep they seized on the clay of the holy body and some thrust it out the window and others received it outside, and placing it in a boat they went down the river Vienne with all their people and entered the channel of the Loire, and made their way to the city of Tours with great praises and plentiful psalm-singing, and the people of Poitiers were waked by their voices, and having no treasure to guard they returned to their own place greatly crestfallen. And if any one asks why there was only one bishop, that is, Litorius, after the death of bishop Gatianus to

Gregory of Tours

the time of Saint Martin, let him know that for a long time the city of Tours was without the blessing of a bishop, owing to the resistance of the heathen. For they who lived as Christians at that time celebrated the divine office secretly and in hiding. For if any Christians were found by the heathen they were punished with stripes or slain by the sword.

Now from the suffering of the Lord to the passing of Saint Martin, 412 years are included.

HERE ENDS THE FIRST BOOK CONTAINING 5597 YEARS WHICH ARE RECKONED FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD TO THE DEATH OF THE HOLY BISHOP MARTIN.

BOOK ONE

27. After these events Childeric died and Clovis his son reigned in his stead. In the fifth year of his reign Siagrius, king of the Romans, son of Egidius, had his seat in the city of Soissons which Egidius, who has been mentioned before, once held. And Clovis came against him with Ragnachar, his kinsman, because he used to possess the kingdom, and demanded that they make ready a battlefield. And Siagrius did not delay nor was he afraid to resist. And so they fought against each other and Siagrius, seeing his army crushed, turned his back and fled swiftly to king Alaric at Toulouse. And Clovis sent to Alaric to send him back, otherwise he was to know that Clovis would make war on him for his refusal. And Alaric was afraid that he would incur the anger of the Franks on account of Siagrius, seeing it is the fashion of the Goths to be terrified, and he surrendered him in chains to Clovis' envoys. And Clovis took him and gave orders to put him under guard, and when he had got his kingdom he directed that he be executed secretly. At that time many churches were despoiled by Clovis' army, since he was as yet involved in heathen error. Now the army had taken from a certain church a vase of wonderful size and beauty, along with the remainder of the utensils for the service of the church. And the bishop of the church sent messengers to the king asking that the vase at least be returned, if he could not get back any more of the sacred dishes. On hearing this the king said to the messenger: "Follow us as far as Soissons, because all that has been taken is to be divided there and when the lot assigns me that dish I will do what the father asks."

[note: papa. The word was used in the early Middle Ages in unrestricted, informal sense, and applied widely to bishops. Cf. Du Cange, *Glossarium*]

History of the Franks

Then when he came to Soissons and all the booty was set in their midst, the king said: "I ask of you, brave warriors, not to refuse to grant me in addition to my share, yonder dish," that is, he was speaking of the vase just mentioned. In answer to the speech of the king those of more sense replied: "Glorious king, all that we see is yours, and we ourselves are subject to your rule. Now do what seems wellpleasing to you; for no one is able to resist your power." When they said this a foolish, envious and excitable fellow lifted his battleax and struck the vase, and cried in a loud voice: "You shall get nothing here except what the lot fairly bestows on you." At this all were stupefied, but the king endured the insult with the gentleness of patience, and taking the vase he handed it over to the messenger of the church, nursing the wound deep in his heart. And at the end of the year he ordered the whole army to come with their equipment of armor, to show the brightness of their arms on the field of March. And when he was reviewing them all carefully, he came to the man who struck the vase, and said to him "No one has brought armor so carelessly kept as you; for neither your spear nor sword nor ax is in serviceable condition." And seizing his ax he cast it to the earth, and when the other had bent over somewhat to pick it up, the king raised his hands and drove his own ax into the man's head. "This," said he, "is what you did at Soissons to the vase." Upon the death of this man, he ordered the rest to depart, raising great dread of himself by this action. He made many wars and gained many victories. In the tenth year of his reign he made war on the Thuringi and brought them under his dominion.

28. Now the king of the Burgundians was Gundevech, of the family of king Athanaric the persecutor, whom we have mentioned before. He had four sons; Gundobad, Godegisel, Chilperic and Godomar. Gundobad killed his brother Chilperic with the sword, and sank his wife in water with a stone tied to her neck. His two daughters he condemned to exile; the older of these, who became a nun, was called Chrona, and the younger Clotilda. And as Clovis often sent embassies to Burgundy, the maiden Clotilda was found by his envoys. And when they saw that she was of good bearing and wise, and learned that she was of the family of the king, they reported this to King Clovis, and he sent an embassy to Gundobad without delay asking her in marriage. And Gundobad was afraid to refuse, and surrendered her to the men, and they took the girl and brought her swiftly to the king. The king was

very glad when he saw her, and married her, having already by a concubine a son named Theodoric.

29. He had a first-born son by queen Clotilda, and as his wife wished to consecrate him in baptism, she tried unceasingly to persuade her husband, saying: "The gods you worship are nothing, and they will be unable to help themselves or any one else. For they are graven out of stone or wood or some metal. And the names you have given them are names of men and not of gods, as Saturn, who is declared to have fled in fear of being banished from his kingdom by his son; as Jove himself, the foul perpetrator of all shameful crimes, committing incest with men, mocking at his kinswomen, not able to refrain from intercourse with his own sister as she herself says: *Jovisque et soror et conjunx*. What could Mars or Mercury do? They are endowed rather with the magic arts than with the power of the divine name. But he ought rather to be worshipped who created by his word heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is out of a state of nothingness, who made the sun shine, and adorned the heavens with stars, who filled the waters with creeping things, the earth with living things and the air with creatures that fly, at whose nod the earth is decked with growing crops, the trees with fruit, the vines with grapes, by whose hand mankind was created, by whose generosity all that creation serves and helps man whom he created as his own." But though the queen said this the spirit of the king was by no means moved to belief, and he said: "It was at the command of our gods that all things were created and came forth, and it is plain that your God has no power and, what is more, he is proven not to belong to the family of the gods." Meantime the faithful queen made her son ready for baptism; she gave command to adorn the church with hangings and curtains, in order that he who could not be moved by persuasion might be urged to belief by this mystery. The boy, whom they named Ingomer, died after being baptized, still wearing the white garments in which he became regenerate. At this the king was violently angry, and reproached the queen harshly, saying: "If the boy had been dedicated in the name of my gods he would certainly have lived; but as it is, since he was baptized in the name of your God, he could not live at all." To this the queen said: "I give thanks to the omnipotent God, creator of all, who has judged me not wholly unworthy, that he should deign to take to his kingdom one born from my womb. My soul is not stricken with grief for his sake, because I know that,

History of the Franks

summoned from this world as he was in his baptismal garments, he will be fed by the vision of God.”

After this she bore another son, whom she named Chlodomer at baptism; and when he fell sick, the king said: “It is impossible that anything else should happen to him than happened to his brother, namely, that being baptized in the name of your Christ, should die at once.” But through the prayers of his mother, and the Lord’s command, he became well.

30. The queen did not cease to urge him to recognize the true God and cease worshipping idols. But he could not be influenced in any way to this belief, until at last a war arose with the Alamanni, in which he was driven by necessity to confess what before he had of his free will denied. It came about that as the two armies were fighting fiercely, there was much slaughter, and Clovis’s army began to be in danger of destruction. He saw it and raised his eyes to heaven, and with remorse in his heart he burst into tears and cried: “Jesus Christ, whom Clotilda asserts to be the son of the living God, who art said to give aid to those in distress, and to bestow victory on those who hope in thee, I beseech the glory of thy aid, with the vow that if thou wilt grant me victory over these enemies, and I shall know that power which she says that people dedicated in thy name have had from thee, I will believe in thee and be baptized in thy name. For I have invoked my own gods but, as I find, they have withdrawn from aiding me; and therefore I believe that they possess no power, since they do not help those who obey them. I now call upon thee, I desire to believe thee only let me be rescued from my adversaries.” And when he said thus, the Alamanni turned their backs, and began to disperse in flight. And when they saw that their king was killed, they submitted to the dominion of Clovis, saying: “Let not the people perish further, we pray; we are yours now.” And he stopped the fighting, and after encouraging his men, retired in peace and told the queen how he had had merit to win the victory by calling on the name of Christ. This happened in the fifteenth year of his reign.

31. Then the queen asked saint Remi, bishop of Rheims, to summon Clovis secretly, urging him to introduce the king to the word of salvation. And the bishop sent for him secretly and began to urge him to believe in the true God, maker of heaven and earth, and to cease worshipping idols,

which could help neither themselves nor any one else. But the king said: "I gladly hear you, most holy father; but there remains one thing: the people who follow me cannot endure to abandon their gods; but I shall go and speak to them according to your words." He met with his followers, but before he could speak the power of God anticipated him, and all the people cried out together: "O pious king, we reject our mortal gods, and we are ready to follow the immortal God whom Remi preaches." This was reported to the bishop, who was greatly rejoiced, and bade them get ready the baptismal font. The squares were shaded with tapestried canopies, the churches adorned with white curtains, the baptistery set in order, the aroma of incense spread, candles of fragrant odor burned brightly, and the whole shrine of the baptistery was filled with a divine fragrance: and the Lord gave such grace to those who stood by that they thought they were placed amid the odors of paradise. And the king was the first to ask to be baptized by the bishop. Another Constantine advanced to the baptismal font, to terminate the disease of ancient leprosy and wash away with fresh water the foul spots that had long been borne. And when he entered to be baptized, the saint of God began with ready speech: "Gently bend your neck, Sigamber; worship what you burned; burn what you worshipped." The holy bishop Remi was a man of excellent wisdom and especially trained in rhetorical studies, and of such surpassing holiness that he equalled the miracles of Silvester. For there is extant a book of his life which tells that he raised a dead man. And so the king confessed all-powerful God in the Trinity, and was baptized in the name of the Father, Son and holy Spirit, and was anointed with the holy ointment with the sign of the cross of Christ. And of his army more than 3000 were baptized. His sister also, Albofled, was baptized, who not long after passed to the Lord. And when the king was in mourning for her, the holy Remi sent a letter of consolation which began in this way: "The reason of your mourning pains me, and pains me greatly, that Albofled your sister, of good memory, has passed away. But I can give you this comfort, that her departure from the world was such that she ought to be envied rather than e mourned." Another sister also was converted, Lanthechild by name, who had fallen into the heresy of the Arians, and she confessed that the Son and the holy Spirit were equal to the Father, and was anointed.

32. At that time the brothers Gundobad and Godegisel were kings of

History of the Franks

the country about the Rhone and the Saône together With the province of Marseilles. And they, as well as their people belonged to the Arian sect. And since they were fighting with each other, Godegisel, hearing of the victories of King Clovis, sent an embassy to him secretly, saying: "If you will give me aid in attacking my brother, so that I may be able to kill him in battle or drive him from the country, I will pay you every year whatever tribute you yourself wish to impose." Clovis accepted this offer gladly, and promised aid whenever need should ask. And at a time agreed upon he marched his army against Gundobad. On hearing of this, Gundobad, who did not know of his brother's treachery, sent to him, saying: "Come to my assistance, since the Franks are in motion against us and are coming to our country to take it. Therefore let us be united against a nation hostile to us lest because of division we suffer in turn what other peoples have suffered." And the other said: "I will come with my army, and will give you aid." And these three, namely, Clovis against Gundobad and Godegisel, were marching their armies to the same point, and they came with all their warlike equipment to the strong hold named Dijon. And they fought on the river Ouche, and Godegisel joined Clovis, and both armies crushed the people of Gundobad. And he perceived the treachery of his brother, whom he had not suspected, and turned his back and began to flee, hastening along the banks of the Rhone, and he came to the city of Avignon. And Godegisel having won the victory, promised to Clovis a part of his kingdom, and departed quietly and entered Vienne in triumph as if he now held the whole kingdom. King Clovis increased his army further, and set off after Gundobad to drag him from his city and slay him. He heard it, and was terrified, and feared that sudden death would come to him. However he had with him Aridius, a man famed for energy and wisdom, and he sent for him and said: "Difficulties wall me in on every side, and I do not know what to do, because these barbarians have come upon us to slay us and destroy the whole country." To this Aridius answered: "You must soften the fierceness of this man in order not to perish. Now if it is pleasing in your eyes, I will pretend to flee from you and to pass over to his side, and when I come to him, I shall prevent his harming either you or this country. Only be willing to do what he demands of you by my advice, until the Lord in his goodness deigns to make your cause successful." And Gundobad said: "I will do whatever you direct." When he said this, Aridius bade him goodby and departed, and going to King Clovis he said: "Behold I am your humble servant, most pious king, I

come to your protection, leaving the wretched Gundobad. And if your goodness condescends to receive me, both you and your children shall have in me a true and faithful servant.” Clovis received him very readily, and kept him by him, for he was entertaining in storytelling, ready in counsel, just in judgment, and faithful in what was put in his charge. Then when Clovis with all his army sat around the walls of the city, Aridius said: “O King, if the glory of your loftiness should kindly consent to hear the few words of my lowliness, though you do not need counsel, yet I would utter them with entire faithfulness, and they will be advantageous to you and to the cities through which you purpose to go. Why,” said he, “do you keep your army here, when your enemy sits in a very strong place? If you ravage the fields, lay waste the meadows, cut down the vineyards, lay low the oliveyards, and destroy all the produce of the country, you do not, however, succeed in doing him any harm. Send an embassy rather and impose tribute to be paid you every year, so that the country may be safe and you may rule forever over a tributary. And if he refuses, then do whatever pleases you.” The king took this advice, and commanded his army to return home. Then he sent an embassy to Gundobad, and ordered him to pay him every year a tribute. And he paid it at once and promised that he would pay it for the future.

33. Later he regained his power, and now contemptuously: refused to pay the promised tribute to king Clovis, and set his army in motion against his brother Godegisel, and shut him up in the city of Vienne and besieged him. And when food began to be lacking for the common people, Godegisel was afraid that the famine would extend to himself, and gave orders that the common people be expelled from the city. When this was done, there was driven out, among the rest, the artisan who had charge of the aqueduct. And he was indignant that he had been cast out from the city with the rest, and went to Gundobad in a rage to inform him how to burst into the city and take vengeance on his brother. Under his guidance an army was led through the aqueduct, and many with iron crowbars went in front, for there was a vent in the aqueduct closed with a great stone, and when this had been pushed away with crowbars, by direction of the artisan, they entered the city, and surprised from the rear the defenders who were shooting arrows from the wall. The trumpet was sounded in the midst of the city, and the besiegers seized the gates, and opened them and entered at the same time, and when the peo-

History of the Franks

ple between these two battle lines were being slain by each army, Godegisel sought refuge in the church of the heretics, and was slain there along with the Arian bishop. Finally the Franks who were with Godegisel gathered in a tower. But Gundobad ordered that no harm should be done to a single one of them, but seized them and sent them in exile to king Alaric at Toulouse, and he slew the Burgundian senators who had conspired with Godegisel. He restored to his own dominion all the region which is now called Burgundy. He established milder laws for the Burgundians lest they should oppress the Romans.

[34. King Gundobad is converted to the doctrine of the Trinity but will not confess it in public. The writings of bishop Avitus are described.]

35. Now when Alaric, king of the Goths, saw Clovis conquering nations steadily, he sent envoys to him saying: "If my brother consents, it is the desire of my heart that with God's favor we have a meeting." Clovis did not spurn this proposal but went to meet him. They met in an island of the Loire which is near the village of Amboise in the territory of Tours, and they talked and ate and drank together, and plighted friendship and departed in peace. Even at that time many in the Gauls desired greatly to have the Franks as masters.

36. Whence it happened that Quintian, bishop of Rodez, was driven from his city through illwill on this account. For they said: "It is your desire that the rule of the Franks be extended over this land." A few days later a quarrel arose between him and the citizens, and the Goths who dwelt in the city became suspicious when the citizens charged that he wished to submit himself to the control of the Franks; they took counsel and decided to slay him with the sword. When this was reported to the man of God he rose in the night and left the city of Rodez with his most faithful servants and went to Clermont. There he was received kindly by the holy bishop Eufrasius, who had succeeded Aprunculus of Dijon, and he kept Quintian with him, giving him houses as well as fields and vineyards, and saying: "The wealth of this church is enough to keep us both; only let the charity which the blessed apostle preaches endure among the bishops of God." Moreover the bishop of Lyons bestowed upon him some of the possessions of the church which he had in Auvergne. And the rest about the holy Quintian, both the plottings which he endured and the miracles which the Lord deigned to work through him, are

written in the book of his life.

37. Now Clovis the king said to his people: "I take it very hard that these Arians hold part of the Gauls. Let us go with God's help and conquer them and bring the land under our control. Since these words pleased all, he set his army in motion and made for Poitiers where Alaric was at that time. But since part of the host was passing through Touraine, he issued an edict out of respect to the blessed Martin that no one should take anything from that country except grass for fodder, and water. But one from the army found a poor man's hay and said: "Did not the king order grass only to be taken, nothing else? "And this," said he, "is grass. We shall not be transgressing his command if we take it." And when he had done violence to the poor man and taken his hay by force, the deed came to the king. And quicker than speech the offender was slain by the sword, and the king said: "And where shall our hope of victory be if we offend the blessed Martin? . It would be better for the army to take nothing else from this country." The king himself sent envoys to the blessed church saying: "Go, and perhaps you will receive some omen of victory from the holy temple." Then giving them gifts to set up in the holy place, he said: "If thou, O Lord, art my helper, and hast determined to surrender this unbelieving nation, always striving against thee, into my hands, consent to reveal it propitiously at the entrance to the church of St. Martin, so that I may know that thou wilt deign to be favorable to thy servant." Clovis' servants went on their way according to the king's command, and drew near to the place, and when they were about to enter the holy church, the first singer, without any pre-arrangement, sang this response: "Thou hast girded me, O Lord, with strength unto the battle; thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me, and hast made mine enemies turn their backs unto me, and thou hast utterly destroyed them that hated me." On hearing this singing they thanked the Lord, and paying their vow to the blessed confessor they joyfully made their report to the king. Moreover, when he came to the river Vienne with his army, he did not know where he ought to cross. For the river had swollen from the rains. When he had prayed to the Lord in the night to show him a ford where he could cross, in the morning by God's will a hind of wonderful size entered the river before them, and when it passed over the people saw where they could cross. When the king came to the neighborhood of Poitiers and was encamped some distance off, he saw a ball

History of the Franks

of fire come out of the church of Saint Hilarius and pass, as it were, over him, to show that, aided by the light of the blessed confessor Hilarius, he should more boldly conquer the heretic armies, against which the same bishop had often fought for the faith. And he made it known to all the army that neither there nor on the way should they spoil any one or take any one's property.

There was in these days a man of praiseworthy holiness, the abbot Maxentius, who had become a recluse in his own monastery in Poitou because of his fear of God. We have not put the name of the monastery in this account because the place is called to the present day Cellula sancti Maxentii. And when his monks saw a division of the host approaching the monastery, they prayed to the abbot to come forth from his cell to consult with them. And as he stayed, they were panic-stricken and opened the door and dragged him from his cell. And he hastened boldly to meet the enemy to ask for peace. And one of them drew out his sword to launch a stroke at his head, and when he had raised his hand to his ear it became rigid and the sword fell. And he threw himself at the feet of the blessed man, asking pardon. And the rest of them seeing this returned in great fear to the army, afraid that they should all perish together. The man's arm the holy confessor rubbed with consecrated oil, and made over it the sign of the cross and restored it to soundness. And owing to his protection the monastery remained uninjured. He worked many other miracles also, and if any one diligently seeks for them he will find them all in reading the book of his Life. In the twenty-fifth year of Clovis.

Meantime king Clovis met with Alaric, king of the Goths, in the plain of Vouillé at the tenth milestone from Poitiers, and while the one army was for fighting at a distance the other tried to come to close combat. And when the Goths had fled as was their custom, king Clovis won the victory by God's aid. He had to help him the son of Sigibert the lame, named Chloderic. This Sigibert was lame from a wound in the leg, received in a battle with the Alemanni near the town of Zulpich. Now when the king had put the Goths to flight and slain king Alaric, two of the enemy suddenly appeared and struck at him with their lances, one on each side. But he was saved from death by the help of his coat of mail as well as by his fast horse. At that time there perished a great number of the people of Auvergne, who had come with Apollinaris and the leading senators. From this battle Amalaric, son of Alaric, fled to Spain and wisely seized his father's kingdom Clovis sent his son Theodoric

Gregory of Tours

to Clermont by way of Albi and Rodez. He went, and brought under his father's dominion the cities from the boundaries of the Goths to the limit of the Burgundians. Alaric reigned twentytwo years. When Clovis had spent the winter in Bordeaux and taken all the treasures of Alaric at Toulouse, he went to Angoulême. And the Lord gave him such grace that the walls fell down of their own accord when he gazed at them. Then he drove the Goths out and brought the city under his own dominion. Thereupon after completing his victory he returned to Tours, bringing many gifts to the holy church of the blessed Martin.

38. Clovis received an appointment to the consulship from the emperor Anastasius, and in the church of the blessed Martin he clad himself in the purple tunic and chlamys, and placed a diadem on his head. Then he mounted his horse, and in the most generous manner he gave gold and silver as he passed along the way which is between the gate of the entrance [of the church of St. Martin] and the church of the city, scattering it among the people who were there with his own hand, and from that day he was called consul or Augustus. Leaving Tours he went to Paris and there he established the seat of his kingdom. There also Theodoric came to him.

[39. *Licinius was bishop of Tours at the time of Clovis' visit. His travels.*]

40. When King Clovis was dwelling at Paris he sent secretly to the son of Sigibert saying: "Behold your father has become an old man and limps in his weak foot. If he should die," said he, "Of due right his kingdom would be yours together with our friendship." Led on by greed the son plotted to kill his father. And when his father went out from the city of Cologne and crossed the Rhine and was intending to journey through the wood Buchaw, as he slept at midday in his tent his son sent assassins in against him, and killed him there, in the idea that he would get his kingdom But by God's judgment he walked into the pit that he had cruelly dug for his father. He sent messengers to king Clovis to tell about his father's death, and to say: "My father is dead, and I have his treasures in my possession, and also his kingdom. Send men to me, and I shall gladly transmit to you from his treasures whatever pleases you." And Clovis replied: "I thank you for your good will, and I ask that you show the treasures to my men who come, and after that you shall possess all yourself." When they came, he showed his father's treasures. And when they

History of the Franks

were looking at the different things he said: "It was in this little chest that my father used to put his gold coins." "Thrust in your hand," said they, "to the bottom, and uncover the whole." When he did so, and was much bent over, one of them lifted his hand and dashed his battleax against his head, and so in a shameful manner he incurred the death which he had brought on his father. Clovis heard that Sigibert and his son had been slain, and came to the place and summoned all the people, saying: "Hear what has happened. When I," said he, "was sailing down the river Scheldt Cloderic, son of my kinsman, was in pursuit of his own father asserting that I wished him killed. And when his father was fleeing through the forest of Buchaw, he set highwaymen upon him, and gave him over to death, and slew him. And when he was opening the treasures, he was slain himself by some one or other. Now I know nothing at all of these matters. For I cannot shed the blood of my own kinsmen, which it is a crime to do. But since this has happened, I give you my advice, if it seems acceptable; turn to me, that you may be under my protection." They listened to this, and giving applause with both shields and voices, they raised him on a shield, and made him king over them. He received Sigibert's kingdom with his treasures, and placed the people, too, under his rule. For God was laying his enemies low every day under his hand, and was increasing his kingdom, because he walked with an upright heart before him, and did what was pleasing in his eyes.

41. After this he turned to Chararic. When he had fought with Siagrius this Chararic had been summoned to help Clovis, but stood at a distance, aiding neither side, but awaiting the outcome, in order to form a league of friendship with him to whom victory came. For this reason Clovis was angry, and went out against him. He entrapped and captured him and his son also, and kept them in prison, and gave them the tonsure; he gave orders to ordain Chararic priest and his son deacon. And when Chararic complained of his degradation and wept, it is said that his son remarked: "It was on green wood," said he, "that these twigs were cut, and they are not altogether withered. They will shoot out quickly, and be able to grow; may he perish as swiftly who has done this." This utterance was reported to the ears of Clovis, namely, that they were threatening to let their hair grow, and kill him. And he ordered them both to be put to death. When they were dead, he took their kingdom with the treasures and people.

42. Ragnachar was then king at Cambrai, a man so unrestrained in his wantonness that he scarcely had mercy for his own near relatives. He had a counselor Farro, who defiled himself with a like vileness. And it was said that when food, or a gift, or anything whatever was brought to the king, he was wont to say that: it was enough for him and his Farro. And at this thing the Franks were in a great rage. And so it happened that Clovis gave golden armlets and belts, but all only made to resemble gold-for it was bronze gilded so as to deceive-these he gave to Ragnachar's leudes to be invited to attack him. Moreover, when Clovis had set his army in motion against him, and Ragnachar was continually sending spies to get information, on the return of his messengers, he used to ask how strong the force was. And they would answer: is a great sufficiency for you and your Farro." Clovis came and made war on him, and he saw that his army was beaten and prepared to slip away in flight, but was seized by his army, and with his hands tied behind his back, he was taken with Ricchar his brother before Clovis. And Clovis said to him: "Why have you humiliated our family in permitting yourself to be bound? It would have been better for you to die." And raising his ax he dashed it against his head, and he turned to his brother and said: "If you had aided your brother, he would not have been bound" And in the same way he smote him with his ax and killed him. After their death their betrayers perceived that the gold which they had received from the king was false. When they told the king of this, it is said that he answered: " Rightly," said he, " does he receive this kind of gold, who of his own will brings his own master to death;" it ought to suffice them that they were alive and were not put to death, to mourn amid torments the wicked betrayal of their masters. When they heard this, they prayed for mercy, saying it was enough for them if they were allowed to live The kings named above were kinsmen of Clovis, and their brother Rignomer by name, was slain by Clovis' order at the city of Mans. When they were dead Clovis received all their kingdom and treasures And having killed many other kings and his nearest relatives, of whom he was jealous lest they take the kingdom from him, he extended his rule over all the Gauls. However he gathered his people together at one time, it is said, and spoke of the kinsmen whom he had himself destroyed. "Woe to me, who have remained as a stranger among foreigners, and have none of my kinsmen to give me aid if adversity comes." But he said this not because of grief at their death but by way of a ruse, if perchance he should be able to find some one still to kill.

History of the Franks

43. After all this he died at Paris, and was buried in the church of the holy apostles, which he himself had built together with his queen Clotilda. He passed away in the fifth year after the battle; of Vouillé, and all the days of his reign were thirty years, and his age was forty-five. From the death of St. Martin to the death of king Clovis, which happened in the eleventh year of the episcopate of Licinius, bishop of Tours, one hundred and twelve years are reckoned. Queen Clotilda came to Tours after the death of her husband and served there in the church of St. Martin, and dwelt in the place with the greatest chastity and kindness all the days of her life, rarely visiting Paris.

BOOK SIX

46. While they continued on their way with this plunder, Chilperic, the Nero and Herod of our time, went to his villa of Chelles, about one hundred stades distant from Paris and there hunted. One day, returning from the hunt in the dusk, when he was dismounting from his horse and had one hand on a slave's shoulder a certain one came and stabbed him with a dagger under the armpit and repeating the blow pierced his belly. A flood of blood issued at once from his mouth and the open wounds and put his wicked soul to flight. The narrative before this shows how iniquitous he was. For he frequently laid great districts waste and burned them over, and experienced no pain in this but rather joy, like Nero before him when he recited tragedies as the palace burned. He often punished men unjustly because of their wealth. Very few clerics in his time reached the office of bishop. He was given over to gluttony and his belly was his god. He used to say that no one was wiser than he. He wrote two books on the model of Sedulius, but their feeble little verses can't stand on their feet at all, since for lack of understanding he put short syllables for long ones and long for short. He wrote pamphlets also and hymns and masses which can in no wise be received. He hated the causes of the poor. He was always blaspheming the bishops of the Lord, and when he was in retirement he belittled and ridiculed no one more than the bishops of the churches. He called this one lightheaded, that one vain, another lavish, another wanton, another conceited, another pompous. He hated nothing more than churches. For he often used to say: "Behold our treasury has remained poor, behold our wealth has gone to the churches, no one reigns if not the bishops; our office will perish and be transferred to the bishops of the cities."

Gregory of Tours

Going on in this way he would always break wills that were made in favor of churches and he trampled under foot the last directions of his own father, thinking that there was no one left to require the execution of his will. As to lust and wantonness nothing can be found in thought that he did not realize in deed. And he was always looking for new devices to injure the people and of late years if he found any one guilty he would order his eyes torn out. And in the directions he sent to his judges to secure his own advantages he would add this: "If any one disregards our orders let him be punished by having his eyes torn out." He never loved any one sincerely and was loved by no one, and therefore when he died all his people deserted him. But Mallulf bishop of Senlis, who had been sitting in his tent three days and had been unable to see him, came when he heard he was killed, and washed him and put on better garments, and spent the night singing hymns, and took him in a boat and buried him in the church of St. Vincent which is at Paris, leaving queen Fredegunda in the cathedral.



BOOK OF PASTORAL RULE

GREGORY THE GREAT

Translated by James Barnby

BOOK ONE

Introduction

With kind and humble intent you reprove me, dearest brother, for having wished by hiding myself to fly from the burdens of pastoral care; as to which, lest to some they should appear light, I express with my pen in the book before you all my own estimate of their heaviness, in order both that he who is free from them may not unwarily seek them, and that he who has so sought them may tremble for having got them. This book is divided into four separate heads of argument, that it may approach the reader's mind by allegations arranged in order— by certain steps, as it were. For, as the necessity of things requires, we must especially consider after what manner every one should come to supreme rule; and, duly arriving at it, after what manner he should live; and, living well, after what manner he should teach; and, teaching aright, with how great consideration every day he should become aware of his own infirmity; lest either humility fly from the approach, or life be at variance with

Gregory to his most reverend and most holy brother and fellow-bishop, John.

the arrival, or teaching be wanting to the life, or presumption unduly exalt the teaching. Wherefore, let fear temper the desire; but afterwards, authority being assumed by one who sought it not, let his life commend it. But then it is necessary that the good which is displayed in the life of the pastor should also be propagated by his speech. And at last it remains that, whatever works are brought to perfection, consideration of our own infirmity should depress us with regard to them, lest the swelling of elation extinguish even them before the eyes of hidden judgment. But inasmuch as there are many, like me in unskillfulness, who, while they know not how to measure themselves, are covetous of teaching what they have not learned; who estimate lightly the burden of authority in proportion as they are ignorant of the pressure of its greatness; let them be reprov'd from the very beginning of this book; so that, while, unlearned and precipitate, they desire to hold the citadel of teaching, they may be repell'd at the very door of our discourse from the ventures of their precipitancy.

That the unskillful venture not to approach an office of authority.

I

No one presumes to teach an art till he has first, with intent meditation, learned it. What rashness is it, then, for the unskillful to assume pastoral authority, since the government of souls is the art of arts! For who can be ignorant that the sores of the thoughts of men are more occult than the sores of the bowels? And yet how often do men who have no knowledge whatever of spiritual precepts fearlessly profess themselves physicians of the heart, though those who are ignorant of the effect of drugs blush to appear as physicians of the flesh! But because, through the ordering of God, all the highest in rank of this present age are inclined to reverence religion, there are some who, through the outward show of rule within the holy Church, affect the glory of distinction. They desire to appear as teachers, they covet superiority to others, and, as the Truth attests, they seek the first salutations in the market-place, the first rooms at feasts, the first seats in assemblies* , being all the less able to administer worthily the office they have undertaken of pastoral care, as they have reached the magisterial position of humility out of elation only. For, indeed, in a magisterial position language itself is confounded when one thing is learned and another taught. Against such the Lord complains by the prophet, saying, "They have reigned, and not by Me; they have been set

Matthew 23:6-7

up as princes, and I knew it not”*. For those reign of themselves, and not by the Will of the Supreme Ruler, who, supported by no virtues, and in no way divinely called, but inflamed by their own desire, seize rather than attain supreme rule. But them the Judge within both advances, and yet knows not; for whom by permission he tolerates them surely by the judgment of reprobation he ignores. Whence to some who come to Him even after miracles He says, “Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, I know you not who you are”.* The unskillfulness of shepherds is rebuked by the voice of the Truth, when it is said through the prophet, “The shepherds themselves have not known understanding”*; whom again the Lord denounces, saying, “And they that handle the law knew Me not”.* And therefore the Truth complains of not being known of them, and protests that He knows not the principality of those who know not Him; because in truth these who know not the things of the Lord are unknown of the Lord; as Paul attests, who says, “But if any man knows not, he shall not be known”.* Yet this unskillfulness of the shepherds doubtless suits often the deserts of those who are subject to them, because, though it is their own fault that they have not the light of knowledge, yet it is in the dealing of strict judgment that through their ignorance those also who follow them should stumble. Hence it is that, in the Gospel, the Truth in person says, “If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch”.* Hence the Psalmist (not expressing his own desire, but in his ministry as a prophet) denounces such, when he says, “Let their eyes be blinded that they see not, and ever bow down their back”.* For, indeed, those persons are eyes who, placed in the very face of the highest dignity, have undertaken the office of spying out the road; while those who are attached to them and follow them are denominated backs. And so, when the eyes are blinded, the back is bent, because, when those who go before lose the light of knowledge, those who follow are bowed down to carry the burden of their sins.

Hosea 8:4

Luke 13:27

Isaiah 56:11

Jeremiah 2:8

1 Corinthians 14:38

Matthew 15:14

Psalm 68:24

That none should enter on a place of government who practise not in life what they have learned by study.

II

There are some also who investigate spiritual precepts with cunning care, but what they penetrate with their understanding they trample on in their lives: all at once they teach the things which not by practice but by study they have learned; and what in words they preach by their manners they impugn. Whence it comes to pass that when the shepherd walks through

steep places, the flock follows to the precipice. Hence it is that the Lord through the prophet complains of the contemptible knowledge of shepherds, saying, “When you yourselves had drunk most pure water, you fouled the residue with your feet; and My sheep fed on that which had been trodden by your feet, and drank that which your feet had fouled”. * For indeed the shepherds drink most pure water, when with a right understanding they imbibe the streams of truth. But to foul the same water with their feet is to corrupt the studies of holy meditation by evil living. And verily the sheep drink the water fouled by their feet, when any of those subject to them follow not the words which they hear, but only imitate the bad examples which they see. Thirsting for the things said, but perverted by the works observed, they take in mud with their draughts, as from polluted fountains. Hence also it is written through the prophet, “A snare for the downfall of my people are evil priests”. Hence again the Lord through the prophet says of the priests, “They are made to be for a stumbling-block of iniquity to the house of Israel”. * For certainly no one does more harm in the Church than one who has the name and rank of sanctity, while he acts perversely. For him, when he transgresses, no one presumes to take to task; and the offense spreads forcibly for example, when out of reverence to his rank the sinner is honoured. But all who are unworthy would fly from the burden of so great guilt, if with the attentive ear of the heart they weighed the sentence of the Truth, “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea”. * By the millstone is expressed the round and labour of worldly life, and by the depth of the sea is denoted final damnation. Whosoever, then, having come to bear the outward show of sanctity, either by word or example destroys others, it had indeed been better for him that earthly deeds in open guise should press him down to death than that sacred offices should point him out to others as imitable in his wrong-doing; because, surely, if he fell alone, the pains of hell would torment him in more tolerable degree.

Ezekiel 34:18-19

Hosea 5:1; 9:8

Matthew 18:6

Of the weight of government; and that all manner of adversity is to be despised, and prosperity feared.

III

So much, then, have we briefly said, to show how great is the weight of government, lest whosoever is unequal to sacred offices of government should dare to profane them, and through lust of pre-eminence undertake

Book of Pastoral Rule

a leadership of perdition. For hence it is that James affectionately deters us, saying, “Be not made many masters, my brethren”.* Hence the Mediator between God and man Himself— He who, transcending the knowledge and understanding even of supernal spirits, reigns in heaven from eternity— on earth fled from receiving a kingdom. For it is written, “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into the mountain Himself alone”.* For who could so blamelessly have had principality over men as He who would in fact have reigned over those whom He had Himself created? But, because He had come in the flesh to this end, that He might not only redeem us by His passion but also teach us by His conversation, offering Himself as an example to His followers, He would not be made a king; but He went of His own accord to the gibbet of the cross. He fled from the offered glory of pre-eminence, but desired the pain of an ignominious death; that so His members might learn to fly from the favours of the world, to be afraid of no terrors, to love adversity for the truth’s sake, and to shrink in fear from prosperity; because this often defiles the heart through vain glory, while that purges it through sorrow; in this the mind exalts itself, but in that, even though it had once exalted itself, it brings itself low; in this man forgets himself, but in that, even perforce and against his will, he is recalled to memory of what he is; in this even good things done aforetime often come to nothing, but in that faults even of long standing are wiped away. For commonly in the school of adversity the heart is subdued under discipline, while, on sudden attainment of supreme rule, it is immediately changed and becomes elated through familiarity with glory. Thus Saul, who had before fled in consideration of his unworthiness, no sooner had assumed the government of the kingdom than he was puffed up*; for, desirous of being honoured before the people while unwilling to be publicly blamed, he cut off from himself even him who had anointed him to the kingdom. Thus David, who in the judgment of Him who chose him was well pleasing to Him in almost all his deeds, as soon as the weight of pressure was removed, broke out into a swelling sore,* and, having been as a laxly running one in his appetite for the woman, became as a cruelly hard one in the slaughter of the man; and he who had before known pitifully how to spare the bad learned afterwards, without impediment of hesitation, to pant even for the death of the good.* For, indeed, previously he had been unwilling to smite his captured persecutor; and afterwards, with loss to his wearied army,

James 3:1

John 6:15

1 Kings 10:22;
15:17-30

2 Kings 11:3, seq

2 Kings 11:15

he destroyed even his devoted soldier. And in truth his crime would have snatched him farther away from the number of the elect, had not scourges called him back to pardon.

That for the most part the occupation of government dissipates the solidity of the mind.

IV

Often the care of government, when undertaken, distracts the heart in various directions; and one is found unequal to dealing with particular things, while with confused mind divided among many. Whence a certain wise man providently dissuades, saying, “My son, meddle not with many matters”;* because, that is, the mind is by no means collected on the plan of any single work while parted among various. And, when it is drawn abroad by unwonted care, it is emptied of the solidity of inward fear: it becomes anxious in the ordering of things that are without, and, ignorant of itself alone, knows how to think of many things, while itself it knows not. For, when it implicates itself more than is needful in things that are without, it is as though it were so occupied during a journey as to forget where it was going; so that, being estranged from the business of self-examination, it does not even consider the losses it is suffering, or know how great they are. For neither did Hezekiah believe himself to be sinning*, when he showed to the strangers who came to him his storehouses of spices; but he fell under the anger of the judge, to the condemnation of his future offspring, from what he supposed himself to be doing lawfully*. Often, when means are abundant, and many things can be done for subordinates to admire, the mind exalts itself in thought, and fully provokes to itself the anger of the judge, though not breaking out in overt acts of iniquity. For he who judges is within; that which is judged is within. When, then, in heart we transgress, what we are doing within ourselves is hidden from men. but yet in the eyes of the judge we sin. For neither did the King of Babylon then first stand guilty of elation* when he came to utter words of elation, inasmuch as even before, when he had given no utterance to his elation, he heard the sentence of reprobation from the prophet’s mouth. For he had already wiped off the fault of the pride he had been guilty of, when he proclaimed to all the nations under him the omnipotent God whom he found himself to have offended.

Sirach 11:10

2 Kings 20:13

Isaiah 39:4

Daniel 4:16, seq

But after this, elevated by the success of his dominion, and rejoicing in

Book of Pastoral Rule

having done great things, he first preferred himself to all in thought, and afterwards, still vain-glorious, said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, and in the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"* Which utterance of his, as we see, fell openly under the vengeance of the wrath which his hidden elation kindled. For the strict judge first sees invisibly what he afterwards reproves by publicly smiting it. Hence him He turned even into an irrational animal, separated him from human society, changed his mind and joined him to the beasts of the field, that in obviously strict and just judgment he who had esteemed himself great beyond men should lose even his being as a man. Now in adducing these things we are not finding fault with dominion, but guarding the infirmity of the heart from coveting it, lest any that are imperfect should venture to snatch at supreme rule, or those who stumble on plain ground set foot on a precipice.

Daniel 4:30

Of those who are able to profit others by virtuous example in supreme rule, but fly from it in pursuit of their own ease.

V

For there are some who are eminently endowed with virtues, and for the training of others are exalted by great gifts, who are pure in zeal for chastity, strong in the might of abstinence, filled with the feasts of doctrine, humble in the long-suffering of patience, erect in the fortitude of authority, tender in the grace of loving-kindness, strict in the severity of justice. Truly such as these, if when called they refuse to undertake offices of supreme rule, for the most part deprive themselves of the very gifts which they received not for themselves alone, but for others also; and, while they meditate their own and not another's gain, they forfeit the very benefits which they desire to keep to themselves. For hence it was that the Truth said to His disciples, "A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid: neither do they light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house".* Hence He says to Peter, "Simon, Son of Jonas, do you love Me?"; and he, when he had at once answered that he loved, was told, "If you love Me, feed My sheep". If, then, the care of feeding is the proof of loving, whosoever abounds in virtues, and yet refuses to feed the flock of God, is convicted of not loving the chief Shepherd. Hence Paul says, "If Christ died for all, then all died. And if He died for all, it remains that they which live should now no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again".* Hence Moses says that a surviving brother shall

Matthew 5:15 John 15:16-17

2 Corinthians 5:15

take to him the wife of a brother who has died without children, and beget children to the name of his brother; and that, if he haply refuse to take her, the woman shall spit in his face, and her kinsman shall loose the shoe from off one of his feet, and call his habitation the house of him that has his shoe loosed. * Now the deceased brother is He who, after the glory of the resurrection, said, “Go tell My brethren”. * For He died as it were without children, in that He had not yet filled up the number of His elect. Then, it is ordered that the surviving brother shall have the wife assigned to him, because it is surely fit that the care of holy Church be imposed on him who is best able to rule it well. But, should he be unwilling, the woman spits in his face, because whosoever cares not to benefit others out of the gifts which he has received, the holy Church exprobrates even what he has of good, and, as it were, casts spittle on his face; and from one foot the shoe is taken away, inasmuch as it is written, “Your feet shod in preparation of the Gospel of Peace”. If, then, we have the care of our neighbour as well as of ourselves upon us, we have each foot protected by a shoe. But he who, meditating his own advantage, neglects that of his neighbours, loses with disgrace one foot’s shoe. And so there are some, as we have said, enriched with great gifts, who, while they are ardent for the studies of contemplation only, shrink from serving to their neighbour’s benefit by preaching; they love a secret place of quiet, they long for a retreat for speculation. With respect to which conduct, they are, if strictly judged, undoubtedly guilty in proportion to the greatness of the gifts whereby they might have been publicly useful. For with what disposition of mind does one who might be conspicuous in profiting his neighbours prefer his own privacy to the advantage of others, when the Only-begotten of the supreme Father Himself came forth from the bosom of the Father into the midst of us all, that He might profit many?

Deuteronomy 25:5

Matthew 28:10

Ephesians 6:15

That those who
fly from the
burden of rule
through humility
are then truly
humble when
they resist
not the divine
decrees.

VI

There are some also who fly by reason only of their humility, lest they should be preferred to others to whom they esteem themselves unequal. And theirs, indeed, if it be surrounded by other virtues, is then true humility before the eyes of God, when it is not pertinacious in rejecting what it is enjoined to undertake with profit. For neither is he truly humble, who understands how the good pleasure of the Supernal Will ought to bear sway, and yet contemns

its sway. But, submitting himself to the divine disposals, and averse from the vice of obstinacy, if he be already prevented with gifts whereby he may profit others also, he ought, when enjoined to undertake supreme rule, in his heart to flee from it, but against his will to obey.

VII

Although sometimes some laudably desire the office of preaching, yet others are as laudably drawn to it by compulsion; as we plainly perceive, if we consider the conduct of two prophets, one of whom offered himself of his own accord to be sent to preach, yet the other in fear refused to go. For Isaiah, when the Lord asked whom He should send, offered himself of his own accord, saying, "Here I am; send me". * But Jeremiah is sent, yet humbly pleads that he should not be sent, saying, "Ah, Lord God! Behold I cannot speak: for I am a child". * Lo, from these two men different voices proceeded outwardly, but they flowed from the same fountain of love. For there are two precepts of charity; the love of God and of our neighbour. Wherefore Isaiah, eager to profit his neighbours through an active life, desires the office of preaching; but Jeremiah, longing to cleave sedulously to the love of his Creator through a contemplative life, remonstrates against being sent to preach. Thus what the one laudably desired the other laudably shrunk from; the latter, lest by speaking he should lose the gains of silent contemplation; the former, lest by keeping silence he should suffer loss for lack of diligent work. But this in both cases is to be nicely observed, that he who refused did not persist in his refusal, and he who wished to be sent saw himself previously cleansed by a coal of the altar; lest any one who has not been purged should dare to approach sacred ministries, or any whom supernal grace has chosen should proudly gainsay it under a show of humility. Wherefore, since it is very difficult for any one to be sure that he has been cleansed, it is safer to decline the office of preaching, though (as we have said) it should not be declined pertinaciously when the Supernal Will that it should be undertaken is recognized. Both requirements Moses marvellously fulfilled, who was unwilling to be set over so great a multitude, and yet obeyed. For perhaps he were proud, were he to undertake without trepidation the leadership of that innumerable people; and, again, proud he would plainly be were he to refuse to obey his Lord's command. Thus in both ways humble, in both ways

That sometimes some laudably desire the office of preaching, while others, as laudably, are drawn to it by compulsion.

Isaiah 6:8

Jeremiah 1:6

submissive, he was unwilling, as measuring himself, to be set over the people; and yet, as presuming on the might of Him who commanded him, he consented. Hence, then, hence let all rash ones infer how great guilt is theirs, if they fear not to be preferred to others by their own seeking, when holy men, even when God commanded, feared to undertake the leadership of peoples. Moses trembles though God persuades him; and yet every weak one pants to assume the burden of dignity; and one who can hardly bear his own load without falling, gladly puts his shoulders under the pressure of others not his own: his own deeds are too heavy for him to carry, and he augments his burden.

Of those who covet pre-eminence, and seize on the language of the Apostle to serve the purpose of their own cupidity.

VIII

But for the most part those who covet pre-eminence seize on the language of the Apostle to serve the purpose of their own cupidity, where he says, “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work”.* But, while praising the desire, he immediately turns what he has praised to fear when at once he adds, “but a bishop must be blameless”.* And, when he subsequently enumerates the necessary virtues, he makes manifest what this blamelessness consists in. And so, with regard to their desire, he approves them, but by his precept he alarms them; as if saying plainly, I praise what you seek; but first learn what it is you seek; lest, while you neglect to measure yourselves, your blamefulness appear all the fouler for its haste to be seen by all in the highest place of honour. For the great master in the art of ruling impels by approval and checks by alarms; so that, by describing the height of blamelessness, he may restrain his hearers from pride, and, by praising the office which is sought, dispose them to the life required. Nevertheless it is to be noted that this was said at a time when whosoever was set over people was usually the first to be led to the torments of martyrdom. At that time, therefore, it was laudable to seek the office of a bishop, since through it there was no doubt that a man would come in the end to heavier pains. Hence even the office of a bishop itself is defined as a good work, when it is said, “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work”.* Wherefore he that seeks, not this ministry of a good work, but the glory of distinction, is himself a witness against himself that he does not desire the office of a bishop; inasmuch as that man not only does not love at all the sacred office, but even knows not what

1 Timothy 3:1

1 Timothy 3:2

1 Timothy 3:1

it is, who, panting after supreme rule, is fed by the subjection of others in the hidden meditation of his thought, rejoices in his own praises, lifts up his heart to honour, exults in abundant affluence. Thus worldly gain is sought under colour of that honour by which worldly gains should have been destroyed; and, when the mind thinks to seize on the highest post of humility for its own elation, it inwardly changes what it outwardly desires.

IX

But for the most part those who covet pastoral authority mentally propose to themselves some good works besides, and, though desiring it with a motive of pride, still muse how they will effect great things: and so it comes to pass that the motive suppressed in the depths of the heart is one thing, another what the surface of thought presents to the musers' mind. For the mind itself lies to itself about itself, and feigns with respect to good work to love what it does not love, and with respect to the world's glory not to love what it does love. Eager for domination, it becomes timid with regard to it while in pursuit, audacious after attainment. For, while advancing towards it, it is in trepidation lest it should not attain it; but all at once, on having attained, thinks what it has attained to be its just due. And, when it has once begun to enjoy the office of its acquired dominion in a worldly way, it willingly forgets what it has cogitated in a religious way. Hence it is necessary that, when such cogitation is extended beyond wont, the mind's eye should be recalled to works already accomplished, and that every one should consider what he has done as a subordinate; and so may he at once discover whether as a prelate he will be able to do the good things he has proposed to do. For one can by no means learn humility in a high place who has not ceased to be proud while occupying a low one: one knows not how to fly from praise when it abounds, who has learned to pant for it when it was wanting: one can by no means overcome avarice, when advanced to the sustentation of many, whom his own means could not suffice for himself alone. Wherefore from his past life let every one discover what he is, lest in his craving for eminence the phantom of his cogitation illude him. Nevertheless it is generally the case that the very practice of good deeds which was maintained in tranquillity is lost in the occupation of government; since even an unskilful person guides a ship along a straight course in a calm sea; but in one disturbed by the waves of

That the mind of those who wish for pre-eminence for the most part flatters itself with a feigned promise of good works.

tempest even the skilled sailor is confounded. For what is eminent dominion but a tempest of the mind, in which the ship of the heart is ever shaken by hurricanes of thought, is incessantly driven hither and there, so as to be shattered by sudden excesses of word and deed, as if by opposing rocks? In the midst of all these dangers, then, what course is to be followed, what is to be held to, except that one who abounds in virtues should accede to government under compulsion, and that one who is void of virtues should not, even under compulsion, approach it? As to the former, let him beware lest, if he refuses altogether, he be as one who binds up in a napkin the money which he has received, and be judged for hiding it.* For, indeed, to bind up in a napkin is to hide gifts received under the listlessness of sluggish torpor. But, on the other hand, let the latter, when he craves government, take care lest, by his example of evil deeds, he become an obstacle to such as are journeying to the entrance of the kingdom, after the manner of the Pharisees, who, according to the Master's voice*, neither go in themselves nor suffer others to go in. And he should also consider how, when an elected prelate undertakes the cause of the people, he goes, as it were, as a physician to one that is sick. If, then, ailments still live in his body, what presumption is his, to make haste to heal the smitten, while in his own face carrying a sore!

Matthew 25:18

Matthew 23:13

What manner
of man ought to
come to rule.

X

That man, therefore, ought by all means to be drawn with cords to be an example of good living who already lives spiritually, dying to all passions of the flesh; who disregards worldly prosperity; who is afraid of no adversity; who desires only inward wealth; whose intention the body, in good accord with it, thwarts not at all by its frailness, nor the spirit greatly by its disdain: one who is not led to covet the things of others, but gives freely of his own; who through the bowels of compassion is quickly moved to pardon, yet is never bent down from the fortress of rectitude by pardoning more than is meet; who perpetrates no unlawful deeds, yet deplores those perpetrated by others as though they were his own; who out of affection of heart sympathizes with another's infirmity, and so rejoices in the good of his neighbour as though it were his own advantage; who so insinuates himself as an example to others in all he does that among them he has nothing, at any rate of his own past deeds, to blush for; who studies so to live that he may be able to water even

dry hearts with the streams of doctrine; who has already learned by the use and trial of prayer that he can obtain what he has requested from the Lord, having had already said to him, as it were, through the voice of experience, "While you are yet speaking, I will say, Here am I".* For if perchance any one should come to us asking us to intercede for him with some great man, who was incensed against him, but to us unknown, we should at once reply, We cannot go to intercede for you, since we have no familiar acquaintance with that man. If, then, a man blushes to become an intercessor with another man on whom he has no claim, with what idea can any one grasp the post of intercession with God for the people, who does not know himself to be in favour with Him through the merit of his own life? And how can he ask of Him pardon for others while ignorant whether towards himself He is appeased? And in this matter there is yet another thing to be more anxiously feared; namely, lest one who is supposed to be competent to appease wrath should himself provoke it on account of guilt of his own. For we all know well that, when one who is in disfavour is sent to intercede with an incensed person, the mind of the latter is provoked to greater severity. Wherefore let one who is still tied and bound with earthly desires beware lest by more grievously incensing the strict judge, while he delights himself in his place of honour, he become the cause of ruin to his subordinates.

Isaiah 58:9

XI

Wherefore let every one measure himself wisely, lest he venture to assume a place of rule, while in himself vice still reigns unto condemnation; lest one whom his own guilt depraves desire to become an intercessor for the faults of others. For on this account it is said to Moses by the supernal voice, "Speak unto Aaron; Whosoever he be of your seed throughout their generations that has a blemish, he shall not offer loaves of bread to the Lord his God".* And it is also immediately subjoined; "If he be blind, if he be lame, if he have either a small or a large and crooked nose, if he be broken-footed or brokenhanded, if he be hunchbacked, if he be bleareyed (lippus), if he have a white speck (albuginem) in his eye, if chronic scabies, if impetigo in his body, or if he be ruptured (ponderosus)".* For that man is indeed blind who is unacquainted with the light of supernal contemplation, who, whelmed in the darkness of the present life, while he beholds not at all by

What manner of man ought not to come to rule.

Leviticus 21:17

Leviticus 21:18

loving it the light to come, knows not whither he is advancing the steps of his conduct. Hence by Hannah prophesying it is said, “He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness”.* But that man is lame who does indeed see in what direction he ought to go, but, through infirmity of purpose, is unable to keep perfectly the way of life which he sees, because, while unstable habit rises not to a settled state of virtue, the steps of conduct do not follow with effect the aim of desire. Hence it is that Paul says, “Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed”.* But one with a small nose is he who is not adapted for keeping the measure of discernment. For with the nose we discern sweet odours and stenches: and so by the nose is properly expressed discernment, through which we choose virtues and eschew sins. Whence also it is said in praise of the bride, “Your nose is as the tower which is in Lebanon”;* because, to wit, Holy Church, by discernment, espies assaults issuing from this or that quarter, and detects from an eminence the coming wars of vices. But there are some who, not liking to be thought dull, busy themselves often more than needs in various investigations, and by reason of too great subtlety are deceived. Wherefore this also is added, Or have a large and crooked nose. For a large and crooked nose is excessive subtlety of discernment, which, having become unduly excrescent, itself confuses the correctness of its own operation. But one with broken foot or hand is he who cannot walk in the way of God at all, and is utterly without part or lot in good deeds, to such degree that he does not, like the lame man, maintain them however weakly, but remains altogether apart from them. But the hunchbacked is he whom the weight of earthly care bows down, so that he never looks up to the things that are above, but is intent only on what is trodden on among the lowest. And he, should he ever hear anything of the good things of the heavenly country, is so pressed down by the weight of perverse custom, that he lifts not the face of his heart to it, being unable to erect the posture of his thought, which the habit of earthly care keeps downward bent. Of this kind of men the Psalmist says, “I am bent down and am brought low continually”.* The fault of such as these the Truth in person reprobates, saying, “But the seed which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard the word, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life, and bear no fruit”.* But the blear-eyed is he whose native wit flashes out for cognition of the truth,

1 Kings 2:9

Hebrews 12:12-13

Canticles 7:4

Psalm 38:8

Luke 8:14

and yet carnal works obscure it. For in the blear-eyed the pupils are sound; but the eyelids, weakened by defluxion of humours, become gross; and even the brightness of the pupils is impaired, because they are worn continually by the flux upon them. The blear-eyed, then, is one whose sense nature has made keen, but whom a depraved habit of life confuses. To him it is well said through the angel, "Anoint your eyes with eyesalve that you may see".* For we may be said to anoint our eyes with eyesalve that we may see, when we aid the eye of our understanding for perceiving the clearness of the true light with the medicament of good conduct. But that man has a white speck in his eye who is not permitted to see the light of truth, in that he is blinded by the arrogant assumption of wisdom or of righteousness. For the pupil of the eye, when black, sees; but, when it bears a white speck, sees nothing; by which we may understand that the perceiving sense of human thought, if a man understands himself to be a fool and a sinner, becomes cognizant of the clearness of inmost light; but, if it attributes to itself the whiteness of righteousness or wisdom, it excludes itself from the light of knowledge from above, and by so much the more fails entirely to penetrate the clearness of the true light, as it exalts itself within itself through arrogance; as of some it is said, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools".* But that man has chronic scabies whom the wantonness of the flesh without cease overmasters. For in scabies the violent heat of the bowels is drawn to the skin; whereby lechery is rightly designated, since, if the heart's temptation shoots forth into action, it may be truly said that violent internal heat breaks out into scabies of the skin: and it now wounds the body outwardly, because, while sensuality is not repressed in thought, it gains the mastery also in action. For Paul had a care to cleanse away this itch of the skin, when he said, "Let no temptation take you but such as is human";* as if to say plainly, It is human to suffer temptation in the heart; but it is devilish, in the struggle of temptation, to be also overcome in action. He also has impetigo in his body whosoever is ravaged in the mind by avarice; which, if not restrained in small things, does indeed dilate itself without measure.

Revelation 3:18

Romans 1:22

1 Corinthians 10:13

For, as impetigo invades the body without pain, and, spreading with no annoyance to him whom it invades, disfigures the comeliness of the members, so avarice, too, exulcerates, while it pleases, the mind of one who is captive to it. As it offers to the thought one thing after another to be gained, it kindles

1 Timothy 6:10

the fire of enmities, and gives no pain with the wounds it causes, because it promises to the fevered mind abundance out of sin. But the comeliness of the members is destroyed, because the beauty of other virtues is also hereby marred: and it exulcerates as it were the whole body, in that it corrupts the mind with vices of all kinds; as Paul attests, saying, “The love of money is the root of all evils”. * But the ruptured one is he who does not carry turpitude into action, but yet is immoderately weighed down by it in mind through continual cogitation; one who is indeed by no means carried away to the extent of nefarious conduct; but his mind still delights itself without prick of repugnance in the pleasure of lechery. For the disease of rupture is when humor *viscerum ad virilia labitur, quæ; profecto cum molestia dedecoris intumescunt* He, then, may be said to be ruptured who, letting all his thoughts flow down to lasciviousness, bears in his heart a weight of turpitude; and, though not actually doing deeds of shame, nevertheless in mind is not withdrawn from them. Nor has he power to rise to the practice of good living before the eyes of men, because, hidden within him, the shameful weight presses him down. Whosoever, therefore, is subjected to any one of these diseases is forbidden to offer loaves of bread to the Lord, lest in truth he should be of no avail for expiating the sins of others, being one who is still ravaged by his own.

And now, having briefly shown after what manner one who is worthy should come to pastoral authority, and after what manner one who is unworthy should be greatly afraid, let us now demonstrate after what manner one who has attained to it worthily should live in it.

BOOK TWO

I

The conduct of a prelate ought so far to transcend the conduct of the people as the life of a shepherd is wont to exalt him above the flock. For one whose estimation is such that the people are called his flock is bound anxiously to consider what great necessity is laid upon him to maintain rectitude. It

How one who
has in due order
arrived at a place
of rule ought to
demean himself
in it.

Book of Pastoral Rule

is necessary, then, that in thought he should be pure, in action chief; discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech; a near neighbour to every one in sympathy, exalted above all in contemplation; a familiar friend of good livers through humility, unbending against the vices of evil-doers through zeal for righteousness; not relaxing in his care for what is inward from being occupied in outward things, nor neglecting to provide for outward things in his solicitude for what is inward. But the things which we have thus briefly touched on let us now unfold and discuss more at length.

II

That the ruler should be pure in thought.

The ruler should always be pure in thought, inasmuch as no impurity ought to pollute him who has undertaken the office of wiping away the stains of pollution in the hearts of others also; for the hand that would cleanse from dirt must needs be clean, lest, being itself sordid with clinging mire, it soil whatever it touches all the more. For on this account it is said through the prophet, "Be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord".* For they bear the vessels of the Lord who undertake, on the surety of their own conversation, to conduct the souls of their neighbours to the eternal sanctuary. Let them therefore perceive within themselves how purified they ought to be who carry in the bosom of their own personal responsibility living vessels to the temple of eternity. Hence by the divine voice it is enjoined,* that on the breast of Aaron the breastplate of judgment should be closely pressed by binding fillets; seeing that lax cogitations should by no means possess the priestly heart, but reason alone constrain it; nor should he cogitate anything indiscreet or unprofitable, who, constituted as he is for example to others, ought to show in the gravity of his life what store of reason he carries in his breast. And on this breastplate it is further carefully prescribed that the names of the twelve patriarchs should be engraved. For to carry always the fathers registered on the breast is to think without intermission on the lives of the ancients. For the priest then walks blamelessly when he pores continually on the examples of the fathers that went before him, when he considers without cease the footsteps of the Saints, and keeps down unlawful thoughts, lest he advance the foot of his conduct beyond the limit of order. And it is also well called the breastplate of judgment, because the ruler ought ever with subtle scrutiny to discern between good and evil, and studiously consider what things are suit-

Isaiah 52:11

Exodus 28:15

able for what, and when and how; nor should he seek anything for himself, but esteem his neighbours' good as his own advantage. Hence in the same place it is written, "But you shall put in the breastplate of Aaron doctrine and truth, which shall be upon Aaron's breast, when he goes in before the Lord, and he shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his breast in the sight of the Lord continually".* For the priest's bearing the judgment of the children of Israel on his breast before the face of the Lord means his examining the causes of his subjects with regard only to the mind of the judge within, so that no admixture of humanity cleave to him in what he dispenses as standing in God's stead, lest private vexation should exasperate the keenness of his censure. And while he shows himself zealous against the vices of others, let him get rid of his own lest either latent grudge vitiate the calmness of his judgment, or headlong anger disturb it. But when the terror of Him who presides over all things is considered (that is to say of the judge within), not without great fear may subjects be governed. And such fear indeed purges, while it humiliates, the mind of the ruler, guarding it against being either lifted up by presumption of spirit, or defiled by delight of the flesh, or obscured by importunity of dusty thought through lust for earthly things. These things, however, cannot but knock at the ruler's mind: but it is necessary to make haste to overcome them by resistance, lest the vice which tempts by suggestion should subdue by the softness of delight, and, this being tardily expelled from the mind, should slay with the sword of consent.

Exodus 18:30

That the ruler
should be always
chief in action.

III

The ruler should always be chief in action, that by his living he may point out the way of life to those that are put under him, and that the flock, which follows the voice and manners of the shepherd, may learn how to walk better through example than through words. For he who is required by the necessity of his position to speak the highest things is compelled by the same necessity to exhibit the highest things. For that voice more readily penetrates the hearer's heart, which the speaker's life commends, since what he commands by speaking he helps the doing of by showing. Hence it is said through the prophet, "Get you up into the high mountain, you that bringest good tidings to Sion";* which means that he who is engaged in heavenly preaching should already have forsaken the low level of earthly works, and appear as stand-

Isaiah 40:9

Book of Pastoral Rule

ing on the summit of things, and by so much the more easily should draw those who are under him to better things as by the merit of his life he cries aloud from heights above. Hence under the divine law the priest receives the shoulder for sacrifice, and this the right one and separate;* to signify that his action should be not only profitable, but even singular; and that he should not merely do what is right among bad men, but transcend even the well-doers among those that are under him in the virtue of his conduct, as he surpasses them in the dignity of his order. The breast also together with the shoulder is assigned to him for eating, that he may learn to immolate to the Giver of all that of himself which he is enjoined to take of the Sacrifice; that he may not only in his breast entertain right thoughts, but with the shoulder of work invite those who behold him to things on high; that he may covet no prosperity of the present life, and fear no adversity; that, having regard to the fear within him, he may despise the charm of the world, but considering the charm of inward sweetness, may despise its terrors. Wherefore by command of the supernal voice* the priest is braced on each shoulder with the robe of the ephod, that he may be always guarded against prosperity and adversity by the ornament of virtues; so that walking, as St. Paul says*, in the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, while he strives only after those things which are before, he may decline on neither side to low delight. Him let neither prosperity elate nor adversity perturb; let neither smooth things coax him to the surrender of his will, nor rough things press him down to despair; so that, while he humbles the bent of his mind to no passions, he may show with how great beauty of the ephod he is covered on each shoulder. Which ephod is also rightly ordered to be made of gold, blue, purple, twice dyed scarlet, and flue twined linen*, that it may be shown by how great diversity of virtues the priest ought to be distinguished. Thus in the priest's robe before all things gold glitters, to show that he should shine forth principally in the understanding of wisdom. And with it blue, which is resplendent with aerial colour, is conjoined, to show that through all that he penetrates with his understanding he should rise above earthly favours to the love of celestial things; lest, while caught unawares by his own praises, he be emptied of his very understanding of the truth. With gold and blue, purple also is mingled: which means, that the priest's heart, while hoping for the high things which he preaches, should repress in itself even the suggestions of vice, and as it were in virtue of a royal power, rebut them, in that he has regard ever

Exodus 29:22

Exodus 29:5

2 Corinthians 6:7

Exodus 28:8

to the nobility of inward regeneration, and by his manners guards his right to the robe of the heavenly kingdom. For it is of this nobility of the spirit that it is said through Peter, “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood”. * With respect also to this power, whereby we subdue vices, we are fortified by the voice of John, who says, “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God”. * This dignity of fortitude the Psalmist has in view when he says, “But with me greatly honoured have been Your friends, O God; greatly strengthened has been their principality”. * For truly the mind of saints is exalted to princely eminence while outwardly they are seen to suffer abasement. But with gold, blue, and purple, twice dyed scarlet is conjoined, to show that all excellences of virtue should be adorned with charity in the eyes of the judge within; and that whatever glitters before men may be lighted up in sight of the hidden arbiter with the flame of inward love. And, further, this charity, since it consists in love at once of God and of our neighbour, has, as it were, the lustre of a double dye. He then who so pants after the beauty of his Maker as to neglect the care of his neighbours, or so attends to the care of his neighbours as to grow languid in divine love, whichever of these two things it may be that he neglects, knows not what it is to have twice dyed scarlet in the adornment of his ephod. But, while the mind is intent on the precepts of charity, it undoubtedly remains that the flesh be macerated through abstinence. Hence with twice dyed scarlet fine twined linen is conjoined. For fine linen (byssus) springs from the earth with glittering show: and what is designated by fine linen but bodily chastity shining white in the comeliness of purity? And it is also twisted for being interwoven into the beauty of the ephod, since the habit of chastity then attains to the perfect whiteness of purity when the flesh is worn by abstinence. And, since the merit of affliction of the flesh profits among the other virtues, fine twined linen shows white, as it were, in the diverse beauty of the ephod.

That the ruler should be discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech.

IV

The ruler should be discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech; lest he either utter what ought to be suppressed or suppress what he ought to utter. For, as incautious speaking leads into error, so indiscreet silence leaves in error those who might have been instructed. For often improvident rulers, fearing to lose human favour, shrink timidly from speaking freely the

Book of Pastoral Rule

things that are right; and, according to the voice of the Truth,* serve unto the custody of the flock by no means with the zeal of shepherds, but in the way of hirelings; since they fly when the wolf comes if they hide themselves under silence. For hence it is that the Lord through the prophet upbraids them, saying, “Dumb dogs, that cannot bark”.* Hence again He complains, saying, “You have not gone up against the enemy, neither opposed a wall for the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord”.* Now to go up against the enemy is to go with free voice against the powers of this world for defence of the flock; and to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord is out of love of justice to resist bad men when they contend against us. For, for a shepherd to have feared to say what is right, what else is it but to have turned his back in keeping silence? But surely, if he puts himself in front for the flock, he opposes a wall against the enemy for the house of Israel. Hence again to the sinful people it is said, “Your prophets have seen false and foolish things for you: neither did they discover your iniquity, to provoke you to repentance”.* For in sacred language teachers are sometimes called prophets, in that, by pointing out how fleeting are present things, they make manifest the things that are to come. And such the divine discourse convinces of seeing false things, because, while fearing to reprove faults, they vainly flatter evil doers by promising security: neither do they at all discover the iniquity of sinners, since they refrain their voice from chiding. For the language of reproof is the key of discovery, because by chiding it discloses the fault of which even he who has committed it is often himself unaware. Hence Paul says, “That he may be able by sound doctrine even to convince the gainsayers”.* Hence through Malachi it is said, “The priest’s lips keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth”.* Hence through Isaiah the Lord admonishes, saying, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet”.* For it is true that whosoever enters on the priesthood undertakes the office of a herald, so as to walk, himself crying aloud, before the coming of the judge who follows terribly. Wherefore, if the priest knows not how to preach, what voice of a loud cry shall the mute herald utter? For hence it is that the Holy Spirit sat upon the first pastors under the appearance of tongues;* because whomsoever He has filled, He himself at once makes eloquent. Hence it is enjoined on Moses that when the priest goes into the tabernacle he shall be encompassed with bells;* that is, that he shall have about him the sounds of preaching, lest he provoke by his silence the judgment of Him Who beholds

John 10:12

Isaiah 56:10

Ezekiel 13:5

Lamentations 2:14

Titus 1:9

Malachi 2:7

Isaiah 58:1

Acts 2:3

Exodus 28:33

him from above. For it is written, "That his sound may be heard when he goes in unto the holy place before the Lord and when he comes out, that he die not".* For the priest, when he goes in or comes out, dies if a sound is not heard from him, because he provokes the wrath of the hidden judge, if he goes without the sound of preaching. Aptly also are the bells described as inserted in his vestments. For what else ought we to take the vestments of the priest to be but righteous works; as the prophet attests when he says, "Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness"?* The bells, therefore, are inherent in his vestments to signify that the very works of the priest should also proclaim the way of life together with the sound of his tongue. But, when the ruler prepares himself for speaking, let him bear in mind with what studious caution he ought to speak, lest, if he be hurried inordinately into speaking, the hearts of hearers be smitten with the wound of error and, while he perchance desires to seem wise he unwisely sever the bond of unity. For on this account the Truth says, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another".* Now by salt is denoted the word of wisdom. Let him, therefore, who strives to speak wisely fear greatly, lest by his eloquence the unity of his hearers be disturbed. Hence Paul says, "Not to be more wise than behooves to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety".* Hence in the priest's vestment, according to Divine precept, to bells are added pomegranates.* For what is signified by pomegranates but the unity of the faith? For, as within a pomegranate many seeds are protected by one outer rind, so the unity of the faith comprehends the innumerable peoples of holy Church, whom a diversity of merits retains within her. Lest then a ruler should be unadvisedly hurried into speaking, the Truth in person proclaims to His disciples this which we have already cited, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another".* It is as though He should say in a figure through the dress of the priest: Join pomegranates to bells, that in all you say you may with cautious watchfulness keep the unity of the faith. Rulers ought also to guard with anxious thought not only against saying in any way what is wrong, but against uttering even what is right overmuch and inordinately; since the good effect of things spoken is often lost, when enfeebled to the hearts of hearers by the incautious importunity of loquacity; and this same loquacity, which knows not how to serve for the profit of the hearers, also defiles the speaker. Hence it is well said through Moses, "The man that has a flux of seed shall be unclean".* For the quality of the speech that is heard is the seed of the thought which follows,

Book of Pastoral Rule

since, while speech is conceived through the ear, thought is engendered in the mind. Whence also by the wise of this world the excellent preacher was called a sower of words (*seminiverbius*). * Wherefore, he that suffers from a flux of seed is pronounced unclean, because, being addicted to much speaking, he defiles himself by that which, had it been orderly issued, might have produced the offspring of right thought in the hearts of hearers; and, while he incautiously spends himself in loquacity, he sheds his seed not so as to serve for generation, but unto uncleanness. Hence Paul also, in admonishing his disciple to be instant in preaching, when he says, “I charge you before God and Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the quick and the dead by His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word, be instant opportunely, importunely”, * being about to say importunely, premises opportunely, because in truth importunity mars itself to the mind of the hearer by its own very cheapness, if it knows not how to observe opportunity.

Acts 17:18

2 Timothy 4:1

V

The ruler should be a near neighbour to every one in sympathy, and exalted above all in contemplation, so that through the bowels of loving-kindness he may transfer the infirmities of others to himself, and by loftiness of speculation transcend even himself in his aspiration after the invisible; lest either in seeking high things he despise the weak things of his neighbours, or in suiting himself to the weak things of his neighbours he relinquish his aspiration after high things. For hence it is that Paul is caught up into Paradise * and explores the secrets of the third heaven, and, yet, though borne aloft in that contemplation of things invisible, recalls the vision of his mind to the bed of the carnal, and directs how they should have intercourse with each other in their hidden privacy, saying, “But on account of fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife her due, and likewise the wife unto the husband”. * And a little after, “Defraud not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer, and come together again, that Satan tempt you not”. * Lo, he is already initiated into heavenly secrets, and yet through the bowels of condescension he searches into the bed of the carnal; and the same eye of the heart which in his elevation he lifts to the invisible, he bends in his compassion upon the secrets of those who

That the ruler should be a near neighbour to every one in compassion, and exalted above all in contemplation.

2 Corinthians 12:3

1 Corinthians 7:2

1 Corinthians 5:5

are subject to infirmity. In contemplation he transcends heaven, and yet in his anxious care deserts not the couch of the carnal; because, being joined at once to the highest and to the lowest by the bond of charity, though in himself mightily caught up in the power of the spirit into the heights above, yet among others, in his loving-kindness, he is content to become weak. Hence, therefore, he says, “Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?”*. Hence again he says, “Unto the Jews I became as a Jew”.* Now he exhibited this behaviour not by losing hold of his faith, but by extending his loving-kindness; so as, by transferring in a figure the person of unbelievers to himself, to learn from himself how they ought to have compassion shown them; to the end that he might bestow on them what he would have rightly wished to have had bestowed upon himself, had he been as they. Hence again he says, “Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for you”.* For he had known how both to transcend himself in contemplation, and to accommodate himself to his hearers in condescension. Hence Jacob, the Lord looking down from above, and oil being poured down on the stone, saw angels ascending and descending*; to signify, that true preachers not only aspire in contemplation to the holy head of the Church, that is to the Lord, above, but also descend in commiseration downward to His members. Hence Moses goes frequently in and out of the tabernacle, and he who is wrapped into contemplation within is busied outside with the affairs of those who are subject to infirmity. Within he considers the secret things of God; without he carries the burdens of the carnal. And also concerning doubtful matters he always recurs to the tabernacle, to consult the Lord before the ark of the covenant; affording without doubt an example to rulers; that, when in the outside world they are uncertain how to order things, they should return to their own soul as though to the tabernacle, and, as before the ark of the covenant, consult the Lord, if so, they may search within themselves the pages of sacred utterance concerning that whereof they doubt. Hence the Truth itself, manifested to us through susception of our humanity, continues in prayer on the mountain, but works miracles in the cities*, thus laying down the way to be followed by good rulers; that, though already in contemplation aspiring to the highest things, they should mingle in sympathy with the necessities of the infirm; since charity then rises wonderfully to high things when it is compassionately drawn to the low things of neighbours; and the more kindly it descends to the weak things of this world, the more vigor-

2 Corinthians 11:29
1 Corinthians 9:20

2 Corinthians 5:13

Genesis 28:12

Luke 6:12

ously it recurs to the things on high. But those who are over others should show themselves to be such that their subjects may not blush to disclose even their secrets to them; that the little ones, vexed with the waves of temptation, may have recourse to their pastor's heart as to a mother's breast, and wash away the defilement they foresee to themselves from the filth of the sin that buffets them in the solace of his exhortation and in the tears of prayer. Hence also it is that before the doors of the temple the brazen sea for washing the hands of those who enter, that is the laver, is supported by twelve oxen,* whose faces indeed stand out to view, but whose hinder parts are hidden. For what is signified by the twelve oxen but the whole order of pastors, of whom the law says, as explained by Paul, You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the grain?† Their open works indeed we see; but what remains to them behind in the hidden retribution of the strict judge we know not. Yet, when they prepare the patience of their condescension for cleansing the sins of their neighbours in confession, they support, as it were, the laver before the doors of the temple; that whosoever is striving to enter the gate of eternity may show his temptations to his pastor's heart, and, as it were, wash the hands of his thought and of his deed in the laver of the oxen. And for the most part it comes to pass that, while the ruler's mind becomes aware, through condescension, of the trials of others, it is itself also attacked by the temptations whereof it hears; since the same water of the laver in which a multitude of people is cleansed is undoubtedly itself defiled. For, in receiving the pollutions of those who wash, it loses, as it were, the calmness of its own purity. But of this the pastor ought by no means to be afraid, since, under God, who nicely balances all things, he is the more easily rescued from his own temptations as he is more compassionately distressed by those of others.

1 Kings 7:23, seq

1 Corinthians 9:9;
ex Deuteronomy
25:4

That the ruler should be, through humility, a companion of good livers, but, through the zeal of righteousness, rigid against the vices of evildoers.

VI

The ruler should be, through humility, a companion of good livers, and, through the zeal of righteousness, rigid against the vices of evil-doers; so that in nothing he prefer himself to the good, and yet, when the fault of the bad requires it, he be at once conscious of the power of his priority; to the end that, while among his subordinates who live well he waives his rank and accounts them as his equals, he may not fear to execute the laws of rectitude towards the perverse. For, as I remember to have said in my book on morals,* it is

Lib. xxi., Moral, cap.
10, nunc. n. 22

Genesis 9:1

clear that nature produced all men equal; but, through variation in the order of their merits, guilt puts some below others. But the very diversity which has accrued from vice is ordered by divine judgment, so that, since all men cannot stand on an equal footing, one should be ruled by another. Hence all who are over others ought to consider in themselves not the authority of their rank, but the equality of their condition and rejoice not to be over men, but to do them good. For indeed our ancient fathers are said to have been not kings of men, but shepherds of flocks. And, when the Lord said to Noe and his children, "Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth", He at once added, "And let the fear of you and the dread of you be upon all the beasts of the earth". * Thus it appears that, whereas it is ordered that the fear and the dread should be upon the beasts of the earth, it is forbidden that it should be upon men. For man is by nature preferred to the brute beasts, but not to other men; and therefore it is said to him that he should be feared by the beasts, but not by men; since to wish to be feared by one's equal is to be proud against nature. And yet it is necessary that rulers should be feared by their subjects, when they find that God is not feared by them; so that those who have no dread of divine judgments may at any rate, through human dread, be afraid to sin. For superiors by no means show themselves proud in seeking to inspire this fear, in which they seek not their own glory, but the righteousness of their subordinates. For in exacting fear of themselves from such as live perversely, they lord it, as it were, not over men, but over beasts, inasmuch as, so far as their subordinates are bestial, they ought also to lie subdued to dread.

But commonly a ruler, from the very fact of his being pre-eminent over others, is puffed up with elation of thought; and, while all things serve his need, while his commands are quickly executed after his desire, while all his subjects extol with praises what he has done well, but have no authority to speak against what he has done amiss, and while they commonly praise even what they ought to have reprovèd, his mind, seduced by what is offered in abundance from below, is lifted up above itself; and, while outwardly surrounded by unbounded favour, he loses his inward sense of truth; and, forgetful of himself, he scatters himself on the voices of other men, and believes himself to be such as outwardly he hears himself called rather than such as he ought inwardly to have judged himself to be. He looks down on those who are under him, nor does he acknowledge them as in the order of

Book of Pastoral Rule

nature his equals; and those whom he has surpassed in the accident of power he believes himself to have transcended also in the merits of his life; he esteems himself wiser than all whom he sees himself to excel in power. For indeed he establishes himself in his own mind on a certain lofty eminence, and, though bound together in the same condition of nature with others, he disdains to regard others from the same level; and so he comes to be even like him of whom it is written, “He beholds all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride”.* Nay, aspiring to a singular eminence, and despising the social life of the angels, he says, “I will place my seat in the north, and I will be like the Most High”.* Wherefore through a marvellous judgment he finds a pit of downfall within himself, while outwardly he exalts himself on the summit of power. For he is indeed made like the apostate angel, when, being a man, he disdains to be like men. Thus Saul, after merit of humility, became swollen with pride, when in the height of power: for his humility he was preferred, for his pride rejected; as the Lord attests, Who says, “When you were little in your own sight, did I not make you the head of the tribes of Israel”?* He had before seen himself little in his own eyes, but, when propped up by temporal power, he no longer saw himself little. For, preferring himself in comparison with others because he had more power than all, he esteemed himself great above all. Yet in a wonderful way, when he was little with himself, he was great with God; but, when he appeared great with himself, he was little with God. Thus commonly, while the mind is inflated from an affluence of subordinates, it becomes corrupted to a flux of pride, the very summit of power being pander to desire. And in truth he orders this power well who knows how both to maintain it and to combat it. He orders it well who knows how through it to tower above delinquencies, and knows how with it to match himself with others in equality. For the human mind commonly is exalted even when supported by no authority: how much more does it lift itself on high when authority lends itself to its support! Nevertheless he dispenses this authority aright, who knows how, with anxious care, both to take of it what is helpful, and also to reject what tempts, and with it to perceive himself to be on a par with others, and yet to put himself above those that sin in his avenging zeal.

Job 41:25

Isaiah 14:13

1 Samuel 15:17

But we shall more fully understand this distinction, if we look at the examples given by the first pastor. For Peter, who had received from God the prin-

cipality of Holy Church, from Cornelius, acting well and prostrating himself humbly before him, refused to accept immoderate veneration, saying, "Stand up; do it not; I myself also am a man".* But, when he discovers the guilt of Ananias and Sapphira, he soon shows with how great power he had been made eminent above all others. For by his word he smote their life, which he detected by the penetration of his spirit; and he recollected himself as chief within the Church against sins, though he did not acknowledge this, when honour was eagerly paid him, before his brethren who acted well. In one case holiness of conduct merited the communion of equality; in the other avenging zeal brought out to view the just claims of authority. Paul, too, knew not himself as preferred above his brethren who acted well, when he said, "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy".* And he straightway added, For by faith you stand: as if to explain his declaration by saying, For this cause we have not dominion over your faith, because by faith you stand; for we are your equals in that wherein we know you to stand. He knew not himself as preferred above his brethren, when he said, "We became babes in the midst of you";* and again, "But ourselves your servants through Christ".* But, when he found a fault that required to be corrected, straightway he recollected himself as a master, saying, "What will you? Shall I come unto you with a rod"?*

Acts 10:26

2 Corinthians 1:23

1 Thessalonians 2:7

2 Corinthians 4:5

1 Corinthians 4:21

Supreme rule, then, is ordered well, when he who presides lords it over vices, rather than over his brethren. But, when superiors correct their delinquent subordinates, it remains for them anxiously to take heed how far, while in right of their authority they smite faults with due discipline, they still, through custody of humility, acknowledge themselves to be on a par with the very brethren who are corrected; although for the most part it is becoming that in our silent thought we even prefer the brethren whom we correct to ourselves. For their vices are through us smitten with the vigour of discipline; but in those which we ourselves commit we are lacerated by not even a word of upbraiding. Wherefore we are by so much the more bounden before the Lord as among men we sin unpunished: but our discipline renders our subordinates by so much the freer from divine judgment, as it leaves not their faults without retribution here. Therefore, in the heart humility should be maintained, and in action discipline. And all the time there is need of sagacious insight, lest, through excessive custody of the virtue of humility, the just

claims of government be relaxed, and lest, while any superior lowers himself more than is fit, he be unable to restrain the lives of his subordinates under the bond of discipline. Let rulers, then, maintain outwardly what they undertake for the benefit of others: let them retain inwardly what makes them fearful in their estimate of themselves. But still let even their subjects perceive, by certain signs coming out becomingly, that in themselves they are humble; so as both to see something to be afraid of in their authority, and to acknowledge something to imitate with respect to humility. Therefore let those who preside study without intermission that in proportion as their power is seen to be great externally it be kept down within themselves internally; that it vanquish not their thought; that the heart be not carried away to delight in it; lest the mind become unable to control that which in lust of domination it submits itself to. For, lest the heart of a ruler should be betrayed into elation by delight in personal power, it is rightly said by a certain wise man “They have made you a leader: lift not up yourself, but be among them as one of them”.* Hence also Peter says, “Not as being lords over God’s heritage, but being made ensamples to the flock”.* Hence the Truth in person, provoking us to higher virtuous desert, says, “You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are greater exercise authority upon them. It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be greater among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister”.* Hence also He indicates what punishments are in store for the servant who has been elated by his assumption of government, saying, “But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delays his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites”.* For he is rightly numbered among the hypocrites, who under pretence of discipline turns the ministry of government to the purpose of domination. And yet sometimes there is more grievous delinquency, if among perverse persons equality is kept up more than discipline. For Eli, because, overcome by false affection, he would not punish his delinquent sons, smote himself along with his sons before the strict judge with a cruel doom.* For on this account it is said to him by the divine voice, “You have honoured your sons more than Me”.* Hence, too, He upbraids

Sirach 32:1

1 Peter 5:3

Matthew 20:25

Matthew 24:48, seq.

1 Samuel 4:17-18

1 Samuel 2:29

the shepherds through the prophet, saying, "That which was broken you have not bound up, and that which was cast away you have not brought back".*
 For one who had been cast away is brought back, when any one who has fallen into sin is recalled to a state of righteousness by the vigour of pastoral solicitude. For ligature binds a fracture when discipline subdues a sin, lest the wound should bleed mortally for want of being compressed by the severity of constraint. But often a fracture is made worse, when it is bound together unwarily, so that the cut is more severely felt from being immoderately constrained by ligaments. Hence it is needful that when a wound of sin in subordinates is repressed by correction, even constraint should moderate itself with great carefulness, to the end that it may so exercise the rights of discipline against delinquents as to retain the bowels of loving-kindness. For care should be taken that a ruler show himself to his subjects as a mother in loving-kindness, and as a father in discipline. And all the time it should be seen to with anxious circumspection, that neither discipline be rigid nor loving-kindness lax. For, as we have before now said in our book on **Morals***, there is much wanting both to discipline and to compassion, if one be had without the other. But there ought to be in rulers towards their subjects both compassion justly considerate, and discipline affectionately severe. For hence it is that, as the Truth teaches*, the man is brought by the care of the Samaritan half dead into the inn, and both wine and oil are applied to his wounds; the wine to make them smart, the oil to soothe them. For whosoever superintends the healing of wounds must needs administer in wine the smart of pain, and in oil the softness of loving-kindness, to the end that through wine what is festering may be purged, and through oil what is curable may be soothed. Gentleness, then, is to be mingled with severity; a sort of compound is to be made of both; so that subjects be neither exulcerated by too much asperity, nor relaxed by too great kindness. Which thing, according to the words of Paul*, is well signified by that ark of the tabernacle, in which, together with the tables, there as a rod and manna; because, if with knowledge of sacred Scripture in the good ruler's breast there is the rod of constraint, there should be also the manna of sweetness. Hence David says, "Your rod and your staff, they have comforted me".* For with a rod we are smitten, with a staff we are supported. If, then, there is the constraint of the rod for striking, there should be also the comfort of the staff for supporting. Wherefore let there be love, but not enervating; let there be vigour, but not exasperating; let there be zeal, but not immoderately

Ezekiel 34:4

Lib. xx., Moral n.
 14, c. 8, et ep. 25,
 lib. 1

Luke 10:34

Hebrews 9:4

Psalms 23:4

burning; let there be pity; but not sparing more than is expedient; that, while justice and mercy blend themselves together in supreme rule, he who is at the head may both soothe the hearts of his subjects in making them afraid, and yet in soothing them constrain them to reverential awe.

That the ruler relax not his care for the things that are within in his occupation among the things that are without, nor neglect to provide for the things that are without in his solicitude for the things that are within.

VII

The ruler should not relax his care for the things that are within in his occupation among the things that are without, nor neglect to provide for the things that are without in his solicitude for the things that are within; lest either, given up to the things that are without, he fall away from his inmost concerns, or, occupied only with the things that are within bestow not on his neighbours outside himself what he owes them. For it is often the case that some, as if forgetting that they have been put over their brethren for their souls' sake, devote themselves with the whole effort of their heart to secular concerns; these, when they are at hand, they exult in transacting, and, even when there is a lack of them, pant after them night and day with seethings of turbid thought; and when, haply for lack of opportunity, they have quiet from them, by their very quiet they are wearied all the more. For they count it pleasure to be tired by action: they esteem it labour not to labour in earthly businesses. And so it comes to pass that, while they delight in being hustled by worldly tumults, they are ignorant of the things that are within, which they ought to have taught to others. And from this cause undoubtedly, the life also of their subjects is benumbed; because, while desirous of advancing spiritually, it meets a stumbling-block on the way in the example of him who is set over it. For when the head languishes, the members fail to thrive; and it is in vain for an army to follow swiftly in pursuit of enemies if the very leader of the march goes wrong. No exhortation sustains the minds of the subjects, and no reproof chastises their faults, because, while the office of an earthly judge is executed by the guardian of souls, the attention of the shepherd is diverted from custody of the flock; and the subjects are unable to apprehend the light of truth, because, while earthly pursuits occupy the pastor's mind, dust, driven by the wind of temptation, blinds the Church's eyes. To guard against this, the Redeemer of the human race, when He would restrain us from gluttony, saying, "Take heed to yourselves that your hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness",* immediately added, "Or with cares of this

Luke 21:34

life”: and in the same place also, with design to add fearfulness to the warning,
 Luke 21:34 He straightway said, “Lest perchance that day come upon you unawares”:*
 and He even declares the manner of that coming, saying, “For as a snare
 Luke 21:35 shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth”.* Hence
 Luke 16:13 He says again, “No man can serve two masters”.* Hence Paul withdraws
 the minds of the religious from consort with the world by summoning, nay
 rather enlisting them, when he says, “No man that wars for God entangles
 2 Timothy 2:4 himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him to whom he has
 approved himself”.* Hence to the rulers of the Church he both commends
 the studies of leisure and points out the remedies of counsel, saying, “If then
 you should have secular judgments, set them to judge who are contemptible
 1 Corinthians 6:4 in the church”;* that is, that those very persons whom no spiritual gifts adorn
 should devote themselves to earthly charges. It is as if he had said more plain-
 ly, Since they are incapable of penetrating the inmost things, let them at any
 rate employ themselves externally in necessary things. Hence Moses, who
 Exodus 18:17-18 speaks with God,* is judged by the reproof of Jethro, who was of alien race,
 because with ill-advised labour he devotes himself to the people’s earthly
 affairs: and counsel too is presently given him, that he should appoint others
 in his stead for settling earthly strifes, and he himself should be more free to
 learn spiritual secrets for the instruction of the people.

By the subjects, then, inferior matters are to be transacted, by the rul-
 ers the highest thought of; so that no annoyance of dust may darken the
 eye which is placed aloft for looking forward to the onward steps. For all
 who preside are the head of their subjects; and, that the feet may be able
 to take a straight course, the head ought undoubtedly to look forward to it
 from above, lest the feet linger on their onward journey, the body being bent
 from its uprightness and the head bowed down to the earth. But with what
 conscience can the overseer of souls avail himself among other men of his
 pastoral dignity, while engaged himself in the earthly cares which it was his
 duty to reprehend in others? And this indeed is what the Lord, in the wrath
 of just retribution, menaced through the prophet, saying, “And there shall
 Hosea 4:9 be like people, like priest”.* For the priest is as the people, when one who
 bears a spiritual office acts as do others who are still under judgment with
 regard to their carnal pursuits. And this indeed the prophet Jeremiah, in
 the great sorrow of his charity, deploras under the image of the destruction

Book of Pastoral Rule

of the temple, saying, How is the gold become dim! The most excellent colour is changed; the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of all the streets.* For what is expressed by gold, which surpasses all other metals, but the excellency of holiness? What by the most excellent colour but the reverence that is about religion, to all men lovely? What are signified by the stones of the sanctuary but persons in sacred orders? What is figured under the name of streets but the latitude of this present life? For, because in Greek speech the word for latitude is *πλάτος*, streets (*plateæ*) have been so called from their breadth, or latitude. But the Truth in person says, "Broad and spacious is the way that leads to destruction".* Gold, therefore, becomes dim when a life of holiness is polluted by earthly doings; the most excellent colour is changed, when the previous reputation of persons who were believed to be living religiously is diminished. For, when any one after a habit of holiness mixes himself up with earthly doings, it is as though his colour were changed, and the reverence that surrounded him grew pale and disregarded before the eyes of men. The stones of the sanctuary also are poured out into the streets, when those who, for the ornament of the Church, should have been free to penetrate internal mysteries as it were in the secret places of the tabernacle seek out the broadways of secular causes outside. For indeed to this end they were made stones of the sanctuary, that they might appear in the vestment of the high-priest within the holy of holies. But when ministers of religion exact not the Redeemer's honour from those that are under them by the merit of their life, they are not stones of the sanctuary in the ornament of the pontiff. And truly these stones of the sanctuary lie scattered through the streets, when persons in sacred orders, given up to the latitude of their own pleasures, cleave to earthly businesses. And it is to be observed that they are said to be scattered, not in the streets, but in the top of the streets; because, even when they are engaged in earthly matters, they desire to appear topmost; so as to occupy the broad ways in their enjoyment of delight, and yet to be at the top of the streets in the dignity of holiness.

Lamentations 4:1

Matthew 7:13

Further, there is nothing to hinder us from taking the stones of the sanctuary to be those of which the sanctuary was itself constructed; which lie scattered in the top of the streets when men in sacred orders, in whose office the glory of holiness had previously seemed to stand, devote themselves out of preference to earthly doings. Secular employments, therefore, though they

may sometimes be endured out of compassion, should never be sought after out of affection for the things themselves; lest, while they weigh down the mind of him who loves them, they sink it, overcome by its own burden, from heavenly places to the lowest. But, on the other hand, there are some who undertake the care of the flock, but desire to be so at leisure for their own spiritual concerns as to be in no wise occupied with external things. Such persons, in neglecting all care for what pertains to the body, by no means meet the needs of those who are put under them. And certainly their preaching is for the most part despised; because, while they find fault with the deeds of sinners, but nevertheless afford them not the necessaries of the present life, they are not at all willingly listened to. For the word of doctrine penetrates not the mind of one that is in need, if the hand of compassion commends it not to his heart. But the seed of the word readily germinates, when the loving-kindness of the preacher waters it in the hearer's breast. Whence, for a ruler to be able to infuse what may profit inwardly, it is necessary for him, with blameless consideration, to provide also for outward things. Let pastors, then, so glow with ardour in regard to the inward affections of those they have the charge of as not to relinquish provision also for their outward life. For, as we have said, the heart of the flock is, even as it were of right, set against preaching, if the care of external succour be neglected by the pastor. Whence also the first pastor anxiously admonishes, saying, "The elders which are among you I beseech, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, feed the flock of God which is among you":* in which place he showed whether it was the feeding of the heart or of the body that he was commending, when he immediately added, Providing for it, not by constraint, but willingly, according to God, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. In these words, indeed, pastors are kindly forewarned, lest, while they satisfy the want of those who are under them, they slay themselves with the sword of ambition; lest, while through them their neighbours are refreshed with succours of the flesh, they themselves remain fasting from the bread of righteousness. This solicitude of pastors Paul stirs up when he says, If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel 1 Timothy 5:8. In the midst of all this, then, they should fear, and watchfully take heed, lest, while occupied with outward care, they be whelmed away from inward intentness. For usually, as we have already said, the hearts of

¹ Peter 5:1

rulers, while unwarily devoting themselves to temporal solicitude, cool in inmost love; and, being carried here and there abroad, fear not to forget that they have undertaken the government of souls. It is necessary, then, that the solicitude expended on those who are put under us should be kept within a certain measure. Hence it is well said to Ezekiel, "The priests shall not shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long, but polling let them poll their heads".* For they are rightly called priests who are set over the faithful for affording them sacred guidance. But the hairs outside the head are thoughts in the mind; which, as they spring up insensibly above the brain, denote the cares of the present life, which, owing to negligent perception, since they sometimes come forth unseasonably, advance, as it were, without our feeling them. Since, then, all who are over others ought indeed to have external anxieties, and yet should not be vehemently bent upon them, the priests are rightly forbidden either to shave their heads or to let their hair grow long; that so they may neither cut off from themselves entirely thoughts of the flesh for the life of those who are under them, nor again allow them to grow too much. Thus in this passage it is well said, Polling let them poll their heads; to wit, that the cares of temporal anxiety should both extend themselves as far as need requires, and yet be cut short soon, lest they grow to an immoderate extent. When, therefore, through provident care for bodies applied externally life is protected [or, through provident care applied externally the life of bodies is protected], and again, through moderate intentness of heart, is not impeded, the hairs on the priest's head are both preserved to cover the skin, and cut short so as not to veil the eyes.

Ezekiel 44:20

VIII

Meanwhile it is also necessary for the ruler to keep wary watch, lest the lust of pleasing men assail him; lest, when he studiously penetrates the things that are within, and providently supplies the things that are without, he seek to be beloved of those that are under him more than truth; lest, while, supported by his good deeds, he seems not to belong to the world, self-love estrange him from his Maker. For he is the Redeemer's enemy who through the good works which he does covets being loved by the Church instead of Him; since a servant whom the bridegroom has sent with gifts to the bride is guilty of treacherous thought if he desires to please the eyes of the bride. And in truth

That the ruler should not set his heart on pleasing men, and yet should give heed to what ought to please them.

this self-love, when it has got possession of a ruler's mind, sometimes carries it away inordinately to softness, but sometimes to roughness. For from love of himself the ruler's mind is inclined to softness, because, when he observes those that are under him sinning, he does not presume to reprove them, lest their affection for himself should grow dull; nay sometimes he smooths down with flatteries the offense of his subordinates which he ought to have rebuked. Hence it is well said through the prophet, "Woe unto them that sew cushions under every elbow, and make pillows under the head of every stature to catch souls";* inasmuch as to put cushions under every elbow is to cherish with bland flatteries souls that are falling from their uprightness and reclining themselves in this world's enjoyment. For it is as though the elbow of a recumbent person rested on a cushion and his head on pillows, when the hardness of reproof is withdrawn from one who sins, and when the softness of favour is offered to him, that he may lie softly in error, while no roughness of contradiction troubles him. But so rulers who love themselves undoubtedly show themselves to those by whom they fear they may be injured in their pursuit of temporal glory. Such indeed as they see to have no power against them they ever keep down with roughness of rigid censure, never admonish them gently, but, forgetful of pastoral kindness, terrify them with the rights of domination. Such the divine voice rightly upbraids through the prophet, "But with austerity and power did you rule them".* For, loving themselves more than their Maker, they lift up themselves haughtily towards those that are under them, considering not what they ought to do, but what they can do; they have no fear of future judgment; they glory insolently in temporal power; it pleases them to be free to do even unlawful things, and that no one among their subordinates should contradict them. He, then, who sets his mind on doing wrong things, and yet wishes all other men to hold their peace about them, is himself a witness to himself that he desires to be loved himself more than the truth, which he is unwilling should be defended against him. There is indeed no one who so lives as not to some extent to fail in duty. He, then, desires the truth to be loved more fully than himself, who wishes to be spared by no one against the truth. For hence Peter willingly accepted Paul's rebuke;* hence David humbly listened to the reproof of his subject;* because good rulers, being themselves unconscious of loving with partial affection, believe the word of free sincerity from subjects to be the homage of humility. But meanwhile it is necessary that the care of government be tempered with

Ezekiel 13:18

Ezekiel 24:4

Galatians 2:11
2 Samuel 12:7

so great skill of management that the mind of subjects, when it has become able to feel rightly on some subjects, should so advance to liberty of speech that liberty still break not out into pride; lest, while liberty of the tongue is perchance conceded to them overmuch, the humility of their life be lost. It is to be borne in mind also, that it is right for good rulers to desire to please men; but this in order to draw their neighbours by the sweetness of their own character to affection for the truth; not that they should long to be themselves loved, but should make affection for themselves as a sort of road by which to lead the hearts of their hearers to the love of the Creator. For it is indeed difficult for a preacher who is not loved, however well he may preach, to be willingly listened to. He, then, who is over others ought to study to be loved to the end that he may be listened to, and still not seek love for its own sake, lest he be found in the hidden usurpation of his thought to rebel against Him whom in his office he appears to serve. Which thing Paul insinuates well, when, manifesting the secret of his affection for us, he says, “Even as I please all men in all things”.* And yet he says again, “If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ”.* Thus Paul pleases, and pleases not; because in that he desires to please he seeks that not he himself should please men, but truth through him.

1 Corinthians 10:33

Galatians 1:10

IX

The ruler also ought to understand how commonly vices pass themselves off as virtues. For often niggardliness palliates itself under the name of frugality, and on the other hand prodigality hides itself under the appellation of liberality. Often inordinate laxity is believed to be loving-kindness, and unbridled wrath is accounted the virtue of spiritual zeal. Often precipitate action is taken for the efficacy of promptness, and tardiness for the deliberation of seriousness. Whence it is necessary for the ruler of souls to distinguish with vigilant care between virtues and vices, lest either niggardliness get possession of his heart while he exults in seeming frugal in expenditure; or, while anything is prodigally wasted, he glory in being as it were compassionately liberal; or in remitting what he ought to have smitten he draw on those that are under him to eternal punishment; or in mercilessly smiting an offense he himself offend more grievously; or by immaturely anticipating what might have been done properly and gravely; or by putting off the merit of a good action

That the ruler ought to be careful to understand how commonly vices pass themselves off as virtues.

change it to something worse.

What the ruler's
discrimination
should be be-
tween correction
and connivance,
between fervour
and gentleness.

X

It should be known too that the vices of subjects ought sometimes to be prudently connived at, but indicated in that they are connived at; that things, even though openly known, ought sometimes to be seasonably tolerated, but sometimes, though hidden, be closely investigated; that they ought sometimes to be gently reproved, but sometimes vehemently censured. For, indeed, some things, as we have said, ought to be prudently connived at, but indicated in that they are connived at, so that, when the delinquent is aware that he is discovered and borne with, he may blush to augment those faults which he considers in himself are tolerated in silence, and may punish himself in his own judgment as being one whom the patience of his ruler in his own mind mercifully excuses. By such connivance the Lord well reproves Judah, when He says through the prophet, "You have lied, and hast not remembered Me, nor laid it to your heart, because I have held My peace and been as one that saw not".* Thus He both connived at faults and made them known, since He both held His peace against the sinner, and nevertheless declared this very thing, that He had held His peace. But some things, even though openly known, ought to be seasonably tolerated; that is, when circumstances afford no suitable opportunity for openly correcting them. For sores by being unseasonably cut are the worse enflamed and, if medicaments suit not the time, it is undoubtedly evident that they lose their medicinal function. But, while a fitting time for the correction of subordinates is being sought, the patience of the prelate is exercised under the very weight of their offenses. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, "Sinners have built upon my back".* For on the back we support burdens; and therefore he complains that sinners had built upon his back, as if to say plainly, Those whom I am unable to correct I carry as a burden laid upon me.

Isaiah 57:11

Psalms 128:3

Some hidden things, however, ought to be closely investigated, that, by the breaking out of certain symptoms, the ruler may discover all that lies closely hidden in the minds of his subordinates, and, by reproof intervening at the nick of time, from very small things become aware of greater ones. Whence it is rightly said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, dig in the wall";* where the said

Ezekiel 8:8

prophet presently adds, “And when I had dug in the wall, there appeared one door. And he said unto me, Go in, and see the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every similitude of creeping things, and abomination of beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were portrayed upon the wall”. * Now by Ezekiel are personified men in authority; by the wall is signified the hardness of their subordinates. And what is digging in a wall but opening the hardness of the heart by sharp inquisitions? Which wall when he had dug into, there appeared a door, because when hardness of heart is pierced either by careful questionings or by seasonable reproofs, there is shown as it were a kind of door, through which may appear the interior of the thoughts in him who is reproved. Whence also it follows well in that place, Go in and see the wicked abominations that they do here. * He goes in, as it were, to see the abominations, who, by examination of certain symptoms outwardly appearing, so penetrates the hearts of his subordinates as to become cognizant of all their illicit thoughts. Whence also he added, And I went in and saw; and behold every similitude of creeping things, and abomination of beasts. * By creeping things thoughts altogether earthly are signified; but by beasts such as are indeed a little lifted above the earth, but still crave the rewards of earthly recompense. For creeping things cleave to the earth with the whole body; but beasts are in a large part of the body lifted above the earth, yet are ever inclined to the earth by gulosity. Therefore there are creeping things within the wall, when thoughts are revolved in the mind which never rise above earthly cravings. There are also beasts within the wall, when, though some just and some honourable thoughts are entertained, they are still subservient to appetite for temporal gains and honour, and, though in themselves indeed lifted, as one may say, above the earth, still through desire to curry favour, as through the throat’s craving, demean themselves to what is lowest. Whence also it is well added, “And all the idols of the house of Israel were portrayed upon the wall”, * inasmuch as it is written, “And covetousness, which is idolatry”. * Rightly therefore after beasts idols are spoken of, because some, though lifting themselves as it were above the earth by honourable action, still lower themselves to the earth by dishonourable ambition. And it is well said, Were portrayed; since, when the shows of external things are drawn into one’s inner self, whatever is meditated on under imagined images is, as it were, portrayed on the heart. It is to be observed, therefore, that first a hole in the wall, and afterwards a door, is perceived, and that then at

Ibid. 9, 10

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ezekiel 8:10

Colossians 3:5

length the hidden abomination is made apparent; because, in fact, of every single sin signs are first seen outwardly, and afterwards a door is pointed out for opening the iniquity to view; and then at length every evil that lies hidden within is disclosed.

Some things, however, ought to be gently reprov'd: for, when fault is committed, not of malice, but only from ignorance or infirmity, it is certainly necessary that the very censure of it be tempered with great moderation. For it is true that all of us, so long as we subsist in this mortal flesh, are subject to the infirmities of our corruption. Every one, therefore, ought to gather from himself how it behooves him to pity another's weakness, lest, if he be too fervently hurried to words of reprehension against a neighbour's infirmity, he should seem to be forgetful of his own. Whence Paul admonishes well, when he says, "If a man be overtaken in any fault, you which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted";* as if to say plainly, When what you see of the infirmity of another displeases you, consider what you are; that so the spirit may moderate itself in the zeal of reprehension, while for itself also it fears what it reprehends.

Galatians 6:1

Some things, however, ought to be vehemently reprov'd, that, when a fault is not recognized by him who has committed it, he may be made sensible of its gravity from the mouth of the reprov'er; and that, when any one smooths over to himself the evil that he has perpetrated, he may be led by the asperity of his censurer to entertain grave fears of its effects against himself. For indeed it is the duty of a ruler to show by the voice of preaching the glory of the supernal country, to disclose what great temptations of the old enemy are lurking in this life's journey, and to correct with great asperity of zeal such evils among those who are under his sway as ought not to be gently borne with; lest, in being too little incensed against faults, of all faults he be himself held guilty. Whence it is well said to Ezekiel, "Take unto you a tile, and you shall lay it before you, and portray upon it the city Jerusalem".* And immediately it is subjoined, "And you shall lay siege against it, and build forts, and cast a mount, and set camps against it, and set battering rams against it round about. And to him, for his own defence it is immediately subjoined, And do thou take unto you an iron frying-pan, and you shall set it for a wall of iron between you and the city". For of what does the prophet Ezekiel bear the semblance but of teachers, in that it is said to him, "Take unto you a tile, and

Ezekiel 4:1

Book of Pastoral Rule

you shall lay it before you, and portray upon it the city Jerusalem”?

For indeed holy teachers take unto themselves a tile, when they lay hold of the earthly heart of hearers in order to teach them: which tile in truth they lay before themselves, because they keep watch over it with the entire bent of their mind: on which tile also they are commanded to portray the city Jerusalem, because they are at the utmost pains to represent to earthly hearts by preaching a vision of supernal peace. But, because the glory of the heavenly country is perceived in vain, unless it be known also what great temptations of the crafty enemy assail us here, it is fitly subjoined, “And you shall lay siege against it, and build forts”. For indeed holy preachers lay siege about the tile on which the city Jerusalem is delineated, when to a mind that is earthly but already seeking after the supernal country they show how great an opposition of vices in the time of this life is arrayed against it. For, when it is shown how each several sin besets us in our onward course, it is as though a siege were laid round the city Jerusalem by the voice of the preacher. But, because preachers ought not only to make known how vices assail us, but also how well-guarded virtues strengthen us, it is rightly subjoined, “And you shall build forts”. For indeed the holy preacher builds forts, when he shows what virtues resist what vices. And because, as virtue increases, the wars of temptation are for the most part augmented, it is rightly further added, “And you shall cast a mount, and set camps against it, and set battering rams round about”. For, when any preacher sets forth the mass of increasing temptation, he casts a mount. And he sets camps against Jerusalem when to the right intention of his hearers he foretells the unsurveyed, and as it were incomprehensible, ambuscades of the cunning enemy. And he sets battering-rams round about, when he makes known the darts of temptation encompassing us on every side in this life, and piercing through our wall of virtues.

But although the ruler may nicely insinuate all these things, he procures not for himself lasting absolution, unless he glow with a spirit of jealousy against the delinquencies of all and each. Whence in that place it is further rightly subjoined, “And do thou take to you an iron frying-pan, and you shall set it for a wall of iron between you and the city”. For by the frying-pan is denoted a frying of the mind, and by iron the hardness of reproof.

But what more fiercely fries and excruciates the teacher’s mind than zeal

2 Corinthians 11:29

for God? Hence Paul was being burnt with the frying of this frying-pan when he said, “Who is made weak, and I am not made weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?”.* And, because whosoever is inflamed with zeal for God is protected by a guard continually, lest he should deserve to be condemned for negligence, it is rightly said, “You shall set it for a wall of iron between you and the city”. For an iron frying-pan is set for a wall of iron between the prophet and the city, because, when rulers already exhibit strong zeal, they keep the same zeal as a strong defence afterwards between themselves and their hearers, lest they should be destitute then of the power to punish from having been previously remiss in reproving.

Deuteronomy
19:4-5

But meanwhile it is to be borne in mind that, while the mind of the teacher exasperates itself for rebuke, it is very difficult for him to avoid breaking out into saying something that he ought not to say. And for the most part it happens that, when the faults of subordinates are reprehended with severe invective, the tongue of the master is betrayed into excess of language. And, when rebuke is immoderately hot, the hearts of the delinquents are depressed to despair. Wherefore it is necessary for the exasperated ruler, when he considers that he has wounded more than he should have done the feelings of his subordinates, to have recourse in his own mind to penitence, so as by lamentations to obtain pardon in the sight of the Truth; and even for this cause, that it is through the ardour of his zeal for it that he sins. This is what the Lord in a figure enjoins through Moses, saying, “If a man go in simplicity of heart with his friend into the wood to hew wood, and the wood of the axe fly from his hand, and the iron slip from the handle and smite his friend and slay him, he shall flee unto one of the aforesaid cities and live; lest haply the next of kin to him whose blood has been shed, while his heart is hot, pursue him, and overtake him, and smite him mortally”.* For indeed we go with a friend into the wood as often as we betake ourselves to look into the delinquencies of subordinates. And we hew wood in simplicity of heart, when with pious intention we cut off the vices of delinquents. But the axe flies from the hand, when rebuke is drawn on to asperity more than need requires. And the iron leaps from the handle, when out of reproof issues speech too hard. And he smites and slays his friend, because overstrained contumely cuts him off from the spirit of love. For the mind of one who is reproved suddenly breaks out into hatred, if immoderate reproof charges it beyond its due. But he who

smites wood incautiously and destroys his neighbour must needs fly to three cities, that in one of them he may live protected; since if, betaking himself to the laments of penitence, he is hidden under hope and charity in sacramental unity, he is not held guilty of the perpetrated homicide. And him the next of kin to the slain man does not kill, even when he finds him; because, when the strict judge comes, who has joined himself to us by sharing in our nature, without doubt He requires not the penalty of his fault from him whom faith, hope and charity hide under the shelter of his pardon.

XI

But all this is duly executed by a ruler, if, inspired by the spirit of heavenly fear and love, he meditate daily on the precepts of Sacred Writ, that the words of Divine admonition may restore in him the power of solicitude and of provident circumspection with regard to the celestial life, which familiar intercourse with men continually destroys; and that one who is drawn to oldness of life by secular society may by the aspiration of compunction be ever renewed to love of the spiritual country. For the heart runs greatly to waste in the midst of human talk; and, since it is undoubtedly evident that, when driven by the tumults of external occupations, it loses its balance and falls, one ought incessantly to take care that through keen pursuit of instruction it may rise again. For hence it is that Paul admonishes his disciple who had been put over the flock, saying, "Till I come, give attendance to reading".* Hence David says, "How have I loved Your Law, O Lord! It is my meditation all the day".* Hence the Lord commanded Moses concerning the carrying of the ark, saying, "You shall make four rings of gold, which you shall put in the four corners of the ark, and you shall make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, and shall put them through the rings which are by the sides of the ark, that it may be borne with them, and they shall always be in the rings, nor shall they ever be drawn out from them".* What but the holy Church is figured by the ark? To which four rings of gold in the four corners are ordered to be adjoined, because, in that it is thus extended towards the four quarters of the globe, it is declared undoubtedly to be equipped for journeying with the four books of the holy Gospel. And staves of shittim-wood are made, and are put through the same rings for carrying, because strong and persevering teachers, as incorruptible pieces of timber, are to be sought

How intent the ruler ought to be on meditations in the Sacred Law.

1 Timothy 4:13

Psalms 109:97

Exodus 25:12, seq.

Gregory the Great

for, who by cleaving ever to instruction out of the sacred volumes may declare the unity of the holy Church, and, as it were, carry the ark by being let into its rings. For indeed to carry the ark by means of staves is through preaching to bring the holy Church before the rude minds of unbelievers by means of good teachers. And these are also ordered to be overlaid with gold, that, while they are resonant to others in discourse, they may also themselves glitter in the splendour of their lives. Of whom it is further fitly added, “They shall always be in the rings, nor shall they ever be drawn out from them”; because it is surely necessary that those who attend upon the office of preaching should not recede from the study of sacred lore. For to this end it is that the staves are ordered to be always in the rings, that, when occasion requires the ark to be carried, no tardiness in carrying may arise from the staves having to be put in; because, that is to say, when a pastor is enquired of by his subordinates on any spiritual matter, it is exceedingly ignominious, should he then go about to learn, when he ought to solve the question. But let the staves remain ever in the rings, that teachers, ever meditating in their own hearts the words of Sacred Writ, may lift without delay the ark of the covenant; as will be the case if they teach at once whatever is required. Hence the first Pastor of the Church well admonishes all other pastors saying, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you”:^{*} as though he should say plainly, That no delay may hinder the carrying of the ark, let the staves never be withdrawn from the rings.

¹ Peter 3:15



THE DIALOGUES

GREGORY THE GREAT

Translated by Philip Woodward

BOOK TWO

Of the Life and Miracles of St. Benedict

There was a man of venerable life, blessed by grace, and blessed in name, for he was called “Benedictus” or Benedict: who, from his younger years, carried always the mind of an old man; for his age was inferior to his virtue: all vain pleasure he contemned, and though he were in the world, and might freely have enjoyed such commodities as it yieldeth, yet did he nothing esteem it, nor the vanities thereof. He was born in the province of Nursia, of honourable parentage, and brought up at Rome in the study of humanity. But for as much as he saw many by reason of such learning to fall to dissolute and lewd life, he drew back his foot, which he had as it were now set forth into the world, lest, entering too far in acquaintance therewith, he likewise might have fallen into that dangerous and godless gulf: wherefore, giving over his book, and forsaking his father’s house and wealth, with a resolute mind only to serve God, he sought for some place, where he might attain to the desire of his holy purpose: and in this sort he departed, instructed with learned ignorance, and furnished with unlearned wisdom. All the notable things and acts of his life I could not learn; but those few, which I mind now to report,

Gregory the Great

I had by the relation of four of his disciples: to wit, of Constantinus, a most rare and reverent man, who was next Abbot after him; of Valentinianus, who many years had the charge of the Lateran Abbey; of Simplicius, who was the third General of his order; and lastly of Honoratus, who is now Abbot of that monastery in which he first began his holy life.

How he made
a broken sieve
whole and
sound.

I

Benedict having now given over the school, with a resolute mind to lead his life in the wilderness: his nurse alone, which did tenderly love him, would not by any means give him over. Coming, therefore, to a place called Enside and remaining there in the church of St. Peter, in the company of other virtuous men, which for charity lived in that place, it fell so out that his nurse borrowed of the neighbours a sieve to make clean wheat, which being left negligently upon the table, by chance it was broken in two pieces: whereupon she fell pitifully a-weeping, because she had borrowed it. The devout and religious youth Benedict, seeing his nurse so lamenting, moved with compassion, took away with him both the pieces of the sieve, and with tears fell to his prayers; and after he had done, rising up he found it so whole, that the place could not be seen where before it was broken; and coming straight to his nurse, and comforting her with good words, he delivered her the sieve safe and sound: which miracle was known to all the inhabitants thereabout, and so much admired, that the townsmen, for a perpetual memory, did hang it up at the church door, to the end that not only men then living, but also their posterity might understand, how greatly God's grace did work with him upon his first renouncing of the world. The sieve continued there many years after, even to these very troubles of the Lombards, where it did hang over the church door.

But Benedict, desiring rather the miseries of the world than the praises of men: rather to be wearied with labour for God's sake, than to be exalted with transitory commendation: fled privily from his nurse, and went into a desert place called Sublacum,³ distant almost forty miles from Rome: in which there was a fountain springing forth cool and clear water; the abundance whereof doth first in a broad place make a lake, and afterward running forward, cometh to be a river. As he was travelling to this place, a certain monk called

The Dialogues

Romanus met him, and demanded whither he went, and understanding his purpose, he both kept it close, furthered him what he might, vested him with the habit of holy conversation, and as he could, did minister and serve him.

The man of God, Benedict, coming to this foresaid place, lived there in a strait cave, where he continued three years unknown to all men, except to Romanus, who lived not far off, under the rule of Abbot Theodacus,⁴ and very virtuously did steal certain hours, and likewise sometime a loaf given for his own provision, which he did carry to Benedict. And because from Romanus' cell to that cave there was not any way, by reason of an high rock which did hang over it, Romanus, from the top thereof, upon a long rope, did let down the loaf, upon which also with a band he tied a little bell, that by the ringing thereof the man of God might know when he came with his bread, and so be ready to take it. But the old enemy of mankind, envying at the charity of the one and the refecton of the other, seeing a loaf upon a certain day let down, threw a stone and brake the bell; but yet, for all that, Romanus gave not over to serve him by all the possible means he could.

At length when almighty God was determined to ease Romanus of his pains, and to have Benedict's life for an example known to the world, that such a candle, set upon a candlestick, might shine and give light to the Church of God, our Lord vouchsafed to appear unto a certain Priest dwelling a good way off, who had made ready his dinner for Easter day, and spake thus unto him: "Thou hast provided good cheer for thyself, and my servant in such a place is afflicted with hunger": who, hearing this forthwith rose up, and upon Easter day itself, with such meat as he had prepared, went to the place, where he sought for the man of God amongst the steep hills, the low valleys and hollow pits, and at length found him in his cave: where, after they had prayed together, and sitting down had given God thanks, and had much spiritual talk, then the Priest said unto him: "Rise up, brother, and let us dine, because today is the feast of Easter." To whom the man of God answered, and said: "I know that it is Easter with me and a great feast, having found so much favour at God's hands as this day to enjoy your company" (for by reason of his long absence from men, he knew not that it was the great solemnity of Easter). But the reverent Priest again did assure him, saying: "Verily, to-day is the feast of our Lord's Resurrection, and therefore meet it is not that you should keep abstinence, and besides I am sent to that end, that we might eat together of

Gregory the Great

such provision as God's goodness hath sent us." Whereupon they said grace, and fell to their meat, and after they had dined, and bestowed some time in talking, the Priest returned to his church.

About the same time likewise, certain shepherds found him in that same cave: and at the first, when they espied him through the bushes, and saw his apparel made of skins, they verily thought that it had been some beast: but after they were acquainted with the servant of God, many of them were by his means converted from their beastly life to grace, piety, and devotion. And thus his name in the country there about became famous, and many after this went to visit him, and for corporal meat which they brought him, they carried away spiritual food for their souls.

How he over-
came a great
temptation of the
flesh.

II

Upon a certain day being alone, the tempter was at hand: for a little black bird, commonly called a merle or an ousel, began to fly about his face, and that so near as the holy man, if he would, might have taken it with his hand: but after he had blessed himself with the sign of the cross, the bird flew away: and forthwith the holy man was assaulted with such a terrible temptation of the flesh, as he never felt the like in all his life.

A certain woman there was which some time he had seen, the memory of which the wicked spirit put into his mind, and by the representation of her did so mightily inflame with concupiscence the soul of God's servant, which did so increase that, almost overcome with pleasure, he was of mind to have forsaken the wilderness. But, suddenly assisted with God's grace, he came to himself; and seeing many thick briers and nettle bushes to grow hard by, off he cast his apparel, and threw himself into the midst of them,⁵ and there wallowed so long that, when he rose up, all his flesh was pitifully torn: and so by the wounds of his body, he cured the wounds of his soul, in that he turned pleasure into pain, and by the outward burning of extreme smart, quenched that fire which, being nourished before with the fuel of carnal cogitations, did inwardly burn in his soul: and by this means he overcame the sin, because he made a change of the fire.

From which time forward, as himself did afterward report unto his dis-

The Dialogues

ciples, he found all temptation of pleasure so subdued, that he never felt any such thing. Many after this began to abandon the world, and to become his scholars. For being now freed from the vice of temptation, worthily and with great reason is he made a master of virtue: for which cause, in Exodus, commandment is given by Moses that the Levites from five-and-twenty years and upward should serve, but, after they came to fifty, that they should be ordained keepers of the holy vessels.

PETER. Somewhat I understand of this testimony alleged: but yet I beseech you to tell me the meaning thereof more fully.

GREGORY. It is plain, Peter, that in youth the temptation of the flesh is hot: but after fifty years the heat of the body waxeth cold, and the souls of faithful people become holy vessels. Wherefore necessary it is that God's elect servants, while they are yet in the heat of temptation, should live in obedience, serve, and be wearied with labour and pains. But when, by reason of age, the heat of temptation is past, they become keepers of holy vessels; because they then are made the doctors of men's souls.

PETER. I cannot deny, but that your words have given me full satisfaction: wherefore, seeing you have now expounded the meaning of the former text alleged, prosecute, I pray, as you have begun, the rest of the holy man's life.

III

GREGORY. When this great temptation was thus overcome, the man of God, like unto a piece of ground well tilled and weeded, of the seed of virtue brought forth plentiful store of fruit: and by reason of the great report of his wonderful holy life, his name became very famous. Not far from the place where he remained there was a monastery, the Abbot whereof was dead: whereupon the whole Convent came unto the venerable man Benedict, entreating him very earnestly that he would vouchsafe to take upon him the charge and government of their Abbey: long time he denied them, saying that their manners were divers from his, and therefore that they should never agree together: yet at length, overcome with their entreaty, he gave his consent.

Having now taken upon him the charge of the Abbey, he took order that

How Benedict,
by the sign of the
holy cross, broke
a drinking-glass
in pieces.

Gregory the Great

regular life should be observed, so that none of them could, as before they used, through unlawful acts decline from the path of holy conversation, either on the one side or on the other: which the monks perceiving, they fell into a great rage, accusing themselves that ever they desired him to be their Abbot, seeing their crooked conditions could not endure his virtuous kind of government: and therefore when they saw that under him they could not live in unlawful sort, and were loath to leave their former conversation, and found it hard to be enforced with old minds to meditate and think upon new things: and because the life of virtuous men is always grievous to those that be of wicked conditions, some of them began to devise, how they might rid him out of the way: and therefore, taking counsel together, they agreed to poison his wine: which being done, and the glass wherein that wine was, according to the custom, offered to the Abbot to bless, he, putting forth his hand, made the sign of the cross, and straightway the glass, that was holden far off, brake in pieces, as though the sign of the cross had been a stone thrown against it: upon which accident the man of God by and by perceived that the glass had in it the drink of death, which could not endure the sign of life: and therefore rising up, with a mild countenance and quiet mind, he called the monks together, and spake thus unto them: "Almighty God have mercy upon you, and forgive you: why have you used me in this manner? Did not I tell you before hand, that our manner of living could never agree together? Go your ways, and seek ye out some other father suitable to your own conditions, for I intend not now to stay any longer amongst you." When he had thus discharged himself, he returned back to the wilderness which so much he loved, and dwelt alone with himself, in the sight of his Creator, who beholdeth the hearts of all men.

PETER. I understand not very well what you mean, when you say that he dwelt with himself.

GREGORY. If the holy man had longer, contrary to his own mind, continued his government over those monks, who had all conspired against him, and were far unlike to him in life and conversation: perhaps he should have diminished his own devotion, and somewhat withdrawn the eyes of his soul from the light of contemplation; and being wearied daily with correcting of their faults, he should have had the less care of himself, and so haply it might have fallen out, that he should both have lost himself, and yet not found

The Dialogues

them: for so often as by infectious motion we are carried too far from ourselves, we remain the same men that we were before, and yet be not with ourselves as we were before: because we are wandering about other men's affairs, little considering and looking into the state of our own soul. For shall we say that he was with himself, who went into a far country, and after he had, as we read in the Gospel, prodigally spent that portion which he received of his father, was glad to serve a citizen, to keep his hogs, and would willingly have filled his hungry belly with the husks which they did eat: who notwithstanding afterward, when he thought with himself of those goods which he had lost, it is written of him that, returning into himself, he said: How many hired men in my father's house do abound with bread?

If then, before he were with himself, from whence did he return home unto himself? and therefore I said that this venerable man did dwell with himself, because carrying himself circumspectly and carefully in the sight of his Creator, always considering his own actions, always examining himself, never did he turn the eyes of his soul from himself, to behold aught else whatsoever.

PETER. Why, then, is it written of the Apostle, St. Peter, after he was by the Angel delivered out of prison, that, returning to himself, he said: Now I know verily, that our Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me from the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

GREGORY. We are two manner of ways, Peter, carried out of ourselves: for either we fall under ourselves by sinful cogitation, or else we are, by the grace of contemplation, lifted above ourselves: for he that kept hogs, through wandering of his mind and unclean thoughts, fell under himself: but he whom the Angel delivered out of prison, being also rapt by the Angel into an ecstasy, was in truth out of himself, but yet above himself. Both of them, therefore, did return unto themselves; the one when he recollected himself, and forsook his lewd kind of life; and the other from the top of contemplation, to have that usual judgment and understanding, which before he had: wherefore venerable Benedict in that solitary wilderness dwelt with himself, because he kept himself, and retired his cogitations within the closet of his own soul: for when the greatness of contemplation rapt him up aloft, out of all question he did then leave himself under himself.

Gregory the Great

PETER. Your discourse doth very well content me: yet I beseech you to answer me this question, whether he could in conscience give over those monks, whose government he had now taken upon him?

GREGORY. In mine opinion, Peter, evil men may with good conscience be tolerated in that community, where there be some good that may be holpen, and reap commodity. But where there be none good at all, that receive spiritual profit, often times all labour is lost, that is bestowed in bringing of such to good order, especially if other occasions be offered of doing God presently better service elsewhere: for whose good, then, should the holy man have expected, seeing them all to persecute him with one consent? and (that which is not to be passed over with silence) those that be perfect carry always this mind, that when they perceive their labour to be fruitless in one place, to remove straight to another, where more good may be done.

And for this cause, that notable preacher of the word, who was desirous to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, unto whom to live is Christ, and to die is gain: and who not only desired himself to suffer persecution, but did also animate and encourage others to suffer the same; yet being himself in persecution at Damascus, got a rope and a basket to pass over the wall, and was privily let down. What then? shall we say that Paul was afraid of death, when as himself said, that he desired it for Christ's sake? not so: but when he perceived that in that place little good was to be done by great labour, he reserved himself to further labour, where more fruit and better success might be expected: and therefore the valiant soldier of Christ would not be kept within walls, but sought for a larger field where he might more freely labour for his master. And so, in like manner, you shall quickly perceive, if you mark well, that venerable Benedict forsook not so many in one place, that were unwilling to be taught, as he did in sundry other places raise up from the death of soul many more, that were willing to be instructed.

PETER. It is so as you say, and plain reason teacheth it, and the example of St. Paul alleged doth confirm it. But I beseech you to return unto your former purpose, and to prosecute the life of the holy man.

GREGORY. When as God's servant daily increased in virtue, and became continually more famous for miracles, many were by him in the same place drawn to the service of almighty God, so that by Christ's assistance he built

The Dialogues

there twelve Abbeys; over which he appointed governors, and in each of them placed twelve monks, and a few he kept with himself, namely, such as he thought would more profit, and be better instructed by his own presence. At that time also many noble and religious men of Rome came unto him, and committed their children to be brought up under him, for the service of God. Then also Evitius delivered him Maurus, and Tertullius the Senator brought Placidus, being their sons of great hope and towardness: of which two, Maurus, growing to great virtue, began to be his master's coadjutor; but Placidus, as yet, was but a boy of tender years.

IV

In one of the monasteries which he had built in those parts, a monk there was, which could not continue at prayers; for when the other monks knelt down to serve God, his manner was to go forth, and there with wandering mind to busy himself about some earthly and transitory things. And when he had been often by his Abbot admonished of this fault without any amendment, at length he was sent to the man of God, who did likewise very much rebuke him for his folly; yet notwithstanding, returning back again, he did scarce two days follow the holy man's admonition; for, upon the third day, he fell again to his old custom, and would not abide within at the time of prayer: word whereof being once more sent to the man of God, by the father of the Abbey whom he had there appointed, he returned him answer that he would come himself, and reform what was amiss, which he did accordingly: and it fell so out, that when the singing of psalms was ended, and the hour come in which the monks betook themselves to prayer, the holy man perceived that the monk, which used at that time to go forth, was by a little black boy drawn out by the skirt of his garment; upon which sight, he spake secretly to Pompeianus, father of the Abbey, and also to Maurus saying Do you not see who it is, that draweth this monk from his prayers?" and they answered him, that they did not. "Then let us pray," quoth he, "unto God, that you also may behold whom this monk doth follow": and after two days Maurus did see him, but Pompeianus could not.

Upon another day, when the man of God had ended his devotions, he went out of the oratory, where he found the foresaid monk standing idle,

How Benedict reformed a monk that would not stay at his prayers.

Gregory the Great

whom for the blindness of his heart he strake with a little wand, and from that day forward he was so freed from all allurement of the little black boy, that he remained quietly at his prayers, as other of the monks did: for the old enemy was so terrified, that he durst not any more suggest any such cogitations: as though by that blow, not the monk, but himself had been strooken.

Of a fountain
that sprung forth
in the top of a
mountain, by the
prayers of the
man of God.

V

Amongst the monasteries which he had built in those parts, three of them were situated upon the rocks of a mountain, so that very painful it was for the monks to go down and fetch water, especially because the side of the hill was so steep that there was great fear of danger: and therefore the monks of those Abbeys with one consent came unto the servant of God, Benedict, giving him to understand, how laborious it was for them daily to go down unto the lake for water: and therefore they added, that it was very necessary to have them removed to some other places. The man of God, comforting them with sweet words, caused them to return back again; and the next night, having with him only the little boy Placidus (of whom we spake before), he ascended up to the rock of that mountain, and continued there a long time in prayer; and when he had done, he took three stones, and laid them in the same place for a mark, and so, none of them being privy to that he had done, he returned back to his own Abbey. And the next day, when the foresaid monks came again about their former business, he said thus unto them: "Go your way to the rock, and in the place where you find three stones laid one upon another, dig a little hole, for almighty God is able to bring forth water in the top of that mountain, and so to ease you of that great labour which you take in fetching it so far." Away they went, and came to the rock of the mountain according to his direction, which they found as it were sweating drops of water, and after they had with a spade made an hollow place, it was straightways filled, and water flowed out so abundantly, that it doth plentifully, even to this day, spring out and run down from the top to the very bottom of that hill.

How the iron
head of a bill,
from the bottom
of the water,
returned to the
handle again.

VI

At another time, a certain Goth, poor of spirit, that gave over the world, was received by the man of God; whom on a day he commanded to take a

The Dialogues

bill, and to cleanse a certain plot of ground from briars, for the making of a garden, which ground was by the side of a lake. The Goth as he was there labouring, by chance the head of the bill slipped off, and fell into the water, which was so deep, that there was no hope ever to get it again. The poor Goth, in great fear, ran unto Maurus and told him what he had lost, confessing his own fault and negligence: Maurus forthwith went to the servant of God, giving him to understand thereof, who came straightways to the lake: and took the handle out of the Goth's hand, and put it into the water, and the iron head by and by ascended from the bottom, and entered again into the handle of the bill, which he delivered to the Goth, saying: "Behold here is thy bill again, work on, and be sad no more."

VII

How Maurus
walked upon the
water.

On a certain day, as venerable Benedict was, in his cell, the foresaid young Placidus, the holy man's monk, went out to take up water at the lake, and putting down his pail carelessly, fell in himself after it, whom the water forthwith carried away from the land so far as one may shoot an arrow. The man of God, being in his cell, by and by knew this, and called in haste for Maurus, saying: "Brother Maurus, run as fast as you can, for Placidus, that went to the lake to fetch water, is fallen in, and is carried a good way off."

A strange thing, and since the time of Peter the Apostle never heard of! Maurus, craving his father's blessing, and departing in all haste at his commandment, ran to that place upon the water, to which the young lad was carried by force thereof, thinking that he had all that while gone upon the land: and taking fast hold of him by the hair of his head, in all haste he returned back again: and so soon as he was at land, coming to himself he looked behind him, and then knew very well that he had before run upon the water: and that which before he durst not have presumed, being now done and past, he both marvelled, and was afraid at that which he had done.

Coming back to the father, and telling him what had happened, the venerable man did not attribute this to his own merits, but to the obedience of Maurus: but Maurus on the contrary, said that it was done only upon his commandment, and that he had nothing to do in that miracle, not knowing at that time what he did. But the friendly contention proceeding of mutual

Gregory the Great

humility, the young youth himself that was saved from drowning did determine: for he said that he saw when he was drawn out of the water the Abbot's garment upon his head, affirming that it was he that had delivered him from that great danger.

PETER. Certainly they be wonderful things which you report, and such as may serve for the edification of many : for mine own part, the more that I hear of his miracles, the more do I still desire.

How a loaf was
poisoned, and
carried far off by
a crow.

VIII

GREGORY. When as the foresaid monasteries were zealous in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and their fame dispersed far and near, and many gave over the secular life, and subdued the passions of their soul, under the light yoke of our Saviour: then (as the manner of wicked people is, to envy at that virtue which themselves desire not to follow) one Florentius, Priest of a church hardby, and grandfather to Florentius our sub-deacon, possessed with diabolical malice, began to envy the holy man's virtues, to back-bite his manner of living, and to withdraw as many as he could from going to visit him : and when he saw that he could not hinder his virtuous proceedings, but that, on the contrary, the fame of his holy life increased, and many daily, upon the very report of his sanctity, did betake themselves to a better state of life : burning more and more with the coals of envy, he became far worse; and though he desired not to imitate his commendable life, yet fain he would have had the reputation of his virtuous conversation.

In conclusion so much did malicious envy blind him, and so far did he wade in that sin, that he poisoned a loaf and sent it to the servant of almighty God, as it were for an holy present. The man of God received it with great thanks, yet not ignorant of that which was hidden within. At dinner time, a crow daily used to come unto him from the next wood, which took bread at his hands; coming that day after his manner, the man of God threw him the loaf which the Priest had sent him, giving him this charge: "In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, take up that loaf, and leave it in some such place where no man may find it." Then the crow, opening his mouth, and lifting up his wings, began to hop up and down about the loaf, and after his manner to cry out, as though he would have said that he was willing to obey, and yet could

The Dialogues

not do what he was commanded. The man of God again and again bade him, saying: "Take it up without fear, and throw it where no man may find it." At length, with much ado, the crow took it up, and flew away, and after three hours, having dispatched the loaf, he returned back again, and received his usual allowance from the man of God.

But the venerable father, perceiving the Priest so wickedly bent against his life, was far more sorry for him than grieved for himself. And Florentius, seeing that he could not kill the body of the master, laboureth now what he can, to destroy the souls of his disciples; and for that purpose he sent into the yard of the Abbey before their eyes seven naked young women, which did there take hands together, play and dance a long time before them, to the end that, by this means, they might inflame their minds to sinful lust: which damnable sight the holy man beholding out of his cell, and fearing the danger which thereby might ensue to his younger monks, and considering that all this was done only for the persecuting of himself, he gave place to envy; and therefore, after he had for those abbeys and oratories which he had there built appointed governors, and left some under their charge, himself, in the company of a few monks, removed to another place.

And thus the man of God, upon humility, gave place to the other's malice; but yet almighty God of justice did severely punish [Florentius'] wickedness. For when the foresaid Priest, being in his chamber, understood of the departure of holy Benedict, and was very glad of that news, behold (the whole house besides continuing safe and sound) that chamber alone in which he was, fell down, and so killed him: which strange accident the holy man's disciple Maurus understanding, straightways sent him word, he being as yet scarce ten miles off, desiring him to return again, because the Priest that did persecute him was slain; which thing when Benedict heard, he was passing sorrowful, and lamented much: both because his enemy died in such sort, and also for that one of his monks rejoiced thereat; and therefore he gave him penance, for that, sending such news, he presumed to rejoice at his enemy's death.

PETER. The things you report be strange, and much to be wondered at: for in making the rock to yield forth water, I see Moses; and in the iron, which came from the bottom of the lake, I behold Eliseus; in the walking

Gregory the Great

of Maurus upon the water, I perceive Peter; in the obedience of the crow, I contemplate Elias; and in lamenting the death of his enemy, I acknowledge David: and therefore, in mine opinion, this one man was full of the spirit of all good men.

GREGORY. The man of god, Benedict, had the spirit of the one true God, who, by the grace of our redemption, hath filled the hearts of his elect servants; of whom St. John saith: "He was the true light, which doth lighten every man coming into this world". Of whom, again, we find it written: "Of his fulness we have all received". For God's holy servants might receive virtues of our Lord, but to bestow them upon others they could not; and therefore it was he that gave the signs of miracles to his servants, who promised to give the sign of Jonas to his enemies: so that he vouchsafed to die in the sight of the proud, and to rise again before the eyes of the humble: to the end, that they might behold what they contemned, and those see that which they ought to worship and love: by reason of which mystery it cometh to pass that, whereas the proud cast their eyes upon the contempt of his death, the humble contrariwise, against death, lay hold of the glory of his power and might.

PETER. To what places, I pray you, after this, did the holy man go: and whether did he afterward in them work any miracles, or no?

GREGORY. The holy man, changing his place, did not for all that change his enemy. For afterward he endured so much the more grievous battles, by how much he had now the master of all wickedness fighting openly against him. For the town, which is called Cassino, standeth upon the side of an high mountain, which containeth, as it were in the lap thereof, the foresaid town, and afterward so riseth in height the space of three miles, that the top thereof seemeth to touch the very heavens: in this place there was an ancient chapel in which the foolish and simple country people, according to the custom of the old gentiles, worshipped the god Apollo. Round about it likewise upon all sides, there were woods for the service of the devils, in which even to that very time, the mad multitude of infidels did offer most wicked sacrifice. The man of God coming thither, beat in pieces the idol, overthrew the altar, set fire to the woods, and in the temple of Apollo, he built the oratory of St. Martin, and where the altar of the same Apollo was, he made an oratory of St. John: and by his continual preaching, he brought the people dwelling in those parts

The Dialogues

to embrace the faith of Christ.

The old enemy of mankind, not taking this in good part, did not privily or in a dream, but in open sight present himself to the eyes of that holy father, and with great outcries complained that he had offered him violence. The noise which he made, the monks did hear, but himself they could not see: but, as the venerable father told them, he appeared visibly unto him most fell and cruel, and as though, with his fiery mouth and flaming eyes, he would have torn him in pieces: what the devil said unto him, all the monks did hear; for first he would call him by his name, and because the man of God vouchsafed him not any answer, then would he fall a-reviling and railing at him: for when he cried out, calling him “Blessed Benedict,” and yet found that he gave him no answer, straightways he would turn his tune, and say: “Cursed Benedict, and not blessed: what hast thou to do with me? and why dost thou thus persecute me?” Wherefore new battles of the old enemy against the servant of God are to be looked for, against whom willingly did he make war, but, against his will, did he give him occasion of many notable victories.

IX

How venerable Benedict, by his prayer, removed a huge stone.

Upon a certain day, when the monks were building up the cells of the same Abbey, there lay a stone which they meant to employ about that business: and when two or three were not able to remove it, they called for more company, but all in vain, for it remained so immovable as though it had grown to the very earth: whereby they plainly perceived that the devil himself did sit upon it, seeing so many men’s hands could not so much as once move it: wherefore, finding that their own labours could do nothing, they sent for the man of God, to help them with his prayers against the devil, who hindered the removing of that stone. The holy man came, and after some praying, he gave it his blessing, and then they carried it away so quickly, as though it had been of no weight at all.

X

Of the fantastical fire, which burnt the kitchen.

Then the man of God thought good that they should presently before his departure dig up the ground in the same place; which being done, and a

deep hole made, the monks found there an idol of brass, which being for a little while by chance cast into the kitchen, they beheld fire suddenly to come from it, which to all their sight seemed to set the whole kitchen on fire; for the quenching whereof, the monks by casting on of water made such a noise, that the man of God, hearing it, came to see what the matter was: and himself beholding not any fire at all, which they said that they did, he bowed down his head forthwith to his prayers, and then he perceived that they were deluded with fantastical fire, and therefore bad them bless their eyes, that they might behold the kitchen safe and sound, and not those fantastical flames, which the devil had falsely devised.

How venerable
Benedict revived
a boy, crushed
to death with the
ruin of a wall.

XI

Again, as the monks were making of a certain wall somewhat higher, because that was requisite, the man of God in the meantime was in his cell at his prayers. To whom the old enemy appeared in an insulting manner, telling him, that he was now going to his monks, that were a-working; whereof the man of God, in all haste, gave them warning, wishing them to look unto themselves, because the devil was at that time coming amongst them. The message was scarce delivered, when as the wicked spirit overthrew the new wall which they were a building, and with the fall slew a little young child, a monk, who was the son of a certain courtier. At which pitiful chance all were passing sorry and exceedingly grieved, not so much for the loss of the wall, as for the death of their brother: and in all haste they sent this heavy news to the venerable man Benedict; who commanded them to bring unto him the young boy, mangled and maimed as he was, which they did, but yet they could not carry him any otherwise than in a sack: for the stones of the wall had not only broken his limbs, but also his very bones. Being in that manner brought unto the man of God, he bad them to lay him in his cell, and in that place upon which he used to pray; and then, putting them all forth, he shut the door, and fell more instantly to his prayers than he used at other times. And O strange miracle! for the very same hour he made him sound, and as lively as ever he was before; and sent him again to his former work, that he also might help the monks to make an end of that wall, of whose death the old serpent thought he should have insulted over Benedict, and greatly triumphed.

XII

How by revelation venerable Benedict knew that his monks had eaten out of the monastery.

Among other miracles which the man of God did, he began also to be famous for the spirit of prophecy: as to foretell what was to happen, and to relate unto them that were present, such things as were done in absence. The order of his Abbey was, that when the monks went abroad (to deliver any message) never to eat or drink anything out of their cloister: and this being diligently observed, according to the prescription of their rule, upon a certain day some of the monks went forth upon such business: and being enforced about the dispatch thereof to tarry somewhat long abroad, it fell so out that they stayed at the house of a religious woman, where they did eat and refresh themselves. And being late before they came back to the Abbey, they went as the manner was, and asked their father's blessing: of whom he demanded where they had eaten: and they said nowhere. "Why do you," quoth he, "tell an untruth? for did you not go into such a woman's house? and eat such and such kind of meat, and drink so many cups?" When they heard him recount so in particular, both where they had stayed, what kind of meat they had eaten, and how often they had drunk, and perceived well that he knew all whatsoever they had done, they fell down trembling at his feet, and confessed that they had done wickedly: who straightways pardoned them for that fault, persuading himself that they would not any more in his absence presume to do any such thing, seeing they now perceived that he was present with them in spirit.

XIII

Of the brother of Valentinian the Monk, whom the man of God blamed for eating in his journey.

A brother also of Valentinian the monk, of whom I made mention before, was a layman, but devout and religious: who used every year, as well to desire the prayers of God's servant, as also to visit his natural brother, to travel from his own house to the Abbey: and his manner was, not to eat anything all that day before he came thither. Being therefore upon a time in his journey, he lighted into the company of another that carried meat about him to eat by the way: who, after the day was well spent, spake unto him in this manner: "Come, brother," quoth he, "let us refresh ourselves, that we faint not in our journey": to whom he answered: "God forbid: for eat I will not by any means, seeing I am now going to the venerable father Benedict, and my custom is to

Gregory the Great

fast until I see him.” The other, upon this answer, said no more for the space of an hour. But afterward, having travelled a little further again he was in hand with him to eat something; yet then likewise he utterly refused, because he meant to go through fasting as he was. His companion was content, and so went forward with him, without taking anything himself. But when they had now gone very far, and were well wearied with long travelling, at length they came unto a meadow, where there was a fountain, and all such other pleasant things as use to refresh men’s bodies. Then his companion said to him again: “Behold here is water, a green meadow, and a very sweet place, in which we may refresh ourselves and rest a little, that we may be the better able to dispatch the rest of our journey.” Which kind words bewitching his ears, and the pleasant place flattering his eyes, content he was to yield unto the motion, and so they fell to their meat together: and coming afterward in the evening to the Abbey, they brought him to the venerable father Benedict, of whom he desired his blessing. Then the holy man objected against him what he had done in the way, speaking to him in this manner: “How fell it out, brother,” quoth he, “that the devil talking to you, by means of your companion, could not at the first nor second time persuade you: but yet he did at the third, and made you do what best pleased him?” The good man, hearing these words, fell down at his feet, confessing the fault of his frailty; was grieved, and so much the more ashamed of his sin, because he perceived that though he were absent, that yet he did offend in the sight of that venerable father.

PETER. I see well that the holy man had in his soul the spirit of Heliseus, who was present with his servant Giezi, being then absent from him.

How the
dissimulation
of king Totila
was discovered
and found out
by venerable
Benedict.

XIV

GREGORY. You must, good Peter, for a little while be silent, that you may know matters yet far more important. For in the time of the Goths, when Totila, their king, understood that the holy man had the spirit of prophecy, as he was going towards his monastery, he remained in a place somewhat far off, and beforehand sent the father word of his coming: to whom answer was returned, that he might come at his pleasure. The king, as he was a man wickedly disposed, thought he would try whether the man of God were a prophet, as it was reported, or no. A certain man of his guard he had, called Riggo,

The Dialogues

upon whom he caused his own shoes to be put, and to be apparelled with his other princely robes, commanding him to go as it were himself to the man of God; and to give the better colour to this device, he sent three to attend upon him, who especially were always about the king: to wit, Vultericus, Rudericus, and Blindinus; charging them that in the presence of the servant of God, they should be next about him, and behave themselves in such sort as though he had been king Totila indeed: and that diligently they should do unto him all other services, to the end that both by such dutiful kind of behaviour, as also by his purple robes, he might verily be taken for the king himself. Riggo, furnished with that brave apparel, and accompanied with many courtiers, came unto the Abbey: at which time the man of God sat a little way off, and when Riggo was come so near that he might well understand what the man of God said, then, in the hearing of them all, he spake thus: "Put off, my good son, put off that apparel, for that which thou hast on, is none of thine." Riggo, hearing this, fell straightways down to the ground, and was very much afraid, for presuming to go about to mock so worthy a man, and all his attendants and servitors fell down likewise to the earth, and after they were up again, they durst not approach any nearer to his presence: but returned back to their king, telling him with fear, how quickly they were discovered.

XV

Then Totila himself in person went unto the man of God; and seeing him sitting afar off, he durst not come near, but fell down to the ground: whom the holy man (speaking to him twice or thrice) desired to rise up and at length came unto him, and with his own hands lifted him up from the earth, where he lay prostrate: and then, entering into talk, he reprehended him for his wicked deeds, and in few words told him all that which should befall him, saying: "Much wickedness do you daily commit, and many great sins have you done: now at length give over your sinful life. Into the city of Rome shall you enter, and over the sea shall you pass: nine years shall you reign, and in the tenth shall you leave this mortal life." The king, hearing these things, was wonderfully afraid, and desiring the holy man to commend him to God in his prayers, he departed: and from that time forward he was nothing so cruel as before he had been. Not long after he went to Rome, sailed over into Sicily, and, in the tenth year of his reign, he lost his kingdom together with his life.

How venerable Benedict prophesied to king Totila, and also to the Bishop of Camisina, such things as were afterwards to happen.

The Bishop also of Camisina used to visit the servant of God, whom the holy man dearly loved for his virtuous life. The Bishop, therefore, talking with him of King Totila, of his taking of Rome, and the destruction of that city, said: "This city will be so spoiled and ruined by him, that it will never be more inhabited." To whom the man of God answered: "Rome," quoth he, "shall not be utterly destroyed by strangers: but shall be so shaken with tempests, lightnings, whirlwinds, and earthquakes, that it will fall to decay of itself." The mysteries of which prophecy we now behold as clear as the day: for we see before our eyes in this very city, by a strange whirlwind the world shaken, houses ruined, and churches overthrown, and buildings rotten with old age we behold daily to fall down. True it is that Honoratus, by whose relation I had this, saith not that he received it from his own mouth, but that he had it of other monks, which did hear it themselves.

Of a certain
clergyman,
whom venerable
Benedict for a
time delivered
from a devil.

XVI

At the same time a certain clergyman, that served in the church of Aquinum, was possessed: whom the venerable man Constantius, Bishop of the same city, sent unto many places of holy martyrs for help: but God's holy martyrs would not deliver him, to the end that the world might know what great grace was in the servant of God, Benedict: wherefore at length he was brought unto him, who, praying for help to Jesus Christ our Lord, did forthwith cast the old enemy out of the possessed man's body, giving him this charge: "Go your way, and hereafter abstain from eating of flesh, and presume not to enter into holy orders, for whensoever you shall attempt any such thing, the devil again will have power over you." The man departed safe and sound, and because punishment fresh in memory useth to terrify the mind, he observed for a time what the man of God had given him in commandment. But after many years, when all his seniors were dead, and he saw his juniors preferred before him to holy orders, he neglected the words of the man of God, as though forgotten through length of time, and took upon him holy orders: whereupon straightways the devil that before had left him entered again, and never gave over to torment him, until he had separated his soul from his body.

PETER. This holy man, as I perceive, did know the secret counsel of God:

The Dialogues

for he saw that this clergyman was delivered to the power of the devil, to the end he should not presume to enter into holy orders.

GREGORY. Why should he not know the secrets of God, who kept the commandments of God: when as the scripture saith: He that cleaveth unto our Lord, is one spirit with him?

PETER. If he that cleaveth unto our Lord, be one spirit with our Lord, what is the meaning of that which the Apostle saith: Who knoweth the sense of our Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? For it seemeth very inconvenient to be ignorant of his sense, to whom being so united he is made one thing.

GREGORY. Holy men, in that they be one with our Lord are not ignorant of his sense: for the same Apostle saith: For what man knoweth those things which belong to man, but the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things which belong to God, no man knoweth, but the spirit of God. And to show also that he knew such things as belong to God, he addeth straight after: But we have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God. And for this cause, again he saith: that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor it hath ascended into the heart of man, those things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed to us by his spirit.

PETER. If, then, the mysteries of God were revealed to the same Apostle by the spirit of God, why did he then, entreating of this question, set down these words beforehand, saying: O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how incomprehensible be his judgments, and his ways investigable?

And again, whiles I am thus speaking of this matter, another question cometh to my mind: for the prophet David said to our Lord: With my lips have I uttered all the judgments of thy mouth. Wherefore, seeing it is less to know, than to utter: what is the reason that St. Paul affirmeth the judgments of God to be incomprehensible; and yet David saith that he did not know only them, but also with his lips pronounce them?

GREGORY. To both these questions I have already briefly answered, when I said that holy men, in that they be one with our Lord, are not ignorant of

Gregory the Great

the sense of our Lord. For all such, as do devoutly follow our Lord, be also by devotion one with our Lord; and yet for all this, in that they are laden with the burthen of their corruptible flesh, they be not with God: and so in that they be joined with him, they know the secret judgments of God, and in that they be separated from God, they know them not: for seeing they do not as yet perfectly penetrate his secret mysteries, they give testimony that his judgments be incomprehensible.

But those that do with their soul adhere unto him, and cleaving unto the sayings of the holy scripture, or to secret revelations, acknowledge what they receive: such persons both know these things and do utter them: for those judgments which God doth conceal they know not, and those which he doth utter they know: and therefore the prophet David, when he had said: I have with my lips uttered all the judgments; he addeth immediately, of thy mouth: as though he should plainly say: Those judgments I may both know and utter, which I knew thou didst speak, for those things which thou dost not speak, without all question, thou dost conceal from our knowledge.

Wherefore the saying of David and St. Paul agree together: for the judgments of God are incomprehensible; and yet those which himself with his own mouth vouchsafeth to speak, are uttered with men's tongues: because men may come to the knowledge of them, and being revealed, they may be uttered, and by no means can be kept secret.

PETER. Now I see the answer to my question. But I pray you to proceed, if anything yet remaineth to be told of his virtue and miracles.

How the man of
God, Benedict,
did foretell the
suppression of
one of his own
Abbeys.

XVII

GREGORY. A certain noble man called Theoprobus was by the good counsel of holy Benedict converted: who, for his virtue and merit of life, was very intrinsical and familiar with him. This man upon a day, coming into his cell, found him weeping very bitterly. And having expected a good while, and yet not seeing him to make an end (for the man of God used not in his prayers to weep, but rather to be sad), he demanded the cause of that his so great heaviness, to whom he answered straightway, saying: "All this Abbey which I have built, and all such things as I have made ready for my

The Dialogues

brethren, are by the judgment of almighty God delivered to the gentiles, to be spoiled and overthrown: and scarce could I obtain of God to have their lives spared, that should then live in it.” His words Theoprobus then heard, but we see them to be proved most true, who know that very Abbey to be now suppressed by the Lombards. For not long since, in the night time, when the monks were asleep, they entered in, and spoiled all things, but yet not one man could they retain there, and so almighty God fulfilled what he promised to his faithful servant: for though he gave them the house and all the goods, yet did he preserve their lives. In which thing I see that Benedict imitated St. Paul: whose ship though it lost all the goods, yet, for his comfort, he had the lives of all that were in his company bestowed upon him, so that no one man was cast away.

XVIII

Upon a certain time, Exhilaratus our monk, a lay-brother, whom you know, was sent by his master to the monastery of the man of God, to carry him two wooden bottles, commonly called flagons, full of wine: who in the way, as he was going, hid one of them in a bush for himself, and presented the other to venerable Benedict: who took it very thankfully, and, when the man was going away, he gave him this warning: “Take heed, my son,” quoth he, “that thou drinkest not of that flagon which thou hast hidden in the bush: but first be careful to bow it down, and thou shalt find what is within it.” The poor man, thus pitifully confounded by the man of God, went his way, and coming back to the place where the flagon was hidden, and desirous to try the truth of that was told him, as he was bowing it down, a snake straightways leaped forth. Then Exhilaratus perceiving what was gotten into the wine, began to be afraid of that wickedness which he had committed.

How blessed Benedict knew the hiding away of a flagon of wine.

XIX

Not far from his Abbey, there was a village, in which very many men had, by the sermons of Benedict, been converted from idolatry to the true faith of Christ. Certain Nuns also there were in the same town, to whom he did often send some of his monks to preach unto them, for the good of their souls. Upon a day, one that was sent, after he had made an end of his exhortation,

How the man of God knew that one of his Monks had received certain handkerchiefs.

by the entreaty of the Nuns took certain small napkins, and hid them for his own use in his bosom: whom, upon his return to the Abbey, the man of God very sharply rebuked, saying: “How cometh it to pass, brother, that sin is entered into your bosom?” At which words the monk was much amazed for he had quite forgotten what he had put there; and therefore knew not any cause why he should deserve that reprehension: whereupon the holy man spake to him in plain terms, and said: “Was not I present when you took the handkerchiefs of the Nuns, and put them up in your bosom for your own private use?” The monk, hearing this, fell down at his feet, and was sorry that he had behaved himself so indiscreetly: forth he drew those napkins from his bosom, and threw them all away.

How holy Benedict knew the proud thought of one of his Monks.

XX

Upon a time, whiles the venerable Father was at supper, one of his monks, who was the son of a great man, held the candle: and as he was standing there, and the other at his meat, he began to entertain a proud cogitation in his mind, and to speak thus within himself: “Who is he, that I thus wait upon at supper, and hold him the candle? and who am I, that I should do him any such service?” Upon which thought straightways the holy man turned himself, and with severe reprehension spake thus unto him: “Sign your heart, brother, for what is it that you say? Sign your heart”: and forthwith he called another of the monks, and bad him take the candle out of his hands, and commanded him to give over his waiting, and to repose himself: who being demanded of the monks, what it was that he thought, told them, how inwardly he swelled with pride, and what he spake against the man of God, secretly in his own heart. Then they all saw very well that nothing could be hidden from venerable Benedict, seeing the very sound of men’s inward thoughts came unto his ears.

Of two hundred bushels of meal, found before the man of God’s cell.

XXI

At another time, there was a great dearth in the same country of Campania: so that all kind of people tasted of the misery: and all the wheat of Benedict’s monastery was spent, and likewise all the bread, so that there remained no more than five loaves for dinner. The venerable man, beholding the monks

The Dialogues

sad, both rebuked them modestly for their pusillanimity, and again did comfort them with this promise: “Why,” quoth he, “are you so grieved in your minds for lack of bread? Indeed, today some want there is, but tomorrow you shall have plenty”: and so it fell out, for the next day two hundred bushels of meal was found in sacks before his cell door, which almighty God sent them: but by whom, or what means, that is unknown to this very day: which miracle when the monks saw, they gave God thanks, and by this learned in want, not to make any doubt of plenty.

PETER. Tell me, I pray you, whether this servant of God had always the spirit of prophecy, when himself pleased, or only at certain times?

GREGORY. The spirit of prophecy doth not always illuminate the minds of the prophets; because, as it is written of the Holy Ghost that he breatheth where he will, so we are also to know that he doth breathe likewise for what cause, and when he pleaseth. And hereof it cometh, that when king David demanded of Nathan whether he might build a temple for the honour of God, the prophet Nathan gave his consent; and yet afterward utterly forbad it. From hence likewise it proceedeth that, when Heliseus saw the woman weeping, and knew not the cause, he said to his servant that did trouble her: Let her alone, for her soul is in grief, and God hath concealed it from me, and hath not told me. Which thing almighty God of great piety so disposeth: for giving at some times the spirit of prophecy, and at other times withdrawing it, he doth both lift up the prophets minds on high, and yet doth preserve them in humility: that by the gift of the Spirit, they may know what they are by God’s grace: and at other times, destitute of the same Spirit, may understand what they are of themselves.

PETER. There is very great reason for that you say. But, I pray you, let me hear more of the venerable man Benedict, if there be anything else that cometh to your remembrance.

XXII

GREGORY. At another time he was desired by a certain virtuous man, to build an Abbey for his monks upon his ground, not far from the city of Taracina. The holy man was content, and appointed an Abbot and Prior, with

How, by vision, venerable Benedict disposed the building of the Abbey of Taracina.

Gregory the Great

divers monks under them: and when they were departing, he promised that, upon such a day, he would come and shew them in what place the oratory should be made, and where the refectory should stand, and all the other necessary rooms: and so they, taking his blessing, went their way; and against the day appointed, which they greatly expected, they made all such things ready as were necessary to entertain him, and those that should come in his company. But the very night before, the man of God in sleep appeared to the Abbot and the Prior, and particularly described unto them where each place and office was to be builded. And when they were both risen, they conferred together what either of them had seen in their sleep: but yet not giving full credit to that vision, they expected the man of God himself in person, according to his promise. But when they saw that he came not, they returned back unto him very sorrowfully, saying: "We expected, father, that you should have come according to promise, and told us where each place should have been built, which yet you did not." To whom he answered: "Why say you so, good brethren? Did not I come as I promised you?" And when they asked at what time it was: "Why," quoth he, "did not I appear to either of you in your sleep, and appointed how and where every place was to be builded? Go your way, and according to that platform which you then saw, build up the abbey." At which word they much marvelled, and returning back, they caused it to be builded in such sort as they had been taught of him by revelation.

PETER. Gladly would I learn, by what means that could be done: to wit, that he should go so far to tell them that thing in their sleep, which they should both hear and know by vision.

GREGORY. Why do you, Peter, seek out and doubt, in what manner this thing was done? For certain it is, that the soul is of a more noble nature than the body. And by authority of scripture we know that the prophet Habaccuc was carried from Judea with that dinner which he had, and was suddenly set in Chaldea; by which meat the prophet Daniel was relieved: and presently after was brought back again to Judea. If, then, Habaccuc could in a moment with his body go so far, and carry provision for another man's dinner: what marvel is it, if the holy father Benedict obtained grace to go in spirit and to inform the souls of his brethren that were asleep, concerning such things as were necessary: and that as Abacuck about corporal meat went corporally, so Benedict should go spiritually about the dispatch of spiritual business?

The Dialogues

PETER. I confess that your words have satisfied my doubtful mind. But I would know what manner of man he was in his ordinary talk and conversation.

XXIII

Of certain Nuns
absolved after
their death.

GREGORY. His common talk, Peter, was usually full of virtue: for his heart conversed to above in heaven, that no words could in vain proceed from his mouth. And if at any time he spake aught, yet not as one that determined what was best to be done, but only in a threatening manner, his speech in that case was so effectual and forcible, as though he had not doubtfully or uncertainly, but assuredly pronounced and given sentence.

For not far from his Abbey, there lived two Nuns in a place by themselves, born of worshipful parentage: whom a religious good man did serve for the dispatch of their outward business. But as nobility of family doth in some breed ignobility of mind, and maketh them in conversation to show less humility, because they remember still what superiority they had above others: even so was it with these Nuns: for they had not yet learned to temper their tongues, and keep them under with the bridle of their habit: for often did they by their indiscreet speech provoke the foresaid religious man to anger; who having borne with them a long time, at length he complained to the man of God, and told him with what reproachful words they entreated him: whereupon he sent them by and by this message, saying: "Amend your tongues, otherwise I do excommunicate you"; which sentence of excommunication notwithstanding, he did not then presently pronounce against them, but only threatened if they amended not themselves. But they, for all this, changed their conditions nothing at all: both which not long after departed this life, and were buried in the church: and when solemn mass was celebrated in the same church, and the Deacon, according to custom, said with loud voice: "If any there be that do not communicate, let them depart": the nurse, which used to give unto our Lord an offering for them, beheld them at that time to rise out of their graves, and to depart the church. Having often times, at those words of the Deacon, seen them leave the church, and that they could not tarry within, she remembered what message the man of God sent them whiles they were yet alive. For he told them that he did deprive them of the commu-

Gregory the Great

nion, unless they did amend their tongues and conditions. Then with great sorrow, the whole matter was signified to the man of God, who straightways with his own hands gave an oblation, saying: "Go your ways, and cause this to be offered unto our Lord for them, and they shall not remain any longer excommunicate": which oblation being offered for them, and the Deacon, as he used, crying out, that such as did not communicate should depart, they were not seen any more to go out of the church: whereby it was certain that, seeing they did not depart with them which did not communicate, that they had received the communion of our Lord by the hands of his servant.

PETER. It is very strange that you report: for how could he, though a venerable and most holy man, yet living in mortal body, loose those souls which stood now before the invisible judgment of God?

GREGORY. Was he not yet, Peter, mortal, that heard from our Saviour: Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in the heavens: and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth, shall be loosed also in the heavens? whose place of binding and loosing those have at this time, which by faith and virtuous life possess the place of holy government: and to bestow such power upon earthly men, the Creator of heaven and earth descended from heaven to earth: and that flesh might judge of spiritual things, God, who for man's sake was made flesh, vouchsafed to bestow upon him: for from thence our weakness did rise up above itself, from whence the strength of God was weakened under itself.

PETER. For the virtue of his miracles, your words do yield a very good reason.

Of a boy that
after his burial
was cast out of
his grave.

XXIV

GREGORY. Upon a certain day, a young boy that was a monk, loving his parents more than reason would, went from the Abbey to their house, not craving the father's blessing beforehand: and the same day that he came home unto them, he departed this life. And being buried, his body, the next day after, was found cast out of the grave; which they caused again to be put in, and again, the day following, they found it as before. Then in great haste they went to the man of God, fell down at his feet, and with many tears beseeched

The Dialogues

him that he would vouchsafe him that was dead of his favour. To whom the man of God with his own hands delivered the holy communion of our Lord's body, saying: "Go, and lay with great reverence this our Lord's body upon his breast, and so bury him": which when they had done, the dead corpse after that remained quietly in the grave. By which you perceive, Peter, of what merit he was with our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing the earth would not give entertainment to his body, who departed this world out of Benedict's favour.

PETER. I perceive it very well, and do wonderfully admire it.

XXV

GREGORY. A certain monk there was so inconstant and fickle of mind, that he would needs give over the Abbey; for which fault of his, the man of God did daily rebuke him, and often times gave him good admonitions: but yet, for all this, by no means would he tarry amongst them, and therefore continual suit he made that he might be discharged. The venerable man upon a time, wearied with his importunity, in anger bad him depart; who was no sooner out of the Abbey gate, but he found a dragon in the way expecting him with open mouth, which being about to devour him, he began in great fear and trembling to cry out aloud, saying: "Help, help! for this dragon will eat me up." At which noise the monks running out, dragon they saw none, but finding him there shaking and trembling, they brought him back again to the Abbey, who forthwith promised that he would never more forsake the monastery, and so ever after he continued in his profession: for by the prayers of the holy man, he saw the dragon coming against him, whom before, when he saw not, he did willingly follow.

How a Monk, forsaking the Abbey, met with a dragon in the way.

XXVI

But I must not here pass over with silence that which I had by relation of the honourable man, Anthony, who said that his father's boy was so pitifully punished with a leprosy, that all his hair fell off, his body swelled, and filthy corruption did openly come forth. Who being sent by his father to the man of God, he was by him quickly restored to his former health.

How holy Benedict cured a boy of Leprosy.

XXVII

How Benedict
found money
miraculously to
relieve a poor
man.

Neither is that to be omitted, which one of his disciples called Peregrinus used to tell: for he said that, upon a certain day, an honest man, who was in debt, found no other means to help himself, but thought it his best way to acquaint the man of God with his necessity: whereupon he came to the Abbey, and finding the servant of almighty God, gave him to understand, how he was troubled by his creditor for twelve shillings which he did owe him. To whom the venerable man said that himself had not so much money, yet giving him comfortable words, he said: "Go your ways, and after two days come to me again, for I can not presently help you": in which two days, after his manner, he bestowed himself in prayer: and when upon the third day the poor man came back there were found suddenly upon the chest of the Abbey, which was full of corn, thirteen shillings: which the man of God caused to be given to him that required but twelve, both to discharge his debt, and also to defray his own charges.

But now will I return to speak of such things as I had from the mouth of his own scholars, mentioned before in the beginning of this book. A certain man there was who had an enemy that did notably spite and malign him, whose damnable hatred proceeded so far that he poisoned his drink, which, although it killed him not, yet did it change his skin in such sort that it was of many colours, as though he had been infected with a leprosy: but the man of God restored him to his former health: for so soon as he touched him, forthwith all that variety of colours departed from his body.

How a cruet of
glass was thrown
upon the stones,
and not broken.

XXVIII

At such time as there was a great dearth in Campania, the man of God had given away all the wealth of the Abbey to poor people, so that in the cellar there was nothing left but a little oil in a glass. A certain sub-deacon called Agapitus came unto him, instantly craving that he would bestow a little oil upon him. Our Lord's servant, that was resolved to give away all upon earth that he might find all in heaven, commanded that oil to be given him: but the monk that kept the cellar heard what the father commanded, yet did he not perform it: who inquiring not long after whether he had given that which he willed, the monk told him that he had not, adding that if he had given it away,

The Dialogues

that there was not any left for the Convent. Then in an anger he commanded others to take that glass with the oil, and to throw it out at the window, to the end that nothing might remain in the Abbey contrary to obedience. The monks did so, and threw it out at a window, under which there was an huge downfall, full of rough and craggy stones upon which the glass did light, but yet continued for all that so sound as though it had never been thrown out at all, for neither the glass was broken nor any of the oil shed. Then the man of God did command it to be taken up again, and, whole as it was, to be given unto him that desired it, and in the presence of the other brethren he reprehended the disobedient monk, both for his infidelity, and also for his proud mind.

XXIX

How an empty barrel was filled with oil.

After which reprehension, with the rest of his brethren he fell to praying, and in the place where they were, there stood an empty barrel with a cover upon it: and as the holy man continued in his prayers, the oil within did so increase, that the cover began to be lifted up, and at length fell down, and the oil, that was now higher than the mouth of the barrel, began to run over upon the pavement, which so soon as the servant of God, Benedict, beheld, forthwith he gave over his prayers, and the oil likewise ceased to overflow the barrel. Then he did more at large admonish that mistrusting and disobedient monk, that he would learn to have faith and humility, who upon so wholesome an admonition was ashamed, because the venerable father had by miracle shown the power of almighty God, as before he told him when he did first rebuke him: and so no cause there was why any should afterward doubt of his promise, seeing at one and the same time, for a small glass almost empty which he gave away, he bestowed upon them an whole barrel full of oil.

XXX

How Benedict delivered a Monk from the devil.

Upon a certain time, as he was going to the oratory of St. John, which is in the top of the mountain, the old enemy of mankind upon a mule, like a physician, met him, carrying in his hand an horn and a mortar. And when he demanded whither he was going: "To your monks," quoth he, "to give them a drench" [*i.e. a large dose of veterinary medicine*].

Gregory the Great

The venerable father went forward to his prayers, and when he had done, he returned in all haste, but the wicked spirit found an old monk drawing of water, into whom he entered, and straightways cast him upon the ground, and grievously tormented him. The man of God coming from his prayers, and seeing him in such pitiful case gave him only a little blow with his hand, and at the same instant he cast out that cruel devil, so that he durst not any more presume to enter in.

PETER. I would gladly know, whether he obtained always by prayer, to work such notable miracles; or else sometimes did them only at his will and pleasure.

GREGORY. Such as be the devout servants of God, when necessity requireth, use to work miracles both manner of ways: so that sometime they effect wonderful things by their prayers, and sometime only by their power and authority: for St. John saith: So many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God. They, then, that by power be the sons of God, what marvel is it, if by power they be able to do wonderful things? And that both ways they work miracles, we learn of St. Peter: who by his prayers did raise up Tabitha; and by his sharp reprehension did sentence Ananias and Sapphira to death for their lying. For we read not, that in the death of them he prayed at all, but only rebuked them for that sin which they had committed. Certain therefore it is that sometimes they do these things by power, and sometimes by prayer: for Ananias and Sapphira by a severe rebuke, St. Peter deprived of life: and by prayer restored Tabitha to life. And for proof of this, I will now tell you of two miracles, which the faithful servant of God, Benedict, did, in which it shall appear most plainly that he wrought the one by that power which God gave him, and obtained the other by virtue of his prayers.

Of a country fellow, that, with the only sight of the man of God, was loosed from his bands.

XXXI

A certain Goth there was called Galla, an Arian heretic, who, in the time of King Totila, did with such monstrous cruelty persecute religious men of the Catholic church, that what priest or monk soever came in his presence, he never departed alive. This man on a certain day, set upon rapine and pillage, pitifully tormented a poor country man, to make him confess where his money and wealth was: who, overcome with extremity of pain, said that

The Dialogues

he had committed all his substance to the custody of Benedict, the servant of God: and this he did, to the end that his tormentor, giving credit to his words, might at least for a while surcease from his horrible cruelty. Galla hearing this tormented him no longer: but binding his arms fast with strong cords, drave him before his horse, to bring him unto this Benedict, who, as he said, had his wealth in keeping. The country fellow, thus pinioned and running before him, carried him to the holy man's Abbey, where he found him sitting before the gate, reading upon a book. Then turning back to Galla that came raging after, he said: "This is father Benedict, of whom I told you": who looking upon him, in a great fury, thinking to deal as terribly with him as he had with others, cried out aloud to him, saying: "Rise up, sirrah, rise up, and deliver me quickly such wealth as thou hast of this man's in keeping." The man of God, hearing such a noise, straightways lifted up his eyes from reading, and beheld both him and the country fellow; and turning his eyes to his bands, very strangely they fell from his arms, and that so quickly as no man with any haste could have undone them. Galla, seeing him so wonderfully and quickly loosed, fell straight a-trembling, and prostrating himself upon the earth bowed down his cruel and stiff neck to the holy man's feet, and with humility did commend himself to his prayers. But the venerable man for all this rose not up from his reading, but calling for some of his monks commanded them to have him in, and to give him some meat. And when he was brought back again, he gave him a good lesson, admonishing him not to use any more such rigour and cruel dealing. His proud mind thus taken down, away he went, but durst not demand after that anything of the country fellow, whom the man of God, not with hands, but only with his eyes, had loosed from his bands. And this is that, Peter, which I told you, that those which in a more familiar sort serve God, do sometime, by certain power and authority bestowed upon them, work miracles. For he that sitting still did appease the fury of that cruel Goth, and unloose with his eyes those knots and cords which did pinion the innocent man's arms, did plainly shew by the quickness of the miracle, that he had received power to work all that which he did. And now will I likewise tell you of another miracle, which by prayer he obtained at God's hands.

XXXII

How by prayer
venerable Bene-
dict raised up a
dead child.

Being upon a day gone out with his monks to work in the field, a country man carrying the corpse of his dead son came to the gate of the Abbey, lamenting the loss of his child: and inquiring for holy Benedict, they told him that he was abroad with his monks in the field. Down at the gate he laid the dead body, and with great sorrow of soul ran in haste to seek out the venerable father. At the same time, the man of God was returning homeward from work with his monks: whom so soon as he saw, he [the country man] began to cry out: "Give me my son, give me my son!"

The man of God, amazed at these words, stood still, and said: "What, have I taken away your son?" "No, no," quoth the sorrowful father, "but he is dead: come for Christ Jesus' sake and restore him to life."

The servant of God, hearing him speak in that manner, and seeing his monks upon compassion to solicit the poor man's suit, with great sorrow of mind he said: "Away, my good brethren, away: such miracles are not for us to work, but for the blessed Apostles: why will you lay such a burthen upon me, as my weakness cannot bear?" But the poor man, whom excessive grief enforced, would not give over his petition, but swore that he would never depart, except he did raise up his son.

"Where is he, then?" quoth God's servant.

He answered that his body lay at the gate of the Abbey: to which place when the man of God came with his monks, he kneeled down and lay upon the body of the little child, and rising, he held up his hands towards heaven, and said: "Behold not, O Lord, my sins, but the faith of this man, that desireth to have his son raised to life, and restore that soul to the body, which thou hast taken away."

He had scarce spoken these words, and behold the soul returned back again, and therewith the child's body began to tremble in such sort that all which were present did behold it in strange manner to pant and shake. Then he took it by the hand and gave it to his father, but alive and in health. Certain it is, Peter, that this miracle was not in his own power, for which prostrate upon the ground he prayed so earnestly.

The Dialogues

PETER. All is most true that before you said, for what you affirmed in words, you have now verified by examples and works. But tell me, I beseech you, whether holy men can do all such things as they please, and obtain at God's hands whatsoever they desire.

XXXIII

Of a miracle
wrought by his
sister Scholastica.

GREGORY. What man is there, Peter, in this world, that is in greater favour with God than St. Paul was: who yet three times desired our Lord to be delivered from the prick of the flesh, and obtained not his petition? Concerning which point also I must needs tell you, how there was one thing which the venerable father Benedict would have done, and yet he could not.

For his sister called Scholastica, dedicated from her infancy to our Lord, used once a year to come and visit her brother. To whom the man of God went not far from the gate, to a place that did belong to the Abbey, there to give her entertainment. And she coming thither on a time according to her custom, her venerable brother with his monks went to meet her, where they spent the whole day in the praises of God and spiritual talk: and when it was almost night they supped together, and as they were yet sitting at the table, talking of devout matters, and darkness came on, the holy Nun his sister entreated him to stay there all night, that they might spend it in discoursing of the joys of heaven. But by no persuasion would he agree unto that, saying that he might not by any means tarry all night out of his Abbey.

At that time, the sky was so clear that no cloud was to be seen. The Nun, receiving this denial of her brother, joining her hands together, laid them upon the table: and so, bowing down her head upon them, she made her prayers to almighty God: and lifting her head from the table, there fell suddenly such a tempest of lightning and thundering, and such abundance of rain, that neither venerable Benedict, nor his monks that were with him, could put their head out of door: for the holy Nun, resting her head upon her hands, poured forth such a flood of tears upon the table, that she drew the clear air to a watery sky, so that after the end of her devotions, that storm of rain followed: and her prayer and the rain did so meet together, that as she lifted up her head from the table, the thunder began, so that in one and the very same instant, she lifted up her head and brought down the rain. The

Gregory the Great

man of God, seeing that he could not by reason of such thunder and lightning and great abundance of rain return back to his Abbey, began to be heavy and to complain of his sister, saying: "God forgive you, what have you done?" to whom she answered: "I desired you to stay, and you would not hear me, I have desired our good Lord, and he hath vouchsafed to grant my petition: wherefore if you can now depart, in God's name return to your monastery, and leave me here alone."

But the good father, being not able to go forth, tarried there against his will, where willingly before he would not stay. And so by that means they watched all night, and with spiritual and heavenly talk did mutually comfort one another: and therefore by this we see, as I said before, that he would have had that thing, which yet he could not: for if we respect the venerable man's mind, no question but he would have had the same fair weather to have continued as it was, when he set forth, but he found that a miracle did prevent his desire, which, by the power of almighty God, a woman's prayers had wrought. And it is not a thing to be marvelled at, that a woman which of long time had not seen her brother, might do more at that time than he could, seeing, according to the saying of St. John, God is charity and therefore of right she did more which loved more.

PETER. I confess that I am wonderfully pleased with that which you tell me.

How Benedict
saw the soul of
his sister ascend
into heaven.

XXXIV

GREGORY. The next day the venerable woman returned to her Nunnery, and the man of God to his Abbey: who three days after, standing in his cell, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, beheld the soul of his sister (which was departed from her body), in the likeness of a dove to ascend into heaven: who rejoicing much to see her great glory, with hymns and lauds gave thanks to almighty God, and did impart the news of this her death to his monks, whom also he sent presently to bring her corpse to his Abbey, to have it buried in that grave which he had provided for himself: by means whereof it fell out that, as their souls were always one in God whiles they lived, so their bodies continued together after their death.

The Dialogues

XXXV

how he saw the whole world represented before his eyes: and also the soul of Germanus, Bishop of Capua, ascending to heaven.

At another time, Servandus, the Deacon, and Abbot of that monastery, which in times past was founded by the noble man Liberius in the country of Campania, used ordinarily to come and visit the man of God: and the reason why he came so often was, because himself also was a man full of heavenly doctrine: and so they two had often together spiritual conference, to the end that, albeit they could not perfectly feed upon the celestial food of heaven, yet, by means of such sweet discourses, they might at least, with longing and fervent desire, taste of those joys and divine delights. When it was time to go to rest, the venerable Father Benedict reposed himself in the top of a tower, at the foot whereof Servandus the Deacon was lodged, so that one pair of stairs went to them both: before the tower there was a certain large room in which both their disciples did lie.

The man of God, Benedict, being diligent in watching, rose early up before the time of matins (his monks being yet at rest) and came to the window of his chamber, where he offered up his prayers to almighty God. Standing there, all on a sudden in the dead of the night, as he looked forth, he saw a light, which banished away the darkness of the night, and glittered with such brightness, that the light which did shine in the midst of darkness was far more clear than the light of the day. Upon this sight a marvellous strange thing followed, for, as himself did afterward report, the whole world, gathered as it were together under one beam of the sun, was presented before his eyes, and whiles the venerable father stood attentively beholding the brightness of that glittering light, he saw the soul of Germanus, Bishop of Capua, in a fiery globe to be carried up by Angels into heaven.

Then, desirous to have some witness of this so notable a miracle, he called with a very loud voice Servandus the Deacon twice or thrice by his name, who, troubled at such an unusual crying out of the man of God, went up in all haste, and looking forth saw not anything else, but a little remnant of the light, but wondering at so great a miracle, the man of God told him all in order what he had seen, and sending by and by to the town of Cassino, he commanded the religious man Theoprobus to dispatch one that night to the city of Capua, to learn what was become of Germanus their Bishop: which being done, the messenger found that reverent Prelate departed this life, and

Gregory the Great

enquiring curiously the time, he understood that he died at that very instant, in which the man of God beheld him ascending up to heaven.

PETER. A strange thing and very much to be admired. But whereas you say that the whole world, as it were under one sunbeam, was presented before his eyes, as I must needs confess that in myself I never had experience of any such thing, so neither can I conceive by what means the whole world can be seen of any one man.

GREGORY. Assure yourself, Peter, of that which I speak: to wit, that all creatures be as it were nothing to that soul which beholdeth the Creator: for though it see but a glimpse of that light which is in the Creator, yet very small do all things seem that be created: for by means of that supernatural light, the capacity of the inward soul is enlarged, and is in God so extended, that it is far above the world: yea and the soul of him that seeth in this manner, is also above itself; for being rapt up in the light of God, it is inwardly in itself enlarged above itself, and when it is so exalted and looketh downward, then doth it comprehend how little all that is, which before in former baseness it could not comprehend. The man of God, therefore, who saw the fiery globe, and the Angels returning to heaven, out of all doubt could not see those things but in the light of God: what marvel, then, is it, if he saw the world gathered together before him, who, rapt up in the light of his soul, was at that time out of the world? But albeit we say that the world was gathered together before his eyes, yet were not heaven and earth drawn into any lesser room than they be of themselves, but the soul of the beholder was more enlarged, which, rapt in God, might without difficulty see that which is under God, and therefore in that light which appeared to his outward eyes, the inward light which was in his soul ravished the mind of the beholder to supernal things, and shewed him how small all earthly things were.

PETER. I perceive now that it was to my more profit that I understood you not before: seeing, by reason of my slow capacity, you have delivered so notable an exposition. But now, because you have made me thrughly to understand these things, I beseech you to continue on your former narration.

The Dialogues

XXXVI

How holy Benedict wrote a rule for his monks.

GREGORY. Desirous I am, Peter, to tell you many things of this venerable father, but some of purpose I let pass, because I make haste to entreat also of the acts of other holy men: yet I would not have you to be ignorant, but that the man of God amongst so many miracles, for which he was so famous in the world, was also sufficiently learned in divinity: for he wrote a rule for his monks, both excellent for discretion and also eloquent for the style. Of whose life and conversation, if any be curious to know further, he may in the institution of that rule understand all his manner of life and discipline: for the holy man could not otherwise teach, than himself lived.

XXXVII

How venerable Benedict did prophesy to his monks, the time of his own death.

The same year in which he departed this life, he told the day of his holy death to his monks, some of which did live daily with him, and some dwelt far off, willing those that were present to keep it secret, and telling them that were absent by what token they should know that he was dead. Six days before he left this world, he gave order to have his sepulchre opened, and forthwith falling into an ague, he began with burning heat to wax faint, and when as the sickness daily increased, upon the sixth day he commanded his monks to carry him into the oratory, where he did arm himself with receiving the body and blood of our Saviour Christ; and having his weak body holden up betwixt the hands of his disciples, he stood with his own lifted up to heaven, and as he was in that manner praying, he gave up the ghost. Upon which day two monks, one being in his cell, and the other far distant, had concerning him one and the self-same vision: for they saw all the way from the holy man's cell, towards the east even up to heaven, hung and adorned with tapestry, and shining with an infinite number of lamps, at the top whereof a man, reverently attired, stood and demanded if they knew who passed that way, to whom they answered saying, that they knew not. Then he spake thus unto them: "This is the way," quoth he, "by which the beloved servant of God, Benedict, is ascended up to heaven." And by this means, as his monks that were present knew of the death of the holy man, so likewise they which were absent, by the token which he foretold them, had intelligence of the same thing. Buried he was in the oratory of St. John Baptist which himself built, when he overthrew

the altar of Apollo; who also in that cave in which he first dwelled, even to this very time, worketh miracles, if the faith of them that pray requireth the same.

How a mad
woman was
cured in his cave.

XXXVIII

For the thing which I mean now to rehearse fell out lately. A certain woman falling mad, lost the use of reason so far, that she walked up and down, day and night, in mountains and valleys, in woods and fields, and rested only in that place where extreme weariness enforced her to stay. Upon a day it so fell out, that albeit she wandered at random, yet she missed not the right way: for she came to the cave of the blessed man Benedict: and not knowing anything, in she went, and reposed herself there that night, and rising up in the morning, she departed as sound in sense and well in her wits, as though she had never been distracted in her whole life, and so continued always after, even to her dying day.

PETER. What is the reason that in the patronage of martyrs we often times find, that they do not afford so great benefit by their bodies, as they do by other of their relics: and do there work greater miracles, where themselves be not present?

GREGORY. Where the holy martyrs lie in their bodies, there is no doubt, Peter, but that they are able to work many miracles, yea and also do work infinite, to such as seek them with a pure mind. But for as much as simple people might have some doubt whether they be present, and do in those places hear their prayers where their bodies be not, necessary it is that they should in those places shew greater miracles, where weak souls may most doubt of their presence.

But he whose mind is fixed in God, hath so much the greater merit of his faith in that he both knoweth that they rest not there in body, and yet be there present to hear our prayers. And therefore our Saviour himself, to increase the faith of his disciples, said: If I do not depart, the Comforter will not come unto you for, seeing certain it is that the comforting Spirit doth always proceed from the Father and the Son, why doth the Son say that he will depart that the Comforter may come, who never is absent from the Son? But because the disciples, beholding our Lord in flesh, did always desire to see

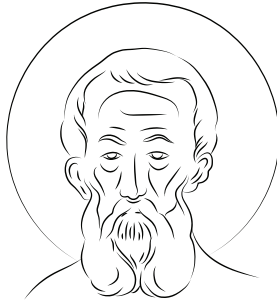
The Dialogues

him with their corporal eyes, very well did he say unto them: “Unless I do go away, the Comforter will not come:” as though he had plainly told them: If I do not withdraw my body, I cannot let you understand what the love of the spirit is: and except you give over [cease] to love my carnal presence, never will you learn to affect me with true spiritual love.

PETER. That you say pleaseth me very well.

GREGORY. Let us now for a while give over our discourse, to the end that if we mean to prosecute the miracles of other Saints, we may through silence be the more able to perform it.

The end of the Second Book



THE CONFESSION OF ST. PATRICK

ST. PATRICK

Translated by Pádraig McCarthy

1. My name is Patrick. I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers. I am looked down upon by many. My father was Calpornius. He was a deacon; his father was Potitus, a priest, who lived at Bannavem Taburniae. His home was near there, and that is where I was taken prisoner. I was about sixteen at the time. At that time, I did not know the true God. I was taken into captivity in Ireland, along with thousands of others. We deserved this, because we had gone away from God, and did not keep his commandments. We would not listen to our priests, who advised us about how we could be saved. The Lord brought his strong anger upon us, and scattered us among many nations even to the ends of the earth. It was among foreigners that it was seen how little I was.

2. It was there that the Lord opened up my awareness of my lack of faith. Even though it came about late, I recognised my failings. So I turned with all my heart to the Lord my God, and he looked down on my lowliness and had mercy on my youthful ignorance. He guarded me before I knew him, and before I came to wisdom and could distinguish between good and evil. He protected me and consoled me as a father does for his son.

St. Patrick

3. That is why I cannot be silent – nor would it be good to do so – about such great blessings and such a gift that the Lord so kindly bestowed in the land of my captivity. This is how we can repay such blessings, when our lives change and we come to know God, to praise and bear witness to his great wonders before every nation under heaven.

4. This is because there is no other God, nor will there ever be, nor was there ever, except God the Father. He is the one who was not begotten, the one without a beginning, the one from whom all beginnings come, the one who holds all things in being – this is our teaching. And his son, Jesus Christ, whom we testify has always been, since before the beginning of this age, with the father in a spiritual way. He was begotten in an indescribable way before every beginning. Everything we can see, and everything beyond our sight, was made through him. He became a human being; and, having overcome death, was welcomed to the heavens to the Father. The Father gave him all power over every being, both heavenly and earthly and beneath the earth. Let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ, in whom we believe and whom we await to come back to us in the near future, is Lord and God. He is judge of the living and of the dead; he rewards every person according to their deeds. He has generously poured on us the Holy Spirit, the gift and promise of immortality, who makes believers and those who listen to be children of God and co-heirs with Christ. This is the one we acknowledge and adore – one God in a trinity of the sacred name.

5. He said through the prophet: ‘Call on me in the day of your distress, and I will set you free, and you will glorify me.’ Again he said: ‘It is a matter of honour to reveal and tell forth the works of God.’

6. Although I am imperfect in many ways, I want my brothers and relations to know what I’m really like, so that they can see what it is that inspires my life.

7. I am not ignoring the evidence of my Lord, who testifies in the psalm: ‘You destroy those who speak lies.’ And again he says: ‘A mouth which lies kills the soul.’ And the same Lord says in the gospel: ‘The idle words which people speak, they will account for on the day of judgment.’

8. So I should greatly dread, with fear and trembling, this sentence on that

The Confession of St. Patrick

day, where nobody can avoid or escape, but all shall give complete account of the least of sins before the tribunal of the Lord Christ.

9. This is why I have long thought to write, but up to now I have hesitated, because I feared what people would say. This is because I did not learn as others did, who drank in equally well both the law and the sacred writings, and never had to change their way of speaking since childhood, but always grew better and better at it. For me, however, my speech and words have been translated into a foreign language, as it can be easily seen from my writings the standard of the instruction and learning I have had. As it is said: 'The wise person is known through speech, and also understanding and knowledge and the teaching of truth.'

10. However, even though there's truth in my excuse, it gets me nowhere. Now, in my old age, I want to do what I was unable to do in my youth. My sins then prevented me from really taking in what I read. But who believes me, even were I to repeat what I said previously? I was taken prisoner as a youth, particularly young in the matter of being able to speak, and before I knew what I should seek and what I should avoid. That is why, today, I blush and am afraid to expose my lack of experience, because I can't express myself with the brief words I would like in my heart and soul.

11. If I had been given the same chance as other people, I would not be silent, whatever the reward. If I seem to some to be too forward, with my lack of knowledge and my even slower tongue, still it is written: 'Stammering tongues will quickly learn to speak peace.' How much more should we want to do this, who are, as it is said, a saving letter of Christ even to the ends of the earth. Although it is not well expressed, still this letter is genuinely and strongly written in your hearts, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God. The Spirit is a witness that what is of the countryside is also created by the Most High!

12. So I am first of all a simple country person, a refugee, and unlearned. I do not know how to provide for the future. But this I know for certain, that before I was brought low, I was like a stone lying deep in the mud. Then he who is powerful came and in his mercy pulled me out, and lifted me up and placed me on the very top of the wall. That is why I must shout aloud in return to the Lord for such great good deeds of his, here and now and forever,

which the human mind cannot measure.

13. So be amazed, all you people great and small who fear God! You well-educated people in authority, listen and examine this carefully. Who was it who called one as foolish as I am from the middle of those who are seen to be wise and experienced in law and powerful in speech and in everything? If I am most looked down upon, yet he inspired me, before others, so that I would faithfully serve the nations with awe and reverence and without blame: the nations to whom the love of Christ brought me. His gift was that I would spend my life, if I were worthy of it, to serving them in truth and with humility to the end.

14. In the knowledge of this faith in the Trinity, and without letting the dangers prevent it, it is right to make known the gift of God and his eternal consolation. It is right to spread abroad the name of God faithfully and without fear, so that even after my death I may leave something of value to the many thousands of my brothers and sisters – the children whom I baptised in the Lord.

15. I didn't deserve at all that the Lord would grant such great grace, after hardships and troubles, after captivity, and after so many years among that people. It was something which, when I was young, I never hoped for or even thought of.

16. After I arrived in Ireland, I tended sheep every day, and I prayed frequently during the day. More and more the love of God increased, and my sense of awe before God. Faith grew, and my spirit was moved, so that in one day I would pray up to one hundred times, and at night perhaps the same. I even remained in the woods and on the mountain, and I would rise to pray before dawn in snow and ice and rain. I never felt the worse for it, and I never felt lazy – as I realise now, the spirit was burning in me at that time.

17. It was there one night in my sleep that I heard a voice saying to me: "You have fasted well. Very soon you will return to your native country." Again after a short while, I heard a someone saying to me: "Look – your ship is ready." It was not nearby, but a good two hundred miles away. I had never been to the place, nor did I know anyone there. So I ran away then, and left the man with whom I had been for six years. It was in the strength of God that

The Confession of St. Patrick

I went – God who turned the direction of my life to good; I feared nothing while I was on the journey to that ship.

18. The day I arrived, the ship was about to leave the place. I said I needed to set sail with them, but the captain was not at all pleased. He replied unpleasantly and angrily: “Don’t you dare try to come with us.” When I heard that, I left them and went back to the hut where I had lodgings. I began to pray while I was going; and before I even finished the prayer, I heard one of them shout aloud at me: “Come quickly – those men are calling you!” I turned back right away, and they began to say to me: “Come – we’ll trust you. Prove you’re our friend in any way you wish.” That day, I refused to suck their breasts, because of my reverence for God. They were pagans, and I hoped they might come to faith in Jesus Christ. This is how I got to go with them, and we set sail right away.

19. After three days we made it to land, and then for twenty eight days we travelled through a wilderness. Food ran out, and great hunger came over them. The captain turned to me and said: “What about this, Christian? You tell us that your God is great and all-powerful – why can’t you pray for us, since we’re in a bad state with hunger? There’s no sign of us finding a human being anywhere!” Then I said to them with some confidence: “Turn in faith with all your hearts to the Lord my God, because nothing is impossible for him, so that he may put food in your way – even enough to make you fully satisfied! He has an abundance everywhere.” With the help of God, this is actually what happened! A herd of pigs appeared in the way before our eyes! They killed many of them and there they remained for two nights, and were fully restored, and the dogs too were filled. Many of them had grown weak and left half-alive by the way. After this, they gave the greatest of thanks to God, and I was honoured in their eyes. From this day on, they had plenty of food. They also found some wild honey, and offered some of it to me. However, one of them said: “This honey must have been offered in sacrifice to a god.” Thanks be to God, from then on I tasted none of it.

20. That same night while I was sleeping, Satan strongly put me to the test – I will remember it as long as I live! It was as if an enormous rock fell on me, and I lost all power in my limbs. Although I knew little about the life of the spirit at the time, how was it that I knew to call upon Helias? While

St. Patrick

these things were happening, I saw the sun rise in the sky, and while I was calling “Helias! Helias!” with all my strength, the splendour of the sun fell on me; and immediately, all that weight was lifted from me. I believe that I was helped by Christ the Lord, and that his spirit cried out for me. I trust that it will be like this whenever I am under stress, as the gospel says: “In that day, the Lord testifies, it will not be you will speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

21. It happened again after many years that I was taken a prisoner. On the first night I was with them, I heard a divine answer saying to me: “You will be with them for two months.” This is how it was: on the sixtieth night, the Lord freed me from their hands.

22. While we were still on the journey, the Lord provided food and fire and shelter every day until we met some people on the tenth day. As I mentioned above, we travelled for twenty eight days through the wilderness. On the very night we met people, we ran out of food.

23. A few years later I was again with my parents in Britain. They welcomed me as a son, and they pleaded with me that, after all the many tribulations I had undergone, I should never leave them again. It was while I was there that I saw, in a vision in the night, a man whose name was Victoricus coming as it were from Ireland with so many letters they could not be counted. He gave me one of these, and I read the beginning of the letter, the voice of the Irish people. While I was reading out the beginning of the letter, I thought I heard at that moment the voice of those who were beside the wood of Voclut, near the western sea. They called out as it were with one voice: “We beg you, holy boy, to come and walk again among us.” This touched my heart deeply, and I could not read any further; I woke up then. Thanks be to God, after many years the Lord granted them what they were calling for.

24. Another night - I do not know, God knows, whether it was within me or beside me - I heard authoritative words which I could hear but not understand, until at the end of the speech it became clear: “The one who gave his life for you, he it is who speaks in you”; and I awoke full of joy.

25. Another time, I saw in me one who was praying. It was as if I were inside my body, and I heard above me, that is, above my inner self. He

The Confession of St. Patrick

prayed strongly, with sighs. I was amazed and astonished, and pondered who it was who prayed in me; but at the end of the prayer, it was clear that it was the Spirit. At this I awoke, and I remembered the apostle saying: "The Spirit helps the weaknesses of our prayer; for we do know what it is we should pray, but the very Spirit pleads for us with unspeakable sighs, which cannot be expressed in words." And again: "The Lord is our advocate, and pleads for us."

26. One time I was put to the test by some superiors of mine. They came and put my sins against my hard work as a bishop. This hit me very hard, so much so that it seemed I was about to fall, both here and in eternity. But the Lord in his kindness spared the converts and the strangers for the sake of his name, and strongly supported me when I was so badly treated. I did not slip into sin and disgrace. I pray that God not hold this sin against them.

27. They brought up against me after thirty years something I had already confessed before I was a deacon. What happened was that, one day when I was feeling anxious and low, with a very dear friend of mine I referred to some things I had done one day - rather, in one hour - when I was young, before I overcame my weakness. I don't know - God knows - whether I was then fifteen years old at the time, and I did not then believe in the living God, not even when I was a child. In fact, I remained in death and unbelief until I was reproved strongly, and actually brought low by hunger and nakedness daily.

28. My defence was that I remained on in Ireland, and that not of my own choosing, until I almost perished. However, it was very good for me, since God straightened me out, and he prepared me for what I would be today. I was far different then from what I am now, and I have care for others, and I have enough to do to save them. In those days I did not even have concern for my own welfare.

29. So on the day I was accused by those I mentioned above, that same night I saw in a vision of the night some writing before my dishonoured face. In the middle of this, I heard an answer from God saying to me: "We have seen with displeasure the face of the one who was chosen deprived of his good name." He did not say: "You have seen with displeasure", but "We have seen with displeasure", as if he were identifying himself with me; as he said "He who touches you as it were touches the pupil of my eye."

St. Patrick

30. For that reason, I give thanks to the one who strengthened me in all things, so that he would not impede me in the course I had undertaken and from the works also which I had learned from Christ my Lord. Rather, I sensed in myself no little strength from him, and my faith passed the test before God and people.

31. I make bold to say that my conscience does not blame me, now and in the future. I have God for witness that I have not told lies in the account I have given you.

32. But I grieve more for my very dear friend, that we had to hear such an account - the one to whom I entrusted my very soul. I did learn from some brothers before the case was heard that he came to my defence in my absence. I was not there at the time, not even in Britain, and it was not I who brought up the matter. In fact it was he himself who told me from his own mouth: "Look, you are being given the rank of bishop." That is something I did not deserve. How could he then afterwards come to disgrace me in public before all, both good and bad, about a matter for which he had already freely and joyfully forgiven me, as indeed had God, who is greater than all?

33. I have said enough about that. I must take care not to hide the gift of God which he has generously given us in the land of my captivity. It was then that I looked for him with all my strength, and there I found him, and he protected me from all evils - this is what I believe - on account of his Spirit living and working in me to this very day. I'm proud to tell again of this. God knows, if it were some other person who had said this to me, perhaps I would have said nothing, because of the love of Christ.

34. So I'll never stop giving thanks to my God, who kept me faithful in the time of my temptation. I can today with confidence offer my soul to Christ my Lord as a living victim. He is the one who defended me in all my difficulties. I can say: Who am I, Lord, or what is my calling, that you have worked with me with such divine presence? This is how I come to praise and magnify your name among the nations all the time, wherever I am, not only in good times but in the difficult times too. Whatever comes about for me, good or bad, I ought to accept them equally and give thanks to God. He has shown me that I can put my faith in him without wavering and without end. However ignorant I am, he has heard me, so that in these late days I can dare

The Confession of St. Patrick

to undertake such a holy and wonderful work. In this way I can imitate somewhat those whom the Lord foretold would announce his gospel in witness to all nations before the end of the world. This is what we see has been fulfilled. Look at us: we are witnesses that the gospel has been preached right out to where there is nobody else there!

35. It's a long story – to tell each and every deed of mine, or even parts of it. I'll make it short, as I tell of how the good God often freed me from slavery, and from twelve dangers which threatened my life, as well as from hidden dangers and from things which I have no words to express. I wouldn't want to hurt my readers! God knows all things even before they are done, and I have him as my authority that he often gave me warnings in heavenly answers, – me, a wretched orphan!

36. From where did this wisdom come to me, a wisdom which was not in me? I didn't even know how the number of days, much less did I know God. Where did such a great and life-giving gift come from then, to know and love God, even at the cost of leaving homeland and parents?

37. And many were the gifts offered to me, along with sorrow and tears. There were those whom I offended, even against the wishes of some of my superiors; but, with God guiding me, I did not consent nor acquiesce to them. It was not by my own grace, but God who overcame it in me, and resisted them all so that I could come to the peoples of Ireland to preach the gospel. I bore insults from unbelievers, so that I would hear the hatred directed at me for travelling here. I bore many persecutions, even chains, so that I could give up my freeborn state for the sake of others. If I be worthy, I am ready even to give up my life most willingly here and now for his name. It is there that I wish to spend my life until I die, if the Lord should grant it to me.

38. I am greatly in debt to God. He gave me such great grace, that through me, many people should be born again in God and brought to full life. Also that clerics should be ordained everywhere for this people who have lately come to believe, and who the Lord has taken from the ends of the earth. This is just what he promised in the past through his prophet: “The nations will come to you from the ends of the earth, and they will say: How false are the idols our fathers got for themselves, and they are of no use whatever.” And again: “I have put you as a light to the nations, that you may be their salvation

to the end of the earth.”

39. It is there that I await his promise – he is the one who never deceives, as is repeated in the gospel: “They will come from the east and from the west, and they will lie down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.” We believe that believing people will come from all over the world.

40. It is right that we should fish well and diligently, as the Lord directs and teaches when he says: “Follow me, and I will may you fishers of men.” And again he says through the prophets: “Behold, I send many fishers and hunters, says God”; and other such sayings. Therefore it is very right that we should cast our nets, so that a great multitude and crowd will be taken for God. Also that there should be clerics to baptise and encourage a people in need and want. This is what the Lord says in the gospel: he warns and teaches in these words: “Go therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the age.” Again he says: “Go out therefore to the whole world and announce the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.” And yet again: “This gospel of the kingdom will be announced all over the world, as testimony to all the nations; and then will come the end.” In the same way, the Lord foretold this through the prophet as he said: “And it will come about in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy; your young people will see visions and your older people will dream dreams. Indeed, on my servants, men and women, I will pour out my Spirit and they will prophesy.” Hosea says: “Those who were not my people, I will call my people; and her who has not obtained mercy, I will name the one who has obtained mercy. In the place where it was said: You are not my people: there they will be called children of the living God.”

41. How has this happened in Ireland? Never before did they know of God except to serve idols and unclean things. But now, they have become the people of the Lord, and are called children of God. The sons and daughters of the leaders of the Irish are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ!

42. An example is this. There was a blessed Irish woman of noble birth,

The Confession of St. Patrick

a most beautiful adult whom I baptised. She came to us a few days later for this reason. She told us that she had received word from a messenger of God, who advised her that she should become a virgin of Christ, and that she should come close to God. Thanks be to God, six days later, enthusiastically and well, she took on the life that all virgins of God do. Their fathers don't like this, of course. These women suffer persecution and false accusations from their parents, and yet their number grows! We do not know the number of our people who were born there. In addition, there are the widows and the celibates. Of all these, those held in slavery work hardest - they bear even terror and threats, but the Lord gives grace to so many of the women who serve him. Even when it is forbidden, they bravely follow his example.

43. I could wish to leave them to go to Britain. I would willingly do this, and am prepared for this, as if to visit my home country and my parents. Not only that, but I would like to go to Gaul to visit the brothers and to see the faces of the saints of my Lord. God knows what I would dearly like to do. But I am bound in the Spirit, who assures me that if I were to do this, I would be held guilty. And I fear, also, to lose the work which I began - not so much I as Christ the Lord, who told me to come here to be with these people for the rest of my life. May the Lord will it, and protect me from every wrong path, so that I do not sin before him.

44. I hope to do what I should. I know I cannot trust myself as long as I am in this body subject to death. There is one who is strong, who tries every day to undermine my faith, and the chastity of genuine religion I have chosen to the end of my life for Christ my Lord. The flesh can be an enemy dragging towards death, that is, towards doing those enticing things which are against the law. I know to some extent how I have not led a perfect life like other believers. But I acknowledge this to my Lord, and I do not blush in his sight. I am not telling lies: from the time in my youth that I came to know him, the love and reverence for God grew in me, and so far, with the Lord's help, I have kept faith.

45. Those who wish may laugh and insult. But I will not be silent, nor will I hide the signs and wonders which the Lord has shown me even many years before they came about. He knows all things even before the beginning of time.

St. Patrick

46. So I want to give thanks to God without ceasing. He frequently forgave my lack of wisdom and my negligence, and more than once did not become very angry with me, the one who was meant to be his helper. I was not quick to accept what he showed me, and so the Spirit prompted me. The Lord was merciful to me a thousand thousand times, because he saw in me that I was ready, but that I did not know what I should do about the state of my life. There were many who forbade this mission. They even told stories among themselves behind my back, and they said: "Why does he put himself in danger among hostile people who do not know God?" It was not that they were malicious – they just did not understand, as I myself can testify, since I was just an unlearned country person. Indeed, I was not quick to recognise the grace that was in me; I know now what I should have done then.

47. Now, therefore, I have informed my brothers and my fellow-servants who believed me, because I gave them warning, and I warn them now, in order to strengthen and confirm your faith. Oh that you would imitate greater things, and do more powerful things! This will be my glory, since a wise son is the glory of his father!

48. You all know, and God knows, how I have lived among you since my youth, in true faith and in sincerity of heart. Towards the pagan people too among whom I live, I have lived in good faith, and will continue to do so. God knows that I have not been devious with even one of them, nor do I think of doing so, for the sake of God and his church. I would not want to arouse persecution of them and of all of us; nor would I want that the Lord's name should be blasphemed on account of me; since it is written: "Woe to the one through whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed."

49. I know that I am inexperienced in all things. But still, I have tried to keep a guard on myself and for the Christians and virgins of Christ and religious women who were giving me small gifts of their own accord. When they would throw some of their ornaments on the altar, I would give them back to them. They were hurt at me that I would do this. But it was because of the hope of the eternal gift, that I was careful in all things, in case unbelievers would trap me or my ministry of service for any reason. Nor did I want to give those who could not believe even the slightest reason for speaking against me or take my character away.

The Confession of St. Patrick

50. Perhaps, however, when I baptised so many thousands of people, did I hope to receive even the smallest payment? If so, tell me, and I will return it to you. Or when the Lord ordained clerics everywhere through my poor efforts, and I gave this service to them for free, if I asked them to pay even for the cost of my shoes – tell it against me, and I will return it to you and more.

51. I spend myself for you, so that you may have me for yours. I have travelled everywhere among you for your own sake, in many dangers, and even to the furthest parts where nobody lived beyond, and where nobody ever went to baptise and to ordain clerics or to bring people to fulfilment. It is only by God's gift that I diligently and most willingly did all of this for your good.

52. At times I gave gifts to kings, over and above what I paid to their sons who travelled with me. Despite this, they took me and my companions prisoner, and very much wanted to kill me, but the time had not yet come. They stole everything they found in our possession, and they bound me in iron. On the fourteenth day, the Lord set me free from their power; all our possessions were returned to us for God's sake, and for the sake of the close friendship we had had previously.

53. You know yourselves how much I expended on those who were the judges in those regions which I most frequently visited. I estimate that I gave out not less than the price of fifteen persons, so that you might benefit from me, and that I might benefit from you in God. I'm not sorry I did it, nor was it even enough for me – I still spend, and will spend more. The Lord is powerful, and he can grant me still to spend my very self for the sake of your souls.

54. See now: I call on God as witness in my soul that I tell no lie. Nor would I write to you looking for your praise, nor out of greed – it's not that I hope for honour from any of you for myself. It is the honour which is not yet to be seen, but which is believed in the heart, which is what gives me satisfaction. The one who gave the promise is faithful, and never lies.

55. I see that already in this present age the Lord has given me a greatness more than could be expected. I was not worthy of this, not the kind of person the Lord would do this for, since I know for certain that poverty and calamity are more my style than riches and enjoyment. But Christ the Lord became poor for us; I too am wretched and unhappy. Even if I were to wish for riches,

St. Patrick

I do not have them. I am not trying to judge myself, since every day there is the chance that I will be killed, or surrounded, or be taken into slavery, or some other such happening. But I fear none of these things, because of the promises of heaven. I have cast myself into the hands of almighty God, who is the ruler of all places, as the prophet says: "Cast your concerns on God, and he will sustain you."

56. Now I commend my soul to my most faithful God. For him I perform the work of an ambassador, despite my less than noble condition. However, God is not influenced by such personal situations, and he chose me for this task so that I would be one servant of his very least important servants.

57. So I shall make a return to him for all that he has given to me. But what can I say, or what can I promise to my Lord? There is nothing I have that is not his gift to me. But he knows the depths of my heart, my very gut feelings! He knows that it is enough that I desire very much, and am ready for this, that he would grant me to drink of his chalice, just as he was pleased to do for others who loved him.

58. For this reason, may God not let it come about that I would suffer the loss of his people who have become his in the furthestmost parts of the earth. I pray that God give me perseverance, and that he grant me to bear faithful witness to him right up to my passing from this life, for the sake of my God.

59. If I have ever imitated anything good for the sake of my God whom I love, I ask that he grant me to be able to shed my blood with these converts and captives – even were I to lack a grave for burial, or my dead body were to be miserably torn apart limb from limb by dogs or wild beasts, or were the birds of heaven to devour it. I declare with certainty that if this were to happen, I would have gained both my soul and my body. There is no doubt whatever that we will rise on the appointed day in the brightness of the sun, that is, in the glory of Christ Jesus our redeemer. We shall be like children of the living God and co-heirs of Christ and to be fashioned in his image, since it is from him and through him and in him that we are to reign.

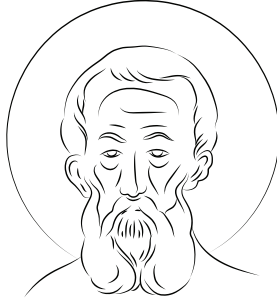
60. The sun which we see rising for us each day at his command, that sun will never reign nor will its splendour continue forever; and all those who adore that sun will come to a bad, miserable penalty. We, however, believe

The Confession of St. Patrick

in and adore the true sun, that is, Christ, who will never perish. Nor will they perish who do his will but they will abide forever just as Christ will abide forever. He lives with God the Father almighty and with the Holy Spirit before the ages began, and now, and for all the ages of ages. Amen.

61. Again and again I briefly put before you the words of my confession. I testify in truth and in great joy of heart before God and his holy angels that I never had any other reason for returning to that nation from which I had earlier escaped, except the gospel and God's promises.

62. I pray for those who believe in and have reverence for God. Some of them may happen to inspect or come upon this writing which Patrick, a sinner without learning, wrote in Ireland. May none of them ever say that whatever little I did or made known to please God was done through ignorance. Instead, you can judge and believe in all truth that it was a gift of God. This is my confession before I die.



LETTER TO THE SOLDIERS OF COROTICUS

ST. PATRICK

Translated By Padraig McCarthy

1. I declare that I, Patrick, – an unlearned sinner indeed – have been established a bishop in Ireland. I hold quite certainly that what I am, I have accepted from God. I live as an alien among non-Roman peoples, an exile on account of the love of God – he is my witness that this is so. It is not that I would choose to let anything so blunt and harsh come from my mouth, but I am driven by the zeal for God. And the truth of Christ stimulates me, for love of neighbours and children: for these, I have given up my homeland and my parents, and my very life to death, if I am worthy of that. I live for my God, to teach these peoples, even if I am despised by some.

2. With my own hand I have written and put together these words to be given and handed on and sent to the soldiers of Coroticus. I cannot say that they are my fellow-citizens, nor fellow-citizens of the saints of Rome, but fellow-citizens of demons, because of their evil works. By their hostile ways they live in death, allies of the apostate Scots and Picts. They are blood-stained: blood-stained with the blood of innocent Christians, whose numbers I have given birth to in God and confirmed in Christ.

3. The newly baptised and anointed were dressed in white robes; the

St. Patrick

anointing was still to be seen clearly on their foreheads when they were cruelly slain and sacrificed by the sword of the ones I referred to above. On the day after that, I sent a letter by a holy priest (whom I had taught from infancy), with clerics, to ask that they return to us some of the booty or of the baptised prisoners they had captured. They scoffed at them.

4. So I don't know which is the cause of the greatest grief for me: whether those who were slain, or those who were captured, or those whom the devil so deeply ensnared. They will face the eternal pains of Gehenna equally with the devil; because whoever commits sin is rightly called a slave and a son of the devil.

5. For this reason, let every God-fearing person know that those people are alien to me and to Christ my God, for whom I am an ambassador: father-slayers, brother-slayers, they are savage wolves devouring the people of God as they would bread for food. It is just as it is said: 'The wicked have routed your law, O Lord' - the very law which in recent times he so graciously planted in Ireland and, with God's help, has taken root.

6. I am not forcing myself in where I have no right to act. I have a part with those whom God called and destined to preach the gospel, even in persecutions which are no small matter, to the very ends of the earth. This is despite the malice of the Enemy through the tyranny of Coroticus, who respects neither God, nor his priests whom God chose and granted the divine and sublime power that whatever they would bind upon earth would be bound also in the heavens.

7. Therefore I ask most of all that all the holy and humble of heart should not fawn on such people, nor even share food or drink with them, nor accept their alms, until such time as they make satisfaction to God in severe penance and shedding of tears, and until they set free the men-servants of God and the baptised women servants of Christ, for whom he died and was crucified.

8. The Most High does not accept the gifts of evildoers. The one who offers a sacrifice taken from what belongs to the poor is like one who sacrifices a child in the very sight of the child's father. Riches, says Scripture, which a person gathers unjustly, will be vomited out of that person's stomach. The angel of death will drag such a one away, to be crushed by the anger of drag-

Letter to the soldiers of Coroticus

ons. Such a one will the tongue of a serpent slay, and the fire which cannot be extinguished will consume. And Scripture also says: 'Woe to those who fill themselves with what does not belong to them'. And: 'What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and yet suffer the loss of his or her soul?'

9. It would take a long time to discuss or refer one by one, and to gather from the whole law all that is stated about such greed. Avarice is a deadly crime. Do not covet your neighbour's goods. Do not kill. The murderer can have no part with Christ. Whoever hates a brother is guilty of homicide. Also: Whoever does not love a brother remains in death. How much more guilty is the one who stained his hands in the blood of the children of God, who God only lately acquired in the most distant parts of the earth through the encouragement of one as unimportant as I am!

10. Surely it was not without God, or simply out of human motives, that I came to Ireland! Who was it who drove me to it? I am so bound by the Spirit that I no longer see my own kindred. Is it just from myself that comes the holy mercy in how I act towards that people who at one time took me captive and slaughtered the men and women servants in my father's home? In my human nature I was born free, in that I was born of a decurion father. But I sold out my noble state for the sake of others - and I am not ashamed of that, nor do I repent of it. Now, in Christ, I am a slave of a foreign people, for the sake of the indescribable glory of eternal life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

11. If my own people do not recognise me, still no prophet is honoured in his own country. Could it be that we are not of the one sheepfold, nor that we have the one God as our Father? As Scripture says: 'Whoever is not with me is against me'; and 'whoever does not gather with me, scatters'. But it is not right that one destroys while another builds. I do not seek what is mine: it is not my own grace, but God who put this concern in my heart, that I would be one of the hunters or fishers whom God at one time foretold would be here in the final days.

12. They watch me with malice. What am I to do, Lord? I am greatly despised. See - your sheep around me are mangled and preyed upon, and this by the thieves I mentioned before, at the bidding of the evil-minded Coroticus. He is far from the love of God, who betrays Christians into the hands of

Scots and Picts. Greedy wolves have devoured the flock of the Lord, which was flourishing in Ireland under the very best of care – I just can't count the number of sons of Scots and daughters of kings who are now monks and virgins of Christ. So the injuries done to good people will not please you – even in the very depths it will not please.

13. Who among the holy people would not be horrified to take pleasure or to enjoy a banquet with such people? They have filled their homes with what they stole from dead Christians; they live on what they plundered. These wretched people don't realise that they offer deadly poison as food to their friends and children. It is just like Eve, who did not understand that it was really death that she offered her man. This is how it is with those who do evil: they work for death as an everlasting punishment.

14. The Christians of Roman Gaul have the custom of sending holy and chosen men to the Franks and to other pagan peoples with so many thousands in money to buy back the baptised who have been taken prisoner. You, on the other hand, kill them, and sell them to foreign peoples who have no knowledge of God. You hand over the members of Christ as it were to a brothel. What hope have you in God? Who approves of what you do, or who ever speaks words of praise? God will be the judge, for it is written: 'Not only the doers of evil, but also those who go along with it, are to be condemned'.

15. I do not know what to say, or how I can say any more, about the children of God who are dead, whom the sword has touched so cruelly. All I can do is what is written: 'Weep with those who weep'; and again: 'If one member suffers pain, let all the members suffer the pain with it'. This is why the church mourns and weeps for its sons and daughters whom the sword has not yet slain, but who were taken away and exported to far distant lands, where grave sin openly flourishes without shame, where freeborn people have been sold off, Christians reduced to slavery: slaves particularly of the lowest and worst of the apostate Picts.

16. That is why I will cry aloud with sadness and grief: O my fairest and most loving brothers and sisters whom I begot without number in Christ, what am I to do for you? I am not worthy to come to the aid either of God or of human beings. The evil of evil people has prevailed over us. We have been made as if we were complete outsiders. Can it be they do not believe that we

Letter to the soldiers of Coroticus

have received one and the same Baptism, or that we have one and the same God as father. For them, it is a disgrace that we are from Ireland. Remember what Scripture says: ‘Do you not have the one God? Then why have you each abandoned your neighbour?’

17. That is why I grieve for you; I grieve for you who are so very dear to me. And yet I rejoice within myself: I have not worked for nothing; my wanderings have not been in vain. This unspeakably horrifying crime has been carried out. But, thanks to God, you who are baptised believers have moved on from this world to paradise. I see you clearly: you have begun your journey to where there is no night, nor sorrow, nor death, any more. Rather, you leap for joy, like calves set free from chains, and you tread down the wicked, and they will be like ashes under your feet.

18. And so, you will reign with apostles and prophets and martyrs. You will take possession of an eternal kingdom, as he (Christ) testifies in these words: ‘They will come from the east and from the west, and they will recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens. Left outside are dogs and sorcerers and murderers; with the lying perjurers, their lot is in the pool of eternal fire’. It is not without cause that the apostle says: ‘If it is the case that a just person can be saved only with difficulty, where will the sinner and the irreverent transgressor of the law find himself?’

19. So where will Coroticus and his villainous rebels against Christ find themselves – those who divide out defenceless baptised women as prizes, all for the sake of a miserable temporal kingdom, which will pass away in a moment of time. Just as cloud of smoke is blown away by the wind, that is how deceitful sinners will perish from the face of the Lord. The just, however, will banquet in great constancy with Christ. They will judge nations, and will rule over evil kings for all ages. Amen.

20. I bear witness before God and his angels that it will be as he made it known to one of my inexperience. These are not my own words which I have put before you in Latin; they are the words of God, and of the apostles and prophets, who have never lied. ‘Anyone who believes will be saved; anyone who does not believe will be condemned’ – God has spoken.

21. I ask insistently whatever servant of God is courageous enough to be a

St. Patrick

bearer of these messages, that it in no way be withdrawn or hidden from any person. Quite the opposite – let it be read before all the people, especially in the presence of Coroticus himself. If this takes place, God may inspire them to come back to their right senses before God. However late it may be, may they repent of acting so wrongly, the murder of the brethren of the Lord, and set free the baptised women prisoners whom they previously seized. So may they deserve to live for God, and be made whole here and in eternity. Peace to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



LIFE OF SAINT COLUMBA
ADOMNAN OF IONA

Translated by William Reeves

BOOK ONE
OF HIS PROPHETIC REVELATIONS.

I

A brief narrative
of his great
miracles

ACCORDING to the promise given above, I shall commence this book with. a brief account of the evidences which the venerable man gave of his power. By virtue of his prayer, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, he healed several persons suffering under various diseases; and he alone, by the assistance of God, expelled from this our island, which now has the primacy, innumerable hosts of malignant spirits, whom he saw with his bodily eyes assailing himself, and beginning to bring deadly distempers on his monastic brotherhood. Partly by mortification, and partly by a bold resistance, he subdued, with the help of Christ, the furious rage of wild beasts. The surging waves, also, at times rolling mountains high in a great tempest, became quickly at his prayer quiet and smooth, and his ship, in which he then happened to be, reached the desired haven in a perfect calm.

When returning from the country of the Picts, where he had been for some days, he hoisted his sail when the breeze was against him to confound the Druids, and made as rapid a voyage as if the wind had been favourable. On other occasions, also, contrary winds were at his prayers changed into fair. In that same country, he took a white stone from the river, and blessed it for the working of certain cures, and that stone, contrary to nature, floated like an apple when placed in water. This divine miracle was wrought in the presence of King Brude and his household. In the same country, also, he performed a still greater miracle, by raising to life the dead child of an humble believer, and restoring him in life and vigour to his father and mother. At another time, while the blessed man was yet a young deacon in Hibernia, residing with the holy bishop Findbarr, the wine required for the sacred mysteries failed, and he changed by his prayer pure water into true wine. An immense blaze of heavenly light was on many and wholly distinct occasions seen by some of the brethren to surround him in the light of day, as well as in the darkness of the night. He was also favoured with the sweet and most delightful society of bright hosts of the holy angels. He often saw, by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, the souls of some just men carried by angels to the highest heavens. And the reprobates too he very frequently beheld carried to hell by demons. He very often foretold the future deserts, sometimes joyful, and sometimes sad, of many persons while they were still living in mortal flesh. In the dreadful crash of wars he obtained from God, by the virtue of prayer, that some kings should be conquered, and others come off victorious. And such a grace as this he enjoyed, not only while alive in this world, but even after his departure from the flesh, as God, from whom all the saints derive their honour, has made him still a victorious and most valiant champion in battle. I shall give one example of especial honour conferred by Almighty God on this honourable man, the event having occurred the day before the Saxon prince Oswald went forth to fight with Catlon (Ceadualla of Bede), a very valiant king of the Britons. For as this same King Oswald, after pitching his camp, in readiness for the battle, was sleeping one day on a pillow in his tent, he saw St. Columba in a vision, beaming with angelic brightness, and of figure so majestic that his head seemed to touch the clouds. The blessed man having announced his name to the king, stood in the midst of the camp, and covered it all with his brilliant garment, except at one small distant point; and at the same time he uttered those cheering words which the Lord spake to

Life of Saint Columba

Jesua Ben Nun before the passage of the Jordan, after Moses' death, saying, "Be strong and of a good courage; behold, I shall be with thee," etc. Then St. Columba having said these words to the king in the vision, added, "March out this following night from your camp to battle, for on this occasion the Lord has granted to me that your foes shall be put to flight, that your enemy Catlon shall be delivered into your hands, and that after the battle you shall return in triumph, and have a happy reign." The king, awaking at these words, assembled his council and related the vision, at which they were all encouraged; and so the whole people promised that, after their return from the war, they would believe and be baptized, for up to that time all that Saxon land had been wrapt in the darkness of paganism and ignorance, with the exception of King Oswald and the twelve men who had been baptized with him during his exile among the Scots. What more need I say? On the very next night, King Oswald, as he had been directed in the vision, went forth from his camp to battle, and had a much smaller army than the numerous hosts opposed to him, yet he obtained from the Lord, according to His promise, an easy and decisive victory for King Catlon was slain, and the conqueror, on his return after the battle, was ever after established by God as the Bretwalda of all Britain. I, Adamnan, had this narrative from the lips of my predecessor, the Abbot Failbe, who solemnly declared that he had himself heard King Oswald relating this same vision to Segine the abbot.

But another fact must not be omitted, that by some poems composed in the Scotie language in praise of the same blessed man, and by the commemoration of his name, certain wicked men of lewd conversation, and men of blood, were saved from the hands of their enemies, who in the night had surrounded the house in which they were singing these hymns. They safely escaped through the flames, the swords, and the spears; and, strange to tell, a few of those only who despised these commemorations of the holy man, and refused to join in the hymns, perished in that assault of the enemy. It is not two or three witnesses, as the law requires, but even hundreds and more, that could be cited in proof of this miracle Nor is it in one place or on one occasion only that the same is known to have happened, but even at different times and places, in both Scotia (Ireland) and Britain, it is proved beyond all doubt that the like security was obtained, in the same manner and by the same means. I have learned this for certain, from well-informed men in those

very countries where similar miracles have taken place.

But, to return to the point in hand: among the miracles which this same man of the Lord, while dwelling in mortal flesh, performed by the gift of God, was his foretelling the future by the spirit of prophecy, with which he was highly favoured from his early years, and making known to those who were present what was happening in other places: for though absent in body he was present in spirit, and could look on things that were widely apart, according to the words of St. Paul, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

Hence this same man of the Lord, St. Columba, when a few of the brethren would sometimes inquire into the matter, did not deny but that by some divine intuition, and through a wonderful expansion of his inner soul, he beheld the whole universe drawn together and laid open to his sight, as in one ray of the sun.

This account of the miracles of the holy men I have given here for this purpose, that my reader, in this brief sketch, may have a foretaste of the richer banquet which is before him, in the fuller narrative which is to be given, with the assistance of the Lord, in the three following books. Here it appears to me not improper, though it may be out of the usual order, to record some prophecies which the blessed man gave at different times, regarding certain holy and illustrious men.

Of St. Finten the
Abbot, son of
Tailchan.

II

ST. FINTEN, who was afterwards very well known throughout all the churches of the Scots, having, by the grace of God, preserved from his boyhood purity of body and soul, and being devoted to the study of divine wisdom, had nourished from his youthful years this one resolve in his heart, that he would leave Hibernia and go abroad to St. Columba. Burning with that desire, he went to an old friend, the most prudent and venerable cleric in his country, who was called in the Scotie tongue Columb Crag, to get some sound advice from him. When he had laid open his mind to him, he received the following answer: "As thy devout wish is, I feel, inspired by God, who can presume to say that thou shouldest not cross the sea to St. Columba?" At

the same moment two monks of St. Columba happened to arrive, and when they were asked about their journey, they replied: "We have lately come across from Britain, and to-day we have come from the Oakwood of Calgach (Daire Calgaich, or Derry). "Is he well," says Columb Crag, "your holy father Columba?" Then they burst into tears, and answered with great sorrow, "Our patron is indeed well, for a few days ago he departed to Christ." Hearing this, Finten and Columb, and all who were there present, fell on their faces on the ground, and wept bitterly. Finten then asked, "Whom did he leave as his successor?" "Baithene, his disciple," they replied. And as all cried out, "It is meet and right," Columba said to Finten, "What wilt thou now do, Finten?" He answered, "With God's permission, I will sail over to Baithene, that wise and holy man, and if he receive me I will take him as my abbot." Then kissing the forementioned Columb, and bidding him farewell, he prepared for his voyage, and setting sail without the least delay, arrived at the Iouan island (Hy, now corruptly Iona). As up to that time his name was wholly unknown in those places, he was only received at first with the hospitality given to every unknown stranger; but next day he sent a messenger to Baithene, and asked to have a personal interview. Baithene, ever kind and affable to strangers, ordered him to be introduced. Being at once brought in, he first, as seemed meet, knelt down upon the ground; and then being ordered by the holy abbot to rise and be seated, he was asked by Baithene, who as yet knew nothing of his family, province, name, or life, what was his motive for encountering the labour of the voyage. In reply to the inquiry thus made he told everything in order, and then humbly asked to be admitted. The holy abbot, hearing these things from his guest, and recognising him at the same time as the man of whom St. Columba had some time previously made a prophecy, replied: "Truly, my son, I ought to give thanks to my God for thy arrival, but be thou assured of this, that thou wilt not be one of our monks." On hearing this the stranger was very much grieved, and said: "Perhaps I am unworthy to become thy monk." "It is not because thou art unworthy, as thou sayest, that I gave that answer," immediately replied the abbot, "for I would indeed prefer retaining you with me, but I cannot disobey the command of St. Columba, my predecessor, by whom the Holy Ghost prophesied of thee. For, as I was alone with him one day, among other things which he foretold was the following: 'Hearken very attentively, O Baithene,' said he, 'to these my words, for shortly after my welcome and earnestly longed-for departure from this world

to Christ, a certain brother from Scotia (Ireland), named Finten, son of Tailchan, of the tribe Mocumioie, who is now carefully guarding his youthful years with a good life, and is very well versed in sacred studies will, I say, come to thee, and humbly ask thee to receive and enrol him with your other monks. But this has not been appointed for him in the foreknowledge of God, that he should become the monk of any abbot, for he has long since been chosen of God to be an abbot of monks and a leader of souls to the kingdom of heaven. Thou shalt not therefore detain that illustrious man with thee on these islands of ours, lest thou shouldst even seem to oppose the will of God, but thou shalt make known to him what I have told thee, and send him back in peace to Scotia (Ireland), that he may found a monastery in the parts of the Leinstermen, near the sea, and that there feeding the flock of Christ, he shall lead a countless host of souls to their heavenly country.” The holy youth hearing this burst into tears, and returning thanks to Christ, said: “Be it unto me according to the prophecy and wonderful foreknowledge of St. Columba.” At the same time, in obedience to the words of the saints, he received the blessing of Baithene, and sailed back in peace to Scotia (Ireland).

I have heard this as an undoubted fact from the lips of an aged and pious priest and soldier of Christ, called Oissene, son of Ernan, of the tribe Mocu Neth Corb, who averred that he had himself heard these very words from the lips of St. Finten, son of Tailchan, whose monk he himself had been.

Prophecy of St.
Columba regard-
ing Ernene, son
of Crasen.

III

ON another occasion, while the blessed man was residing for a few months in the midland part of Hibernia, when founding by divine inspiration his monastery, which in the Scotie tongue is called Dair-mag (Darrow), was pleased to pay a visit to the brethren who dwelt in St. Ceran’s monastery, Clon (Clonmacnoise). As soon as it was known that he was near, all flocked from their little grange farms near the monastery, and, along with those who were within it, ranged themselves, with enthusiasm, under the abbot Alither; then advancing beyond the enclosure of the monastery, they went out as one man to meet St. Columba, as if he were an angel of the Lord. Humbly bowing down, with their faces to the ground, in his presence, they kissed him most reverently, and singing hymns of praise as they went they conducted him with

all honour to the Church. Over the saint, as he walked, a canopy made of wood was supported by four men walking by his side, lest the holy abbot, St. Columba, should be troubled by the crowd of brethren pressing upon him. At that very time, a boy attached to the monastery, who was mean in dress and look, and hitherto had not stood well in the opinions of the seniors, concealing himself as well as he could, came forward stealthily, that he might touch unperceived even the hem of the cloak which the blessed man wore, without his feeling or knowing it. This, however, did not escape the saint, for he knew with the eyes of his soul what he could not see taking place behind him with the eyes of his body. Stopping therefore suddenly, and putting out his hand behind him, he seized the boy by the neck, and bringing him round set him before his face. The crowd of bystanders cried out: "Let him go, let him go: why do you touch that unfortunate and naughty boy?" But the saint solemnly uttered these prophetic words from his pure heart: "Suffer it to be so now, brethren;" then turning to the boy, who was in the greatest terror, he said, "My son, open thy mouth, and put out thy tongue." The boy did as he was bid, and in great alarm opened his mouth and put out his tongue: the saint extended to it his holy hand, and after carefully blessing it pronounced his prophecy in the following words: "Though this boy appears to you now very contemptible and worthless, let no one on that account despise him. For from this hour, not only will he not displease you, but he will give you every satisfaction; from day to day he shall advance by degrees in good conduct, and in the virtues of the soul; from this day, wisdom and prudence shall be more and more increased in him, and great shall be his progress in this your community: his tongue also shall receive from God the gift of both wholesome doctrine and eloquence." This was Ernene, son of Crasen, who was afterwards famous and most highly honoured in all the churches of Scotia (Ireland). He himself told all these words which were prophesied regarding himself, as written above, to the abbot Segine, in the attentive hearing of my predecessor Failbe, who was present at the time with Segine, and from whose lips I myself have come to know all that I have stated. But during this short time that the saint was a guest in the monastery of Clon, there were many other things also which he prophesied by the revelation of the Holy Ghost; as, for instance, about the discord which arose a long time after among the churches of Scotia (Ireland), on account of the difference with regard to the Easter Feast; and about some visits of angels distinctly made to himself,

certain places within the enclosure of the monastery being at that time thus resorted to by the angels.

Of the arrival of
St Cainnech, the
Abbot, who had
been previously
announced in
prophecy by St.
Columba.

IV

AT another time, in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), on a day when the tempest was fierce and the sea was exceedingly boisterous, the saint, as he sat in the house, gave orders to his brethren, saying, "Prepare the guest-chamber quickly, and draw water to wash the strangers' feet." One of the brethren upon this inquired: "Who can cross the Sound safely, narrow though it be, on so perilous and stormy a day?" The saint, on hearing this, thus made answer, "The Almighty has given a calm even in this tempest to a certain holy and excellent man, who will arrive here among us before evening." And lo! the same day, the ship for which the brethren had some time been looking out arrived, according to the saint's prediction, and brought St. Cainnech. The saint went forth with the brethren to meet him and received him with all honour and hospitality. But the sailors who had been with St. Cainnech, when they were asked by the brethren what sort of a voyage they had had, told them, even as St. Columba had predicted, about both the tempest and the calm which God had given in the same sea and at the same time, with an amazing distinction between the two. The tempest they saw at a distance, yet they said they did not feel it.

Of the Danger to
the holy Bishop
Colman Mocu-
sailni in the Sea,
near the island
called Rechru.

V

ON another day; also, while St. Columba was engaged in his mother-church, he suddenly cried out, with a smile, "Columbanus, the son of Beogna, has just now set out on a voyage to us, and is in great danger in the rolling tides of Breacan's whirlpool: he is sitting at the prow and raising both his hands to heaven: he is also blessing that angry and dreadful sea: yet in this the Lord only frightens him, for the ship in which he is shall not be wrecked in the storm; but this is rather to excite him to pray more fervently, that by God's favour he may escape the danger of his voyage, and reach us in safety."

VI

Of Cormac.

ON another occasion also St. Columba prophesied in the following manner of Cormac, grandson of Lethan, a truly pious man, who not less than three times went in search of a desert in the ocean, but did not find it. "In his desire to find a desert, Cormac is this day, for the second time, now embarking from that district which lies at the other side of the river Moda (the Moy, in Sligo), and is called Eirros, Domno (Erris, in Mayo); nor even this time shall he find what he seeks, and that for no other fault than that he has irregularly allowed to accompany him in the voyage a monk who is going away from his own proper abbot without obtaining his consent."

VII

Prophecy of the blessed man regarding the Tumults of Battles fought at a distance.

ABOUT two years, as we have been told, after the battle of Cule-Drebe-ne (in Connaught), at which time the blessed man first set sail and took his departure from Scotia (Ireland), it happened that on the very day and at the same hour when the battle, called in Scotie Ondemone (near Coleraine), was fought in Scotia (Ireland), the same man of God was then living in Britain with King Connall, the son of Comgell, and told him everything, as well about the battle itself, as also about those kings to whom the Lord granted the victory over their enemies. These kings were known as Ainmore, son of Setna, and the two sons of Mac Erca, Donnall and Forcus. And the saint, in like manner, prophesied of the king of the Cruithne, who was called Echoid Laib, and how, after being defeated, he escaped riding in his chariot.

AT another time, after the lapse of many years from the above-mentioned battle, and while the holy man was in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he suddenly said to his minister, Diormit, "Ring the bell. Ó The brethren, startled at the sound, proceeded quickly to the church, with the holy prelate himself at their head. There he began, on bended knees, to say to them, "Let us pray now earnestly to the Lord for this people and King Aidan, for they are engaging in battle at this moment." Then after a short time he went out of the oratory, and, looking up to heaven, said, "The barbarians are fleeing now, and to Aidan is given the victory a sad one though it be." And the blessed man in his prophecy declared the number of the slain in Aidan's army to be three hundred and three men.

On the Battle of the Miathi.

VIII

Prophecy of St.
Columba regard-
ing the Sons of
King Aidan.

At another time, before the above-mentioned battle, the saint asked King Aidan about his successor to the crown. The king answered that of his three sons, Artur, Eochoid Find, and Domingart, he knew not which would have the kingdom after him. Then at once the saint prophesied on this wise, "None of these three shall be king, for they shall fall in battle, slain by their enemies; but now if thou hast any younger sons, let them come to me, and that one of them whom the Lord has chosen to be king will at once rush into my lap." When they were called in, Eochoid Buide, according to the word of the saint, advanced and rested in his bosom. Immediately the saint kissed him, and, giving him his blessing, said to his father, "This one: shall survive and reign as king after thee, and his sons shall reign after him." And so were all these things fully accomplished afterwards in their time. For Artur and Eochoid Find were not long after killed in the above-mentioned battle of the Miathi; Domingart was also defeated and slain in battle in Saxonia; while Eochoid Buide succeeded his father on the throne.

Of Domnall, son
of Aid.

Domnall, son of Aid, while yet a boy, was brought by those who brought him up to St. Columba on the ridge of Ceatt (Druim Ceatt in Londonderry), who looked at him and inquired, "Whose son is this whom you have brought here?" They answered, "This is Domnall, son of Aid, who is brought to thee for this purpose, that he may return enriched by thy blessing." The saint blessed him immediately and said. "He shall survive all his brethren, and be a very famous king, nor shall he be ever delivered into the hands of his enemies; but in his old age, in his own house, and with a crowd of his familiar friends around him, he shall die peacefully in his bed." All this was truly fulfilled in him, as the blessed man had foretold.

Of Scandlan, son
of Colman.

AT the same time and place, the saint, wishing to visit Scandlan, son of Colman, went to him where he was kept in prison by King Aid, and when he had blessed him he comforted him, saying, "Son, do not distress yourself, but rather rejoice and take courage, for King Aid, who has you a prisoner, will go out of this world before you, and after some time of exile you shall reign in your own nation for thirty years. And again you shall be driven from your kingdom, and be in exile for some days; but after that you shall be called home again by your people, and shall reign for three short terms." All this

Life of Saint Columba

was fully accomplished according to the prediction of the saint. For in thirty years he had to leave his throne, and continued in exile for some time; and then being recalled by his people, he reigned not three years, as he expected, but three months, and at the end of that time he died.

A Prophecy of the blessed man regarding two other Kings, who were called the two grandsons of Muiredach Baitan, son of Maic Erc, and Eochoid, son of Domnall.

AT another time, while travelling through the rough and rocky country which is called Artdamuirchol (Ardnamurchan), he heard his companions Laisran, son of Feradach, and Diormit, his minister speaking on the way of the two above-named kings, and addressed them in these words, "O my dear children, why do you talk thus foolishly of these men? Both of these kings of whom you are now conversing are newly slain, and have had their heads cut off by their enemies. And this very day some sailors shall come here from Scotia (Ireland), and tell you the same about these kings." That same day some sailors arrived from Eibernia, at a place which is called Muirbolc Paradisi (Portnamurloch in Lismore), and told the two above-named companions, who were now sailing in the same ship with the saint, how these kings had been slain, and thus the prophecy of the venerable man fulfilled.

WHEN he and his two brothers were driven from his country, he came as an exile to the saint, who was then wandering in Britain, and who, in blessing him, uttered these prophetic words from his holy heart, "This youth shall survive when his other brothers are gone, and he shall reign a long time in his native country; his enemies shall fall before him, while he shall never fall into their hands, but in old age he shall die peacefully in the midst of his friends." All this was fully accomplished according to the saint's words. This was Oingus, surnamed Bronbachal.

ON another occasion, when the blessed man was sojourning for some days in Scotia (Ireland), he spoke in the following prophetic strain to the above-mentioned Aid, who had come to visit him: "Thou must take care, my son, lest, for the sin of murdering thy kinsman, thou lose the right of governing the whole of Hibernia, as was first assigned thee by God for if at any time thou dost commit that sin, thou shalt not hold the whole of thy father's kingdom, but only a part of it in thine own tribe, and that but for a short

Prophecy of the holy man regarding Oingus, son of Aid Comman.

Prophecy of the blessed man regarding the son of King Dermot, who in the Scotie language is called Aid Slane.

time.” These words of the saint were on this wise fulfilled according to the prediction, that after Aid had treacherously killed Suitne, son of Columban, he reigned, it is said, no longer than four years and three months, and that only as colleague in the kingdom.

Prophecy of the blessed man regarding King Roderic, son of Tothal, who reigned on the Rock of Cluaithe (Alcluith or Dumbarton).

THIS same king being on friendly terms with the holy man, sent to him on one occasion a secret message by Lugbe Mocumin, as he was anxious to know whether he would be killed by his enemies or not. But when Lugte was being closely inquired at by the saint regarding the king, his kingdom, and people, he answered in a tone of pity, “Why do you ask about that wretched man, who is quite unable to tell at what hour he may be killed by his enemies?” Then the saint replied, “He shall never be delivered into the hands of his enemies; he will die at home on his own pillow.” And the prophecy of the saint regarding Kina Roderic was fully accomplished; for, according to his word, he died quietly in his own house.

Prophecy of the Saint regarding two boys, one of whom, according to the Saint’s word, died at the end of a week.

IX

ON another occasion, two men of low rank in life came to the saint, who was then in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona). One of them, named Meldan, brought his son to the saint and asked him what kind of future he would enjoy. To whom the saint replied, “Is not this the Sabbath day? Thy son will die on the sixth day at the end of next week, and will be buried here on the eighth day, that is the Sabbath.” Then the other man, named Glasderc, also took his son along with him, and venturing to make a similar inquiry, received the following answer from the saint, “Thy son Ernan will see his grandchildren, and be buried in old age in this island.” All this was fully accomplished in its own time regarding the two boys, according to the words of the saint.

Prophecy of the Saint regarding Colca, son of Aid Draignich, sprung from the grandsons of Fechureg, and regarding some secret sin of his mother.

X

THIS Colca residing one time in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona) with the saint, was asked by him concerning his mother whether she was a pious woman or not. Colca answered him, “I have always known my mother to be good, and to bear that character.” The saint then spoke these prophetic words: “Set out now at once for Scotia (Ireland), with God’s help, and question thy moth-

Life of Saint Columba

er closely regarding her very grievous secret sin, which she will not confess to any man." To carry out the advice thus given him he departed to Hibernia: and when he interrogated his mother closely, she at first denied, and then she at last confessed her sin. When she had done penance according to the judgment of the saint, she was absolved, wondering very much all the while at what was made known to the saint regarding her.

XI

COLCA, however, returned to the saint, and remained with him for some days, and then asking about the end of his own days, received this answer from the saint: "In thine own beloved country thou shalt be head of a church for many years, and when at any time thou happenest to see thy butler making merry with a company of his friends at supper, and twirling the ladle round in the strainer, know that then in a short time thou shalt die." What more need I say? This same prophecy of the blessed man was exactly fulfilled as it was foretold to Colca.

XII

Regarding
Laisrean, the
gardener, a holy
man.

ON a certain day, the holy man ordered one of his monks named Trena, of the tribe Mocuruntir, to go a message for him to Scotia (Ireland). While he was preparing the ship in haste to obey the orders of the man of God, he complained before the saint that one of the sailors was wanting. The saint immediately answered him and uttered these words from his sacred breast, "The sailor who is, thou sayest, absent, I cannot just now find. But go in peace; thou shalt have a favourable and steady breeze till thou reach Hibernia. Thou shalt see a man coming to meet thee from a distance, and he will be the first to seize the prow of thy ship in Scotia (Ireland); he shall be with thee during the time of thy sojourn in Hibernia, and accompany thee on thy return to us, as a man chosen by God, who in this very monastery of mine will live piously the remainder of his days." What more can I add? Trena received the saint's blessing, and crossed over at full sail during the whole voyage, and lo! as his little ship was nearing the port, Laisran Mocumioie ran forward before the others and caught the prow. The sailors knew that this was the very man of whom the saint had spoken beforehand.

XIII

How the Saint
knew and told
beforehand
about a great
Whale.

ONE day when the venerable man was staying in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), a certain brother named Berach intended to sail to the Ethican island (Tiree), and going to the saint in the morning asked his blessing. The saint looking at him, said, "O my son, take very great care this day not to attempt sailing direct over the open sea to the Ethican land (Tiree); but rather take a circuit, and sail round by the smaller islands, for this reason, that thou be not thrown into great terror by a huge monster, and hardly be able to escape." On receiving the saint's blessing he departed, and when he reached his ship, he set sail without giving heed to the saint's words. But as he was crossing over the larger arms of the Ethican sea, he and the sailors who were with him looked out, and lo, a whale, of huge and amazing size, raised itself like a mountain, and as it floated on the surface, it opened its mouth, which, as it gaped; was bristling with teeth. Then the rowers, hauling in their sail, pulled back in the utmost terror, and had a very narrow escape from the agitation of the waves caused by the motion of the monster; and they were also struck with wonder as they remembered the prophetic words of the saint. On the morning of that same day, as Baithene was going to sail to the forenamed island, the saint told him about this whale, saying, "Last night, at midnight, a great whale rose from the depth of the sea, and it will coat this day on the surface of the ocean between the Iouan and Ethican islands (Iona and Tiree)." Baithene answered and said, "That beast and I are under the power of God." "Go in peace," said the saint, "thy faith in Christ shall defend thee from this danger." Baithene accordingly, having received the saint's blessing, sailed from the harbour; and after they had sailed a considerable distance, he and his companions saw the whale; and while all the others were much terrified, he alone was without fear, and raising up both his hands, blessed the sea and the whale. At the same moment the enormous brute plunged down under the waves, and never afterwards appeared to them.

Prophecy of the
holy man re-
garding a certain
Baitan, who with
others sailed in
search of a desert
in the ocean.

XIV

AT another time, a certain man named Baitan, by race a descendant of Niath Taloiric, when setting out with others to seek a desert in the sea, asked the saint's blessing. The saint bidding him adieu uttered this prophecy regard-

Life of Saint Columba

ing him: "This man who is going in search of a desert in the ocean shall not be buried in the desert, but in that place where a woman shall drive sheep over his grave." The same Baitan, after long wanderings on stormy seas, returned to his native country without finding the desert, and remained for many years the head of a small monastic house, which is called in the Scotie tongue Lathreginden (not identified). When after a while he died and was buried, in the Oakgrove of Galgach (Derry), it happened at the same time that on account of some hostile inroad the poor people with their wives and children fled for sanctuary to the church of that place. Whence it occurred that on a certain day a woman was caught, as she was driving her lambs over the grave of this same man who was newly buried. Then a holy priest who was present and saw this, said, "Now is fulfilled the prophecy which St. Columba uttered many years ago!" And this I myself was told regarding Baitan, by that same priest and soldier of Christ, Mailodran by name, of the tribe of Mocurin.

XV

AT another time, the saint came to the Hinbina island (Eilean-na-naoimh, one of the Garveloch islands), and that same day he gave orders that even the penitents should enjoy some indulgence in respect of their food. Now there was among the penitents in that place a certain Neman, son of Cathair, who, though ordered by the saint, declined to accept the offer of this little indulgence. Him then the saint addressed in these words: "O Neman, art thou not accepting some indulgence in food as it is kindly granted by me and Baitan? The time shall come when thou wilt be stealthily eating mare's flesh, as thou liest concealed in the woods with robbers." And accordingly that same man afterwards returned to the world, and was found in a forest with robbers taking and eating off a wooden griddle such flesh as the saint had foretold.

Prophecy of the holy man regarding a certain Neman, who was not a real penitent.

XVI

AT another time, the saint called out the brethren at the dead of night, and when they were assembled in the church said to them: "Now let us pray fervently to the Lord, for at this hour a sin unheard of in the world has been committed, for which rigorous vengeance that is justly due is very much to be feared." Next day he spoke of this sin to a few who were asking him about

Regarding a certain unhappy man who lay with his Mother.

it. "After a few months," he said, "that unhappy wretch will come here to the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona) with Lugaid, who is unaware of the sin." Accordingly after the few months had passed away, the saint one day spoke to Diormit, and ordered him, "Rise quickly; lo! Lugaid is coming. Tell him to send off the wretch whom he has with him in the ship to the Malean island (Mull), that he may not tread the sod of this island." He went to the sea in obedience to the saint's injunction, and told Lugaid as he was approaching all the words of the saint regarding the unhappy man. On hearing the directions, that unhappy man vowed that he would never eat food with others until he had seen St. Columba and spoken to him. Diormit therefore returned to the saint, and told him the words of the poor wretch. The saint, on hearing them, went down to the haven, and as Baitan was citing the authority of Holy Scriptures, and suggesting that the repentance of the unhappy man should be received, the saint immediately replied to him, "O Baitan! this man has committed fratricide like Cain, and become an adulterer with his mother." Then the poor wretch, casting himself upon his knees on the beach, promised that he would comply with all the rules of penance, according to the judgment of the saint. The saint said to him, "If thou do penance in tears and lamentations for twelve years among the Britons and never to the day of thy death return to Scotia (Ireland), perhaps God may pardon thy sin." Having said these words, the saint turned to his own friends and said, "This man is a son of perdition, who will not perform the penance he has promised, but will soon return to Scotia (Ireland), and there in a short time be killed by his enemies." All this happened exactly according to the saint's prophecy; for the wretched man, returning to Hibernia about the same time, fell into the hands of his enemies in the region called Lea (Firlí, in Ulster), and was murdered. He was of the descendants of Turtre.

XVII

ONE day Baithene came to the saint and said, "I want some one of the brethren to look over with me and correct the psalter which I have written." Hearing this, the saint said, "Why give us this trouble without any cause? In that psalter of thine, of which thou speakest, there is not one superfluous letter to be found, nor is any wanting except the one vowel I." And accordingly, when the whole psalter was read over, what the saint had said was found to

be true.

XVIII

Of the Book which fell into the Water-vessel, as the Saint had foretold.

IN the same way, on another day, as he was sitting by the hearth in the monastery, he saw at some distance Lugbe, of the tribe Mocumin, reading a book, and suddenly said to him, "Take care, my son, take care, for I think that the book thou redest is about to fall into a vessel full of water." And so it soon happened, for when the same youth rose soon after to perform some duty in the monastery, he forgot the word of the blessed man, and the book which he held negligently under his arm suddenly fell into the water-pot, which was full of water.

XIX

Of the Inkhorn, awkwardly spilled.

On another day a shout was given on the other side of the Sound of the Iouan island (Sound of Iona); the saint hearing the shout, as he was sitting in his little hut, which was made of planks, said, "The man who is shouting beyond the Sound is not of very sharp wit, for when he is here today he will upset my inkhorn and spill the ink." Diormit, his minister, hearing this, stood a little in front of the door, and waited for the arrival of this troublesome guest, in order to save the inkhorn. But for some cause or other he had soon to leave his place, and after his departure the unwelcome guest arrived; in his eager haste to kiss the saint, he upset the inkhorn with the hem of his garment and spilled the ink.

XX

Of the arrival of another Guest foretold by the Saint.

So again at another time the saint spoke thus to his brethren on the third day of the week, "We intend to fast tomorrow, being Wednesday: and yet by the arrival of a certain troublesome guest the usual fast will be broken." And so it happened as had been shown to the saint beforehand; for on the morning of that same Wednesday, another stranger was heard signalling across the Sound. This was Aidan, the son of Fergno, who, it is said, was minister for twelve years to Brendan Mocualti. He was a very religious man, and his arrival, as the saint had foretold, broke the fast of that day.

Of another man
in distress who
was crying
across the same
Sound.

XXI

ON another day the saint heard some person shouting across the Sound, and spoke on this wise, "That man who is shouting is much to be pitied, for he is coming here to us to ask some cure for the disease of his body; but it were better for him this day to do true penance for his sins, for at the close of this week he shall die." These words those who were present told to the unhappy man when he arrived. But he gave no heed to them when he had received what he asked, and quickly departed, yet before the end of the same week he died, according to the prediction of the saint.

The Prophecy
of the holy man
regarding the
Roman city,
burnt by a
sulphurous fire
which fell from
heaven.

XXII

ANOTHER time also, Lugbe, of the tribe Mocumin, of whom I spoke already, came to the saint one day after the grinding of the corn, but the saint's countenance shone with such wonderful brilliancy that he could not look upon it, and quickly fled in great terror. The saint gently clapped his hands and called him back; then on his return the saint asked him why he fled so quickly. "I fled," he replied, "because I was very much alarmed." Then becoming more confident, after a while, he ventured to ask the saint, "Hath any awful vision been shown to thee just now?" The saint answered, "A very fearful vengeance hath just now been exacted in a distant corner of the world." "What vengeance?" says the youth, "and where hath it taken place?" The saint then addressed him thus: "A sulphurous fire hath been poured down from heaven this moment on a city which is subject to Rome, and within the Italian territory, and about three thousand men, besides women and children, have perished. Before the end of this year Gallican sailors shall come here from the provinces of Gaul, and tell thee these same things." His words proved true in a few months; for the same Lugbe, happening to accompany the saint to the Head of the land (Kintyre), inquired at the captain and crew of a bark that had just arrived, and received from them all the news regarding the city and its inhabitants, exactly as it was foretold by the illustrious man.

XXIII

The Vision of the blessed man regarding Laisran, son of Feradach.

ONE very cold day in winter the saint was much afflicted, and wept bitterly. His attendant, Diormit, asked the cause of his sadness, and received this answer from him, "With just reason am I sad today, my little child, seeing that my monks, now wearied after their severe labours, are engaged by Laisran in building a large house; with this I am very much displeased." Strange to say, at that very moment, Laisran, who was living at the time in the monastery of the Oakwood Plain (Derry), felt somehow impelled, and as it were consumed by a fire within him, so that he commanded the monks to stop from working, and some refreshments to be made ready for them. He also gave directions that they were to rest not only that day, but also on other occasions of severe weather. The saint, hearing in spirit these words of consolation addressed by Laisran to his brethren, ceased weeping, and though he himself was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and told all the circumstances to his brethren, while at the same time he blessed Laisran for his timely relief to the monks.

XXIV

How Feachna the Wise came as a Penitent to St. Columba, as he had foretold.

ANOTHER time the saint was sitting on the top of the mountain which overhangs this our monastery, at some distance from it, and turning to his attendant Diormit, said to him, "I am surprised that a certain ship from Scotia (Ireland) does not appear sooner: there is on board a certain wise man who has fallen into a great crime, but who, with tears of repentance, shall soon arrive." Not long after the attendant, looking to the south, saw the sail of a ship that was approaching the harbour. When its arrival was pointed out to the saint he got up quickly and said, "Let us go to meet this stranger, whose sincere penance is accepted by Christ." As soon as Feachna came on shore, he ran to meet the saint, who was coming down to the shore, and falling on his knees before him lamented most bitterly with wailing and tears, and there in the presence of all made open confession of his sins. Then the saint, also shedding tears, said to him, "Arise, my son, and be comforted; the sins thou hast committed are forgiven thee, because, as it is written, 'a humble and contrite heart God doth not despise. He then arose, and the saint received him with great joy. After a few days he was sent to Baithene, who at that time was

Adomnan of Iona

the superior of the monastery in the plain of Lunge (Maigh Lunge, in Tiree), and he journeyed thither in peace.

The Prophecy
of the holy man
regarding his
monk Cailtan.

XXV

AT another time he sent two of his monks to another of them named Cailtan, who was then superior in the cell which is called to this day after his brother Dinni, and is situated near the lake of the river Aba (Lochawe). The saint gave them the following instructions, "Run quickly to Cailtan, and tell him to come to me without delay." In obedience to the saint's command they went to the cell of Dinni, and told Cailtan the object of their mission. At once, and without the least delay, he set out along with the messengers of the saint, and soon reached his abode in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona). On making his appearance he was addressed by the saint, "O Cailtan, thou hast done well by coming hither quickly in obedience to my summons; rest now for a while. I sent for you to come to me for this reason, that, loving thee as a friend, I would wish thee to end thy days with me here in true obedience. For before the close of this week thou shalt depart in peace to the Lord." When he heard these words he gave thanks to God, embraced the saint with tears, and receiving his blessing, retired to the guest-chamber. He fell sick that same night, and passed away to Christ the Lord during that very week, as the saint had said.

The Foresight
and Prophecy
of the Saint Re-
garding the two
brothers who
were strangers.

XXVI

ONE Lord's day a loud cry was heard beyond the above-mentioned Sound of which I speak so often. As soon as the saint heard it, he said to the brethren who were then with him, "Go directly and bring here before us at once the strangers that have now arrived from a distant land." They went accordingly and ferried the strangers across. The saint, after embracing them, asked them at once the object of their journey. In reply they said, "We are come to reside with thee for this year." The saint replied, "With me, as you say, you cannot reside for a year, unless you take first the monastic vow." When those who were present heard these words addressed to strangers who were only newly arrived they wondered very much. But the elder brother, in answer to the saint's remarks, replied, "Although we never up to the present

Life of Saint Columba

hour entertained the thought before, yet we shall follow thy advice, believing that it cometh from God.” What more need I say? That very moment they entered the chapel with the saint, and on bended knees devoutly took the monastic vow. The saint then turned to his monks and said, “These two strangers who are presenting themselves ‘a living sacrifice to God,’ and within a short time are fulfilling a long time of Christian warfare, shall pass away in peace this very month to Christ our Lord.” The two brothers, on hearing this, gave thanks to God, and were led away to the guest room. After seven days the elder brother fell sick, and departed to the Lord in the course of that week. After other seven days the other brother also fell sick, and within the same week passed to the Lord with joy, so that, according to the truthful prophecy of the saint, both closed their fires in this world within the space of one month.

XXVII

The Prophecy of the holy man regarding a certain Artbranan.

WHEN the blessed man was staying for some days in the Scian island (Sky), he struck a spot of ground near the sea with his staff, and said to his companions: “Strange to say, my children, this day, an aged heathen, whose natural goodness has been preserved through all his life, will receive baptism, die, and be buried on this very spot.” And lo! about an hour after, a boat came into the harbour, on whose prow sat a decrepit old man, the chief of the Geona cohort. Two young men took him out of the boat and laid him at the feet of the blessed man. After being instructed in the word of God by the saint through an interpreter, the old man believed, and was baptized at once by him, and when the baptism was duly administered, he instantly died on the same spot, according to the saint’s prediction, and was buried there by his companions, who raised a heap of stones over his grave. This cairn may be seen still on the sea-coast, and the river in which he was baptized is called to this day by the inhabitants, Dobur Artbranan.

XXVIII

Of the Boat that was removed by the Saint’s order.

ANOTHER time, as the saint was travelling beyond the Dorsal ridge of Britain (Drumalban), he came to a small village, lying amid deserted fields, on the banks of a river, where it flows into a lake. There the saint took up his

abode, and that same night, while they were yet but falling asleep, he awoke his companions, and said to them: "Go out this instant with all speed, bring hither quickly the boat you left on the other side of the stream, and put it in a house near us." They did at once as they were ordered, and soon after they were again asleep, the saint roused Diormit, and said to him: "Stand outside the door, and see what has happened to the village in which you had left your boat." Diormit went out accordingly and saw the whole village on fire, and returning to the saint he told him what was taking place. Then the saint told the brethren the name of the rancorous foe who had burnt the houses that night.

O Gallan, son of Fachtna, who resided in the jurisdiction of Golga, son of Cellach.

XXIX

ONE day again, as the saint was sitting in his little hut, he said, in prophecy to the same Colca, then reading by his side, "Just now demons are dragging with them down to hell one of the chiefs of thy district who is a niggardly person." When Colca heard this, he marked the time accurately in a tablet, and, coming home within a few months, learned on inquiry from the inhabitants of the place, that Gallan, son of Fachtna, died at the very moment that the saint said to him the man was being carried off by demons.

The Prophecy of the blessed man regarding Findchan, a Priest, and the founder of the monastery called in Scotie Artchain, in the Ethican land (Tiree).

AT another time Findchan, the priest and soldier of Christ, named above, brought with him from Scotia (Ireland) to Britain, Aid, surnamed the Black, descended of a royal family, and a Cruthinian by race. Aid wore the clerical habit, and came with the purpose of residing with him in the monastery for some years. Now this Aid the Black had been a very bloodthirsty man, and cruelly murdered many persons, amongst others Diormit, son of Cerbul, by divine appointment king of all. This same Aid, then, after spending some time in his retirement, was irregularly ordained priest by a bishop invited for the purpose, in the presence of the above-named Findchan. The bishop, however, would not venture to lay a hand upon his head unless Findchan, who was greatly attached to Aid, in a carnal way, should first place his right hand on his head as a mark of approval. When such an ordination afterwards became known to the saint, he was deeply grieved, and in consequence forthwith pronounced this fearful sentence on the ill-fated Findchan and Aid: "That right hand which, against the laws of God; and the Church, Findchan placed on the head of the son of perdition, shall soon be covered with sores,

Life of Saint Columba

and after great and excruciating pain shall precede himself to the grave, and he shall survive the burial of his hand for many years. And Aid, thus irregularly ordained, shall return as a dog to his vomit, and be again a bloody murderer, until at length, pierced in the neck with a spear, he shall fall from a tree into the water and be drowned.” Such indeed was the end long due to him who murdered the king of all Scotia (Ireland). The blessed man’s prophecy was fulfilled regarding both, for the priest Findchan’s right hand festered from the effects of a blow, and went before him into the ground, being buried in an island called Ommon (not identified), while he himself survived for many years, according to the saying of St. Columba. But Aid the Black, a priest only in name, betaking himself again to his former evil doings, and being treacherously wounded with a spear, fell from the prow of a boat into a lake and was drowned.

Of the Consolation which the Monks, when they were weary on their journey, received from the Saint visiting them in spirit.

AMONG these wonderful manifestations of prophetic spirit it does not seem alien from the purpose of our short treatise to mention also here the spiritual comfort which the monks of St. Columba at one time received from his spirit’s meeting them by the way. For as the brethren, on one occasion after the harvest work, were returning in the evening to the monastery, and came to a place called in Scotie Cuuleilne, which is said to lie on the western side of the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), midway between the field on the plain and our monastery, each of them thought he felt something strange and unusual, which, however, they did not venture to speak of to one another. And so they had the same feeling for some days successively, at the same place, and at the same hour in the evening.

The holy Baithen at that particular time had charge of the work, and one day he said to them: “Now, my brethren, if any of you ever notices anything wonderful and unusual in this spot which lies between the corn-field and the monastery, it is your duty to declare it openly.” An elder brother said, “As you have ordered me, I shall tell you what I observed on this spot. For both in the past few days, and even now, I perceive the fragrance of such a wonderful odour, just as if all the flowers on earth were gathered together into one place; I feel also a glow of heat within me, not at all painful, but most pleasing, and a certain unusual and inexpressible joy poured into my heart, which on a sudden so refreshes and gladdens me, that I forget grief and weariness of every kind. Even the load, however heavy, which I carry on my back, is in

some mysterious way so much lightened, from this place all the way to the monastery, that I do not seem to have any weight to bear." What need I add? All the other reapers in turn declared they had exactly the same feeling as the first had described. All then knelt down together, and requested of the holy Baithen that he would learn and inform them of the as yet unknown cause and origin of this wonderful relief, which both he and they were feeling. "Ye all know," he immediately replied, "our father Columba's tender care regarding us, and how, ever mindful of our toil, he is always grieved when we return later than usual to the monastery. And now because he cannot come in person on this occasion to meet us, his spirit cometh forth to us as we walk along, and conveyeth to us such great comfort." Having heard these words, they raised their hands to heaven with intense joy as they knelt, and venerated Christ in the holy and blessed man.

I must not pass over another well-authenticated story, told, indeed, by those who heard it, regarding the voice of the blessed man in singing the psalms. The venerable man, when singing in the church with the brethren, raised his voice so wonderfully that it was sometimes heard four furlongs off, that is five hundred paces, and sometimes eight furlongs, that is one thousand paces. But what is stranger still: to those who were with him in the church, his voice did not seem louder than that of others; and yet at the same time persons more than a mile away heard it so distinctly that they could mark each syllable of the verses he was singing, for his voice sounded the same whether far or near. It is however admitted, that this wonderful character in the voice of the blessed man was but rarely observable, and even then it could never happen without the aid of the Holy Ghost.

But another story concerning the great and wonderful power of his voice should not be omitted. The fact is said to have taken place near the fortress of King Brude (near Inverness). When the saint himself was chanting the evening hymns with a few of the brethren, as usual, outside the king's fortifications, some Druids, coming near to them, did all they could to prevent God's praises being sung in the midst of a pagan nation. On seeing this, the saint began to sing the 44th Psalm, and at the same moment so wonderfully loud, like pealing thunder, did his voice become, that king and people were struck with terror and amazement.

XXX

Concerning a rich man named Lugud Clodus.

AT another time, when the saint was staying some days in Scotia (Ireland), he saw a cleric mounted on a chariot, and driving pleasantly along the plain of Breg (MaghBreg, in Meath). On asking who the person was, the cleric's friend made this reply regarding him: "This is Lugud Clodus, who is rich, and much respected by the people." The saint immediately answered, "He does not seem so to me, but a poor wretched creature, who on the day of his death shall have within his own walled enclosure three of his neighbour's cattle which have strayed on to his property. The best of the strayed cows he shall order to be killed for his own use, and a part of the meat he shall direct to be cooked and served up to him at the very time that he is lying on the same couch with a prostitute, but by the first morsel that he eats shall he be choked and die immediately." Now all these things, as we heard from well-informed Persons, afterwards happened according to the saint's prophecy.

XXXI

Prophecy of the Saint regarding Neman, son of Gruthrich.

FOR when the saint corrected this man for his faults, he received the saint's reproof with derision. The blessed man then said to him, "In God's name I will declare these words of truth concerning thee, Neman, that thine enemies shall find thee in bed with a prostitute and put thee to death, and the evil spirits shall carry off thy soul to the place of torments." A few years after his enemies found this same Neman on a couch along with a prostitute in the district of Cainle (not identified), and beheaded him, as was foretold by the saint.

XXXII

Prophecy of the holy man regarding a certain Priest.

AT another time, as the saint was staying in that part of Scotia (Ireland), named a little before, he came by chance on the Lord's day to a neighbouring little monastery, called in the Scotie language Trioit (Trevet, in Meath). The same day a priest celebrated the holy mysteries of the Eucharist, who was selected by the brethren who lived there to perform the solemn offices of the Mass, because they thought him very pious. The saint, on hearing him, suddenly opened his mouth and uttered this fearful sentence: "The clean and

unclean are now equally mingled together; that is, the clean mysteries of the holy sacrifice are offered by an unclean person, who just now conceals within his own conscience a grievous crime.” The bystanders, hearing these words, were struck with terror; but he of whom they were said was forced to confess his sin before them all. And the fellow-soldiers of Christ, who stood round the saint in the church, and had heard him making manifest the secrets of the heart, greatly wondered, and glorified the heavenly knowledge that was seen in him.

The Prophecy
of the holy
man regarding
the robber Erc
Mocudruidi,
who dwelt in the
island Coloso
(Colonsay).

XXXIII

AT another time, when the saint was in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he called two of the brothers, Lugbe and Silnan, and gave them this charge, “Sail over now to the Malean island (Mull), and on the open ground, near the sea-shore, look for Erc, a robber, who came alone last night in secret from the island Coloso (Colonsay). He strives to hide himself among the sand hills during the daytime under his boat, which he covers with hay, that he may sail across at night to the little island where our young seals are brought forth and nurtured. When this furious robber has stealthily killed as many as he can, he then fills his boat, and goes back to his hiding-place.” They proceeded at once in compliance with their orders, and found the robber lying hid in the very spot that was indicated, and they brought him to the saint, as they had been told. The saint looked at him, and said, “Why dost thou transgress the commandment of God so often by stealing the property of others? If thou art in want at any time, come to us and thy needs shall be supplied.” At the same time he ordered some wethers to be killed, and given to the wretched thief in place of the seals, that he might not return empty. A short time after the saint saw in spirit that the death of the robber was at hand, and ordered Baithen, then steward in the plain of Lunge (Maigh Lunge, in Tiree), to send a fat sheep and six pecks of corn as a last gift. Baithen sent them at once as the saint had recommended, but he found that the wretched robber had died suddenly the same day, and the presents sent over were used at his burial.

XXXIV

Prophecy of the holy man regarding the poet Cronan.

AT another time, as the saint was sitting one day with the brothers beside the lake Ce (Lough Key, in Roscommon), at the mouth of the river called in Latin Bos (the Boyle), a certain Scotie poet came to them, and when he retired, after a short interview, the brothers said to the saint, "Why didst thou not ask the poet Cronan, before he went away, to sing us a song with accompaniment, according to the rules of his profession?" The saint replied, "Why do even you now utter such idle words? How could I ask that poor man to sing a song of joy, who has now been murdered, and thus hastily has ended his days, at the hands of his enemies?" The saint had no sooner said these words than immediately a man cried out from beyond the river, "That poet who left you in safety a few minutes ago has just now been met and put to death by his enemies." Then all that were present wondered very much, and looked at one another in amazement.

XXXV

The holy man's Prophecy regarding the two Noblemen who died of wounds mutually inflicted.

AGAIN, at another time, as the saint was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), on a sudden, while he was reading, and to the great surprise of all, he moaned very heavily. Lugbe Mocublai, who was beside him, on seeing this, asked the cause of such sudden grief. The saint, in very great affliction, answered him, "Two men of royal blood in Scotia (Ireland) have perished of wounds mutually inflicted near the monastery called Cellrois, in the province of the Maudgorna (Magheross, in Monaghan); and on the eighth day from the end of this week, one shall give the shout on the other side of the Sound, who has come from Hibernia, and will tell you all as it happened. But oh! my dear child, tell this to nobody so long as I live." On the eighth day, accordingly, the voice was heard beyond the firth. Then the saint called quietly to Lugbe, and said to him, "This is the aged traveller to whom I alluded, who now crieth aloud beyond the strait; go and bring him here to me." The stranger was speedily brought, and told, among other things, how two noblemen in the district of the Maudgorna, near the confines of the territory in which is situate the monastery of Cellrois, died of wounds received in single combat namely, Colman the Hound, son of Ailen, and Ronan, son of Aid, son of Colga, both descended of the kings of the Anteriores (the Airtheara, or

people of Oriel in Ulster). After these things were thus narrated, Lugbe, the soldier of Christ, began to question the saint in private. "Tell me, I entreat of thee, about these and such like prophetic revelations, how they are made to thee, whether by sight or hearing, or other means unknown to man." To this the saint replied, "Thy question regardeth a most difficult subject, on which I can give thee no information whatever, unless thou first strictly promise, on thy bended knees, by the name of the Most High God, never to communicate this most secret mystery to any person all the days of my life." Hearing this, Lugbe fell at once on his knees, and, with face bent down to the ground, promised everything faithfully as the saint demanded. After this pledge had been promptly given he arose, and the saint said to him, "There are some, though very few, who are enabled by divine grace to see most clearly and distinctly the whole compass of the world, and to embrace within their own wondrously enlarged mental capacity the utmost limits of the heavens and the earth at the same moment, as if all were illumined by a single ray of the sun." In speaking of this miracle, the saint, though he seems to be referring to the experience of other favoured persons, yet was in reality alluding to his own, though indirectly, that he might avoid the appearance of vain-glory; and no one can doubt this who reads the apostle Paul, that vessel of election, when he relates the visions revealed to himself. For he did not write, "I know that I," but "I know a man caught up even to the third heavens." Now, although the words seem strictly to refer to another person, yet all admit that he spoke thus of none but himself in his great humility. This was the model followed by our Columba in relating those visions of the Spirit spoken of above, and that, too, in such a way that even Lugbe, for whom the saint showed a special affection, could hardly force him to tell these wonders after much entreaty. And to this fact Lugbe himself, after St. Columba's death, bore witness in the presence of other holy men, from whom I learned the undoubted truths which I have now related of the saint.

Of Cronan the
Bishop.

AT another time, a stranger from the province of the Munstermen, who in his humility did all he could to disguise himself, so that nobody might know he was a bishop, came to the saint; but his rank could not be hidden from the saint. For next Lord's day, being invited by the saint, as the custom was, to consecrate the Body of Christ, he asked the saint to join him, that, as two priests, they might break the bread of the Lord together. The saint

Life of Saint Columba

went to the altar accordingly, and suddenly looking into the stranger's face, thus addressed him: "Christ bless thee, brother; do thou break the bread alone, according to the episcopal rite, for I know now that thou art a bishop. Why hast thou disguised thyself so long, and prevented our giving thee the honour we owe to thee?" On hearing the saint's words, the humble stranger was greatly astonished, and adored Christ in His saint, and the bystanders in amazement gave glory to God.

AT another time, the venerable man sent Ernan, his uncle, an aged priest, to preside over the monastery he had founded many years before in Hinba island (Eilean-na-Naoimh). On his departure the saint embraced him affectionately, blessed him, and then foretold what would by and by happen to him, saying, "This friend of mine, who is now going away from me, I never expect to see alive again in this world." After a few days this same Ernan became very unwell, and desired to be taken back to the saint, who was much rejoiced at his return, and set out for the harbour to meet him. Ernan also himself, though with feeble step, attempted very boldly, and without assistance, to walk from the harbour to meet him; but when there was only the short distance of twenty-four paces between them, death came suddenly upon him before the saint could see his face in life, and he breathed his last as he fell to the ground, that the word of the saint might be fulfilled. Hence on that spot, before the door of the kiln, a cross was raised, and another cross was in like manner put up where the saint resided at the time of his death, which remaineth unto this day.

The Saint's prophecy regarding Ernan the Priest.

AT another time, when the saint was staying in that district which is called in the Scotie tongue Coire Salchain (Corrie Sallachan, now Corry, in Morvern), the peasants came to him, and one evening when he saw one of them approaching he said to him, "Where dost thou live?" "I live," said he, "in that district which borders the shore of Lake Crogreth (Loch Creran)." That district of which thou speakest," replied the saint, "is now being pillaged by savage marauders." On hearing this, the unhappy peasant began to lament his wife and children; but when the saint saw him so much afflicted he consoled him, saying, "Go, my poor man, go; thy whole family hath escaped by flight to the mountains, but thy cattle, furniture, and other effects the ruthless invaders have taken off with their unjust spoils." When the poor man heard these words he went home, and found that all had happened exactly as the

The Saint's prophecy regarding the Family of a certain Peasant.

saint foretold.

The Saint's
prophecy regard-
ing a Peasant
called Goire, son
of Aidan.

AT another time, in the same way, a peasant, who at that time was by far the bravest of all the inhabitants of Korkureti (Corkaree, in Westmeath), asked the saint by what death he would die. "Not in the battle-field shalt thou die," said the saint, "nor at sea; but the travelling companion of whom thou hast no suspicion shall cause thy death." "Perhaps," said Goire, "one of the friends who accompany me on my journey may be intending to murder me, or my wife, in her love for some younger man, may treacherously kill me." "Not so," replied the saint. "Why," asked Goire, "wilt thou not tell now the cause of my death?" "Because," said the saint, "I do not wish to tell more clearly just now the companion that is to injure thee, lest the frequent thought of the fact should make thee too unhappy, until the hour come when thou shalt find that my words are verified. Why dwell longer on what I have said?" After the lapse of a few years, this same Goire happened to be lying one day under his boat scraping off the bark from a spear-handle, when he heard others fighting near him. He rose hastily to stop the fighting, but his knife, through some neglect in the rapid movement, fell to the ground, and made a very deep wound in his knee. By such a companion, then, was his death caused, and he himself at once remembered with surprise the holy man's prophecy. After a few months he died, carried off by that same wound.

The Saint's
foreknowledge
and prophecy
concerning a
matter of less
moment, but so
beautiful that it
cannot, I think,
be passed over in
silence.

FOR at another time, while the saint was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he called one of the brothers, and thus addressed him: In the morning of the third day from this date thou must sit down and wait on the shore on the western side of this island, for a crane, which is a stranger from the northern region of Hibernia, and hath been driven about by various winds, shall come, weary and fatigued, after the ninth hour, and lie down before thee on the beach quite exhausted. Treat that bird tenderly, take it to some neighbouring house, where it may be kindly received and carefully nursed and fed by thee for three days and three nights. When the crane is refreshed with the three days' rest, and is unwilling to abide any longer with us, it shall fly back with renewed strength to the pleasant part of Scotia (Ireland) from which it originally hath come. This bird do I consign to thee with such special care because it cometh from our own native place." The brother obeyed, and on the third day, after the ninth hour, he watched as he was bid for the arrival of the expected guest. As soon as the crane came and alighted

Life of Saint Columba

on the shore, he took it up gently in its weakness, and carried it to a dwelling that was near, where in its hunger he fed it. On his return to the monastery in the evening, the saint, without any inquiry, but as stating a fact, said to him, "God bless thee, my child, for thy kind attention to this foreign visitor, that shall not remain long on its journey, but return within three days to its old home." As the saint predicted, so exactly did the event prove, for after being nursed carefully for three days, the bird then gently rose on its wings to a great height in the sight of its hospitable entertainer, and marking for a little its path through the air homewards, it directed its course across the sea to Hibernia, straight as it could fly, on a calm day.

The blessed man's fore-knowledge regarding the Battle fought many years after in the fortress of Cethirn, and regarding the Well near that place.

ANOTHER time, after the convention of the kings at the Ridge of Ceate (Druim Ceatt) that is, of Aidan, son of Gabran, and Aid, son of Ainmure the blessed man returned to the seacoast, and on a calm day in summer he and the Abbot Comgell sat down not far from the above-named fort. Then water was brought in a bronze vessel to the saints from a well that was close by to wash their hands. When St. Columba had received the water, he thus spoke to Abbot Comgell, who was sitting at his side, "A day shall come, O Comgell ! when the well whence this water now poured out for us was drawn will be no longer fit for man's use." "How?" said Comgell; "shall the water of this spring be defiled?" "From this," said St. Columba, "that it shall be filled with human blood; for thy relatives and mine that is, the people of the Cruithni and the race of Niall shall be at war in the neighbouring fortress of Cethirn (now called the Giant's Sconce, near Coleraine). Whence, at this same well, an unhappy relative of mine shall be slain, and his blood, mingling with that of many others, shall fill it up." This truthful prophecy was duly accomplished after many years, for in that battle, as is well known to many, Domnall, son of Aid, came off victorious, and at that well, according to the saint's word, a near kinsman of his was slain.

Another soldier of Christ, called Finan, who led the life of an anchorite blamelessly for many years near the monastery of the Oakwood Plain (Derry), and who was present at the battle, in relating these things to me, Adamnan, assured me that he saw a man's dead body lying in the well, and that on his return from the battlefield the same day to the monastery of St. Comgell, which is called in the Scotie tongue Cambas (on the river Bann, in diocese of Derry), and from which he had first set out, he found there two aged monks,

of St. Comgell, who, when he told them of the battle he saw, and of the well defiled with human blood, at once said to him: "A true prophet is Columba, for he foretold all the circumstances you now mention today regarding the battle and the well, many years indeed before they occurred; this he did in our hearing to St. Comgell, as he sat by the fort Cethirn."

How the Saint
was favoured
by God's grace
with the power
of distinguish-
ing different
Presents.

ABOUT the same time Conall, bishop of Culerathin (Coleraine) collected almost countless presents from the people of the plain of Eilne (Magh Wine, on the Bann), to give a hospitable reception to the blessed man, and the vast multitude that accompanied him, on his return from the meeting of the kings mentioned above.

Many of these presents from the people were laid out in the paved court of the monastery, that the holy man might bless them on his arrival; and as he was giving the blessing he specially pointed out one present, the gift of a wealthy man. "The mercy of God," said he, "attendeth the man who gave this, for his charity to the poor and his munificence." Then he pointed out another of the many gifts, and said: "Of this wise and avaricious man's offering, I cannot partake until he repent sincerely of his sin of avarice." Now this saying was quickly circulated among the crowd, and soon reaching the ears of Columb, son of Aid, his conscience reproached him; and he ran immediately to the saint, and on bended knees repented of his sin, promising to forsake his former greedy habits, and to be liberal ever after, with amendment of life. The saint bade him rise: and from that moment he was cured of the fault of greediness, for he was truly a wise man, as was revealed to the saint through that present.

But the munificent rich man, called Brenden, of whose present mention was made above, hearing the words of the saint regarding himself, knelt down at his feet and besought him to pray for him to the Lord. When at the outset the saint reproved him for certain other sins of which he was guilty, he expressed his heartfelt sorrow, and purpose of amendment. And thus both these men were cured of the peculiar vices in which they were wont to indulge. With like knowledge at another time, on the occasion of his visit to the Great Cell of Deathrib (Kilmore, in Roscommon), the saint knew the offering of a stingy man, called Diormit, from many others collected in that place on his arrival.

Life of Saint Columba

To have written thus much in the course of this first book selecting a few instances out of many of the prophetic gifts of the blessed man, may suffice. Indeed, I have recorded only a few facts regarding this venerable person, for no doubt there were very many more which could not come to men's knowledge, from being hidden under a kind of sacramental character while those mentioned were like a few little drops which oozed out, as it were, like newly fermented wine through the chinks of a full vessel. For holy and apostolic men, in general, in order to avoid vain-glory, strive as much as they can to conceal the wonders of God's secret working within them. Yet God sometimes, whether they will or no, maketh some of these known to the world, and bringeth them into view by various means, wishing thus, as He doth, to honour those saints who honour Him, that is, our Lord Himself, to whom be glory for ever, and ever.

Here endeth this first book, and the next book treateth of the wonderful miracles, which generally accompanied his prophetic foreknowledge.

BOOK TWO

ON HIS MIRACULOUS POWERS.

I

AT another time, while the venerable man was yet a youth in Scotia (Ireland) learning the wisdom of the Holy Scripture under St. Findbarr, the bishop, it happened that on a festival day not the least drop of wine could be found for the mystic sacrifice. Hearing the ministers of the altar complaining among themselves of this want, he took the vessel and went to the fountain, that, as a deacon, he might bring pure spring water for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; for at that time he was himself serving in the order of deacon. The holy man then blessed in faith that element of water taken from the spring, invoking, as he did so, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in Cana of Galilee had changed water into wine: and the result was that by

Of the Wine
which was
formed from
water.

His operation in this miracle also, an inferior element, namely pure water, was changed into one of a more excellent kind, namely wine, by the hands of this illustrious man. The holy man, then returning from the fountain and entering the church, placed beside the altar the vessel containing this liquid, and said to the ministers: "Here is wine, which the Lord Jesus hath sent, for the celebration of His mysteries." The holy bishop and his ministers having ascertained the fact, returned most ardent thanks to God. But the holy youth ascribed this, not to himself, but to the holy bishop Vinnian. This first proof of miraculous power, Christ the Lord manifested in His disciple, just as under like circumstances He had made it the first of His own miracles in Cana of Galilee.

Let this divine miracle, worked by our Columba, shine as a light in the beginning of this book, that it may lead us on to the other divine and miraculous powers which were seen in him.

Of the bitter fruit
of a tree changed
into sweet by the
blessing of the
Saint.

II

THERE was a certain very fruitful apple tree on the south side of the monastery of the Oakwood Plain (Derry), in its immediate vicinity. When the inhabitants of the place were complaining of the exceeding bitterness of the fruit, the saint one day in autumn, came to it, and seeing the boughs bearing to no purpose a load of fruit that injured rather than pleased those who tasted it, he raised his holy hand and blessed it, saying, "In the name of the Almighty God, O bitter tree, let all thy bitterness depart from thee; and let all thy apples, hitherto so very bitter, be now changed into the sweetest." Wonderful to be told, quicker than the word, and at that very instant, all the apples of the tree lost their bitterness, and were changed to an amazing sweetness, according to the saint's word.

Of Corn sown
after Midsum-
mer and reaped
in the beginning
of the month of
August, at the
Saint's prayer,
while he was
residing in the
Iouan island (Hy,
now Iona).

III

AT another time the saint sent his monks to bring from the little farm of a peasant some bundles of twigs to build a dwelling. When they returned to the saint, with a freight-ship laden with the foresaid bundles of twigs, they told the saint that the poor man was very sorry on account of the loss. The saint

immediately gave them these directions, saying, "Lest we do the man any wrong, take to him from us twice three measures of barley, and let him sow it now in his arable land." According to the saint's orders, the corn was sent and delivered over to the poor man, who was called Findchan, with the above directions. He received them with thanks, but asked, "What good can any corn do, which is sown after midsummer, against the nature of this soil?" But his wife, on the contrary, said, "Do what thou hast been ordered by the saint, to whom the Lord will give whatever he asketh from Him." And the messengers likewise said further, "St. Clolumba, who sent us to thee with this gift, intrusted us also with this form of instruction regarding thy crop, saying, 'Let that man trust in the omnipotence of God; his corn, though sown now, when twelve days of the month of June are passed, shall be reaped in the beginning of the month of August.'" The peasant accordingly ploughed and sowed, and the crop which, against hope, he sowed at the above-mentioned time he gathered in ripe, to the admiration of all his neighbours, in the beginning of the month of August, in that place which is called Delcros (not identified).

IV

Of a Pestilential
Cloud, and the
curing of many.

AT another time also, while the saint was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), and was sitting on the little hill which is called, in Latin, *Munitio Magna*, he saw in the north a dense rainy cloud rising from the sea on a clear day. As the saint saw it rising, he said to one of his monks, named Silnan, son of Nemandon Mocusogin, who was sitting beside him, "This cloud will be very baleful to man and beast, and after rapidly passing today over a considerable part of Scotia (Ireland) namely, from the stream called Ailbine (Delvin, in Meath) as far as the Ford Cliead (Athcliath, now Dublin) it will discharge in the evening a pestilential rain, which will raise large and putrid ulcers on the bodies of men and on the udders of cows; so that men and cattle shall sicken and die, worn out with that poisonous complaint. But we, in pity for their sufferings, ought to relieve them by the merciful aid of God; do thou therefore, Silnan, come down with me from this hill, and prepare for thy tomorrow's voyage. If God be willing and life spared to us, thou shalt receive from me some bread which has been blessed by the invocation of the name of God; this thou shalt dip in water, and on thy sprinkling therewith man and beast, they shall speedily recover their health." Why need we linger over it? On the

next day, when all things necessary had been hastily got ready, Silnan received the blessed bread from the hands of the saint, and set out on his voyage in peace. As he was starting, the saint gave him these words of comfort, saying, "Be of good courage, my dear son, for thou shalt have fair and pleasant breezes day and night till thou come to that district which is called Ard-Ceannachta (in Meath), that thou mayest bring the more speedily relief with the healing bread to those who are there sick." What more? Silnan, obeying the saint's words, had a quick and prosperous voyage, by the aid of God, and coming to the above-mentioned part of the district, found the people of whom the saint had been speaking destroyed by the pestilential rain falling down from the aforesaid cloud, which had passed rapidly on before him. In the first place, twice three men were found in the same house near the sea reduced to the agonies of approaching death, and when they were sprinkled by Silnan with the blessed water, were very happily healed that very day. The report of this sudden cure was soon carried through the whole country which was attacked by this most fatal disease, and drew all the sick people to St. Columba's messenger, who, according to the saint's orders, sprinkled man and beast with the water in which the blessed bread had been dipped, and immediately they were restored to perfect health; then the people finding themselves and their cattle healed, praised with the utmost expression of thankfulness Christ in St. Columba. Now, in the incidents here related these two things, I think, are clearly associated—namely, the gift of prophecy regarding the cloud and the miraculous power in healing the sick. And to the truth of all these things, in every particular, the above-named Silnan, the soldier of Christ and messenger of St. Columba, bore testimony in the presence of the Abbot Segine and the other fathers.

Of Maugina
the holy virgin,
daughter of
Daimen, who
had lived in
Clochur, of the
sons of Daimen
(Clogher).

V

AT another time, while the saint was staying in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he one day at prime called to him a certain brother, named Lugaid, who in the Scotie tongue was surnamed Lathir, and thus addressed him, saying, "Prepare quickly for a rapid voyage to Scotia (Ireland), for it is of the very utmost importance to me that thou be sent with a message from me to Clocher, of the sons of Daimen (Clogher). For this last night, by some accident, the holy virgin Maugina, daughter of Daimen, when she was returning home

Life of Saint Columba

from the oratory after mass, stumbled and broke her thigh quite through. She is now crying out, and very often calling on my name, in hope that through me she may receive some comfort from the Lord.” What more need I say? As Lugaid was setting out in accordance with the directions given him, the saint gave him a little box made of pine, saying, “Let the blessed gift which is contained in this little box be dipped in a vessel of water when thou comest to visit Maugina, and let the water thus blessed be poured on her thigh; then at once, by the invocation of God’s name, her thigh-bone shall be joined together and made strong, and the holy virgin shall recover perfect health.” This, too, the saint added, “Lo! here in thy presence I write on the lid of this little box the number of twenty- three years, which the holy virgin shall enjoy of this present life after receiving her health.” All this was exactly fulfilled as the saint had foretold; for as soon as Lugaid came to the holy virgin her thigh was washed, as the saint recommended, with the blessed water, and was in an instant completely healed by the closing up of the bone. At the arrival of the messenger of St. Columba, she expressed her joy in the most earnest thanksgiving, and, after recovering her health, she lived, according to the prophecy of the saint, twenty-three years in the constant practice of good works.

VI

WE have been told by well-informed persons that this man of admirable life, by invoking the name of Christ, healed the disorders of various sick persons in the course of that short time which he spent at the Ridge of Ceate (Druimceatt), when attending there the meeting of the kings. For either by his merely stretching out his holy hand, or by the sprinkling of the sick with the water blessed by him, or by their touching even the hem of his cloak, or by their receiving his blessing on anything, as, for instance, on bread or salt, and dipping it in water, they who believed recovered perfect health.

Of the Cures of various Diseases which took place in the Ridge of Ceate (Druimceatt).

VII

On another occasion also, Colga, son of Cellach, asked and obtained from the saint a lump of salt which he had blessed, for the cure of his sister, who had nursed him, and was now suffering from a very severe attack of ophthalmia. This same sister and nurse having received such a blessed gift

Of a lump of Salt blessed by the Saint, which could not be consumed by the fire.

from the hand of her brother, hung it up on the wall over her bed; and after some days it happened by accident that a destructive fire entirely consumed the village where this took place, and with others the house of the aforesaid woman. Yet, strange to say, in order that the gift of the blessed man might not be destroyed, the portion of the wall from which it was suspended still stood uninjured after the rest of the house had been burned down; nor did the fire venture to touch even the two uprights from which the lump of salt was suspended.

Of a volume of a book in the Saint's handwriting which could not be destroyed by water.

VIII

I CANNOT think of leaving unnoticed another miracle which once took place by means of the opposite element. For many years after the holy man had departed to the Lord, a certain youth fell from his horse into the river which in Scotie is called Boend (the Boyne), and, being drowned, was for twenty days under the water. When he fell he had a number of books packed up in a leathern satchel under his arm; and so, when he was found after the above-mentioned number of days, he still had the satchel of books pressed between his arm and side. When the body was brought out to the dry ground, and the satchel opened, it was found to contain, among the volumes of other books, which were not only injured, but even rotten, a volume written by the sacred fingers of St. Columba; and it was as dry and wholly uninjured as if it had been enclosed in a desk.

Of another Miracle in similar circumstances.

AT another time a book of hymns for the office of every day in the week, and in the handwriting of St. Columba, having slips, with the leathern satchel which contained it, from the shoulder of a boy who fell from a bridge, was immersed in a certain river in the province of the Lagenians (Leinster). This very book lay in the water from the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord till the end of the Paschal season, and was afterwards found on the bank of the river by some women who were walking there: it was brought by them in the same satchel, which was not only soaked, but even rotten, to a certain priest named Iogenan, a Pict by race, to whom it formerly belonged. On opening the satchel himself, Iogenan found his book uninjured, and as clean and dry as if it had been as long a time in his desk, and had never fallen into the water. And we have ascertained, as undoubted truth, from those who were well informed

Life of Saint Columba

in the matter, that the like things happened in several places with regard to books written by the hands of St. Columba namely, that the books could suffer no injury from being immersed in water. But the account we have given of the above-mentioned book of Iogenan we have received from certain truthful excellent, and honourable men, who saw the book itself, perfectly white and beautiful, after a submersion of so many days, as we have stated.

These two miracles, though wrought in matters of small moment, and shown in opposite elements namely, fire and water, redound to the honour of the blessed man, and prove his great and singular merits before the Lord.

IX

Of Water drawn from the hard rock by the Saint's prayers.

AND since mention has been made a little before of the element of water, we must not pass over in silence some other miracles which the Lord wrought by the saint at different times and places, in which the same element was concerned. On another occasion, then, when the saint was engaged in one of his journeys, a child was presented to him in the course of his travels for baptism by its parents; and because there was no water to be found in the neighbourhood, the saint turned aside to a rock that was near, and kneeling down prayed for a short time; then rising up after his prayer, he blessed the face of the rock, from which there immediately gushed out an abundant stream of water; and there he forthwith baptized the child. Concerning the child that was baptized he uttered the following prophecy, saying, "This child shall live to a very great age; in his youth he will indulge freely the desires of the flesh; afterwards he will devote himself to the warfare of a Christian until the very end of his life, and thus depart to the Lord in a good old age." All this happened to the man according to the prophecy of the saint. This was Lugucencalad, whose parents were from Artdaib Muirchol (Ardnamurchan), where there is seen even to this day a well called by the name of St. Columba.

X

Of a poisonous Fountain of Water to which the blessed man gave his blessing in the country of the Picts.

AGAIN, while the blessed man was stopping for some days in the province of the Picts, he heard that there was a fountain famous amongst this heathen people, which foolish men, having their senses blinded by the devil, wor-

shipped as a god. For those who drank of this fountain, or purposely washed their hands or feet in it, were allowed by God to be struck by demoniacal art, and went home either leprous or purblind, or at least suffering from weakness or other kinds of infirmity. By all these things the Pagans were seduced, and paid divine honour to the fountain. Having ascertained this, the saint one day went up to the fountain fearlessly; and, on seeing this, the Druids, whom he had often sent away from him vanquished and confounded, were greatly rejoiced, thinking that he would suffer like others from the touch of that baneful water. But he, having first raised his holy hand and invoked the name of Christ, washed his hands and feet; and then with his companions, drank of the water which he had blessed. And from that day the demons departed from the fountain; and not only was it not allowed to injure any one, but even many diseases amongst the people were cured by this same fountain, after it had been blessed and washed in by the saint.

Of the Danger
to the blessed
man at Sea, and
the sudden calm
produced by his
prayers.

XI

AT another time the holy man began to be in great danger at sea, for the whole vessel was violently tossed and shaken with the huge dashing waves, and a great storm of wind was raging on all hands. The sailors then chanced to say to the saint, as he was trying to help them to bale the vessel, "What thou art now doing is of little use to us in our present danger, thou shouldst rather pray for us as we are perishing." On hearing this he ceased to throw out the bitter waters of the green sea wave, and began to pour out a sweet and fervent prayer to the Lord. Wonderful to relate! The very moment the saint stood up at the prow, with his hands stretched out to heaven and prayed to the Almighty, the whole storm of wind and the fury of the sea ceased more quickly than can be told, and a perfect calm instantly ensued. But those who were in the vessel were amazed, and giving thanks with great admiration, glorified the Lord in the holy and illustrious man.

Of another sim-
ilar Peril to him
at Sea.

XII

AT another time, also, when a wild and dangerous storm was raging, and his companions were crying out to the saint to pray to the Lord for them, he gave them this answer, saying, "On this day it is not for me, but for that holy

Life of Saint Columba

man, the Abbot Cainnech, to pray for you in your present peril.” What I am to relate is wonderful. The very same hour St. Cainnech was in his monastery, which in Latin is called *Campulus Bovis*, but in Scotie Ached- bou (Aghaboe, in Queen’s County), and heard with the inner ear of his heart, by a revelation of the Holy Ghost, the aforesaid words of St. Columba; and when he had just begun to break the blessed bread in the refectory after the ninth hour, he hastily left the table, and with one shoe on his foot, while the other in his extreme haste was left behind, he went quickly to the church, saying, “It is not for us now to take time to dine, when the vessel of St. Columba is in danger at sea, for at this moment he is lamenting, and calling on the name of Cainnech to pray to Christ for him and his companions in peril” When he had said this he entered the oratory and prayed for a short time on his bended knees; and the Lord heard his prayer, the storm immediately ceased, and the sea became very calm. Whereupon St. Columba, seeing in spirit, though there was a far distance between them, the haste of Cainnech in going to the church, uttered, to the wonder of all, from his pure heart, these words, saying, “Now I know, O Cainnech, that God has heard thy prayer; now hath thy swift running to the church with a single shoe greatly profited us.” In such a miracle as this, then, we believe that the prayers of both saints had their share in the work.

XIII

ON another occasion, the same Cainnech above mentioned embarked for Scotia (Ireland) from the harbour of the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), and forgot to take his staff with him. After his departure the staff was found on the shore, and given into the hands of St. Columba, who, on his return home, brought it into the oratory, and remained there for a very long time alone in prayer. Cainnech, meanwhile, on approaching the Oidechan island (Oidech, near Isla, probably Texa) suddenly felt pricked at heart at the thought of his forgetfulness, and was deeply afflicted at it. But after some time, leaving the vessel, and falling upon his knees in prayer on the ground, he found before him on the turf of the little land of Aithche (genitive of Aitech) the staff which, in his forgetfulness, he had left behind him at the landing-place in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona). He was greatly surprised at its being thus brought to him by the divine power, and gave thanks to God.

Of the Staff of St. Cainnech which was forgotten in the Harbour.

XIV

AT another time, also, the above-named holy men came in company to the saint, and asked him, with one consent, to seek and obtain for them from the Lord a favourable wind on the next day, though they were to set out in different directions. The saint in answer gave them this reply, "To-morrow morning, Baithene, setting sail from the harbour of the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), shall have a favourable wind until he reaches the landing-place of the plain of Lunge (Magh Lunge, in Tiree)." And the Lord granted this favour according to the word of the saint; for Baithene on that same day crossed, with full sails, the whole of the open sea, as far as the Ethican land (Tiree). But at the third hour of the same day, the venerable man called to him the priest Columban, saying, "Baithene has now happily arrived at the wished-for haven, prepare thou then to sail to-day; the Lord will soon change the wind to the north." And the same hour the wind from the south obeying the word thus spoken by the holy man, wheeled round and became a northern breeze; and thus on the same day these two holy men departed the one from the other in peace and both set sail, Baithene in the morning for the Ethican land (Tiree), and Columban in the afternoon for Hibernia, and made the voyages with full sails and fair winds. The Lord wrought this miracle in answer to the prayer of the illustrious man, according as it is written, "All things are possible to him that believeth." After the departure of St. Columban on that day, St. Columba uttered this prophecy concerning him: "The holy man, Columban, whom we have blessed on his departure, shall never see my face again in this world." And this was afterwards fulfilled, for the same year St. Columban passed away to the Lord.

How Baithene and Columban, the son of Beogna, holy priests, asked of the Lord, through the prayers of the blessed man, that he would grant them on the same day a favourable wind, though sailing in different directions.

Of the driving out of a Demon that Lurked in a Milk-pail.

XV

AT another time, a certain youth, named Columban, grandson of Brian, came forward hurriedly, and stopped at the door of the little cell in which the blessed man was writing. This same person, being on his way home from the milking of the cows, and carrying on his back a vessel full of new milk, asked the saint to bless his burden, as he usually did. Then the saint, being at the time at some distance away in front of him, raised his hand, and formed the saving sign in the air, which at once was greatly agitated; the bar, which

fastened the lid of the pail, being pushed back through the two openings that received it, was shot away to a great distance, while the lid fell to the earth, and the greater part of the milk was spilled upon the ground. The young lad then laid down the vessel, with the little milk that remained, on its bottom on the ground, and kneeled down in prayer. The saint said to him, "Rise up, Columban, for thou hast acted negligently in thy work today, inasmuch as thou didst not banish the demon that lurked in the bottom of the empty vessel by forming on it the sign of the cross of our Lord before the milk was poured into it; and now, as thou seest, being unable to bear the power of that sign, he has quickly fled in terror, troubled the whole vessel in every corner, and spilled the milk. Bring the vessel, then, nearer to me here that I may bless it." This being done, the half-empty pail, which the saint had blessed, was found the same instant, filled by divine agency; and the little that had previously remained in the bottom was at once increased under the blessing of his holy hand, so as to fill it to the brim.

XVI

THE following is told as having occurred in the house of a rich peasant named Foirtgirn, who lived in Mount Cainle (not identified). When the saint was staying there, he decided justly a dispute between two rustics, whose coming to him he knew beforehand: and one of them, who was a sorcerer, took milk, by his diabolical art, at the command of the saint, from a bull that was near. This the saint directed to be done, not to confirm these sorceries—God forbid! but to put an end to them in the presence of all the people. The blessed man, therefore, demanded that the vessel, full, as it seemed to be, of this milk, should be immediately given to him; and he blessed it with this sentence, saying: "Now it shall in this way be proved that this is not true milk, as it is supposed to be, but blood, which is coloured by the artifice of demons to impose on men." This was no sooner said than the milky colour gave place to the true natural colour of blood. The bull also, which in the space of one hour wasted and pined away with a hideous leanness, and was all but dead, was sprinkled with water that had been blessed by the saint, and recovered with astonishing rapidity.

Concerning a Vessel which a sorcerer named Silnan had filled with milk taken from a bull.

Of Lugne
Mocumin.

XVII

ONE day a young man of good disposition and parts, named Lugne, who afterwards, in his old age, was prior of the monastery of the Elena island (Eileen Naomh, now Nave island, near Isla), came to the saint, and complained of a bleeding which for many months had often poured profusely from the nostrils. Having asked him to come nearer, the saint pressed both his nostrils with two fingers of his right hand and blessed him. And from that hour when he received the blessing, till the last day of his life, a drop of blood never came from his nose.

Of the Fishes
which were specially
provided by God for the
blessed man.

XVIII

ON another occasion, when some hardy fishermen, companions of this renowned man, had taken five fish in their net in the river Sale (the Shiel, or Seil), which abounds in fish, the saint said to them, "Try again," said he; "cast thy net into the stream, and you shall at once find a large fish which the Lord has provided for me." In obedience to the saint's command they hauled in their nets a salmon of astonishing size, which God had provided for him.

XIX

AT another time also, when the saint was stopping some, days beside the lake of Ce (Loughkey, in Roscommon), he delayed his companions when they were anxious to go a-fishing, saying: "No fish will be found in the river to-day or to-morrow; but on the third day I will send you, and you shall find two large river-salmon taken in the net." And so, after two short days, they cast their nets, and landed two, of the most extraordinary size, which they found in the river which is named Bo (the Boyle). In the capture of fish on these two occasions, the power of miracles appears accompanied at the same time by a prophetic foreknowledge, and for both graces the saint and his companions gave fervent thanks to God.

XX

THIS Nesan, though very poor, joyfully received on one occasion the saint as his guest. And after he had entertained him as hospitably as his means would afford for one night, the saint asked him the number of his heifers. He answered, "Five." The saint then said, "Bring them to me that I may bless them." And when they were brought the saint raised his holy hand and blessed them, and said: "From this day thy five little heifers shall increase to the number of one hundred and five cows." And as this same Nesan was a man of humble condition, having a wife and children, the saint added this further blessing, saying: "Thy seed shall be blessed in thy children and grandchildren." And all this was completely fulfilled without any failure, according to the word of the saint.

Regarding Nesan the Crooked, who lived in the country bordering on the Lake of Apors (Lochaber).

XXI

ON the other hand, he pronounced the following prophetic sentence on a certain rich and very stingy man named Uigene, who despised St. Columba, and showed him no hospitality, saying: "But the riches of that niggardly man who hath despised Christ in the strangers that came to be his guests, will gradually become less from this day, and be reduced to nothing; and he himself shall be a beggar; and his son shall go about from house to house with a half-empty wallet: and he shall be slain by a rival beggar with an axe, in the pit of a threshingfloor." All this was exactly fulfilled in both cases, according to the prophecy of the holy man.

How the holy man blessed the few Cattle belonging to Columban, a man of equally humble condition; and how, after his blessing, they increased to the number of a hundred.

XXII

AT another time also, the blessed man was one night kindly treated as his guest by the aforesaid Columban, who was then very poor, and, as he had done before in the above account of Nesan, he asked his host, early next morning, as to the amount and kind of his goods. When asked, he said: "I have only five small cows, but if thou bless them they will increase to more." And immediately he was directed by the saint to bring them before him, and in the same manner as was related concerning the five cows of Nesan, he gave as rich a blessing to those of Columban, and said, "Thou shalt have, by God's

gift, a hundred and five cows, and an abundant blessing shall be also upon thy children and grandchildren." All this was granted to the full in his lands, and cattle, and offspring, according to the prophecy of the blessed man; and, what is very strange, the number of cattle determined by the saint for both these men, whenever it reached one hundred and five, could not in any way be increased; for those that were beyond this stated number, being carried off by various accidents, never appeared to be of any value, except in so far as anything might be employed for the use of the family, or spent in almsgiving. In this history, then, as in the others, the gifts both of miracles and prophecy are clearly shown together, for in the large increase of the cattle we see the virtue of his blessing and of his prayer, and, in the determination of the number, his prophetic knowledge.

Of the Death of
some wicked
men who had
spurned the
Saint.

XXIII

THE venerable man had a great love for the above-named Columban, on account of the many acts of kindness he had done to him, and caused him by blessing him, from being poor to become very rich. Now, there was at that time a certain wicked man, a persecutor of the good, named Joan, son of Conall, son of Domnall, sprung from the royal tribe of Gabran. This man troubled the foresaid Columban, the friend of St. Columba; and not once, but twice, attacked and plundered his house and carried off all he could find in it. Hence it not unfitly happened to this wicked man, that as he and his associates, after having plundered the house of the same person a third time, were returning to their vessel, laden with plunder, he met advancing towards him, the holy man whom he had despised, when he thought he was afar off. When the saint reproached him for his evil deeds, and advised and besought him to give up the plunder, he remained hardened and obstinate, and scorned the holy man; and thus mocking and laughing at the blessed man, he embarked with the booty. Yet the saint followed him to the water's edge, and wading up to the knees in the clear green sea-water, with both his hands raised to heaven, earnestly invoked Christ, who glorifies His elect, who are giving glory to Him.

Now the haven where he thus for some time stood and besought the Lord after the departure of the oppressor, is at a place called in Scotie Ait-Cham-

bas Art-Muirchol (Camus-an-Gaall, Ardnamurchan). Then the saint, as soon as he had finished his prayer, returned to the dry ground, and sat down on the higher ground with his companions, and spoke to them in that hour these very terrible words, saying: "This miserable wretch who, hath despised Christ in His servants will never return to the port from which you have now seen him set sail: neither shall he, nor his wicked associates, reach the land for which they are bound, for a sudden death shall prevent it. This day a furious storm shall proceed from a cloud, which you will soon see rising in the north, shall overwhelm him and his companions, so that not one of them will survive to tell the tale." After the lapse of a few moments, even while the day was perfectly calm, behold! a cloud arose from the sea, as the saint had said, and caused a great hurricane, which overtook the plunderer with his spoil, between the Malean and Colosus islands (Mull and Colonsay), and overwhelmed him in the midst of the sea, which was suddenly lashed into fury: and not even one of those in the vessel escaped, as the saint had said: and in this wonderful manner, by such a singular storm, while the whole sea around remained quiet, were the robbers miserably, but justly, overwhelmed and sunk into the deep.

XXIV

Of a certain Feradach, who was cut off by sudden death.

AT another time also, the holy man specially recommended a certain exile, of noble race among the Picts, named Tarain, to the care of one Feradach, a rich man, who lived in the Ilean island (Isla), that he might be received in his retinue for some months as one of his friends. After he had accepted the person thus highly recommended at the hand of the holy man, he in a few days acted treacherously, and cruelly ordered him to be put to death. When the news of this horrid crime was carried by travellers to the saint, he replied by the following prediction: "That unhappy wretch hath not lied unto me, but unto God, and his name shall be blotted out of the book of life. We are speaking these words now in the middle of summer, but in autumn, before he shall eat of swine's flesh that hath been fattened on the fruits of the trees, he shall be seized by a sudden death, and carried off to the infernal regions." When the miserable man was told this prophecy of the saint, he scorned

and laughed at him; and when some days of the autumn months had passed, he ordered a sow that had been fattened on the kernels of nuts to be killed, none of his other swine having yet been slaughtered: he ordered also, that its entrails should be immediately taken out and a piece quickly roasted for him on the spit, so that by hurrying and eating of it thus early, he might falsify the prediction of the blessed man. As soon as it was roasted he asked for a very small morsel to taste it, but before the hand which he stretched out to take it had reached his mouth he expired, and fell down on his back a corpse. And all who saw or heard it were greatly astonished and terrified; and they honoured and glorified Christ in his holy prophet.

Concerning a certain other impious man, a persecutor of the Churches, who was called in Latin Manus Dexteræ.

XXV

ON one occasion when the blessed man was living in the Hinba island (Eilean-na-Naoimh), and set about excommunicating some destroyers of the churches, and amongst them the sons of Conall, son of Domnall, one of whom was the Joan before mentioned, one of their wicked associates was instigated by the devil to rush on the saint with a spear, on purpose to kill him. To prevent this, one of the brethren, named Findlughan, put on the saint's cowl and interposed, being ready to die for the holy man. But in a wonderful way the saint's garment served as a kind of strong and impenetrable fence which could not be pierced by the thrust of a very sharp spear though made by a powerful man, but remained untouched, and he who had it on was safe and uninjured under the protection of such a guard. But the ruffian who did this, whose name was Manus Dexteræ, retraced his steps thinking he had transfixed the saint with his spear. Exactly a year afterwards, when the saint was staying in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he said, "A year is just now elapsed since the day Lam-dess did what he could to put Findlughan to death in my place; but he himself is slain, I believe, this very hour." And so it happened, at that very moment, according to the revelation of the saint, in the island which in Latin may be called Longa (Luing), where, in a battle fought between a number of men on both sides, this Lam-dess alone was slain by Cronan, son of Baithene, with a dart, shot, it is said, in the name of St. Columba; and when he fell the battle ceased.

XXVI

Of yet another
Oppressor of the
innocent.

WHEN the holy man, while yet a youth in deacon's orders, was living in the region of the Lagenians (Leinster), learning the divine wisdom, it happened one day that an unfeeling and pitiless oppressor of the innocent was pursuing a young girl who fled before him on a level plain. As she chanced to observe the aged Gemman, master of the foresaid young deacon, reading on the plain, she ran straight to him as fast as she could. Being alarmed at such an unexpected occurrence, he called on Columba, who was reading at some distance, that both together, to the best of their ability, might defend the girl from her pursuer; but he immediately came up, and without any regard to their presence, stabbed the girl with his lance under their very cloaks, and leaving her lying dead at their feet turned to go away back. Then the old man, in great affliction, turning to Columba, said: "How long, holy youth Columba, shall God, the just Judge, allow this horrid crime and this insult to us to go unpunished?" Then the saint at once pronounced this sentence on the perpetrator of the deed: "At the very instant the soul of this girl whom he hath murdered ascendeth into heaven, shall the soul of the murderer go down into hell." And scarcely had he spoken the words when the murderer of the innocent, like Ananias before Peter, fell down dead on the spot before the eyes of the holy youth. The news of this sudden and terrible vengeance was soon spread abroad throughout many districts of Scotia (Ireland), and with it the wonderful fame of the holy deacon.

What we have said may suffice concerning the terrible punishments inflicted on those who were opposed to him; we will now relate a few things regarding wild beasts.

XXVII

How a Wild Boar
was destroyed
through his
prayers.

ON one occasion when the blessed man was staying some days in the Scian island (Sky), he left the brethren and went alone a little farther than usual to pray; and having entered a dense forest he met a huge wild boar that happened to be pursued by hounds. As soon as the saint saw him at some distance, he stood looking intently at him. Then raising his holy hand and invoking the name of God in fervent prayer, he said to it, "Thou shalt proceed no further in this direction: perish in the spot which thou hast now

reached.” At the sound of these words of the saint in the woods, the terrible brute was not only unable to proceed farther, but by the efficacy of his word immediately fell dead before his face.

How an Aquatic
Monster was
driven off by vir-
tue of the blessed
man’s prayer.

XXVIII

ON another occasion also, when the blessed man was living for some days in the province of the Picts, he was obliged to cross the river Nesa (the Ness); and when he reached the bank of the river, he saw some of the inhabitants burying an unfortunate man, who, according to the account of those who were burying him, was a short time before seized, as he was swimming, and bitten most severely by a monster that lived in the water; his wretched body was, though too late, taken out with a hook, by those who came to his assistance in a boat. The blessed man, on hearing this, was so far from being dismayed, that he directed one of his companions to swim over and row across the coble that was moored at the farther bank. And Lugne Mocumin hearing the command of the excellent man, obeyed without the least delay, taking off all his clothes, except his tunic, and leaping into the water. But the monster, which, so far from being satiated, was only roused for more prey, was lying at the bottom of the stream, and when it felt the water disturbed above by the man swimming, suddenly rushed out, and, giving an awful roar, darted after him, with its mouth wide open, as the man swam in the middle of the stream. Then the blessed man observing this, raised his holy hand, while all the rest, brethren as well as strangers, were stupefied with terror, and, invoking the name of God, formed the saving sign of the cross in the air, and commanded the ferocious monster, saying, “Thou shalt go no further, nor touch the man; go back with all speed.” Then at the voice of the saint, the monster was terrified, and fled more quickly than if it had been pulled back with ropes, though it had just got so near to Lugne, as he swam, that there was not more than the length of a spear-staff between the man and the beast. Then the brethren seeing that the monster had gone back, and that their comrade Lugne returned to them in the boat safe and sound, were struck with admiration, and gave glory to God in the blessed man. And even the barbarous heathens, who were present, were forced by the greatness of this miracle, which they themselves had seen, to magnify the God of the Christians.

XXIX

ON a certain day in that same summer in which he passed to the Lord, the saint went in a chariot to visit some of the brethren, who were engaged in some heavy work in the western part of the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona). After speaking to them some words of comfort and encouragement, the saint stood upon the higher ground, and uttered the following prophecy: "My dear children, I know that from this day you shall never see my face again anywhere in this field." Seeing the brethren filled with sorrow upon hearing these words, the saint tried to comfort them as best he could; and, raising both his holy hands, he blessed the whole of this our island, saying: "From this very moment poisonous reptiles shall in no way be able to hurt men or cattle in this island, so long as the inhabitants shall continue to observe the commandments of Christ."

How the Saint
blessed the Soil
of this Island
that no poison of
Serpents should
henceforth hurt
any one in it.

XXX

AT another time, a certain brother named Molua, grandson of Brian, came to the saint whilst he was writing, and said to him, "This knife which I hold in my hand I beseech thee to bless." The saint, without turning his face from the book out of which he was writing, extended his holy hand a little, with the pen in it, and blessed the knife by signing it. But when the foresaid brother had departed with the knife thus blessed, the saint asked, "What sort of a knife have I blessed for that brother?" Diormit, the saint's faithful attendant, replied, "Thou hast blessed a knife for killing bulls or oxen." The saint then, on the contrary, said, "I trust in my Lord that the knife I have blessed will never wound men or cattle." This word of the holy man received the strongest confirmation the same hour; for the same brother went beyond the enclosure of the monastery and attempted to kill an ox, but, although he made three strong efforts with all his strength, yet he could not even cut the skin. When this came to the knowledge of the monks, they skillfully melted down the iron of the knife and applied a thin coating of it to all the iron tools used in the monastery. And such was the abiding virtue of the saint's blessing, that these tools could never afterwards inflict a wound on flesh.

Of the Knife
which the Saint
blessed by sign-
ing it with the
Lord's Cross.

Of the cure of
Diormit when
sick.

XXXI

AT another time, Diormit, the saint's faithful attendant, was sick even unto death, and the saint went to see him in his extremity. Having invoked the name of Christ, he stood at the bed of the sick man and prayed for him, saying, "O my Lord, be propitious to me, I beseech thee, and take not away the soul of my faithful attendant from its dwelling in the flesh whilst I live." Having said this, he remained silent for a short time, and then again he spoke these words, with his sacred mouth, "My son shall not only not die at present, but will even live for many years after my death." This prayer of the saint was heard, for, on the instant that the saint's prayer was made, Diormit was restored to perfect health, and lived also for many years after St. Columba had passed to the Lord.

Of the cure of
Finten, the son of
Aid, when at the
point of death.

XXXII

AT another time also, as the saint was making a journey beyond the Dorsal Ridge of Britain (Drumalban), a certain youth named Finten, one of his companions, was seized with a sudden illness and reduced to the last extremity. His comrades were much afflicted on his account, and besought the saint to pray for him. Yielding at once to their entreaties, Columba raised his holy hands to heaven in earnest prayer, and blessing the sick person, said, "This youth for whom you plead shall enjoy a long life; he will survive all who are here present, and die in a good old age." This prophecy of the blessed man was fulfilled in every particular; for this same youth, after founding the monastery of Kailli-au-inde (not identified), closed this present life at a good old age.

Of the boy
whom the holy
man raised from
the dead, in the
name of the Lord
Christ.

XXXIII

AT the time when St. Columba was tarrying for some days in the province of the Picts, a certain peasant who, with his whole family, had listened to and learned through an interpreter the word of life preached by the holy man, believed and was baptized the husband, together with his wife, children, and domestics.

Life of Saint Columba

A very few days after his conversion, one of the sons of this householder was attacked with a dangerous illness and brought to the very borders of life and death. When the Druids saw him in a dying state they began with great bitterness to upbraid his parents, and to extol their own gods as more powerful than the God of the Christians, and thus to despise God as though He were weaker than their gods. When all this was told to the blessed man, he burned with zeal for God, and proceeded with some of his companions to the house of the friendly peasant, where he found the afflicted parents celebrating the obsequies of their child, who was newly dead. The saint, on seeing their bitter grief, strove to console them with words of comfort, and exhorted them not to doubt in any way the omnipotence of God. He then inquired, saying, "In what chamber is the dead body of your son lying?" And being conducted by the bereaved father under the sad roof, he left the whole crowd of persons who accompanied him outside, and immediately entered by himself into the house of mourning, where, falling on his knees, he prayed to Christ our Lord, having his face bedewed with copious tears. Then rising from his kneeling posture, he turned his eyes towards the deceased and said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, arise, and stand upon thy feet." At the sound of this glorious word from the saint, the soul returned to the body, and the person that was dead opened his eyes and revived. The apostolic man then taking him by the hand raised him up, and placing him in a standing position, led him forth with him from the house, and restored him to his parents. Upon this the cries of the applauding multitude broke forth, sorrow was turned into joy, and the God of the Christians glorified.

We must thus believe that our saint had the gift of miracles like the prophets Elias and Eliseus, and like the apostles Peter, Paul, and John, he had the honour bestowed on him of raising the dead to life, and now in heaven, placed amid the prophets and apostles, this prophetic and apostolic man enjoys a glorious and eternal throne in the heavenly fatherland with Christ, who reigns with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost forever.

XXXIV

ABOUT the same time the venerable man, from motives of humanity, besought Broichan the Druid to liberate a certain Scotie female slave, and

Concerning the illness with which the Druid Broichan was visited for his detention of a female slave, and his cure on her release.

when he very cruelly and obstinately refused to part with her, the saint then spoke to him to the following effect: "Know, O Broichan, and be assured that if thou refuse to set this captive free, as I desire thee, that thou shalt die suddenly before I take my departure again from this province." Having said this in presence of Brude, the king, he departed from the royal palace and proceeded to the river Nesa (the Ness); from this stream he took a white pebble, and showing it to his companions said to them: "Behold this white pebble by which God will effect the cure of many diseases among this heathen nation."

Having thus spoken, he instantly added, "Broichan is chastised grievously at this moment, for an angel being sent from heaven, and striking him severely, hath broken into many pieces the glass cup in his hand from which he was drinking, and hath left him gasping deeply for breath, and half dead. Let us await here a short time, for two of the king's messengers, who have been sent after us in haste, to request us to return quickly and help the dying Broichan, who, now that he is thus terribly punished, consenteth to set the girl free."

Whilst the saint was yet speaking, behold, there arrived, as he had predicted, two horsemen who were sent by the king, and who related all that had occurred to Broichan in the royal fortress, according to the prediction of the saint—both the breaking of the drinking goblet, the punishment of the Druid, and his willingness to set his captive at liberty; they then added: "The king and his friends have sent us to thee to request that thou wouldst cure his foster-father Broichan, who lieth in a dying state."

Having heard these words of the messengers, St. Columba sent two of his companions to the king with the pebble which he had blessed, and said to them: "If Broichan shall first promise to set the maiden free, then at once immerse this little stone in water, and let him drink from it and he shall be instantly cured; but if he break his vow and refuse to liberate her, he shall die that instant."

The two persons, in obedience to the saint's instructions, proceeded to the palace, and announced to the king the words of the venerable man. When they were made known to the king and his tutor Broichan, they were so dismayed that they immediately liberated the captive and delivered her to the saint's messengers. The pebble was then immersed in water, and in a wonderful manner, contrary to the laws of nature, the stone floated on the wa-

ter like a nut or an apple, nor, as it had been blessed by the holy man, could it be submerged. Broichan drank from the stone as it floated on the water, and instantly returning from the verge of death recovered his perfect health and soundness of body.

This remarkable pebble, which was afterwards preserved among the treasures of the king, through the mercy of God effected the cure of sundry diseases among the people, while it in the same manner floated when dipped in water. And what is very wonderful, when this same stone was sought for by those sick persons whose term of life had arrived, it could not be found. Thus, on the very day on which King Brude died, though it was sought for, yet it could not be found in the place where it had been previously laid.

XXXV

Of the manner in which St. Columba overcame Broichan the Druid and sailed against the wind.

ON a certain day after the events recorded in the foregoing chapters, Broichan, whilst conversing with the saint, said to him: "Tell me, Columba, when dost thou propose to set sail?" The saint replied, "I intend to begin my voyage after three days, if God permits me, and preserves my life." Broichan said, "On the contrary, thou shalt not be able, for I can make the winds unfavourable to thy voyage, and cause a great darkness to envelop you in its shade." Upon this the saint observed: "The almighty power of God ruleth all things, and in His name and under His guiding providence all our movements are directed." What more need I say? That same day, the saint, accompanied by a large number of followers, went to the long lake of the river Nesa (Loch Ness), as he had determined. Then the Druids began to exult, seeing that it had become very dark, and that the wind was very violent and contrary. Nor should we wonder, that God sometimes allows them, with the aid of evil spirits, to raise tempests and agitate the sea. For thus legions of demons once met in the midst of the sea the holy bishop Germanus, whilst on his voyage through the Gallican channel to Britain, whither he was going from zeal for the salvation of souls, and exposed him to great dangers, by raising a violent storm and causing great darkness whilst it was yet day. But all these things were dissipated by the prayers of St. Germanus more rapidly than his words were uttered, and the darkness passed away.

Our Columba, therefore, seeing that the sea was violently agitated, and

that the wind was most unfavourable for his voyage, called on Christ the Lord and embarked in his small boat; and whilst the sailors hesitated, he the more confidently ordered them to raise the sails against the wind. No sooner was this order executed, while the whole crowd was looking on, than the vessel ran against the wind with extraordinary speed. And after a short time, the wind, which hitherto had been against them, veered round to help them on their voyage, to the intense astonishment of all. And thus throughout the remainder of that day the light breeze continued most favourable, and the skiff of blessed man was carried safely to the wished-for haven.

Let the reader therefore consider how great and eminent this venerable man must have been, upon whom God Almighty, for the purpose of manifesting His illustrious name before a heathen people, bestowed the gift of working such miracles as those we have recorded.

Of the sudden opening of the door of the Royal Fortress of its own accord.

XXXVI

AT another time, when the saint made his first journey to King Brude, it happened that the king, elated by the pride of royalty, acted haughtily, and would not open his gates on the first arrival of the blessed man. When the man of God observed this, he approached the folding doors with his companions, and having first formed upon them the sign of the cross of our Lord, he then knocked at and laid his hand upon the gate, which instantly flew open of its own accord, the bolts having been driven back with great force. The saint and his companions then passed through the gate thus speedily opened. And when the king learned what had occurred, he and his councillors were filled with alarm, and immediately setting out from the palace, he advanced to meet with due respect the blessed man, whom he addressed in the most conciliating and respectful language. And ever after from that day, so long as he lived, the king held this holy and reverend man in very great honour, as was due.

Of a similar unclosing of the Church of the Field of the Two Streams (Tirdaglas, in the county of Tipperary).

XXXVII

UPON another occasion, when the saint was staying a few days in Scotia (Ireland), he went, on invitation, to visit the brethren in the monastery of the

Field of the Two Streams (Tirdaglas). But it happened, by some accident, that when he arrived at the church the keys of the oratory could not be found. When the saint observed the brethren lamenting to one another about the keys being astray, and the door locked, he went himself to the door and said, “The Lord is able, without a key, to open his own house for his servants.” At these words, the bolts of the lock were driven back with great force, and the door opened of itself. The saint entered the church before all with universal admiration; and he was afterwards most hospitably entertained by the brethren, and treated by all with the greatest respect and veneration.

XXXVIII

AT another time there came to St. Columba a very poor peasant, who lived in the district which borders the shores of the Aporic lake (Lochaber). The blessed man, taking pity on the wretched man, who had not wherewithal to support his wife and family, gave him all the alms he could afford, and then said to him, “Poor man, take a branch from the neighbouring wood, and bring it to me quickly.” The wretched man brought the branch as he was directed, and the saint, taking it in his own hand, sharpened it to a point like a stake, and, blessing it, gave it back to the destitute man, saying, “Preserve this stake with great care, and it, I believe, will never hurt men or cattle, but only wild beasts and fishes; and as long as thou preservest this stake thou shalt never be without abundance of venison in thy house.”

The wretched beggar upon hearing this was greatly delighted, and returning home, fixed the stake in a remote place which was frequented by the wild beasts of the forest; and when that next night was past, he went at early morning dawn to see the stake, and found a stag of great size that had fallen upon it and been transfixt by it. Why should I mention more instances? Not a day could pass, so the tradition goes, in which he did not find a stag or hind or some other wild beast fixed upon the stake; and his whole house being thus filled with the flesh of the wild beasts, he sold to his neighbours all that remained after his own family was supplied. But, as in the case of Adam, the envy of the devil also found out this miserable man also through his wife, who, not as a prudent matron, but rather like one infatuated, thus spoke to her husband: “Remove the stake out of the earth, for if men, or

Concerning a certain Peasant who was a beggar, for whom, the Saint made and blessed a stake for killing wild beasts.

cattle, perish on it, then thou and I and our children shall be put to death, or led into captivity." To these words her husband replied, "It will not be so, for when the holy man blessed the stake he said it would never injure men or cattle." Still the miserable man, after saying this, yielded to his wife, and taking the stake out of the earth, like a man deprived of his reason, brought it into the house and placed it against the wall. Soon after his house-dog fell upon it and was killed, and on its death his wife said to him, "One of thy children will fall upon it and be killed." At these words of his wife he removed the stake out of the house, and having carried it to a forest, placed it in the thickest brushwood, where, as he thought, no animal could be hurt by it; but upon his return the following day he found a roe had fallen upon it and perished. He then took it away and concealed it by thrusting it under the water in the edge of the river, which may be called in Latin *Nigra Dea* (not identified). On returning the next day he found transfixed, and still held by it, a salmon of extraordinary size, which he was scarcely able by himself to take from the river and carry home. At the same time, he took the stake again back with him from the water, and placed it outside on the top of his house, where a crow having soon after lighted, was instantly killed by the force of the fall. Upon this the miserable man, yielding again to the advice of his foolish wife, took down the stake from the house-top, and taking an axe cut it in many pieces, and threw them into the fire. Having thus deprived himself of this effectual means of alleviating his distress, he was again, as he deserved to be, reduced to beggary. This freedom from want was owing to the stake, so frequently mentioned above, which the blessed man had blest and given him, and which, so long as it was kept, could suffice for snares and nets, and every kind of fishing and hunting; but when the stake was lost, the wretched peasant, though he had been enriched for the time, could only, when too late, lament over it with his whole family all the rest of his life.

Concerning a
Leathern Vessel
for holding
milk which was
carried from its
place by the ebb,
and brought
back again by
the return of the
tide.

XXXIX

ON another occasion, when the blessed man's messenger, who was named *Lugaid*, and surnamed *Laitir*, was at his command making preparations for a voyage to *Scotia* (Ireland), he searched for and found amongst the sea-going articles that belonged to the saint's ship a leathern vessel for holding milk. This vessel he immersed in the sea in order to moisten it, and put

upon it stones of considerable size. He then went to the saint, and told him what he had done with the leathern bottle. The saint smiled and said, "I do not think that this vessel, which thou sayest thou hast sunk under the waves, will accompany thee to Hibernia on the present occasion." "Why," rejoined Lugaid, "can I not take it with me in the ship?" The saint replied, "Thou shalt learn the reason tomorrow, as the event will prove."

On the following morning, therefore, Lugaid went to take the vessel out of the sea, but the ebb of the tide had carried it away during the night. When he could not find it, he returned in grief to the saint, and on his bended knees on the ground confessed his negligence. St. Columba consoled him, saying, "My brother, grieve not for perishable things. The vessel which the ebbing tide has carried away the returning tide will, after your departure, bring back to the spot where thou didst place it." At the ninth hour of the same day, soon after the departure of Lugaid from the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), the saint addressed those who stood near him, and said, "Let one of you now go to the sea, for the leathern vessel for which Lugaid was lamenting, when it was carried away by the ebbing tide, hath been brought back by the returning tide, and is to be found at the place from which it was taken." Upon hearing these words spoken by the saint, a certain active youth ran to the sea-shore, where he found the vessel, as the saint had predicted. He immediately took it out of the water, and with great joy hastened back at full speed to the holy man, into whose hands he delivered it, amid the great admiration of all the beholders.

In the two miracles which we have just recorded, and which regard such common and trifling things as a wooden stake and a leathern vessel, there may, nevertheless, be observed, as we noticed before, the gift of prophecy united with the power of working miracles.

Let us now proceed with our narrative regarding other things.

XL

AT another time, while the saint was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), a certain man of humble birth, who had lately assumed the clerical habit, sailed over from Scotia (Ireland), and came to the blessed man's monastery on the island. The saint found him one day sitting alone in the

The Saint's
prophecy regard-
ing Libran, of the
Rush-ground.

lodging provided for strangers, and inquired first about his country, family, and the object of his journey. He replied that he was born in the region of the Connacht men (Connaught), and that he had undertaken that long and weary journey to atone for his sins by the pilgrimage. In order to test the depth of his repentance, the saint then laid down minutely before his eyes the hardship and labour attending the monastic exercises. "I am prepared," he replied at once to the saint, "to do everything whatever thou shalt bid me, however hard and however humiliating." Why add more? That same hour he confessed all his sins, and promised, kneeling on the ground, to fulfil the laws of penance. The saint said to him, "Arise and take a seat." Then he thus addressed him as he sat, "Thou must do penance for seven years in the Ethican land (Tiree); thou and I, with God's blessing, shall survive that period of seven years." Being comforted by the saint's words, he first gave thanks to God, and turning afterwards to the saint, asked, "What am I to do with regard to an oath which I have violated? for while living in my own country I murdered a certain man, and afterwards, as guilty of murdering him, I was confined in prison. But a certain very wealthy blood-relation came to my aid, and promptly loosing me from my prison-chains, rescued me from the death to which I was condemned. When I was released, I bound myself by oath to serve that friend all the days of my life; but I had remained only a short time in his service, when I felt ashamed of serving man, and very much preferred to devote myself to God. I therefore left that earthly master, broke the oath, and departing, reached thee safely, God prospering my journey thus far." The saint, on seeing him very much grieved over such things, and first prophesying with respect to him, thus made answer, saying, "At the end of seven years, as I said to thee, thou shalt come to me here during the forty days of Lent, and thou shalt approach the altar and partake of the Lucharist at the great Paschal festival." Why hang longer over words? The penitent stranger in every respect obeyed the saint's commands; and being sent at that time to the monastery of the Plain of Lunge (Magh Lunge, in Tiree), and having fully completed his seven years' penance there, returned to him during Lent, according to the previous command and prophecy. After celebrating the Paschal solemnity, and coming at that time to the altar as directed, he came again to the saint to consult him on the above-mentioned oath. Then the saint gave this prophetic answer to his inquiry, "That earthly master of thine of whom thou hast formerly spoken is still living; so are thy father, thy mother, and thy

Life of Saint Columba

brethren. Thou must now, therefore, prepare thyself for the voyage.” And while speaking, he drew forth a sword ornamented with carved ivory, and said, “Take this gift to carry with thee, and offer it to thy master as the price of thy ransom; but when thou dost, he will on no account accept it, for he has a virtuous, kindly-disposed wife, and by the influence of her wholesome counsel he shall that very day, without recompense or ransom, set thee free, unbinding the girdle round thy captive loins. But though thus relieved from this anxiety, thou shalt not escape a source of disquietude arising on another hand, for thy brethren will come round and press thee to make good the support due to thy father for so long a time which thou hast neglected. Comply thou at once with their wish, and take in hand dutifully to cherish thine aged father. Though the duty may, indeed, seem weighty, thou must not be grieved thereat, because thou shalt soon be relieved of it; for from the day on which thou shalt take charge of thy father, the end of that same week shall see his death and burial. But after thy father’s burial thy brethren will a second time come and sharply demand of thee that thou pay the expenses due for thy mother. However, thy younger brother will assuredly set thee free from this necessity by engaging to perform in thy stead every duty or obligation which thou owest to thy mother.”

Having heard these words, the above-mentioned brother, whose name was Libran, received the gift, and set out enriched with the saint’s blessing. When he reached his native country, he found everything exactly as prophesied by the saint. For when he showed and made offer of the price of his freedom to his master, his wife opposed his wish to accept it, saying, “What need have we to accept this ransom sent by St. Columba? We are not even worthy of such a favour. Release this dutiful servant without payment. The prayers of the holy man will profit us more than this price which is offered us.” The husband, therefore, listening to his wife’s wholesome counsel, set the slave free at once without ransom. He was afterwards, according to the saint’s prophecy, compelled by his brethren to undertake the providing for his father, and he buried him at his death on the seventh day. After his burial they required him to discharge the same duty to his mother; but a younger brother, as the saint foretold, engaged to supply his place, and thus released him from the obligation. “We ought not on any account,” said he to his brethren, “detain this our brother at home, who, for the salvation of his soul,

has spent seven years in penitential exercises with St. Columba in Britain.”

After being thus released from the matters which gave him annoyance, he bade farewell to his mother and brothers, and returned a free man to a place called in the Scotie tongue Daire Calgaich (Derry). There he found a ship under sail just leaving the harbour, and he called to the sailors to take him on board and convey him to Britain. But they, not being the monks of St. Columba, refused to receive him. He then prayed to the venerable man, who, though far distant, indeed, in body, yet was present in spirit, as the event soon proved, saying, “Is it thy will, holy Columba, that these sailors, who do not receive me, thy companion, proceed upon their voyage with full sails and favourable winds?”

At this saying the wind, which till then was favourable for them, veered round on the instant to the opposite point. While this was taking place, the sailors saw again the same man running in a line with them along the bank of the river, and, hastily taking counsel together, they cried out to him from the ship, saying, “Perhaps the wind hath suddenly turned against us, for this reason, that we refused to give thee a passage; but if even now we were to invite thee to be with us on board, couldst thou change these contrary winds to be in our favour?” When the pilgrim heard this, he said to them, “St. Columba, to whom I am going, and whom I have served for the last seven years, is able by prayer, if you take me on board, to obtain a favourable wind for you from his Lord.” They then on hearing this, approached the land with their ship, and asked him to join them in it. As soon as he came on board, he said, “In the name of the Almighty God, whom St. Columba blamelessly serveth, spread your sails on the extended yards.” And when they had done so, the gale of contrary winds immediately became favourable, and the vessel made a prosperous voyage under full sail to Britain. After reaching the shores of Britain, Libran left the ship, blessed the sailors, and went directly to St. Columba, who was staying in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona). The blessed man welcomed him with joy, and, without receiving the information from any one, told him fully of everything that happened on his way—of his master and the wife’s kindly suggestion and of his being set free by her advice; of his brethren also, and the death and burial of his father within the week; of his mother, and the timely assistance of the younger brother; of what occurred as he was returning, the adverse and favourable winds; of the words of the

Life of Saint Columba

sailors when first they refused to take him in; of the promise of fair wind, and of the favourable change when they took him on board their vessel. Why need I add more? Every particular the saint foretold he now described after it was exactly fulfilled.

After these words, the traveller gave back to the saint the price of his ransom which he had received from him; and at the same time the saint addressed him in these words: “Inasmuch as thou art free, thou shalt be called Libran.” Libran took at the same period the monastic vows with much fervour.

And when he was being sent back again by the holy man to the monastery where he had formerly served the Lord during the seven years of penance, he received in farewell the following prophetic announcement regarding himself: “Thou shalt live yet a long time, and end this present life in a good old age; yet thou shalt not arise from the dead in Britain, but in Scotia (Ireland).” Hearing these words, he knelt down and wept bitterly. When the saint saw his great grief he tried to comfort him, saying, “Arise, and be not sad. Thou shalt die in one of my monasteries, and thy lot shall be among my chosen monks in the kingdom; and with them thou shalt awake from the sleep of death unto the resurrection of life.” When he heard this unusual consolation from the saint he rejoiced exceedingly, and, being enriched by the saint’s blessing, went away in peace. This truthful prophecy of the saint regarding the same man was afterwards fulfilled; for when he had faithfully served the Lord for many revolving years of holy obedience in the monastery of the Plain of Lunge (Magh Lunge, in Tیره), after the departure of St. Columba from the world, he was sent, in extreme old age, on a mission to Scotia regarding the interests of the monastery, and proceeded as soon as he landed through the Plain of Breg (Maghbreg, in Meath), till he reached the monastery of the Oakwood Plain (Derry). Being there received as a stranger in the guest-chamber, and suffering from a certain disease, he passed to the Lord in peace on the seventh day of his illness, and was buried with the chosen monks of St. Columba, according to his prophecy, to await the resurrection unto eternal life.

Let it suffice that we have written these truthful prophecies of St. Columba regarding Libran of the Rush-ground. He was called “of the Rush-ground” from his having been engaged many years in the labour of collecting rushes.

XLI

Concerning a certain little Woman who, as a daughter of Eve, was enduring the great and extremely dangerous pains of childbirth.

ON a certain day during the saint's stay in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), the saint arose from reading, and said with a smile, "I must now hasten to the oratory to pray to the Lord on behalf of a poor woman in Hibernia, who at this moment is suffering the pangs of a most difficult childbirth, and is calling upon the name of Columba. She trusteth that God will grant her relief from her sufferings through my prayers, because she is a relation of mine, being lineally descended from the house of my mother's parentage."

Having said this, the saint, being touched with pity for the poor woman, hastened to the church, and, on his bended knees, earnestly prayed for her to Christ, who was Himself by birth a partaker of humanity. Returning from the church after his prayer, he said to the brethren who met him, "The Lord Jesus, born of a woman, hath given seasonable help to this poor woman, and hath mercifully relieved her from her distress. She hath been safely delivered of a child, nor shall she die upon this occasion." That same hour, as the saint had predicted, the poor woman, by invoking his name, was safely delivered, and restored to perfect health, as we afterwards learned from travellers who came to us from that part of Scotia (Ireland) where the woman resided.

Of one Lugne, surnamed Tudida, a Pilot, who lived on the Rechrean island (either Rathlin or Lambay), and whom, as being deformed, his wife hated.

XLII

ANOTHER time, when the saint was living on the Rechrean island, a certain man of humble birth came to him and complained of his wife, who, as he said, so hated him, that she would on no account allow him to come near her for marriage rights. The saint on hearing this, sent for the wife, and, so far as he could, began to reprove her on that account, saying: "Why, O woman, dost thou endeavour to withdraw thy flesh from thyself, while the Lord says, 'They shall be two in one flesh'? Wherefore the flesh of thy husband is thy flesh." She answered and said, "Whatever thou shalt require of me I am ready to do, however hard it may be, with this single exception, that thou dost not urge me in any way to sleep in one bed with Lugne. I do not refuse to perform every duty at home, or, if thou dost command me, even to pass over the seas, or to live in some monastery for women." The saint then said, "What thou dost propose cannot be lawfully done, for thou art bound by the law of the husband as long as thy husband liveth, for it would be impious to

separate those whom God has lawfully joined together.” Immediately after these words he added: “This day let us three, namely, the husband and his wife and myself, join in prayer to the Lord and in fasting.” But the woman replied: “I know it is not impossible for thee to obtain from God, when thou askest them, those things that seem to us either difficult, or even impossible.” It is unnecessary to say more. The husband and wife agreed to fast with the saint that day, and the following night the saint spent sleepless in prayer for them. Next day he thus addressed the wife in presence of her husband, and said to her: “O woman, art thou still ready to-day, as thou saidst yesterday, to go away to a convent of women?” “I know now,” she answered, “that thy prayer to God for me hath been heard; for that man whom I hated yesterday, I love today; for my heart hath been changed last night in some unknown way—from hatred to love.” Why need we linger over it? From that day to the hour of death, the soul of the wife was firmly cemented in affection to her husband, so that she no longer refused those mutual matrimonial rights which she was formerly unwilling to allow.

XLIII

AT another time a soldier of Christ, named Cormac, about whom we have related a few brief particulars in the first part of this book, made even a second attempt to discover a desert in the ocean. After he had gone far from the land over the boundless ocean at full sail, St. Columba, who was then staying beyond the Dorsal Ridge of Britain (Drumalban), recommended him in the following terms to King Brude, in the presence of the ruler of the Orcades (Orkneys): “Some of our brethren have lately set sail, and are anxious to discover a desert in the pathless sea; should they happen, after many wanderings, to come to the Orcadian islands, do thou carefully instruct this chief, whose hostages are in thy hand, that no evil befall them within his dominions.” The saint took care to give this direction, because he knew that after a few months Cormac would arrive at the Orcades. So it afterwards came to pass, and to this advice of the holy man Cormac owed his escape from impending death.

After the lapse of a few months, whilst the saint was remaining in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), Cormac’s name was mentioned one day unexpectedly

The Prophecy
of the blessed
man regarding
the Voyage of
Cormac the
grandson of
Lethan.

in his presence by some persons in conversation, who were observing that it was not yet known whether the voyage of Cormac had been successful or otherwise. Upon hearing this, the saint joined the conversation and said: "You shall see Cormac, about whom you are now speaking, arrive here today."

And after about an hour, wonderful to relate, lo! Cormac unexpectedly arrived, and proceeded to the oratory whilst all expressed their admiration and gave thanks to God.

Having mentioned thus briefly the prediction of the blessed man regarding Cormac's second voyage, we have now to relate another equally remarkable instance of the holy man's prophetic knowledge regarding his third voyage.

When Cormac was laboriously engaged in his third voyage over the ocean, he was exposed to the most imminent danger of death. For, when for fourteen days in summer, and as many nights, his vessel sailed with full sails before a south wind, in a straight course from land, into the northern regions, his voyage seemed to be extended beyond the limits of human wanderings, and return to be impossible.

Accordingly, after the tenth hour of the fourteenth day, certain dangers of a most formidable and almost insurmountable kind presented themselves. A multitude of loathsome and annoying insects, such as had never been seen before, covered the sea in swarms, and struck the keel and sides, the prow, and stern of the vessel, so very violently, that it seemed as if they would wholly penetrate the leathern covering of the ship. According to the accounts afterwards-given by those who were there, they were about the size of frogs; they could swim, but were not able to fly; their sting was extremely painful, and they crowded upon the handles of the oars.

When Cormac and his fellow-voyagers had seen these and other monsters, which it is not now our province to describe, they were filled with fear and alarm, and, shedding copious tears, they prayed to God, who is a kind and ready helper of those who are in trouble. At that same hour our holy Columba, although far away in body, was present in spirit with Cormac in the ship. Accordingly he gave the signal, and calling the brethren to the oratory, he entered the church, and addressing those who were present, he uttered the following prophecy in his usual manner: "Brethren, pray with all your

Life of Saint Columba

usual fervour for Cormac, who by sailing too far hath passed the bounds of human enterprise, and is exposed at this moment to dreadful alarm and fright, in the presence of monsters which were never before seen, and are almost indescribable. We ought, therefore, to sympathize with our brethren and associates who are in such imminent danger, and to pray to the Lord with them; behold at this moment Cormac and his sailors are shedding copious tears, and praying with intense fervency to Christ; let us assist them by our prayers, that God may take compassion upon us, and cause the wind, which for the past fourteen days has blown from the south, to blow from the north, and this north wind will, of course, deliver Cormac's vessel out of all danger."

Having said this he knelt before the altar, and in a plaintive voice poured forth his prayers to the almighty power of God, who governeth the winds and all things, After having prayed he arose quickly, and wiping away his tears, joyfully gave thanks to God, saying, "Now, brethren, let us congratulate our dear friends for whom we have been praying, for God will now change the south into a north wind, which will free our associates from their perils, and bring them to us here again." As he spoke the south wind ceased, and a north wind blew for many days after, so that Cormac's ship was enabled to gain the land. And Cormac hastened to visit Columba, and in God's bounty they looked on each other again face to face, to the extreme joy and wonder of all. Let the reader, then, carefully consider how great and of what a character the blessed man must have been, who possessed such prophetic knowledge, and who, by invoking the name of Christ, could rule the winds and the waves.

XLIV

AT another time, while the saint was spending a few days in Scotia (Ireland), some ecclesiastical object required his presence, and accordingly he ascended a yoked car which he had previously blessed; but from some unaccountable neglect the requisite lynch-pins were not inserted in the holes at the extremities of the axles. The person who on this occasion performed the duty of driver in the carriage with St. Columba was Columban, a holy man, the son of Echud, and founder of that monastery which is called in the Scotie language Snam luthir (now Slanore, in Granard, county of Longford). The distance they rode that day was very long, and the jolting severe, yet the

How the venerable man made a Journey in a Chariot which was not secured with the proper lynch-pins.

wheels did not come off the axles nor even stir from their proper places, although, as was mentioned before, there were no lynch-pins to secure them. But divine grace alone so favoured the venerable man that the car in which he was safely seated proceeded without being upset, or meeting any obstacle to retard its progress.

Thus far we may have written enough regarding the miracles which the divine omnipotence wrought through this remarkable man while he lived; we shall now mention also a few out of many well-authenticated miracles which the Lord was pleased to grant to him after his death.

Of the Rain
which, after
some months
of drought, the
Lord bountiful-
ly poured out
upon the earth
in honour of the
blessed man.

XLV

ABOUT fourteen years before the date at which we write, there occurred during the spring a very great and long-continued drought in these marshy regions, insomuch that the threat denounced against sinners in the Book of Leviticus seemed to impend over the people: "I will give to you the heaven above as iron, and the earth as brass. Your labour shall be spent in vain, the ground shall not bring forth her increase, nor the trees their fruit," etc.

We therefore, reading these words, and fearing the impending calamity, took counsel together, and resolved that some of the senior members of the community should walk round a newly ploughed and sowed field, taking with them the white tunic of St. Columba, and some books written in his own hand, that they should raise in the air, and shake three times the tunic which the saint wore at the hour of his death; and that they then should open the books and read them on the little hill of the angels (now called Sithean Mor), where the citizens of the heavenly country were occasionally seen to descend at the bidding of the blessed man. When these directions had been executed in the manner prescribed, then, strange to relate, the sky, which during the preceding months of March and April had been cloudless, was suddenly covered with dense vapours that arose from the sea with extraordinary rapidity; copious rain fell day and night, and the parched earth being sufficiently moistened, produced its fruits in good season, and yielded the same year a most abundant harvest. And thus the invocation of the very name of the blessed man, by the exhibition of his tunic and books, obtained seasonable relief at the same time for many places and much people.

XLVI

Of the unfavourable Winds which, through the intercession of our Saint, were changed into propitious breezes.

OUR belief in the miracles which we have recorded, but which we did not ourselves see, is confirmed beyond doubt by the miracles of which we were eye-witnesses; for on three different occasions we saw unfavourable gales of wind changed unto propitious breezes.

On the first occasion we had to draw over land long boats of hewn pine and oak, and to bring home in the same way a large quantity of materials for building ships. In order to obtain from the Lord a favourable wind for our voyage, we took counsel and put the books and garments of the blessed man upon the altar, and at the same time fasted, chanted psalms, and invoked his name. And this was granted to the holy man by God's favour, for on the day that our sailors had made all their preparations, and were ready to convey the wood for the purposes above mentioned in curachs and skiffs, the wind, which for several days before had been contrary, suddenly changed into favourable breezes. They blew steadily the entire day, by God's blessing, and enabled the whole fleet of boats to make their long and dangerous passage to the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), with safety and expedition.

On the second occasion, which was a few years after the one just mentioned, our monastery was requiring repairs, and some oak-trees were to be taken from near the mouth of the river Sale (the Seil, in Lorn), in twelve vessels which we brought for the purpose. Our sailors then rowed out to sea with their oars, the day being calm and the sea tranquil, when suddenly a westerly wind, which is also called Zephyr, sprang up, and we betook ourselves to the nearest island, which is called in Scotie Airthrago (probably Kerrera), to seek for shelter in a harbour in it.

But in the meantime we began to complain of this unfavourable change in the wind, and in some measure even to blame our Columba, saying, "Doth our unfortunate detention in this place please thee, O saint? Hitherto we had hoped that we might receive from thee some aid and comfort in our labours through the divine favour, seeing we thought that thou wert honoured and powerful in the sight of God."

No sooner had we thus spoken, than, wonderful to relate, the unfavourable west wind ceased, and immediately, in the course as it were of one min-

ute, behold a most favourable south-eastern breeze sprang up. The sailors were then directed to raise the sail yards in the form of a cross, and spread the sails upon them; thus putting to sea with a steady and favourable breeze, we were enabled, without the slightest fatigue, to reach our island that same day, rejoicing in our cargo of wood, and in the company of all who were engaged in assisting us in the ships. Thus the chiding with the holy man, slight though it was, in that complaint assisted us not a little; and in what and how great esteem the saint is held by the Lord is evident from His hearing him so quickly and changing the winds.

Then the third instance was in the summer, after the celebration of a synod in Hibernia, when we were detained by contrary winds for a few days among the people of the tribe of Loern (Lorn), and had reached the Sainean island (Shuna). There the vigil and the feast of St. Columba found us extremely sad and disconsolate, because we wished to celebrate that joyous day in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona). Accordingly, as on a former occasion, we began to complain and to say, "Is it agreeable to thee, O saint, that we should spend tomorrow, thy festival-day, among strangers, and not celebrate it in shine own church? It is easy for thee in the morning of such a day to obtain from the Lord that the contrary winds may become favourable, and that we may be able to celebrate the solemn mass of thy birth in shine own church. On the following morning we arose at daybreak, and seeing that the adverse winds had ceased, we went on board our vessels and put to sea in a profound calm, when, lo! there suddenly sprung up a south wind, which was most favourable for the voyage. The sailors then joyously raised the sails, and on this occasion also without any exertion on our part, so quick and so favourable was our passage, owing to the mercy of God to the blessed man, that we reached the landing-place of the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), after the third hour, according to our previous anxious desire. After washing our hands and feet we entered the church at the sixth hour in company with our brethren, and celebrated at once the holy services of the mass of St. Columba and St. Baithene, whose festivals occurred on that day, at the daybreak of which, as we said above, we started: from the distant Sainean island (Shuna).

And as to the truth of this story I have now related, there are yet living, not merely one or two witnesses as the law requires, but hundreds and more who can bear testimony.

WHAT we are about to relate concerning the plague, which in our own time twice visited the greater part of the world, deserves, I think, to be reckoned among not the least of the miracles of St. Columba. For, not to mention the other and greater countries of Europe, including Italy, the Roman States, and the Cisalpine provinces of Gaul, with the States of Spain also, which lie beyond the Pyrenees, these islands of the sea, Scotia (Ireland) and Britain, have twice been ravaged by a dreadful pestilence throughout their whole extent, except among the two tribes, the Picts and Scots of Britain, who are separated from each other by the Dorsal mountains of Britain. And although neither of these nations was free from those grievous crimes which generally provoke the anger of the eternal Judge, yet both have been hitherto patiently borne with and mercifully spared. Now, to what other person can this favour granted them by God be attributed unless to St. Columba, whose monasteries lie within the territories of both these people, and have been regarded by both with the greatest respect up to the present time? But what I am now to say cannot, I think, be heard without a sigh, that there are many very stupid people in both countries who, in their ignorance that they owe their exemption from the plague to the prayers of the saint, ungratefully and wickedly abuse the patience and the goodness of God. But I often return my most grateful thanks to God for having, through the intercession of our holy patron, preserved me and those in our islands from the ravages of the pestilence; and that in Saxonia also, when I went to visit my friend King Aldfrid, where the plague was raging and laying waste many of his villages, yet both in its first attack, immediately after the war of Ecfrius, and in its second, two years subsequently, the Lord mercifully saved me from danger, though I was living and moving about in the very midst of the plague. The Divine mercy was also extended to my companions, not one of whom died of the plague, or was attacked with any other disease.

Here must end the second Book recording the miracles, and it is right for me to draw attention to the fact, that many well-authenticated miracles have been omitted in order not to fatigue the reader.

Here endeth the Second Book.

BOOK THREE

HERE BEGINNETH THE THIRD BOOK.

OF THE VISIONS OF ANGELS.

I

IN the first of these three little Books we have, under the guidance of God, shortly and concisely related, as was observed before, some of the prophetic revelations. In the second we have recorded the powerful miracles the blessed man wrought, which, as we have often observed, were generally accompanied with the gift of prophecy. But in this third Book, which treateth of the Apparitions of Angels, we shall relate those which either our saint received regarding others, or others saw regarding him; we shall also describe some which were manifested to both parties, though in different measure, that is, to the saint himself, specially and clearly, but to the others improperly and partially, or, in other words, externally and tentatively, yet in the same visions either of angels, or of heavenly light. Whatever discrepancies however in any case may at first sight seem to occur in those visions, will be completely removed as we proceed to relate them in their proper places. But now we must begin at the very birth of the blessed man, and relate these angelic manifestations.

II

ON a certain night between the conception and birth of the venerable man, an angel of the Lord appeared to his mother in dreams, bringing to her, as he stood by her, a certain robe of extraordinary beauty, in which the most beautiful colours, as it were, of all the flowers seemed to be portrayed. After a short time he asked it back, and took it out of her hands, and having raised it and spread it out, he let it fly through the air. But she being sad at the loss of it, said to that man of venerable aspect, "Why dost thou take this lovely cloak away from me so soon?" He immediately replied, "Because this mantle is so exceedingly honourable that thou canst not retain it longer with thee." When this was said, the woman saw that the fore-mentioned robe was gradually receding from her in its flight; and that then it expanded until its width exceeded the plains, and in all its measurements was larger than the mountains and forests. Then she heard the following words: "Woman, do not grieve, for to the man to whom thou hast been joined by the marriage bond, thou shalt bring forth a son, of so beautiful a character, that he shall be reckoned among his own people as one of the prophets of God, and hath been predestined by God to be the leader of innumerable souls to the heavenly country." At these words the woman awoke from her sleep.

III

ON another night, Cruithnecan, a priest of blameless life, to whose care the blessed youth was confided, upon returning home from the church after mass, found his house illuminated with a bright light, and saw in fact a ball of fire standing over the face of the little boy as he lay asleep. At the sight he at once shook with fear, and fell down with his face to the ground in great amazement, well knowing that it indicated the grace of the Holy Spirit poured out from heaven upon his young charge.

Of the Ray of Light which was seen upon the boy's face as he lay asleep.

IV

FOR indeed after the lapse of many years, when St. Columba was excommunicated by a certain synod for some pardonable and very trifling reasons, and indeed unjustly, as it afterwards appeared at the end, he came to the'

Of the Apparition of Holy Angels whom St. Brenden saw accompanying the blessed man through the plain.

same meeting convened against himself. When St. Brenden, the founder of the monastery which in the Scotie language is called Birra (Birr, in King's County), saw him approaching in the distance, he quickly arose, and with head bowed down reverently kissed him. When some of the seniors in that assembly, going apart from the rest, were finding fault with him, and saying: "Why didst thou not decline to rise in presence of an excommunicated person, and to kiss him?" he replied to them in this wise: "If," said he, "you had seen what the Lord has this day thought fit to show to me regarding this his chosen one, whom you dishonour, you would never have excommunicated a person whom God not only doth not excommunicate, according to your unjust sentence, but even more and more highly esteemeth." "How, we would wish to know," said they in reply, "doth God exalt, as thou sayest, one whom we have excommunicated, not without reason?" "I have seen," said Brenden, "a most brilliant pillar wreathed with fiery tresses preceding this same man of God whom you treat with contempt; I have also seen holy angels accompanying him on his journey through the plain. Therefore I do not dare to slight him whom I see foreordained by God to be the leader of his people to life." When he said this, they desisted, and so far from daring to hold the saint any longer excommunicated, they even treated him with the greatest respect and reverence. This took place in Teilte (Taillte, now Teltown, in Meath).

The blessed man
in his journey.

V

ON another occasion the holy man went to the venerable Bishop Finnio, who had formerly been his preceptor, the youth to visit the man far advanced in years. When St. Finnio saw him coming to him, he observed also an angel of the Lord accompanying him, as he proceeded, and as it is handed down to us by well-informed persons, he made it known to certain brethren who were standing by, saying to them: "Behold, look now to Columba as he draweth near; he hath been deemed worthy of having an angelic inhabitant of heaven to be his companion in his wanderings." About that same time the holy man, with his twelve disciples and fellow-soldiers, sailed across to Britain.

VI

How an Angel of the Lord appeared in a vision to St. Columba while he stayed in the Hinba island (Eilean-na-Naoimh), being sent to him in order that he might appoint Aidan king.

ON another occasion, when this eminent man was staying in the Hinba island (Eilean-na-Naoimh), he saw, on a certain night, in a mental ecstasy, an angel sent to him from heaven, and holding in his hand a book of glass, regarding the appointment of kings. Having received the book from the hand of the angel, the venerable man, at his command, began to read it; and when he was reluctant to appoint Aidan king, as the book directed, because he had a greater affection for Iogenan his brother, the angel, suddenly stretching forth his hand, struck the saint with a scourge, the livid marks of which remained in his side all the days of his life. And he added these words: "Know for certain," said he, "that I am sent to thee by God with the book of glass, that in accordance with the words thou hast read therein, thou mayest inaugurate Aidan into the kingdom; but if thou refuse to obey this command, I will strike thee again." When therefore this angel of the Lord had appeared for three successive nights, having the same book of glass in his hand, and had repeated the same commands of the Lord regarding the appointment of the same king, the saint, in obedience to the command of the Lord, sailed across to the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), and there ordained, as he had been commanded, Aidan to be king, who had arrived at the same time as the saint. During the words of consecration, the saint declared the future regarding the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Aidan, and laying his hand upon his head, he consecrated and blessed him.

Cummene the Fair, in the book which he wrote on the virtues of St. Columba, states that St. Columba commenced his predictions regarding Aidan and his children and kingdom in the following manner: "Believe me, unhesitatingly, O Aidan," said he, "none of thine enemies shall be able to resist thee, unless thou first act unjustly towards me and my successors. Wherefore direct thou thy children to commend to their children, their grandchildren, and their posterity, not to let the sceptre pass out of their hands through evil counsels. For at whatever time they turn against me or my relatives who are in Hibernia, the scourge which I suffered on thy account from the angel shall bring great disgrace upon them by the hand of God, and the hearts of men shall be turned away from them, and their foes shall be greatly strengthened against them." Now this prophecy hath been fulfilled in our own times in the battle of Roth (Magh Rath, fought 637), in which Domnall Brecc, the

Adomnan of Iona

grandson of Aidan, ravaged without the slightest provocation the territory of Domnall, the grandson of Ainmuireg. And from that day to this they have been trodden down by strangers—a fate which pierces the heart with sighs and grief.

Of the Apparition of Angels carrying to heaven the soul of the blessed Brito.

VII

AT another time while the holy man was tarrying in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), one of his monks called Brito, a person given to all good works, being seized with bodily illness, was reduced to the last extremity. When the venerable man went to visit him at the hour of his departure, he stood for a few moments at his bedside, and after giving him his blessing, retired quickly from the house, not wishing to see him die, and the very moment after the holy man left the house the monk closed this present life.

Then the eminent man walking in the little court of his monastery, with his eyes upraised to heaven, was for a long time lost in wonder and admiration. But a certain brother named Aidan, the son of Libir, a truly virtuous and religious man, who was the only one of the brethren present at the time, fell upon his knees and asked the saint to tell him the reason of so great astonishment. The saint said to him in reply: “I have this moment seen the holy angels contending in the air against the hostile powers; and I return thanks to Christ, the Judge, because the victorious angels have carried off to the joys of our heavenly country the soul of this stranger, who is the first person that hath died among us in this island. But I beseech thee not to reveal this secret to any one during my life.”

Concerning the Vision of Angels vouchsafed the same holy man when they were bearing to heaven the soul of one named Diormit.

VIII

AT another time a stranger from Hibernia came to the saint and remained with him for some months in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona). The blessed man one day said to him: “One of the clerics of thy province, whose name I do not yet know, is being carried to heaven by the angels at this moment.” Then the brother, upon hearing this, began to search within himself regarding the province of the Anterii (Airthir), which is called in Scotie Indairthir (East Oriel, in Ulster), and also about the name of that blessed man, and in

due course thus expressed himself, saying: "I know a soldier of Jesus Christ, named Diormit, who built a small monastery in the same district where I dwelt." The saint said to him, "He of whom thou speakest is the very person who hath been carried into Paradise by the angels of God."

But this fact must be very carefully noted, that our venerable man was most careful to conceal from the knowledge of men many mysterious secrets which were concealed from others, but revealed to him by God, and this he did for two reasons, as he one day hinted to a few of the brethren; first, that he might avoid vain-glory, and secondly that he might not by the fame of his revelations being spread abroad, attract, to make inquiries at him, innumerable crowds who were anxious to ask some questions regarding themselves.

IX

ON another day while the holy man was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he went to seek in the woods for a place more remote from men and fitting for prayer. And there when he began to pray, he suddenly beheld, as he afterwards told a few of the brethren, a very black host of demons fighting against him with iron darts. These wicked demons wished, as the Holy Spirit revealed to the saint, to attack his monastery and kill with the same spears many of the brethren. But he, single-handed, against innumerable foes of such a nature, fought with the utmost bravery, having received the armour of the apostle Paul. And thus the contest was maintained on both sides during the greater part of the day, nor could the demons, countless though they were, vanquish him, nor was he able, by himself, to drive them from his island, until the angels of God, as the saint afterwards told certain persons, and they few in number, came to his aid, when the demons in terror gave way. On the same day, when the saint was returning to his monastery, after he had driven the devils from his island, he spoke these words concerning the same hostile legions, saying, "Those deadly foes, who this day, through the mercy of God and the assistance of his angels, have been put to flight from this small track of land, have fled to the Ethican land (Tiree), and there as savage invaders they will attack the monasteries of the brethren, and cause pestilential diseases, of which many will be grievously ill and die." All this came to pass in those days, as the blessed man had foreseen. And two days after he thus

Of the brave fight of the Angels against the Demons, and how they opportunely assisted the Saint in the same conflict.

spake from the revelation of the Holy Ghost, "Baithen hath managed wisely, with God's help, that the congregation of the church over which he hath been appointed by God to preside, in the plain of Lunge (Magh Lunge, in Tیره), should be defended by fasts and prayers against the attacks of the demons, and but one person shall die on this occasion." The whole took place as was foretold; for whilst many in the other monasteries of the same island fell victims to that disease, none except the one of whom the saint spoke died in the congregation which was under the charge of Baithen.

Of the Apparition of Angels whom the man of God saw carrying to heaven the soul of a blacksmith, named Columb, and surnamed Coilrigin.

X

A CERTAIN blacksmith, greatly devoted to works of charity, and full of other good works, dwelt in the midland districts of Scotia (Ireland). When the forementioned Columb, surnamed Coilrigin, was dying in a good old age, even at that very moment when he departed from the body St. Columba, who was then in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), thus addressed a few of the senior brethren who were standing around him, "Columb Coilrigin, the blacksmith, hath not laboured in vain, seeing that he hath had the happiness, as he desired, to purchase the eternal rewards by the labour of his hands. For, behold, at this moment, his soul is carried by the holy angels to the joys of the heavenly country, because he laid out all that he could earn by his trade in alms to the poor."

Of a similar vision of Angels whom the blessed man beheld carrying to heaven the soul of a certain virtuous woman.

XI

IN like manner, on another occasion, whilst the holy man was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he one day suddenly raised his eyes to heaven and uttered the words, "O happy woman! happy because of thy virtues; the angels of God are now carrying thy soul to paradise." Now these words from the mouth of the saint were heard by a certain religious brother, a Saxon, by name Genere, who was at the moment working at his trade, which was that of a baker. And on the same day of the month, at the end of the same year, the saint addressed the same Genere the Saxon, and said, "I see a wonderful thing; behold, the woman of whom I spake in thy presence last year, now meeteth in the air the soul of her husband, a poor and holy man, and together with the holy angels engageth in a contest for it against the adverse powers;

by their united assistance, and by the aid of the virtuous character of the man himself, his soul is rescued from the assaults of the demons, and brought to the place of eternal refreshment.

Of the Apparition of Holy Angels whom St. Columba beheld meeting in its passage the soul of St. Brenden, the founder of the monastery which in Scotie is called Birra (Birra, in King's County).

XII

ON another day also, while the venerable man was residing in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he called very early in the morning for his attendant, Diormit, so frequently mentioned before, and commanded him saying, "Make ready in haste for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, for today is the birthday of blessed Brenden." "Wherefore," said his attendant, "dost thou order such solemnities of the Mass to be prepared today? For no messenger hath come to us from Scotia (Ireland) to tell us of the death of that holy man." "Go," said the saint, "it is thy duty to obey my commands. For this last night I saw the heavens suddenly open, and choirs of angels descend to meet the soul of the holy Brenden; and so great and incomparable was the brightness, that in that same hour it illuminated the whole world."

XIII

ON another day also, while the brethren were putting on their sandals in the morning, and were making ready to go to their different duties in the monastery, the saint, on the contrary, bade them rest that day and prepare for the holy sacrifice, ordering also some addition to be made to their dinner, as on the Lord's day. "I must," said he, "though unworthy, celebrate today the holy mysteries of the Eucharist, out of veneration to that soul which this last night went up to paradise, beyond the region of the stars in the heavens, borne thither amid the holy choirs of the angels."

Of the Vision of Holy Angels who carried off to heaven the soul of the Bishop, St. Columban Mocu Loigse.

At these words the brethren obeyed, and, according to his directions, rested that day; then, after preparing for the due celebration of the sacred rite, they accompanied the saint to the church in their white robes as on a festival. But it came to pass that when in the course of chanting the offices, the prayer was being sung as usual in which St. Martin's name is commemorated, the saint, suddenly turning to the chanters, when they had come to make mention of that name, said, "You must pray today for St. Columban, bishop."

Then all the brethren present understood that Columban, a bishop in Leinster, the dear friend of Columba, had passed to the Lord. A short time after, some persons, who came from the province of Leinster, told how the bishop died in the very night in which it was thus made known to the saint.

Of the Apparition of Angels who had come down to meet the souls of the monks of St. Comgell.

XIV

AT another time, when the venerable man was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he became suddenly excited, and summoned the brethren together by the sound of the bell. "Now," said he, "let us help by our prayers the monks of the Abbot Comgell, who are just now in danger of being drowned in the Lake of the Calf (Loch Laodh, now Belfast Lough); for, lo! at this moment they are fighting against the hostile powers in the air, and are striving to rescue the soul of some stranger who is also drowning along with them." Then after having wept and prayed fervently, he hastily stood erect before the altar with a joyful countenance, whilst the brethren continued to lie prostrate in prayer. "Give thanks," he said, "to Christ, for now the holy angels, coming to the aid of holy souls, have rescued this stranger from the attacks of the demons, and borne him off in triumph like victorious warriors."

Of the Manifestation of the Angels who came to meet the soul of one Emchath.

XV

AT another time, when the saint was travelling beyond the Dorsal Ridge of Britain (Drumalban), near the lake of the river Nesa (Loch Ness), he was suddenly inspired by the Holy Ghost, and said to the brethren that accompanied him, "Let us go quickly to meet the holy angels, who have been sent from the realms of the highest heaven to carry away with them the soul of a heathen, and now wait our arrival there, that we may baptize in due time before his death this man, who hath preserved his natural goodness through all his life, even to extreme old age." And having said this much, the holy old man hurried his companions as much as he could, and walked before them until he came to a district called Airchart-dan (Arochdan, now Glen Urquhart); and there he found an aged man whose name was Emchat, who, on hearing the word of God preached by the saint, believed and was baptized, and immediately after, full of joy, and safe from evil, and accompanied by the angels, who came to meet him, passed to the Lord. His son Virolec also

believed, and was baptized with all his house.

XVI

AT another time, while the holy man sat in his little cell engaged in writing, on a sudden his countenance changed, and he poured forth this cry from his pure breast, saying, "Help! Help!" Two of the brothers who stood at the door, namely, Colga, son of Cellach, and Lugne Mocablai, asked the cause of such a sudden cry. The venerable man answered, saying, "I ordered the angel of the Lord who was just now standing among you to go quickly to the relief of one of the brothers who is falling from the highest point of a large house which is now being built in the Oakwood Plain (Derry)." And the saint added afterwards these words, saying, "How wonderful and almost unspeakable is the swiftness of angelic motion, like, as I imagine, to the rapidity of lightning. For the heavenly spirit who just now flew away from us when that man began to fall, arrived there to support him, as it were, in the twinkling of an eye, before his body reached the ground; nor was the man who fell able to feel any fracture or bruise. How wonderful, I say, is that most swift and timely help which could be given so very quickly, even though such an extent of land and sea lay between!"

Of the Angel of the Lord that came so quickly and opportunely to the relief of the brother who fell from the top of the round monastery in the Oakwood Plain (Derry).

XVII

ANOTHER time also, while the blessed man was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he made this known to the assembled brethren with very great earnestness, saying, "Today I wish to go alone to the western plain of this island; let none of you therefore follow me." They obeyed, and he went alone, as he desired. But a brother, who was cunning, and of a prying disposition, proceeded by another road, and secretly placed himself on the summit of a certain little hill which overlooked the plain, because he was very anxious to learn the blessed man's motive for going out alone. While the spy on the top of the hill was looking upon him as he stood on a mound in the plain, with arms extended upwards, and eyes raised to heaven in prayer, then, strange to tell, behold a wonderful scene presented itself, which that brother, as I think not without the leave of God, witnessed with his own eyes from his place on the neighbouring hill, that the saint's name and the rever-

Of the multitude of Holy Angels that were seen to come down from heaven at the bidding of the blessed man.

ence due to him might afterwards, even against his wishes, be more widely diffused among the people, through the vision thus vouchsafed. For holy angels, the citizens of the heavenly country, clad in white robes and flying with wonderful speed, began to stand around the saint whilst he prayed; and after a short converse with the blessed man, that heavenly host, as if feeling itself detected, flew speedily back again to the highest heavens. The blessed man himself also, after his meeting with the angels, returned to the monastery, and calling the brethren together a second time, asked, with no little chiding and reproof, which of them was guilty of violating his command. When all were declaring they did not know at all of the matter, the brother, conscious of his inexcusable transgression, and no longer able to conceal his guilt, fell on his knees before the saint in the midst of the assembled brethren, and humbly craved forgiveness. The saint, taking him aside, commanded him under heavy threats, as he knelt, never, during the life of the blessed man, to disclose to any person even the least part of the secret regarding the angels' visit. It was, therefore, after the saint's departure from the body that the brother related that manifestation of the heavenly host, and solemnly attested its truth. Whence, even to this day, the place where the angels assembled is called by a name that beareth witness to the event that took place in it; this may be said to be in Latin "Colliculus Angelorum" and is in Scotie Cnoc Angel (now called Sithean Mor). Hence, therefore, we must notice, and even carefully inquire, into the fact how great and of what kind these sweet visits of angels to this blessed man were, which took place mostly during the winter nights, when he was in watching and prayer in lonely places while others slept. These were no doubt very numerous, and could in no way come to the knowledge of other men. Though some of these which happened by night or by day might perhaps be discovered by one means or another, these must have been very few compared with the angelic visions, which, of course, could be known by nobody. The same observation applies in the same way to other bright apparitions hitherto investigated by few, which shall be afterwards described.

Of the bright
Pillar seen to
glow upon the
Saint's head.

XVIII

ANOTHER time four holy founders of monasteries came from Scotia (Ireland), to visit St. Columba, and found him in the Hinba island (Eilean-na-Naoimh). The names of these distinguished men were Comgell Mocu

Life of Saint Columba

Aridi, Cainnech Mocu Dalon, Brenden Mocu Alti, and Cormac, grandson of Leathain. They all with one consent agreed that St. Columba should consecrate, in their presence in the church, the holy mysteries of the Eucharist. The saint complied with their express desire, and entered the church with them on Sunday as usual, after the reading of the Gospel; and there, during the celebration of the solemn offices of the Mass, St. Brenden Mocu Alti saw, as he told Comgell and Cainnech afterwards, a ball of fire like a comet burning very brightly on the head of Columba, while he was standing before the altar, and consecrating the holy oblation, and thus it continued burning and rising upwards like a column, so long as he continued to be engaged in the same most sacred mysteries.

XIX

AT another time, when the saint was living in the Hinba island (Eilean-na-Naoimh), the grace of the Holy Ghost was communicated to him abundantly and unspeakably, and dwelt with him in a wonderful manner, so that for three whole days, and as many nights, without either eating or drinking, he allowed no one to approach him, and remained confined in a house which was filled with heavenly brightness. Yet out of that house, through the chinks of the doors and keyholes, rays of surpassing brilliancy were seen to issue during the night. Certain spiritual songs also, which had never been heard before, he was heard to sing. He came to see, as he allowed in the presence of a very few afterwards, many secrets hidden from men since the beginning of the world fully revealed; certain very obscure and difficult parts of sacred Scripture also were made quite plain, and clearer than the light to the eye of his pure heart. He grieved that his beloved disciple, Baithen, was not with him, because if he had chanced to be beside him during those three days, he would have been able to explain from the lips of the blessed man mysteries regarding past or future ages, unknown to the rest of mankind, and to interpret also some passages of the Sacred Volumes. However, Baithen was then detained by contrary winds in the Egean island (Egg), and he was not, therefore, able to be present until those three days and as many nights of that glorious and unspeakable visitation came to a close.

Of the Descent or Visit of the Holy Ghost, which in the same island continued for three whole days and nights with the venerable man.

XX

Of the angelic splendour of the light which Virgnous—a youth of good disposition, and afterwards made by God superior of this Church in which I, though unworthy, now serve—saw coming down upon St. Columba in the Church, on a winter's night, when the brethren were at rest in their chambers.

ONE winter's night the forementioned Virgnous, burning with the love of God, entered the church alone to pray, while the others were asleep; and he prayed fervently in a little side chamber attached to the walls of the oratory. After a considerable interval, as it were of an hour, the venerable Columba entered the same sacred house, and along with him, at the same time, a golden light, that came down from the highest heavens and filled that part of the church. Even the separate recess of the side-chamber, where Virgnous was striving to hide himself as much as he could, was also filled, to his great alarm, with some of the brilliance of that heavenly light which burst through the inner-door of the chamber, that was a little open. And as no one can look directly at, or gaze with steady eye on, the summer sun in his mid-day splendour, so Virgnous could not at all bear this heavenly brightness which he saw, because of the brilliant and unspeakable radiance which overpowered his sight. The brother spoken of was so much terrified by the splendour, almost as dreadful as lightning, that no strength remained in him. But, after a short prayer, St. Columba left the church. And the next day he sent for Virgnous, who was very much alarmed, and spoke to him these few consoling words: "Thou art crying to good purpose, my child, for last night thou wert very pleasing in the sight of God by keeping thine eyes fixed on the ground when thou wert overwhelmed with fear at the brightness, for hadst thou not done so, that priceless light would have blinded thine eyes. This, however, thou must carefully observe—never to disclose this great manifestation of light while I live." This circumstance, therefore, which is so wonderful and so worthy of record, became known to many after the saint's death through this same Virgnous's relating it. Comman, sister's son to Virgnous, a respected priest, solemnly assured me, Adamnan, of the truth of the vision I have just described, and he added, moreover, that he heard the story from the lips of the abbot Virgnous, his own uncle, who, as far as he could, had seen that vision.

Of another very similar Vision of great brilliancy.

XXI

ANOTHER night also, one of the brothers, whose name was Colga, the son of Aid Draigniche, of the grandsons of Fechrech mentioned in the first

Book, came by chance, while the other brothers were asleep, to the gate of the church, and stood there for some time praying. Then suddenly he saw the whole church filled with a heavenly light, which more quickly than he could tell, flashed like lightning from his gaze. He did not know that St. Columba was praying at that time in the church, and after this sudden appearance of light, he returned home in great alarm. On the following day the saint called him aside and rebuked him severely, saying: "Take care of one thing, my child, that you do not attempt to spy out and pry too closely into the nature of that heavenly light which was not granted thee, but rather fled from thee, and that thou do not tell any one during my lifetime what thou hast seen."

XXII

Of another like
Apparition of
Divine light.

AT another time also, the blessed man gave strict orders one day to Berchan, surnamed Mesloen, a pupil learning wisdom with them, saying "Take care, my son, that thou come not near my little hut this evening, as thou art always accustomed to do." Berchan however, though hearing this, went, contrary to this command, to the blessed man's house in the dead of night while others were at rest, and cunningly put down his eyes on a line with the keyholes, in the hope that, just as the thing happened, some heavenly vision would be shown to the saint within. And at that very time the little hut was filled with a light of heavenly brightness, which the disobedient young man was not able to look upon, and therefore he fled at once from the spot. On the morrow the saint took him apart, and chiding him severely, addressed him in these words: "Last night, my son, thou hast sinned before God, and thou didst vainly imagine that the prying of thy secret inquisitiveness could be hidden or concealed from the Holy Ghost. Did I not see thee at that hour as thou didst draw near to the door of my hut, and as thou didst go away from it? Had I not prayed for thee at that moment, thou wouldst have fallen dead there before the door, or thine eyes would have been torn out of their sockets; but on my account, the Lord hath spared thee at this time. And be thou assured of this also, that, whilst thou art living in luxury in thine own country of Hibernia, thy face shall burn with shame all the days of thy life. Yet by my prayers, I have obtained this favour of God, that, as thou art my disciple, thou shalt do heartfelt penance before death, and thus obtain the mercy of God." All these things, according to the saying of the blessed man, occurred

afterwards to him as had been foretold regarding him.

Of another
Vision of Angels
whom the Saint
saw coming to
meet his soul, as
if to show that
it was about to
leave the body.

XXIII

AT another time, while the blessed man was living in the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), his holy countenance one day was lighted up suddenly with strange transports of joy; and raising his eyes to heaven he was filled with delight, and rejoiced beyond measure. After an interval of a few seconds, that sweet and enchanting delight was changed into a mournful sadness.

Now, the two men, who at the same hour were standing at the door of his hut, which was built on the higher ground, and were themselves also much afflicted with him-of whom the one was Lugne Mocublai, and the other a Saxon named Pilu,-asked the cause of this sudden joy, and of the sorrow which followed. The saint said to them, "Go in peace, and do not ask me now to explain the cause of either that joy or that sadness." On hearing this they humbly asked him, kneeling before him in tears, and with faces sunk to the ground, to grant their desire of knowing something concerning that matter which at that same hour had been revealed to the saint. Seeing them so much afflicted, he said, "On account of my love to you, I do not wish you to be in sadness; but you must first promise me never to disclose to any one during my life the secret you seek to know." They made of course the promise at once according to his request, and then, when the promise was made, the venerable man spake to them thus: "On this very day, thirty years of my sojourn in Britain have been completed, and meanwhile for many days past I have been devoutly asking of my Lord to release me from my dwelling here at the end of this thirtieth year, and to call me thither to my heavenly fatherland. And this was the cause of that joy of mine, of which in sorrowful mood you ask me. For I saw the holy angels sent down from the lofty throne to meet my soul when it is taken from the flesh. But, behold now how they are stopped suddenly, and stand on a rock at the other side of the Sound of our island, evidently being anxious to come near me and deliver me from the body. But they are not allowed to come nearer, because, that thing which God granted me after praying with my whole strength-namely, that I might pass from the world to Him on this day,-He hath changed in a moment in His listening to the prayers of so many churches for me. These churches have no

Life of Saint Columba

doubt prayed as the Lord hath granted, so that, though it is against my ardent wish, four years from this day are added for me to abide in the flesh. Such a sad delay as this was fitly the cause of the grief today. At the end of these four years, then, which by God's favour my life is yet to see, I shall pass away suddenly, without any previous bodily sickness, and depart with joy to the Lord, accompanied by His holy angels, who shall come to meet me at that hour."

According to these words, which the venerable man uttered, it is said, with much sorrow and grief, and even many tears, he afterwards abode in the flesh for four years.

XXIV

How our Patron,
St. Columba,
passed to the
Lord.

TOWARDS the end of the above-mentioned four years, and as a true prophet he knew long before that his death would follow the close of that period, the old man, worn out with age, went in a cart one day in the month of May, as we mentioned in the preceding second Book, to visit some of the brethren who were at work. And having found them at work on the western side of the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), he began to speak to them that day, saying, "During the paschal solemnities in the month of April now past, with desire have I desired to depart to Christ the Lord, as He had allowed me, if I preferred it. But lest a joyous festival should be turned for you into mourning, I thought it better to put off for a little longer the time of my departure from the world." The beloved monks all the while they were hearing this sad news were greatly addicted, and he endeavoured as well as he could to cheer them with words of consolation. Then, having done this, he turned his face to the east, still seated as he was in his chariot, and blessed the island with its inhabitants; and from that day to the present, as we have stated in the Book above mentioned, the venomous reptiles with the three forked tongues could do no manner of harm to man or beast. After uttering these words of blessing, the saint was carried back to his monastery.

Then, again, a few days afterwards, while he was celebrating the solemn offices of the Mass as usual on the Lord's day, the face of the venerable man, as his eyes were raised to heaven, suddenly appeared as if suffused with a ruddy glow, for, as it is written, "A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance." For at that same hour he alone saw an angel of the Lord hovering

above within the walls of his oratory; and as the lovely and tranquil aspect of the holy angels infuses joy and exultation into the hearts of the elect, this was the cause of that sudden joy infused into the blessed man. When those who were present on the occasion inquired as to the cause of that joy with which he was evidently inspired, the saint looking upwards gave them this reply, "Wonderful and unspeakable is the subtlety of the angelic nature! For lo, an angel of the Lord, who was sent to demand a certain deposit dear to God, hath, after looking down upon us within the church, and blessing us, returned again through the roof of the church, without leaving any trace of his passage out." Thus spoke the saint. But none of the bystanders could understand what kind of a deposit the angel was sent to demand. Our patron, however, gave the name of a holy deposit to his own soul that had been intrusted to him by God; and after an interval of six days from that time, as shall be related further on, he departed to the Lord on the night of the Lord's day. In the end, then, of this same week, that is on the day of the Sabbath, the venerable man, and his pious attendant Diormit, went to bless the barn which was near at hand. When the saint had entered in and blessed it, and two heaps of winnowed corn that were in it, he gave expression to his thanks in these words, saying, "I heartily congratulate my beloved monks, that this year also, if I am obliged to depart from you, you will have a sufficient supply for the year." On hearing this, Diormit his attendant began to feel sad, and said, "This year, at this time, father, thou very often vexest us, by so frequently making mention of thy leaving us." But the saint replied to him, "I have a little secret address to make to thee, and if thou wilt promise me faithfully not to reveal it to any one before my death, I shall be able to speak to thee with more freedom about my departure." When his attendant had on bended knees made the promise as the saint desired, the venerable man thus resumed his address: "This day in the Holy Scriptures is called the Sabbath, which means rest. And this day is indeed a Sabbath to me, for it is the last day of my present laborious life, and on it I rest after the fatigues of my labours; and this night at midnight, which commenceth the solemn Lord's Day, I shall, according to the sayings of Scripture, go the way of our fathers. For already my Lord Jesus Christ deigneth to invite me; and to Him, I say, in the middle of this night shall I depart, at His invitation. For so it hath been revealed to me by the Lord himself." The attendant hearing these sad words began to weep bitterly, and the saint endeavoured to console him as well as he could.

Life of Saint Columba

After this the saint left the barn, and in going back to the monastery, rested half way at a place where a cross, which was afterwards erected, and is standing to this day, fixed into a millstone, may be observed on the roadside. While the saint, as I have said, bowed down with old age, sat there to rest a little, behold, there came up to him a white pack-horse, the same that used, as a willing servant, to carry the milk-vessels from the cowshed to the monastery. It came up to the saint and, strange to say, laid its head on his bosom-inspired, I believe, by God to do so, as each animal is gifted with the knowledge of things according to the will of the Creator; and knowing that its master was soon about to leave it, and that it would see him no more-began to utter plaintive cries, and like a human being, to shed copious tears on the saint's bosom, foaming and greatly wailing. The attendant seeing this, began to drive the weeping mourner away, but the saint forbade him, saying: "Let it alone, as it is so fond of me, let it pour out its bitter grief into my bosom. Lo! thou, as thou art a man, and hast a rational soul, canst know nothing of my departure hence, except what I myself have just told you, but to this brute beast devoid of reason, the Creator Himself hath evidently in some way made it known that its master is going to leave it." And saying this, the saint blessed the work-horse, which turned away from him in sadness.

Then leaving this spot, he ascended the hill that overlooketh the monastery, and stood for some little time on its summit; and as he stood there with both hands uplifted, he blessed his monastery, saying:

"Small and mean though this place is, yet it shall be held in great and unusual honour, not only by Scotie kings and people, but also by the rulers of foreign and barbarous nations, and by their subjects; the saints also even of other churches shall regard it with no common reverence."

After these words he descended the hill, and having returned to the monastery sat in his hut transcribing the Psalter, and coming to that verse of the 33d Psalm (Eng. Vers. Ps. 34), where it is written, "They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good," "Here," said he, "at the end of the page, I must stop; and what follows let Baithene write." The last verse he had written was very applicable to the saint, who was about to depart, and to whom eternal goods shall never be wanting; while the one that followeth is equally applicable to the father who succeeded him, the instructor of his spir-

itual children: "Come, ye children, and hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord;" and indeed he succeeded him, as recommended by him, not only in teaching, but also in writing.

Having written the aforementioned verse at the end of the page, the saint went to the church to the nocturnal vigils of the Lord's Day; and so soon as this was over, he returned to his chamber, and spent the remainder of the night on his bed, where he had a bare flag for his couch, and for his pillow a stone, which stands to this day as a kind of monument beside his grave. While then he was reclining there, he gave his last instructions to the brethren, in the hearing of his attendant alone, saying: "These, O my children, are the last words I address to you—that ye be at peace, and have unfeigned charity among yourselves; and if you thus follow the example of the holy fathers, God, the Comforter of the good, will be your Helper and I, abiding with Him, will intercede for you; and He will not only give you sufficient to supply the wants of this present life, but will also bestow on you the good and eternal rewards which are laid up for those that keep His commandments." Thus far have the last words of our venerable patron, as he was about to leave this weary pilgrimage for his heavenly country, been preserved for recital in our brief narrative. After these words, as the happy hour of his departure gradually approached, the saint became silent. Then as soon as the bell tolled at midnight, he rose hastily, and went to the church; and running more quickly than the rest, he entered it alone, and knelt down in prayer beside the altar. At the same moment his attendant Diormit, who more slowly followed him, saw from a distance that the whole interior of the church was filled with a heavenly light in the direction of the saint. And as he drew near to the door, the same light he had seen, and which was also seen by a few more of the brethren standing at a distance, quickly disappeared. Diormit therefore entering the church, cried out in a mournful voice, "Where art thou, father?" And feeling his way in the darkness, as the brethren had not yet brought in the lights, he found the saint lying before the altar; and raising him up a little, he sat down beside him, and laid his holy head on his bosom. Meanwhile the rest of the monks ran in hastily in a body with their lights, and beholding their dying father, burst into lamentations. And the saint, as we have been told by some who were present, even before his soul departed, opened wide his eyes and looked round him from side to side, with a countenance full of

Life of Saint Columba

wonderful joy and gladness, no doubt seeing the holy angels coming to meet him. Diormit then raised the holy right hand of the saint, that he might bless his assembled monks. And the venerable father himself moved his hand at the same time, as well as he was able. That as he could not in words, while his soul was departing, he might at least, by the motion of his hand, be seen to bless his brethren. And having given them his holy benediction in this way, he immediately breathed his last. After his soul had left the tabernacle of the body, his face still continued ruddy, and brightened in a wonderful way by his vision of the angels, and that to such a degree that he had the appearance, not so much of one dead, as of one alive and sleeping. Meanwhile the whole church resounded with loud lamentations of grief.

I must not omit to mention the revelation made to a certain saint of Ireland, at the very time the blessed soul departed. For in that monastery which in the Scotie language is called Clonifinchoil (now Rosnarea, in parish of Knockcommon, Meath), there was a holy man named Lugud, son of Tailchan, one who had grown old in the service of Christ, and was noted for his sanctity and wisdom. Now this man had a vision which at early dawn he told in great affliction to one called Fergnous, who was like himself a servant of Christ. "In the middle of this last night," said he, "Columba, the pillar of many churches, passed to the Lord; and at the moment of his blessed departure, I saw in the spirit the whole Iouan island, where I never was in the body, resplendent with the brightness of angels; and the whole heavens above it, up to the very zenith, were illumined with the brilliant light of the same heavenly messengers, who descended in countless numbers to bear away his holy soul. At the same moment, also, I heard the loud hymns and entrancingly sweet canticles of the angelic host, as his holy soul was borne aloft amidst the ascending choirs of angels." Virgnous, who about this time came over from Scotia (Ireland), and spent the rest of his life in the Himba island (Eilean-na-Naoimh), very often related to the monks of St. Columba this vision of angels, which, as has been said, he undoubtedly heard from the lips of the old man himself, to whom it had been granted. This same Virgnous, having for many years lived without reproach in obedience amongst the brethren, led the life of an anchorite, as a victorious soldier of Christ, for twelve years more, in the hermitage of Muirbulmar. This vision above mentioned we have not only found in writing, but have heard related with the utmost free-

dom by several well-informed old men to whom Virgnous himself had told it.

Another vision also given at the same hour under a different form was related to meÑAdamnanÑwho was a young man at the time, by one of those who had seen it; and who solemnly assured me of its truth. He was a very old man, a servant of Christ, whose name may be called Ferreol, but in the Scotie tongue Ernene, of the race of Mocufirroide, who, as being himself a holy monk, is buried in the Ridge of Tomma (now Drumhome, county Donegal), amidst the remains of other monks of St. Columba, and awaits the resurrection with the saints; he said: “On that night when St. Columba, by a happy and blessed death, passed from earth to heaven, while I and others with me were engaged in fishing in the valley of the river Fend (the Finn, in Donegal)Ñwhich abounds in fishÑwe saw the whole vault of heaven become suddenly illuminated. Struck by the suddenness of the miracle, we raised our eyes and looked towards the east, when, lo! there appeared something like an immense pillar of fire, which seemed to us, as it ascended upwards at that midnight, to illuminate the whole earth like the summer sun at noon; and after that column penetrated the heavens darkness followed, as if the sun had just set. And not only did we, who were together in the same place, observe with intense surprise the brightness of this remarkable luminous pillar, but many other fishermen also, who were engaged in fishing here and there in different deep pools along the same river, were greatly terrified, as they afterwards related to us, by an appearance of the same kind.” These three miraculous visions, then, which were seen at the very hour of our venerable patron’s departure, show clearly that the Lord hath conferred on him eternal honours. But let us now return to our narrative.

After his holy soul had departed, and the matin hymns were finished, his sacred body was carried by the brethren, chanting psalms, from the church back to his chamber, from which a little before he had come alive; and his obsequies were celebrated with all due honour and reverence for three days and as many nights. And when these sweet praises of God were ended, the venerable body of our holy and blessed patron was wrapped in a clean shroud of fine linen, and, being placed in the coffin prepared for it, was buried with all due veneration, to rise again with lustrous and eternal brightness.

And now, near the close of this book, we shall relate what hath been told

Life of Saint Columba

us by persons cognisant of the facts, regarding the above-mentioned three days during which his obsequies were celebrated in due ecclesiastical form. It happened on one occasion that a certain brother speaking with great simplicity in the presence of the holy and venerable man, said to him, "After thy death all the people of these provinces will row across to the Iouan island (Hy, now Iona), to celebrate thine obsequies, and will entirely fill it." Hearing this said the saint immediately replied: "No, my child, the event will not turn out as thou sayest; for a promiscuous throng of people shall not by any means be able to come to my obsequies: none but the monks of my monastery will perform my funeral rites, and grace the last offices bestowed upon me." And the fulfillment of this prophecy was brought about immediately after his death by God's almighty power; for there arose a storm of wind without rain, which blew so violently during those three days and nights of his obsequies, that it entirely prevented every one from crossing the Sound in his little boat. And immediately after the interment of the blessed man, the storm was quelled at once, the wind ceased, and the, whole sea became calm.

Let the reader therefore think in what and how great honour our illustrious patron was held by God, seeing that, while he was yet in this mortal flesh, God was pleased at his prayer to quell the storms and to calm the seas; and again, when he found it necessary, as on the occasion just mentioned, the gales of wind arose as he wished, and the sea was lashed into fury; and this storm, as hath been said, was immediately, so soon as his funeral rites were performed, changed into a great calm. Such, then, was the end of our illustrious patron's life, and such is an earnest of all his merits.

And now, according to the sentence of the Holy Scriptures, sharing in eternal triumphs, added to the patriarchs, associated with the prophets and apostles, numbered amongst the thousands of white-robed saints, who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, he followeth the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; a virgin immaculate, free from all stain, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father, be honour, and power, and praise, and glory, and eternal dominion, in the unity of the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.

After reading these three books, let the diligent reader observe of what and how great merit, of what and how high honour in the sight of God our

Adomnan of Iona

holy and venerable abbot must have been deemed worthy, how great and many were the bright visits of the angels made to him, how full of the prophetic spirit, how great his power of miracles wrought in God, how often and to what great extent, while yet he was abiding in this mortal flesh, he was surrounded by a halo of heavenly light; and how, even after the departure of his most kindly soul from the tabernacle of the body, until the present day the place where his sacred bones repose, as has been clearly shown to certain chosen persons, doth not cease to be frequently visited by the holy angels, and illumined by the same heavenly brightness. And this unusual favour hath been conferred by God on this same man of blessed memory; that though he lived in this small and remote island of the British sea, his name hath not only become illustrious throughout the whole of our own Scotia (Ireland), and Britain, the largest island of the whole world, but hath reached even unto triangular Spain, and into Gaul, and to Italy, which lieth beyond the Penine Alps; and also to the city of Rome itself, the head of all cities. This great and honourable celebrity, amongst other marks of divine favour, is known to have been conferred on this same saint by God, Who loveth those that love Him, and raiseth them to immense honour by glorifying more and more those that magnify and truly praise Him, Who is blessed for evermore. Amen.

I beseech those who wish to transcribe these books, yea, rather I adjure them by Christ, the Judge of the world, after they have diligently transcribed, carefully to compare and correct their copies with that from which they have copied them, and also to subjoin here this adjuration:

Whoever readeth these books on the virtues of St. Columba, let him pray to the Lord for me, Dorbbene, that after death I may possess eternal life.

VOYAGE OF BRENDAN

ANONYMOUS

It is a monk going through hardship Blessed Brendan was, that was born in Ciarraige Luachra of a good father and mother. It was on Slieve Daidche beside the sea he was one time, and he saw in a vision a beautiful island with angels serving upon it. And an angel of God came to him in his sleep and said “I will be with you from this out through the length of your lifetime, and it is I will teach you to find that island you have seen and have a mind to come to.” When Brendan heard those words from the angel he cried with the dint of joy, and gave great thanks to God, and he went back to the thousand brothers that were his people.

His Vision of the
Land of Promise

It happened now there was a young man by name Mernoke that was a brother in another house, and that went out in a ship looking for some lonely place where he might serve God at will. And he came to an island that is convenient to the Mountain of Stones, and he liked it well and stopped there a good while, himself and his people. But after that he put out his ship again and sailed on eastward through the length of three days. And it seemed to him on a sudden that a cloud came around them, the way they were in darkness the whole of the day, till by the will of our dear Lord the cloud passed

The News of the
Hidden Country

away and they saw before them a shining lovely island. There was enough of joy and of rejoicing in that island, and every herb was full of blossom and every tree was full of fruit; and as for the ground it was shining with precious stones on every side, and heaven itself could hardly be better. There came to them then a very comely young man, that called every one of them by name and gave them a pleasant welcome; and he said to them "It would be right for you to give good thanks to Jesus Christ that is showing you this hidden place, for this is the country he will give to his darlings upon earth at the world's end, and it is to this place He himself will come. And there is another island besides this one" he said; "but you have not leave to go on to it or to have sight of it at all. And you have been here through the length of half a year" he said "without meat or drink or closing your eyes in sleep." They thought now they had not been the length of half an hour in that place, they had been so happy and so content. And he told them that was the first dwelling place of Adam and Eve, and there never came darkness there, and the name of it was the Earthly Paradise. Then he brought them back to their ship again and when they were come to it he vanished out of their sight, and they did not know where was it he went.

Then they set out over the sea again, and where they came to land was the place where Brendan was and his brothers, and they questioned Mernoke's people as to where they had been. "We have been" they said "before the gates of Paradise, in the Land of Promise, and we had every sort of joy there and of feasting, and there is always day in it and no night at all." And their clothes had the sweetness of that place about them yet and the brothers said "We are certain indeed you have been in that place, by the happy smile of you." And when Brendan heard all these tidings he stood still for a while thinking with himself; and after that he went about among the brothers and chose out twelve of them that he thought more of than of all the rest; and he consulted them and asked an advice of them. "Dear Father" they said "we have left our own will and our friends and all our goods, and have come as children to you; and whatever you think well to do" they said "we will do it."

So with that Brendan made his mind up to search out that place by the help of God; and he fasted forty days and did hard penance. And he made a very large ship having strong hides nailed over it, and pitch over the hides, that the water would not come in. And he took his own twelve with him' and

Voyage of Brendan

took his leave of the brothers and bade them good-bye. And those he left after him were sorry everyone, and two among them came when he was in the ship and begged hard to go with him. And Brendan said "You have leave to sail with me; but one of you will be sorry that he asked to come." But for all that they would go with him. Then they rowed out into the great sea of the ocean in the name of our Lord and were no way daunted at all. And the sea and the wind drove the ship at will, so that on the morning of the morrow they were out of sight of land. And so they went on through forty days and the wind driving them eastward.

And at the last they saw to the north a very large island having hard rocks on every side, and they sailed around it for three days before they could come near any place of landing; but at the last they found a little harbour, and landed every one. Then there came of a sudden a very comely hound and it fell down at Brendan's feet and bade him welcome in its own way. "Good brothers" said Brendan "there is nothing for us to be in dread of, for I know this is a Messenger to lead us into a right place." Then the hound brought them into a great hall where there was a table having a cloth upon it, and bread and fish; and there was not one of them but was glad of that, and they sat down and eat and drank; and after their supper they found beds ready for them and they took their fill of sleep.

The Very Comely Hound

And on the morrow they went back to their ship and they sailed a long time on the sea before they could see any land. And at last they saw before them a very green island, and when they landed and looked about them they saw sheep on every side the whitest and the finest that ever were seen, for every sheep was the size of an ox. There came to them then a very well-looking old man and he gave them a kind welcome and he said "This place you are come to is the Land of Sheep, and there is never winter here but lasting summer, and that is why the sheep are so large and so white, for the grass and the herbs are the best to be found in any place at all. And go on" he said "till you come by the Grace of God to a place that is called the Paradise of Birds; and it is there you will keep your Easter."

The Island of Sheep

Then they went into the ship again and it was driven by storms till they saw before them another little island, and the brothers went to land on it but Brendan stopped in the ship. And they put fish in a cauldron and lighted a

Jasconye the Fish

fire to boil it, and no sooner was the fire hot and the fish beginning to boil, than the island began to quake and to move like a living thing, and there was great fear on the brothers and they went back into the ship leaving the food and the cauldron after them, and they saw what they took to be an island going fast through the sea, and they could notice the fire burning a long way off, that they were astonished. They asked Brendan then did he know what was that great wonder, and Brendan comforted them and he said "It is a great fish, the biggest of the fishes of the world, Jascönye his name is, and he is labouring day and night to put his tail into his mouth, and he cannot do it because of his great bulk."

The Paradise of
Birds

They went on then to the westward through the length of three days, and very downhearted they were seeing no land. But not long after by the will of God they saw a beautiful island full of flowers and herbs and trees, and they were glad enough to see it and they went on land and gave thanks to God. And they went a long way through that lovely country, till they came to a very good well and a tree beside it full of branches and on every branch were beautiful white birds, so many of them there were that not a leaf hardly could be seen. And it was well for them to be looking at such a tree, and the happy singing of the birds was like the noise of Heaven. And Brendan cried for joy and he kneeled down and bade the Lord to tell him the meaning of the birds and their case. Then a little bird of the birds flew towards him from the tree and with the flickering of his wings he made a very merry noise like a fiddle, and it seemed to Brendan never to have heard such joyful music. Then the little bird looked at him and Brendan said "If you are a Messenger tell me out your estate and why you sing to happily." And it is what the bird said: "One time we were every one of us angels, but when our master Lucifer fell from heaven for his high pride we fell along with him, some higher and some lower. And because our offence was but a little one" he said "our Lord has put us here without pain in great joy and merriment to serve what way we can upon that tree. And on the Sunday that is a day of rest" he said "we are made as white as any snow that we may praise him the better. And it is twelve months" he said "since you left your own place, and at the end of seven years there will be an end to your desire. And through these seven years" he said "it is here you will be keeping your Easter until you will come into the Land of Promise." Then the bird took his leave of them and went back to his fellows upon

Voyage of Brendan

the tree. It was upon an Easter Day now all this happened. Then all the birds began to sing the Vespers, and there could be no merrier music if God himself was among them. And after supper Blessed Brendan and his comrades went to bed; and they rose up on the morning of the morrow and the birds sang the matins and said the verses of the psalms, and sang all the Hours as is the habit with Christian men. And Brendan and his people stopped there for eight weeks till after the Pentecost; and they sailed back again to the Island of the Sheep, and there they got good provision and took their leave of the old man their Helper, and went back into their ship.

Then the bird of the tree came to them again and he said "You will sail from this to an island where there are four and twenty brothers and you will spend your Christmas with those holy men;" and with that he flew back again to his comrades. Then Brendan and his people went out again into the ocean in the name of God; and the winds hurled them up and down, that they were in great danger and tired of their lives. And they were tossed about through the length of four months and they had nothing to be looking at but the sky and the waves. And at the last they saw an island that was a good way off, and they cried to Jesus Christ to bring them there; but the waves rose about them another forty days and they were loath to go on living. They came then to a little harbour and it was too narrow for the ship to go into it, so they cast the anchor and they themselves reached to the land. And they went searching the island and they found two wells, and the water of the one was bright and clear but the water of the other was as if stirred and muddy. And some of them were going to drink from the wells but Brendan bade them not to do it without leave. Then a comely old man came to them and gave them a fair enough welcome, and he kissed Brendan and he led them by many good wells till they came to a great Abbey. And there were in it to welcome them four and twenty brothers having royal cloaks woven of threads of gold, and a royal crown before them and candles on every side. And the Abbot came and kissed Brendan very humbly and bade him and his people welcome; and he led them into a beautiful hail and mixed them there among his own people. Then there came one that served them by the will of God and gave them plenty of meat and drink and set a good white loaf between every two, and white well-tasting roots and herbs, but ~they did not know what roots those were, and they drank the water of the good clear well they had first

The Silent Brotherhood

seen. Then the Abbot came and heartened them and bade them to eat and to drink their fill. "For every day" he said "our meat and drink is brought to our cellar by a strong man; and we do not know where it is brought from but that it is sent to us through God. And we have never provided meat or drink for ourselves" he said; "four and twenty brothers we are, and every day of the week He sends us twelve loaves, and on every Sunday and on the day of Saint Patrick twenty-four loaves, and the bread that we do not use at dinner we use it at supper-time. And now at your coming our Lord has sent us forty-eight loaves that we may be merry together. And always twelve of us go to dinner" he said "while another twelve of us serve the quire; and we are here these fourscore years and in this country there is no sickness or bad weather. And there are seven wax tapers in the quire" he said "that have never been lighted by any man's hand, and that burn day and night at every hour of prayers and that have never wasted or lessened through these fourscore years." After that Brendan went to the church with the Abbot, and they said the evening prayers together very devoutly. And Brendan saw beautiful woven stuffs, and chalices of clear crystal, and in the quire were twenty-four seats for the twenty-four brothers and a seat for the Abbot in the middle of them all. And Brendan asked the Abbot how long it was they had kept silence so well that no one of them spoke to the others, and the Abbot said "Our Lord knows no one of us has spoken to another these fourscore years." And when Brendan heard that he cried for joy and "Dear Father" he said "for the love of God let me stop along with you here." "You know well" said the Abbot "you have no leave to do that, for has not our Lord showed you what you have to do, and that you will turn back to Ireland in the end?" And as Brendan was kneeling in the church he saw a bright angel that came in by the window and that lighted all the candles in the church, and went out by the window again to Heaven. "There is wonder on me" said Brendan "those candles to burn the way they do and never to waste." "Did you never hear" said the Abbot "how in the old time Moses saw a bush that was burning from the top to the ground, and the more it burned the greener were the leaves? And let you not wonder" he said "the power of the Lord to be as great now as ever it was."

And when Brendan had stopped there through Christmas and for Little Christmas, he bade good-bye to the Abbot and the brothers and went back to the ship with his people. And the sea tumbled them up and down that they

Voyage of Brendan

were sorry enough until Palm Sunday, and with its coming they came again to the Island of Sheep, and they met there with the same old man as before, and he welcomed them a second time. And on Holy Thursday after supper he washed their feet and kissed them, and they stayed in that place till Easter Eve; and then at his bidding they set out and sailed to the place where the fish Jasconye was lying. And they found upon his back the cauldron they had left there a year ago, and they kept the Feast of the Resurrection there upon the fish's back. And they sang there their Matins and their Vespers and all their Masses, and the great beast stayed as still as any stone.

And when they had kept their Easter with great honour they went on to the island having the tree of birds. And the little bird gave them a good welcome and it is lively was the sound of his song. So they stopped there from Easter to Candlemas the same as the year before, very happy and content, listening to the merry service that was sung upon the tree. Then the bird told Blessed Brendan he should go back again for Christmas to the Island of the Abbey, and at Easter he should come hither again and the rest of the year he should be labouring in the great sea in trouble and in danger. "And so it will be with you from year to year to the end of forty years" he said "and then you will reach to the Land of Promise; and then through forty days you will have your fill of joy. And after that you will return to your own country" he said "quite easily and without any annoy, and there you will end your life." Then the Angel that was their helper brought all sorts of provision and loaded the ship and made all ready. So they thanked our Lord for his great goodness that he had showed them so often in their great need, and they sailed out into the sea among great storms.

The Bird's Fore-
telling

And soon there came after them a horrible great fish that was following their ship and that was casting up such great spouts of water out of his mouth that they had like to be drowned, and he was coming so fast that he had all but reached to them. Then they cried on Jesus Christ to help them in that great danger. And with that there came another fish bigger than the first out of the west, and made an attack on him and beat him and at the last made three halves of him and went away again as he came, and they were very glad and gave thanks to Jesus Christ. And after that again they were very downhearted through hunger, for all their food was spent. And there came to them then a little bird having with him a great branch of red grapes, and they lived by

The Dangers of
the Sea

them through fourteen days and had their fill. And when that failed them they came to a little island that was full of beautiful trees, and fruit on every bough of them. And Brendan landed out of the ship and gathered as much of that fruit would last them through forty days, and they went sailing and ever sailing through storm and through wind. And of a sudden there came sailing towards them a great monster and it made an attack upon them and on their ship and had like to have destroyed them, and at that they cried pitifully and thought themselves as good as dead. And then the little bird that had spoken with them from the tree at Easter time came at the monster and struck out one of his eyes with the first attack and the other eye with the second and made an end of him that he fell into the sea; and it is well pleased Brendan was when he saw that bird coming. Then they gave thanks to God, and they went on sailing until Saint Peter's Day, and they sang the service in honour of the Feast. And in that place the water was so clear that they could see to the bottom, and it was all as if covered with a great heap of fishes. And the brothers were in dread at the sight of all the fishes and they advised Brendan to speak softly and not to waken the fishes for fear they might break the ship. And Brendan said "Why would you that have these two years kept the Feast of the Resurrection upon the great fish's back be in dread of these little fishes?" And with that he made ready for the Mass and sang louder than before. And the fishes awoke and started up and came all around the ship in a heap, that they could hardly see the water for fishes. But when the Mass was ended each one of them turned himself and swam away, and they saw them no more.

A Border of Hell

For seven days now they were going on through that clear water, and there came a south wind that drove them on and they did not know where were they going. And at the end of eight days they saw far away in the north a dark country full of stench and of smoke; and as the ship drew near it they heard great blowing and blasting of bellows, and a noise of blows and a noise like thunder, the way they were all afeared and blessed themselves. And soon after there came one starting out all burning, and he turned away again and gave out a cry that could be heard a long way off. And with that there came demons thick about them on every side, with tongs and with fiery hammers, and followed after them till it seemed all the sea to be one fire; but by the will of God they had no power to hurt them. And then the demons began to roar and cry, and threw their tongs at them and their hammers, and then they

Voyage of Brendan

turned from the ship with a sorrowful cry and went back to the place they came from. "What are you thinking?" said Brendan "was this a merry happening? And we will come here no more" he said "for that was a border of hell, and the devil had great hopes of us but he was hindered by Jesus Christ." Then the south wind drove them farther again into the north, and they saw a hill all on fire and like as it walled in with fire, and clouds upon it, and if there was much smoke in that other place, there was more again in this. Then one of the brothers began to cry and to moan and to say his time was come and that he could stay in the ship no longer, and with that he made a leap out of the ship into the sea and he cried and moaned so dolefully that it was a pity to hear him. "My grief" he said "my wretched life; for now I see my end and I have been with you in happiness and I may go with you no more forever!"

Then the wind turned and drove the ship southward through seven days, and they came to a great rock in the sea, and the sea breaking over it. And on the rock was sitting a wretched ghost, naked and in great misery and pain, for the waves of the sea had so beaten his body that all the flesh was gone from it and nothing was left but sinews and bare bones. And there was a cloth tied to his chin and two tongues of oxen with it, and when the wind blew, the cloth beat against his body, and the waves of the sea beat him before and behind, the way no one could find in any place a more wretched ghost. And Brendan bade him tell who was he in the name of God, and what he had done against God and why he was sitting there. "I am a doleful shadow" he said "that wretched Judas that sold our Lord for pence and I am sitting here most wretchedly; and this is not my right place" he said "for my right place is in burning hell, but by our Lord's Grace I am brought here at certain times of the year, for I am here every Sunday and from the evening of Saturday, and from Christmas to Little Christmas and from Easter to the Feast of Pentecost and on every feast day of Our Lady; for he is full of mercy. But at other times I am lying in burning fire with Pilate, Herod, Annas and Caiaphas; and I am cursing and ever cursing the time when I was born. And I bid you for the love of God" he said "to keep me from the devils that will be coming after me." And Brendan said "With the help of God we will protect you through the night. And tell me what is that cloth that is hanging from your head" he said. "It is a cloth I gave to a leper when I was on earth, and because it was given for the love of God, it is hanging before me. But because it was not with my own

A Most Wretched Ghost

pence I bought it but with what belonged to our Lord and his brothers” he said “it is more harmful to me than helpful, beating very hard in my eyes. And those tongues that you see hanging” he said “I gave to the priests upon earth and so they are here and are some ease to me, because the fishes of the sea gnaw upon them and spare me. And this stone that I am sitting upon” he said “I found it lying in a desolate place where there was no use for it, and I took it and laid it in a boggy path where it was a great comfort to those that passed that way; and because of that it comforts me now, and there are but few good deeds I have to tell of” he said. On the evening now of the Sunday there came a great troop of devils blasting and roaring and they said to Brendan “Go from this, God’s man, you have nothing to do here, and let us have our comrade and bring him back to hell for we dare not face our master and he not with us.” “I will not give you leave to do your master’s orders” said Brendan “but I charge you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to leave him here this night until tomorrow.” “Would you dare” said the devils “to help him that betrayed his master and sold him to death and to great shame?” But Brendan laid orders on them not to annoy him that night, and they cried horribly and went away, and with that Judas thanked Blessed Brendan so mournfully that it was a pity to hear him. And on the morning of the morrow the devils came again and cried out and scolded at Brendan. “Away with you” they said “for our master the great devil tormented us heavily through the night because we had not brought him with us; and we will avenge it on him” they said “and he will get double pains for the six days to come.” And then they turned and took away with them that wretched one, quailing and trembling as he went.

Paul the Hermit

Then Brendan and his people sailed through the length of three days and three nights, and on the Friday they saw before them an island. And when Brendan saw it he began to sigh and to cry. “Paul the hermit is in that island” he said “and there he has been without meat or drink these forty days.” And when they had come to land that old hermit came to them and humbly welcomed them, and his body was bare, but for his hair and his beard that covered it. And when Brendan saw him he cried and he said “Now I see one that lives the life of an angel rather than a man.” But Paul said “You yourself are better than myself, for God has showed you more of his hidden things than tar any other.” And he told them his own story and how he had been fed by an otter through forty years by the grace of God. And then the two blessed

Voyage of Brendan

men parted from one another and there was sorrow enough in that parting.

Then they went back to the ship and they were driven towards the south by a great wind through the forty days of Lent. And on Easter Eve they reached to their good Helper and he gave them good treatment as he had done before. And then he led them to the great fish and it was upon his back they said their Matins and their Mass. And when the Mass was ended the fish began to move and he swam out very far into the sea and there was great terror on the brothers when he did that and they being on his back, for it was a great wonder to see a beast that was the size of a whole country going so fast through the seas. But by the will of God the fish set them down in the Paradise of Birds sound and whole and left them there and went from them. And they were well pleased to be in that place and they spent their time there till after the Trinity as they had done before.

A Lucky Journey

And after that they took their ship and sailed through forty days eastward. And at the end of the forty days there came a great shower of hail and then a dark mist came about them, and they were in it for a long time. Then their Helper came to them and said "Let you be glad now and hearten yourselves for you are come to the Land of Promise." Then they came out of the dark mist and they saw to the east the loveliest country that any one could see. Clear it was and lightsome, and there was enough in it of joy, and the trees were full of fruit on every bough, and the apples were as ripe as at harvest time. And they were going about that country through forty days and could see no end to it, and it was always day there and never night, and the air neither hot nor cold but always in the one way, and the delight that they found there could never be told. Then they came to a river that they could not cross but they could see beyond it the country that had no bounds to its beauty. Then there came to them a young man the comeliest that could be, and he gave them all a welcome, and to Brendan he showed great honour and took him by the hand and said to him "Here is the country you have been in search of, but it is our Lord's will you should go back again and make no delay, and he will show you more of his hidden things when you will come again into the great sea. And charge your ship with the fruit of this country" he said; "and you will soon be out of the world for your life is near its end. And this river you see here is the mering" he said "that divides the worlds, for no man may come to the other side of it while he is in life; and when our

The Land of Promise

Anonymous

Lord will have drawn every man to him, and when every man will know him and be under his law, it is then there will be leave to see this country, towards the world's end." Then Brendan and his comrades did not fast from the fruit, but brought away what they could of it and of precious stones, and put them in their ship and went away homewards, and sorry enough they were to go.

Brendan's
Home-coming

And they sailed home in their ship to Ireland and it is glad the brothers they had left after them were to see them come home out of such great dangers. And as to Brendan he was from that time as if he did not belong to this world at all, but his mind and his joy were in the delight of heaven. And it is in Ireland he died and was buried; and that God may bring us to the same joy his blessed soul returned to!

BEOWULF
ANONYMOUS

Translated By Lesslie Hall

I

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF SCYLD.

Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory through splendid achievements
The folk-kings' former fame we have heard of,
How princes displayed then their prowess-in-battle.
Oft Scyld the Scefing from scathers in numbers
5 From many a people their mead-benches tore.
Since first he found him friendless and wretched,
The earl had had terror: comfort he got for it,
Waxed 'neath the welkin, world-honor gained,
Till all his neighbors o'er sea were compelled to
10 Bow to his bidding and bring him their tribute:
An excellent atheling! After was borne him
A son and heir, young in his dwelling,
Whom God-Father sent to solace the people.
He had marked the misery malice had caused them,
15 That reaved of their rulers they wretched had erstwhile
Long been afflicted. The Lord, in requital,

Anonymous

Wielder of Glory, with world-honor blessed him.
Famed was Beowulf, far spread the glory
Of Scyld's great son in the lands of the Danemen.
20 So the carle that is young, by kindnesses rendered
The friends of his father, with fees in abundance
Must be able to earn that when age approacheth
Eager companions aid him requitingly,
When war assaults him serve him as liegemen:
25 By praise-worthy actions must honor be got
'Mong all of the races. At the hour that was fated
Scyld then departed to the All-Father's keeping
Warlike to wend him; away then they bare him
To the flood of the current, his fond-loving comrades,
30 As himself he had bidden, while the friend of the Scyldings
Word-sway wielded, and the well-lovèd land-prince
Long did rule them. The ring-stemmèd vessel,
Bark of the atheling, lay there at anchor,
Icy in glimmer and eager for sailing;
35 The belovèd leader laid they down there,
Giver of rings, on the breast of the vessel,
The famed by the mainmast. A many of jewels,
Of fretted embossings, from far-lands brought over,
Was placed near at hand then; and heard I not ever
40 That a folk ever furnished a float more superbly
With weapons of warfare, weeds for the battle,
Bills and burnies; on his bosom sparkled
Many a jewel that with him must travel
On the flush of the flood afar on the current.
45 And favors no fewer they furnished him soothly,
Excellent folk-gems, than others had given him
Who when first he was born outward did send him
Lone on the main, the merest of infants:
And a gold-fashioned standard they stretched under heaven
50 High o'er his head, let the holm-currents bear him,
Seaward consigned him: sad was their spirit,

Beowulf

Their mood very mournful. Men are not able
Soothly to tell us, they in halls who reside,
Heroes under heaven, to what haven he hied.

II

SCYLD'S SUCCESSORS.—HROTHGAR'S GREAT MEAD-HALL.

In the boroughs then Beowulf, bairn of the Scyldings,
Belovèd land-prince, for long-lasting season
Was famed mid the folk (his father departed,
The prince from his dwelling), till afterward sprang
5 Great-minded Healfdene; the Danes in his lifetime
He graciously governed, grim-mooded, agèd.
Four bairns of his body born in succession
Woke in the world, war-troopers' leader
Heorogar, Hrothgar, and Halga the good;
10 Heard I that Elan was Ongentheow's consort,
The well-beloved bedmate of the War-Scylfing leader.
Then glory in battle to Hrothgar was given,
Waxing of war-fame, that willingly kinsmen
Obeyed his bidding, till the boys grew to manhood,
15 A numerous band. It burned in his spirit
To urge his folk to found a great building,
A mead-hall grander than men of the era
Ever had heard of, and in it to share
With young and old all of the blessings
20 The Lord had allowed him, save life and retainers.
Then the work I find afar was assigned
To many races in middle-earth's regions,
To adorn the great folk-hall. In due time it happened
Early 'mong men, that 'twas finished entirely,
25 The greatest of hall-buildings; Heorot he named it
Who wide-reaching word-sway wielded 'mong earlmen.
His promise he brake not, rings he lavished,

Anonymous

Treasure at banquet. Towered the hall up
High and horn-crested, huge between antlers:
30 It battle-waves bided, the blasting fire-demon;
Ere long then from hottest hatred must sword-wrath
Arise for a woman's husband and father.
Then the mighty war-spirit endured for a season,
Bore it bitterly, he who bided in darkness,
35 That light-hearted laughter loud in the building
Greeted him daily; there was dulcet harp-music,
Clear song of the singer. He said that was able
To tell from of old earthmen's beginnings,
That Father Almighty earth had created,
40 The winsome wold that the water encircleth,
Set exultingly the sun's and the moon's beams
To lavish their lustre on land-folk and races,
And earth He embellished in all her regions
With limbs and leaves; life He bestowed too
45 On all the kindreds that live under heaven.
So blessed with abundance, brimming with joyance,
The warriors abided, till a certain one gan to
Dog them with deeds of direfullest malice,
A foe in the hall-building: this horrible stranger
50 Was Grendel entitled, the march-stepper famous
Who dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the fastness;
The wan-mooded being abode for a season
In the land of the giants, when the Lord and Creator
Had banned him and branded. For that bitter murder,
55 The killing of Abel, all-ruling Father
The kindred of Cain crushed with His vengeance;
In the feud He rejoiced not, but far away drove him
From kindred and kind, that crime to atone for,
Meter of Justice. Thence ill-favored creatures,
60 Elves and giants, monsters of ocean,
Came into being, and the giants that longtime
Grappled with God; He gave them requital.

III

GRENDEL THE MURDERER.

When the sun was sunken, he set out to visit
The lofty hall-building, how the Ring-Danes had used it
For beds and benches when the banquet was over.
Then he found there reposing many a noble
5 Asleep after supper; sorrow the heroes,
Misery knew not. The monster of evil
Greedy and cruel tarried but little,
Fell and frantic, and forced from their slumbers
Thirty of thanemen; thence he departed
10 Leaping and laughing, his lair to return to,
With surfeit of slaughter sallying homeward.
In the dusk of the dawning, as the day was just breaking,
Was Grendel's prowess revealed to the warriors:
Then, his meal-taking finished, a moan was uplifted,
15 Morning-cry mighty. The man-ruler famous,
The long-worthy atheling, sat very woful,
Suffered great sorrow, sighed for his liegemen,
When they had seen the track of the hateful pursuer,
The spirit accursèd: too crushing that sorrow,
20 Too loathsome and lasting. Not longer he tarried,
But one night after continued his slaughter
Shameless and shocking, shrinking but little
From malice and murder; they mastered him fully.
He was easy to find then who elsewhere looked for
25 A pleasanter place of repose in the lodges,
A bed in the bowers. Then was brought to his notice
Told him truly by token apparent
The hall-thane's hatred: he held himself after
Further and faster who the foeman did baffle.

Anonymous

30 So ruled he and strongly strove against justice
Lone against all men, till empty uptowered
The choicest of houses. Long was the season:
Twelve-winters' time torture suffered
The friend of the Scyldings, every affliction,
35 Endless agony; hence it after became
Certainly known to the children of men
Sadly in measures, that long against Hrothgar
Grendel struggled:—his grudges he cherished,
Murderous malice, many a winter,
40 Strife unremitting, and peacefully wished he
Life-woe to lift from no liegeman at all of
The men of the Dane-folk, for money to settle,
No counsellor needed count for a moment
On handsome amends at the hands of the murderer;
45 The monster of evil fiercely did harass,
The ill-planning death-shade, both elder and younger,
Trapping and tricking them. He trod every night then
The mist-covered moor-fens; men do not know where
Witches and wizards wander and ramble.
50 So the foe of mankind many of evils
Grievous injuries, often accomplished,
Horrible hermit; Heort he frequented,
Gem-bedecked palace, when night-shades had fallen
(Since God did oppose him, not the throne could he touch,
55 The light-flashing jewel, love of Him knew not).
'Twas a fearful affliction to the friend of the Scyldings
Soul-crushing sorrow. Not seldom in private
Sat the king in his council; conference held they
What the braves should determine 'gainst terrors unlooked
for.
60 At the shrines of their idols often they promised
Gifts and offerings, earnestly prayed they
The devil from hell would help them to lighten
Their people's oppression. Such practice they used then,

Beowulf

Hope of the heathen; hell they remembered
65 In innermost spirit, God they knew not,
Judge of their actions, All-wielding Ruler,
No praise could they give the Guardian of Heaven,
The Wielder of Glory. Woe will be his who
Through furious hatred his spirit shall drive to
70 The clutch of the fire, no comfort shall look for,
Wax no wiser; well for the man who,
Living his life-days, his Lord may face
And find defence in his Father's embrace!

IV

BEOWULF GOES TO HROTHGAR'S ASSISTANCE.

So Healfdene's kinsman constantly mused on
His long-lasting sorrow; the battle-thane clever
Was not anywise able evils to 'scape from:
Too crushing the sorrow that came to the people,
5 Loathsome and lasting the life-grinding torture,
Greatest of night-woes. So Higelac's liegeman,
Good amid Geatmen, of Grendel's achievements
Heard in his home: of heroes then living
He was stoutest and strongest, sturdy and noble.
10 He bade them prepare him a bark that was trusty;
He said he the war-king would seek o'er the ocean,
The folk-leader noble, since he needed retainers.
For the perilous project prudent companions
Chided him little, though loving him dearly;
15 They egged the brave atheling, augured him glory.
The excellent knight from the folk of the Geatmen
Had liegemen selected, likest to prove them
Trustworthy warriors; with fourteen companions
The vessel he looked for; a liegeman then showed them,

Anonymous

20 A sea-crafty man, the bounds of the country.
Fast the days fled; the float was a-water,
The craft by the cliff. Clomb to the prow then
Well-equipped warriors: the wave-currents twisted
The sea on the sand; soldiers then carried
25 On the breast of the vessel bright-shining jewels,
Handsome war-armor; heroes outshoved then,
Warmen the wood-ship, on its wished-for adventure.
The foamy-necked floater fanned by the breeze,
Likest a bird, glided the waters,
30 Till twenty and four hours thereafter
The twist-stemmed vessel had traveled such distance
That the sailing-men saw the sloping embankments,
The sea cliffs gleaming, precipitous mountains,
Nesses enormous: they were nearing the limits
35 At the end of the ocean. Up thence quickly
The men of the Weders clomb to the mainland,
Fastened their vessel (battle weeds rattled,
War burnies clattered), the Wielder they thanked
That the ways o'er the waters had waxen so gentle.
40 Then well from the cliff edge the guard of the Scyldings
Who the sea-cliffs should see to, saw o'er the gangway
Brave ones bearing beauteous targets,
Armor all ready, anxiously thought he,
Musing and wondering what men were approaching.
45 High on his horse then Hrothgar's retainer
Turned him to coastward, mightily brandished
His lance in his hands, questioned with boldness.
"Who are ye men here, mail-covered warriors
Clad in your corslets, come thus a-driving
50 A high riding ship o'er the shoals of the waters,
And hither 'neath helmets have hied o'er the ocean?
I have been strand-guard, standing as warden,
Lest enemies ever anywise ravage
Danish dominions with army of war-ships.

Beowulf

55 More boldly never have warriors ventured
Hither to come; of kinsmen's approval,
Word-leave of warriors, I ween that ye surely
Nothing have known. Never a greater one
Of earls o'er the earth have I had a sight of
60 Than is one of your number, a hero in armor;
No low-ranking fellow adorned with his weapons,
But launching them little, unless looks are deceiving,
And striking appearance. Ere ye pass on your journey
As treacherous spies to the land of the Scyldings
65 And farther fare, I fully must know now
What race ye belong to. Ye far-away dwellers,
Sea-faring sailors, my simple opinion
Hear ye and hearken: haste is most fitting
Plainly to tell me what place ye are come from."

V

THE GEATS REACH HEOROT.

The chief of the strangers rendered him answer,
War-troopers' leader, and word-treasure opened:
"We are sprung from the lineage of the people of Geatland,
And Higelac's hearth-friends. To heroes unnumbered
5 My father was known, a noble head-warrior
Ecgtheow titled; many a winter
He lived with the people, ere he passed on his journey,
Old from his dwelling; each of the counsellors
Widely mid world-folk well remembers him.
10 We, kindly of spirit, the lord of thy people,
The son of King Healfdene, have come here to visit,
Folk-troop's defender: be free in thy counsels!
To the noble one bear we a weighty commission,
The helm of the Danemen; we shall hide, I ween,

Anonymous

15 Naught of our message. Thou know'st if it happen,
As we soothly heard say, that some savage despoiler,
Some hidden pursuer, on nights that are murky
By deeds very direful 'mid the Danemen exhibits
Hatred unheard of, horrid destruction
20 And the falling of dead. From feelings least selfish
I am able to render counsel to Hrothgar,
How he, wise and worthy, may worst the destroyer,
If the anguish of sorrow should ever be lessened,
Comfort come to him, and care-waves grow cooler,
25 Or ever hereafter he agony suffer
And troublous distress, while towereth upward
The handsomest of houses high on the summit."
Bestriding his stallion, the strand-watchman answered,
The doughty retainer: "The difference surely
30 'Twixt words and works, the warlike shield-bearer
Who judgeth wisely well shall determine.
This band, I hear, beareth no malice
To the prince of the Scyldings. Pass ye then onward
With weapons and armor. I shall lead you in person;
35 To my war-trusty vassals command I shall issue
To keep from all injury your excellent vessel,
Your fresh-tarred craft, 'gainst every opposer
Close by the sea-shore, till the curved-neckèd bark shall
Waft back again the well-beloved hero
40 O'er the way of the water to Weder dominions.
To warrior so great 'twill be granted sure
In the storm of strife to stand secure."
Onward they fared then (the vessel lay quiet,
The broad-bosomed bark was bound by its cable,
45 Firmly at anchor); the boar-signs glistened
Bright on the visors vivid with gilding,
Blaze-hardened, brilliant; the boar acted warden.
The heroes hastened, hurried the liegemen,
Descended together, till they saw the great palace,

Beowulf

50 The well-fashioned wassail-hall wondrous and gleaming;
‘Mid world-folk and kindreds that was widest reputed
Of halls under heaven which the hero abode in;
Its lustre enlightened lands without number.
Then the battle-brave hero showed them the glittering
55 Court of the bold ones, that they easily thither
Might fare on their journey; the aforementioned warrior
Turning his courser, quoth as he left them:
“’Tis time I were faring; Father Almighty
Grant you His grace, and give you to journey
60 Safe on your mission! To the sea I will get me
‘Gainst hostile warriors as warden to stand.”

VI

BEOWULF INTRODUCES HIMSELF AT THE PALACE.

The highway glistened with many-hued pebble,
A by-path led the liegemen together.
Firm and hand-locked the war-burnie glistened,
The ring-sword radiant rang ‘mid the armor
5 As the party was approaching the palace together
In warlike equipments. ‘Gainst the wall of the building
Their wide-fashioned war-shields they weary did set then,
Battle-shields sturdy; benchward they turned then;
Their battle-sarks rattled, the gear of the heroes;
10 The lances stood up then, all in a cluster,
The arms of the seamen, ashen-shafts mounted
With edges of iron: the armor-clad troopers
Were decked with weapons. Then a proud-mooded hero
Asked of the champions questions of lineage:
15 “From what borders bear ye your battle-shields plated,
Gilded and gleaming, your gray-colored burnies,
Helmets with visors and heap of war-lances?—

Anonymous

To Hrothgar the king I am servant and liegeman.
‘Mong folk from far-lands found I have never
20 Men so many of mien more courageous.
I ween that from valor, nowise as outlaws,
But from greatness of soul ye sought for King Hrothgar.”
Then the strength-famous earlman answer rendered,
The proud-mooded Wederchief replied to his question,
25 Hardy ‘neath helmet: “Higelac’s mates are we;
Beowulf hight I. To the bairn of Healfdene,
The famous folk-leader, I freely will tell
To thy prince my commission, if pleasantly hearing
He’ll grant we may greet him so gracious to all men.”
30 Wulfgar replied then (he was prince of the Wendels,
His boldness of spirit was known unto many,
His prowess and prudence): “The prince of the Scyldings,
The friend-lord of Danemen, I will ask of thy journey,
The giver of rings, as thou urgest me do it,
35 The folk-chief famous, and inform thee early
What answer the good one mindeth to render me.”
He turned then hurriedly where Hrothgar was sitting,
Old and hoary, his earlmen attending him;
The strength-famous went till he stood at the shoulder
40 Of the lord of the Danemen, of courteous thanemen
The custom he minded. Wulfgar addressed then
His friendly liegelord: “Folk of the Geatmen
O’er the way of the waters are wafted hither,
Faring from far-lands: the foremost in rank
45 The battle-champions Beowulf title.
They make this petition: with thee, O my chieftain,
To be granted a conference; O gracious King Hrothgar,
Friendly answer refuse not to give them!
In war-trappings weeded worthy they seem
50 Of earls to be honored; sure the atheling is doughty
Who headed the heroes hitherward coming.”

Beowulf

VII

HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.

Hrothgar answered, helm of the Scyldings:
“I remember this man as the merest of striplings.
His father long dead now was Ecgtheow titled,
Him Hrethel the Geatman granted at home his
5 One only daughter; his battle-brave son
Is come but now, sought a trustworthy friend.
Seafaring sailors asserted it then,
Who valuable gift-gems of the Geatmen carried
As peace-offering thither, that he thirty men’s grapple
10 Has in his hand, the hero-in-battle.
The holy Creator usward sent him,
To West-Dane warriors, I ween, for to render
‘Gainst Grendel’s grimness gracious assistance:
I shall give to the good one gift-gems for courage.
15 Hasten to bid them hither to speed them,
To see assembled this circle of kinsmen;
Tell them expressly they’re welcome in sooth to
The men of the Danes.” To the door of the building
Wulfgar went then, this word-message shouted:
20 “My victorious liegeland bade me to tell you,
The East-Danes’ atheling, that your origin knows he,
And o’er wave-billows wafted ye welcome are hither,
Valiant of spirit. Ye straightway may enter
Clad in corslets, cased in your helmets,
25 To see King Hrothgar. Here let your battle-boards,
Wood-spears and war-shafts, await your conferring.”
The mighty one rose then, with many a liegeman,
An excellent thane-group; some there did await them,
And as bid of the brave one the battle-gear guarded.
30 Together they hied them, while the hero did guide them,
‘Neath Heorot’s roof; the high-minded went then

Anonymous

Sturdy 'neath helmet till he stood in the building,
Beowulf spake (his burnie did glisten,
His armor seamed over by the art of the craftsman):
35 "Hail thou, Hrothgar! I am Higelac's kinsman
And vassal forsooth; many a wonder
I dared as a stripling. The doings of Grendel,
In far-off fatherland I fully did know of:
Sea-farers tell us, this hall-building standeth,
40 Excellent edifice, empty and useless
To all the earlmen after evenlight's glimmer
'Neath heaven's bright hues hath hidden its glory.
This my earls then urged me, the most excellent of them,
Carles very clever, to come and assist thee,
45 Folk-leader Hrothgar; fully they knew of
The strength of my body. Themselves they beheld me
When I came from the contest, when covered with gore
Foes I escaped from, where five I had bound,
The giant-race wasted, in the waters destroying
50 The nickers by night, bore numberless sorrows,
The Weders avenged (woes had they suffered)
Enemies ravaged; alone now with Grendel
I shall manage the matter, with the monster of evil,
The giant, decide it. Thee I would therefore
55 Beg of thy bounty, Bright-Danish chieftain,
Lord of the Scyldings, this single petition:
Not to refuse me, defender of warriors,
Friend-lord of folks, so far have I sought thee,
That I may unaided, my earlmen assisting me,
60 This brave-mooded war-band, purify Heorot.
I have heard on inquiry, the horrible creature
From veriest rashness recks not for weapons;
I this do scorn then, so be Higelac gracious,
My liegelord beloved, lenient of spirit,
65 To bear a blade or a broad-fashioned target,
A shield to the onset; only with hand-grip

Beowulf

The foe I must grapple, fight for my life then,
Foeman with foeman; he fain must rely on
The doom of the Lord whom death layeth hold of.
70 I ween he will wish, if he win in the struggle,
To eat in the war-hall earls of the Geat-folk,
Boldly to swallow them, as of yore he did often
The best of the Hrethmen! Thou needest not trouble
A head-watch to give me; he will have me dripping
75 And dreary with gore, if death overtake me,
Will bear me off bleeding, biting and mouthing me,
The hermit will eat me, heedless of pity,
Marking the moor-fens; no more wilt thou need then
Find me my food. If I fall in the battle,
80 Send to Higelac the armor that serveth
To shield my bosom, the best of equipments,
Richest of ring-mails; 'tis the relic of Hrethla,
The work of Wayland. Goes Weird as she must go!"

VIII

HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.

Hrothgar discoursed, helm of the Scyldings:
"To defend our folk and to furnish assistance,
Thou soughtest us hither, good friend Beowulf.
The fiercest of feuds thy father engaged in,
5 Heatholaf killed he in hand-to-hand conflict
'Mid Wilfingish warriors; then the Wederish people
For fear of a feud were forced to disown him.
Thence flying he fled to the folk of the South-Danes,
The race of the Scyldings, o'er the roll of the waters;
10 I had lately begun then to govern the Danemen,
The hoard-seat of heroes held in my youth,
Rich in its jewels: dead was Heregar,

Anonymous

My kinsman and elder had earth-joys forsaken,
Healfdene his bairn. He was better than I am!
15 That feud thereafter for a fee I compounded;
O'er the weltering waters to the Wilfings I sent
Ornaments old; oaths did he swear me.
It pains me in spirit to any to tell it,
What grief in Heorot Grendel hath caused me,
20 What horror unlooked-for, by hatred unceasing.
Waned is my war-band, wasted my hall-troop;
Weird hath offcast them to the clutches of Grendel.
God can easily hinder the scather
From deeds so direful. Oft drunken with beer
25 O'er the ale-vessel promised warriors in armor
They would willingly wait on the wassailing-benches
A grapple with Grendel, with grimmest of edges.
Then this mead-hall at morning with murder was reeking,
The building was bloody at breaking of daylight,
30 The bench-deals all flooded, dripping and bloodied,
The folk-hall was gory: I had fewer retainers,
Dear-beloved warriors, whom death had laid hold of.
Sit at the feast now, thy intents unto heroes,
Thy victor-fame show, as thy spirit doth urge thee!"
35 For the men of the Geats then together assembled,
In the beer-hall blithesome a bench was made ready;
There warlike in spirit they went to be seated,
Proud and exultant. A liegeman did service,
Who a beaker embellished bore with decorum,
40 And gleaming-drink poured. The gleeman sang whilom
Hearty in Heorot; there was heroes' rejoicing,
A numerous war-band of Weders and Danemen.

Beowulf

IX

UNFERTH TAUNTS BEOWULF.

Unferth spoke up, Ecglafr his son,
Who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings,
Opened the jousting (the journey of Beowulf,
Sea-farer doughty, gave sorrow to Unferth
5 And greatest chagrin, too, for granted he never
That any man else on earth should attain to,
Gain under heaven, more glory than he):
“Art thou that Beowulf with Breca did struggle,
On the wide sea-currents at swimming contended,
10 Where to humor your pride the ocean ye tried,
From vainest vaunting adventured your bodies
In care of the waters? And no one was able
Nor lief nor loth one, in the least to dissuade you
Your difficult voyage; then ye ventured a-swimming,
15 Where your arms outstretching the streams ye did cover,
The mere-ways measured, mixing and stirring them,
Glided the ocean; angry the waves were,
With the weltering of winter. In the water’s possession,
Ye toiled for a seven-night; he at swimming outdid thee,
20 In strength excelled thee. Then early at morning
On the Heathoremes’ shore the holm-currents tossed him,
Sought he thenceward the home of his fathers,
Beloved of his liegemen, the land of the Brondings,
The peace-castle pleasant, where a people he wielded,
25 Had borough and jewels. The pledge that he made thee
The son of Beanstan hath soothly accomplished.
Then I ween thou wilt find thee less fortunate issue,
Though ever triumphant in onset of battle,
A grim grappling, if Grendel thou darest
30 For the space of a night near-by to wait for!”
Beowulf answered, offspring of Ecgtheow:

Anonymous

“My good friend Unferth, sure freely and wildly,
Thou fuddled with beer of Breca hast spoken,
Hast told of his journey! A fact I allege it,
35 That greater strength in the waters I had then,
Ills in the ocean, than any man else had.
We made agreement as the merest of striplings
Promised each other (both of us then were
Younkers in years) that we yet would adventure
40 Out on the ocean; it all we accomplished.
While swimming the sea-floods, sword-blade unscabbarded
Boldly we brandished, our bodies expected
To shield from the sharks. He sure was unable
To swim on the waters further than I could,
45 More swift on the waves, nor _would_ I from him go.
Then we two companions stayed in the ocean
Five nights together, till the currents did part us,
The weltering waters, weathers the bleakest,
And nethermost night, and the north-wind whistled
50 Fierce in our faces; fell were the billows.
The mere fishes’ mood was mightily ruffled:
And there against foemen my firm-knotted corslet,
Hand-jointed, hardy, help did afford me;
My battle-sark braided, brilliantly gilded,
55 Lay on my bosom. To the bottom then dragged me,
A hateful fiend-scather, seized me and held me,
Grim in his grapple: ‘twas granted me, nathless,
To pierce the monster with the point of my weapon,
My obedient blade; battle offcarried
60 The mighty mere-creature by means of my hand-blow.

Beowulf

X

BEOWULF SILENCES UNFERTH.—GLEE IS HIGH.

“So ill-meaning enemies often did cause me
Sorrow the sorest. I served them, in quittance,
With my dear-lovèd sword, as in sooth it was fitting;
They missed the pleasure of feasting abundantly,
5 Ill-doers evil, of eating my body,
Of surrounding the banquet deep in the ocean;
But wounded with edges early at morning
They were stretched a-high on the strand of the ocean,
Put to sleep with the sword, that sea-going travelers
10 No longer thereafter were hindered from sailing
The foam-dashing currents. Came a light from the east,
God’s beautiful beacon; the billows subsided,
That well I could see the nesses projecting,
The blustering crags. Weird often saveth
15 The undoomed hero if doughty his valor!
But me did it fortune to fell with my weapon
Nine of the nickers. Of night-struggle harder
‘Neath dome of the heaven heard I but rarely,
Nor of wight more woful in the waves of the ocean;
20 Yet I ‘scaped with my life the grip of the monsters,
Weary from travel. Then the waters bare me
To the land of the Finns, the flood with the current,
The weltering waves. Not a word hath been told me
Of deeds so daring done by thee, Unferth,
25 And of sword-terror none; never hath Breca
At the play of the battle, nor either of you two,
Feat so fearless performèd with weapons
Glinting and gleaming
. I utter no boasting;
30 Though with cold-blooded cruelty thou killedst thy brothers,
Thy nearest of kin; thou needs must in hell get

Anonymous

Direful damnation, though doughty thy wisdom.
I tell thee in earnest, offspring of Ecglaef,
Never had Grendel such numberless horrors,
35 The direful demon, done to thy liegelord,
Harrying in Heorot, if thy heart were as sturdy,
Thy mood as ferocious as thou dost describe them.
He hath found out fully that the fierce-burning hatred,
The edge-battle eager, of all of your kindred,
40 Of the Victory-Scyldings, need little dismay him:
Oaths he exacteth, not any he spares
Of the folk of the Danemen, but fighteth with pleasure,
Killeth and feasteth, no contest expecteth
From Spear-Danish people. But the prowess and valor
45 Of the earls of the Geatmen early shall venture
To give him a grapple. He shall go who is able
Bravely to banquet, when the bright-light of morning
Which the second day bringeth, the sun in its ether-ropes,
O'er children of men shines from the southward!"
50 Then the gray-haired, war-famed giver of treasure
Was blithesome and joyous, the Bright-Danish ruler
Expected assistance; the people's protector
Heard from Beowulf his bold resolution.
There was laughter of heroes; loud was the clatter,
55 The words were winsome. Wealtheow advanced then,
Consort of Hrothgar, of courtesy mindful,
Gold-decked saluted the men in the building,
And the freeborn woman the beaker presented
To the lord of the kingdom, first of the East-Danes,
60 Bade him be blithesome when beer was a-flowing,
Lief to his liegemen; he lustily tasted
Of banquet and beaker, battle-famed ruler.
The Helmingish lady then graciously circled
'Mid all the liegemen lesser and greater:
65 Treasure-cups tendered, till time was afforded
That the decorous-mooded, diademed folk-queen

Beowulf

Might bear to Beowulf the bumper o'errunning;
She greeted the Geat-prince, God she did thank,
Most wise in her words, that her wish was accomplished,
70 That in any of earlmen she ever should look for
Solace in sorrow. He accepted the beaker,
Battle-bold warrior, at Wealththeow's giving,
Then equipped for combat quoth he in measures,
Beowulf spake, offspring of Ecgtheow:
75 "I purposed in spirit when I mounted the ocean,
When I boarded my boat with a band of my liegemen,
I would work to the fullest the will of your people
Or in foe's-clutches fastened fall in the battle.
Deeds I shall do of daring and prowess,
80 Or the last of my life-days live in this mead-hall."
These words to the lady were welcome and pleasing,
The boast of the Geatman; with gold trappings broidered
Went the freeborn folk-queen her fond-lord to sit by.
Then again as of yore was heard in the building
85 Courtly discussion, conquerors' shouting,
Heroes were happy, till Healfdene's son would
Go to his slumber to seek for refreshing;
For the horrid hell-monster in the hall-building knew he
A fight was determined, since the light of the sun they
90 No longer could see, and lowering darkness
O'er all had descended, and dark under heaven
Shadowy shapes came shying around them.
The liegemen all rose then. One saluted the other,
Hrothgar Beowulf, in rhythmical measures,
95 Wishing him well, and, the wassail-hall giving
To his care and keeping, quoth he departing:
"Not to any one else have I ever entrusted,
But thee and thee only, the hall of the Danemen,
Since high I could heave my hand and my buckler.
100 Take thou in charge now the noblest of houses;
Be mindful of honor, exhibiting prowess,

Anonymous

Watch 'gainst the foeman! Thou shalt want no enjoyments,
Survive thou safely adventure so glorious!"

XI

ALL SLEEP SAVE ONE.

Then Hrothgar departed, his earl-throng attending him,
Folk-lord of Scyldings, forth from the building;
The war-chieftain wished then Wealhtheow to look for,
The queen for a bedmate. To keep away Grendel
5 The Glory of Kings had given a hall-watch,
As men heard recounted: for the king of the Danemen
He did special service, gave the giant a watcher:
And the prince of the Geatmen implicitly trusted
His warlike strength and the Wielder's protection.
10 His armor of iron off him he did then,
His helmet from his head, to his henchman committed
His chased-handled chain-sword, choicest of weapons,
And bade him bide with his battle-equipments.
The good one then uttered words of defiance,
15 Beowulf Geatman, ere his bed he upmounted:
"I hold me no meaner in matters of prowess,
In warlike achievements, than Grendel does himself;
Hence I seek not with sword-edge to sooth him to slumber,
Of life to bereave him, though well I am able.
20 No battle-skill has he, that blows he should strike me,
To shatter my shield, though sure he is mighty
In strife and destruction; but struggling by night we
Shall do without edges, dare he to look for
Weaponless warfare, and wise-mooded Father
25 The glory apportion, God ever-holy,
On which hand soever to him seemeth proper."
Then the brave-mooded hero bent to his slumber,

Beowulf

The pillow received the cheek of the noble;
And many a martial mere-thane attending
30 Sank to his slumber. Seemed it unlikely
That ever thereafter any should hope to
Be happy at home, hero-friends visit
Or the lordly troop-castle where he lived from his child-
hood;
They had heard how slaughter had snatched from the wine-
hall,
35 Had recently ravished, of the race of the Scyldings
Too many by far. But the Lord to them granted
The weaving of war-speed, to Wederish heroes
Aid and comfort, that every opponent
By one man's war-might they worsted and vanquished,
40 By the might of himself; the truth is established
That God Almighty hath governed for ages
Kindreds and nations. A night very lurid
The trav'ler-at-twilight came tramping and striding.
The warriors were sleeping who should watch the
horned-building,
45 One only excepted. 'Mid earthmen 'twas 'stablished,
Th' implacable foeman was powerless to hurl them
To the land of shadows, if the Lord were unwilling;
But serving as warder, in terror to foemen,
He angrily bided the issue of battle.

XII

GRENDDEL AND BEOWULF.

'Neath the cloudy cliffs came from the moor then
Grendel going, God's anger bare he.
The monster intended some one of earthmen
In the hall-building grand to entrap and make way with:
5 He went under welkin where well he knew of

Anonymous

The wine-joyous building, brilliant with plating,
Gold-hall of earthmen. Not the earliest occasion
He the home and manor of Hrothgar had sought:
Ne'er found he in life-days later nor earlier
10 Hardier hero, hall-thanes more sturdy!
Then came to the building the warrior marching,
Bereft of his joyance. The door quickly opened
On fire-hinges fastened, when his fingers had touched it;
The fell one had flung then—his fury so bitter—
15 Open the entrance. Early thereafter
The foeman trod the shining hall-pavement,
Strode he angrily; from the eyes of him glimmered
A lustre unlovely likest to fire.
He beheld in the hall the heroes in numbers,
20 A circle of kinsmen sleeping together,
A throng of thanemen: then his thoughts were exultant,
He minded to sunder from each of the thanemen
The life from his body, horrible demon,
Ere morning came, since fate had allowed him
25 The prospect of plenty. Providence willed not
To permit him any more of men under heaven
To eat in the night-time. Higelac's kinsman
Great sorrow endured how the dire-mooded creature
In unlooked-for assaults were likely to bear him.
30 No thought had the monster of deferring the matter,
But on earliest occasion he quickly laid hold of
A soldier asleep, suddenly tore him,
Bit his bone-prison, the blood drank in currents,
Swallowed in mouthfuls: he soon had the dead man's
35 Feet and hands, too, eaten entirely.
Nearer he strode then, the stout-hearted warrior
Snatched as he slumbered, seizing with hand-grip,
Forward the foeman foined with his hand;
Caught he quickly the cunning deviser,
40 On his elbow he rested. This early discovered

Beowulf

The master of malice, that in middle-earth's regions,
'Neath the whole of the heavens, no hand-grapple greater
In any man else had he ever encountered:
Fearful in spirit, faint-mooded waxed he,
45 Not off could betake him; death he was pondering,
Would fly to his covert, seek the devils' assembly:
His calling no more was the same he had followed
Long in his lifetime. The liege-kinsman worthy
Of Higelac minded his speech of the evening,
50 Stood he up straight and stoutly did seize him.
His fingers crackled; the giant was outward,
The earl stepped farther. The famous one minded
To flee away farther, if he found an occasion,
And off and away, avoiding delay,
55 To fly to the fen-moors; he fully was ware of
The strength of his grapple in the grip of the foeman.
'Twas an ill-taken journey that the injury-bringing,
Harrying harmer to Heorot wandered:
The palace re-echoed; to all of the Danemen,
60 Dwellers in castles, to each of the bold ones,
Earlmen, was terror. Angry they both were,
Archwarders raging. Rattled the building;
'Twas a marvellous wonder that the wine-hall withstood
then
The bold-in-battle, bent not to earthward,
65 Excellent earth-hall; but within and without it
Was fastened so firmly in fetters of iron,
By the art of the armorer. Off from the sill there
Bent mead-benches many, as men have informed me,
Adorned with gold-work, where the grim ones did struggle.
70 The Scylding wise men weened ne'er before
That by might and main-strength a man under heaven
Might break it in pieces, bone-decked, resplendent,
Crush it by cunning, unless clutch of the fire
In smoke should consume it. The sound mounted upward

Anonymous

75 Novel enough; on the North Danes fastened
A terror of anguish, on all of the men there
Who heard from the wall the weeping and plaining,
The song of defeat from the foeman of heaven,
Heard him hymns of horror howl, and his sorrow
80 Hell-bound bewailing. He held him too firmly
Who was strongest of main-strength of men of that era.

XIII

GRENDEL IS VANQUISHED.

For no cause whatever would the earlmen's defender
Leave in life-joys the loathsome newcomer,
He deemed his existence utterly useless
To men under heaven. Many a noble
5 Of Beowulf brandished his battle-sword old,
Would guard the life of his lord and protector,
The far-famous chieftain, if able to do so;
While waging the warfare, this wist they but little,
Brave battle-thanes, while his body intending
10 To slit into slivers, and seeking his spirit:
That the relentless foeman nor finest of weapons
Of all on the earth, nor any of war-bills
Was willing to injure; but weapons of victory
Swords and suchlike he had sworn to dispense with.
15 His death at that time must prove to be wretched,
And the far-away spirit widely should journey
Into enemies' power. This plainly he saw then
Who with mirth of mood malice no little
Had wrought in the past on the race of the earthmen
20 (To God he was hostile), that his body would fail him,
But Higelac's hardy henchman and kinsman
Held him by the hand; hateful to other

Beowulf

Was each one if living. A body-wound suffered
The direful demon, damage incurable
25 Was seen on his shoulder, his sinews were shivered,
His body did burst. To Beowulf was given
Glory in battle; Grendel from thenceward
Must flee and hide him in the fen-cliffs and marshes,
Sick unto death, his dwelling must look for
30 Unwinsome and woful; he wist the more fully
The end of his earthly existence was nearing,
His life-days' limits. At last for the Danemen,
When the slaughter was over, their wish was accomplished.
The comer-from-far-land had cleansed then of evil,
35 Wise and valiant, the war-hall of Hrothgar,
Saved it from violence. He joyed in the night-work,
In repute for prowess; the prince of the Geatmen
For the East-Danish people his boast had accomplished,
Bettered their burdensome bale-sorrows fully,
40 The craft-begot evil they erstwhile had suffered
And were forced to endure from crushing oppression,
Their manifold misery. 'Twas a manifest token,
When the hero-in-battle the hand suspended,
The arm and the shoulder (there was all of the claw
45 Of Grendel together) 'neath great-stretching hall-roof.

XIV

REJOICING OF THE DANES.

In the mist of the morning many a warrior
Stood round the gift-hall, as the story is told me:
Folk-princes fared then from far and from near
Through long-stretching journeys to look at the wonder,
5 The footprints of the foeman. Few of the warriors
Who gazed on the foot-tracks of the inglorious creature

Anonymous

His parting from life pained very deeply,
How, weary in spirit, off from those regions
In combats conquered he carried his traces,
10 Fated and flying, to the flood of the nickers.
There in bloody billows bubbled the currents,
The angry eddy was everywhere mingled
And seething with gore, welling with sword-blood;
He death-doomed had hid him, when reaved of his joyance
15 He laid down his life in the lair he had fled to,
His heathenish spirit, where hell did receive him.
Thence the friends from of old backward turned them,
And many a younker from merry adventure,
Striding their stallions, stout from the seaward,
20 Heroes on horses. There were heard very often
Beowulf's praises; many often asserted
That neither south nor north, in the circuit of waters,
O'er outstretching earth-plain, none other was better
'Mid bearers of war-shields, more worthy to govern,
25 'Neath the arch of the ether. Not any, however,
'Gainst the friend-lord muttered, mocking-words uttered
Of Hrothgar the gracious (a good king he).
Oft the famed ones permitted their fallow-skinned horses
To run in rivalry, racing and chasing,
30 Where the fieldways appeared to them fair and inviting,
Known for their excellence; oft a thane of the folk-lord,
A man of celebrity, mindful of rhythms,
Who ancient traditions treasured in memory,
New word-groups found properly bound:
35 The bard after 'gan then Beowulf's venture
Wisely to tell of, and words that were clever
To utter skilfully, earnestly speaking,
Everything told he that he heard as to Sigmund's
Mighty achievements, many things hidden,
40 The strife of the Wælsing, the wide-going ventures
The children of men knew of but little,

Beowulf

The feud and the fury, but Fitela with him,
When suchlike matters he minded to speak of,
Uncle to nephew, as in every contention
45 Each to other was ever devoted:
A numerous host of the race of the scathers
They had slain with the sword-edge. To Sigmund accrued
then
No little of glory, when his life-days were over,
Since he sturdy in struggle had destroyed the great dragon,
50 The hoard-treasure's keeper; 'neath the hoar-grayish stone,
The son of the atheling, unaided adventured
The perilous project; not present was Fitela,
Yet the fortune befell him of forcing his weapon
Through the marvellous dragon, that it stood in the wall,
55 Well-honored weapon; the worm was slaughtered.
The great one had gained then by his glorious achievement
To reap from the ring-hoard richest enjoyment,
As best it did please him: his vessel he loaded,
Shining ornaments on the ship's bosom carried,
60 Kinsman of Wæls: the drake in heat melted.
He was farthest famed of fugitive pilgrims,
Mid wide-scattered world-folk, for works of great prowess,
War-troopers' shelter: hence waxed he in honor.
Afterward Heremod's hero-strength failed him,
65 His vigor and valor. 'Mid venomous haters
To the hands of foemen he was foully delivered,
Offdriven early. Agony-billows
Oppressed him too long, to his people he became then,
To all the athelings, an ever-great burden;
70 And the daring one's journey in days of yore
Many wise men were wont to deplore,
Such as hoped he would bring them help in their sorrow,
That the son of their ruler should rise into power,
Holding the headship held by his fathers,
75 Should govern the people, the gold-hoard and borough,

Anonymous

The kingdom of heroes, the realm of the Scyldings.
He to all men became then far more beloved,
Higelac's kinsman, to kindreds and races,
To his friends much dearer; him malice assaulted.—
80 Oft running and racing on roadsters they measured
The dun-colored highways. Then the light of the morning
Was hurried and hastened. Went henchmen in numbers
To the beautiful building, bold ones in spirit,
To look at the wonder; the liegelord himself then
85 From his wife-bower wending, warden of treasures,
Glorious trod with troopers unnumbered,
Famed for his virtues, and with him the queen-wife
Measured the mead-ways, with maidens attending.

XV

HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

Hrothgar discoursed (to the hall-building went he,
He stood by the pillar, saw the steep-rising hall-roof
Gleaming with gold-gems, and Grendel his hand there):
“For the sight we behold now, thanks to the Wielder
5 Early be offered! Much evil I bided,
Snaring from Grendel: God can e'er 'complish
Wonder on wonder, Wielder of Glory!
But lately I reckoned ne'er under heaven
Comfort to gain me for any of sorrows,
10 While the handsomest of houses horrid with bloodstain
Gory uptowered; grief had offrightened
Each of the wise ones who weened not that ever
The folk-troop's defences 'gainst foes they should strength-
en,
'Gainst sprites and monsters. Through the might of the
Wielder

Beowulf

15 A doughty retainer hath a deed now accomplished
Which erstwhile we all with our excellent wisdom
Failed to perform. May affirm very truly
What woman soever in all of the nations
Gave birth to the child, if yet she surviveth,
20 That the long-ruling Lord was lavish to herward
In the birth of the bairn. Now, Beowulf dear,
Most excellent hero, I'll love thee in spirit
As bairn of my body; bear well henceforward
The relationship new. No lack shall befall thee
25 Of earth-joys any I ever can give thee.
Full often for lesser service I've given
Hero less hardy hoard-treasure precious,
To a weaker in war-strife. By works of distinction
Thou hast gained for thyself now that thy glory shall flourish
30 Forever and ever. The All-Ruler quite thee
With good from His hand as He hitherto did thee!"
Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's offspring:
"That labor of glory most gladly achieved we,
The combat accomplished, unquailing we ventured
35 The enemy's grapple; I would grant it much rather
Thou wert able to look at the creature in person,
Faint unto falling, the foe in his trappings!
On murder-bed quickly I minded to bind him,
With firm-holding fetters, that forced by my grapple
40 Low he should lie in life-and-death struggle
'Less his body escape; I was wholly unable,
Since God did not will it, to keep him from going,
Not held him that firmly, hated opposer;
Too swift was the foeman. Yet safety regarding
45 He suffered his hand behind him to linger,
His arm and shoulder, to act as watcher;
No shadow of solace the woe-begone creature
Found him there nathless: the hated destroyer
Liveth no longer, lashed for his evils,

Anonymous

50 But sorrow hath seized him, in snare-meshes hath him
Close in its clutches, keepeth him writhing
In baleful bonds: there banished for evil
The man shall wait for the mighty tribunal,
How the God of glory shall give him his earnings.”
55 Then the soldier kept silent, son of old Ecglaf,
From boasting and bragging of battle-achievements,
Since the princes beheld there the hand that depended
‘Neath the lofty hall-timbers by the might of the nobleman,
Each one before him, the enemy’s fingers;
60 Each finger-nail strong steel most resembled,
The heathen one’s hand-spur, the hero-in-battle’s
Claw most uncanny; quoth they agreeing,

XVI

HROTHGAR LAVISHES GIFTS UPON HIS DELIVERER.

Then straight was ordered that Heorot inside
With hands be embellished: a host of them gathered,
Of men and women, who the wassailing-building
The guest-hall begeared. Gold-flashing sparkled
5 Webs on the walls then, of wonders a many
To each of the heroes that look on such objects.
The beautiful building was broken to pieces
Which all within with irons was fastened,
Its hinges torn off: only the roof was
10 Whole and uninjured when the horrible creature
Outlawed for evil off had betaken him,
Hopeless of living. ‘Tis hard to avoid it
(Whoever will do it!); but he doubtless must come to
The place awaiting, as Wyrð hath appointed,
15 Soul-bearers, earth-dwellers, earls under heaven,
Where bound on its bed his body shall slumber

Beowulf

When feasting is finished. Full was the time then
That the son of Healfdene went to the building;
The excellent atheling would eat of the banquet.
20 Ne'er heard I that people with hero-band larger
Bare them better tow'rds their bracelet-bestower.
The laden-with-glory stooped to the bench then
(Their kinsmen-companions in plenty were joyful,
Many a cupful quaffing complaisantly),
25 Doughty of spirit in the high-tow'ring palace,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot then inside
Was filled with friendly ones; falsehood and treachery
The Folk-Scyldings now nowise did practise.
Then the offspring of Healfdene offered to Beowulf
30 A golden standard, as reward for the victory,
A banner embossed, burnie and helmet;
Many men saw then a song-famous weapon
Borne 'fore the hero. Beowulf drank of
The cup in the building; that treasure-bestowing
35 He needed not blush for in battle-men's presence.
Ne'er heard I that many men on the ale-bench
In friendlier fashion to their fellows presented
Four bright jewels with gold-work embellished.
'Round the roof of the helmet a head-guarder outside
40 Braided with wires, with bosses was furnished,
That swords-for-the-battle fight-hardened might fail
Boldly to harm him, when the hero proceeded
Forth against foemen. The defender of earls then
Commanded that eight steeds with bridles
45 Gold-plated, gleaming, be guided to hallward,
Inside the building; on one of them stood then
An art-broidered saddle embellished with jewels;
'Twas the sovereign's seat, when the son of King Healfdene
Was pleased to take part in the play of the edges;
50 The famous one's valor ne'er failed at the front when
Slain ones were bowing. And to Beowulf granted

Anonymous

The prince of the Ingwins, power over both,
O'er war-steeds and weapons; bade him well to enjoy them.
In so manly a manner the mighty-famed chieftain,
55 Hoard-ward of heroes, with horses and jewels
War-storms requited, that none e'er condemneth
Who willeth to tell truth with full justice.

XVII

BANQUET THE SCOP'S SONG OF FINN AND HNÆF.

And the atheling of earlmen to each of the heroes
Who the ways of the waters went with Beowulf,
A costly gift-token gave on the mead-bench,
Offered an heirloom, and ordered that that man
5 With gold should be paid for, whom Grendel had erstwhile
Wickedly slaughtered, as he more of them had done
Had far-seeing God and the mood of the hero
The fate not averted: the Father then governed
All of the earth-dwellers, as He ever is doing;
10 Hence insight for all men is everywhere fittest,
Forethought of spirit! much he shall suffer
Of lief and of loathsome who long in this present
Useth the world in this woful existence.
There was music and merriment mingling together
15 Touching Healfdene's leader; the joy-wood was fingered,
Measures recited, when the singer of Hrothgar
On mead-bench should mention the merry hall-joyance
Of the kinsmen of Finn, when onset surprised them:
"The Half-Danish hero, Hnæf of the Scyldings,
20 On the field of the Frisians was fated to perish.
Sure Hildeburg needed not mention approving
The faith of the Jutemen: though blameless entirely,

Beowulf

When shields were shivered she was shorn of her darlings,
Of bairns and brothers: they bent to their fate
25 With war-spear wounded; woe was that woman.
Not causeless lamented the daughter of Hoce
The decree of the Wielder when morning-light came and
She was able 'neath heaven to behold the destruction
Of brothers and bairns, where the brightest of earth-joys
30 She had hitherto had: all the henchmen of Finn
War had oftaken, save a handful remaining,
That he nowise was able to offer resistance
To the onset of Hengest in the parley of battle,
Nor the wretched remnant to rescue in war from
35 The earl of the atheling; but they offered conditions,
Another great building to fully make ready,
A hall and a high-seat, that half they might rule with
The sons of the Jutemen, and that Folcwalda's son would
Day after day the Danemen honor
40 When gifts were giving, and grant of his ring-store
To Hengest's earl-troop ever so freely,
Of his gold-plated jewels, as he encouraged the Frisians
On the bench of the beer-hall. On both sides they swore
then
A fast-binding compact; Finn unto Hengest
45 With no thought of revoking vowed then most solemnly
The woe-begone remnant well to take charge of,
His Witan advising; the agreement should no one
By words or works weaken and shatter,
By artifice ever injure its value,
50 Though reaved of their ruler their ring-giver's slayer
They followed as vassals, Fate so requiring:
Then if one of the Frisians the quarrel should speak of
In tones that were taunting, terrible edges
Should cut in requital. Accomplished the oath was,
55 And treasure of gold from the hoard was uplifted.
The best of the Scylding braves was then fully

Anonymous

Prepared for the pile; at the pyre was seen clearly
The blood-gory burnie, the boar with his gilding,
The iron-hard swine, athelings many
60 Fatally wounded; no few had been slaughtered.
Hildeburg bade then, at the burning of Hnæf,
The bairn of her bosom to bear to the fire,
That his body be burned and borne to the pyre.
The woe-stricken woman wept on his shoulder,
65 In measures lamented; upmounted the hero.
The greatest of dead-fires curled to the welkin,
On the hill's-front crackled; heads were a-melting,
Wound-doors bursting, while the blood was a-coursing
From body-bite fierce. The fire devoured them,
70 Greediest of spirits, whom war had offcarried
From both of the peoples; their bravest were fallen.

XVIII

THE FINN EPISODE THE BANQUET CONTINUES.

“Then the warriors departed to go to their dwellings,
Reaved of their friends, Friesland to visit,
Their homes and high-city. Hengest continued
Biding with Finn the blood-tainted winter,
5 Wholly unsundered; of fatherland thought he
Though unable to drive the ring-stemmèd vessel
O'er the ways of the waters; the wave-deeps were tossing,
Fought with the wind; winter in ice-bonds
Closed up the currents, till there came to the dwelling
10 A year in its course, as yet it revolveth,
If season propitious one always regardeth,
World-cheering weathers. Then winter was gone,
Earth's bosom was lovely; the exile would get him,
The guest from the palace; on grewsomest vengeance

Beowulf

- 15 He brooded more eager than on oversea journeys,
Whe'r onset-of-anger he were able to 'comply,
The bairns of the Jutemen therein to remember.
Nowise refused he the duties of liegeman
When Hun of the Frisians the battle-sword Láfing,
20 Fairest of falchions, friendly did give him:
Its edges were famous in folk-talk of Jutland.
And savage sword-fury seized in its clutches
Bold-mooded Finn where he bode in his palace,
When the grewsome grapple Guthlaf and Oslaf
25 Had mournfully mentioned, the mere-journey over,
For sorrows half-blamed him; the flickering spirit
Could not bide in his bosom. Then the building was covered
With corpses of foemen, and Finn too was slaughtered,
The king with his comrades, and the queen made a prisoner.
30 The troops of the Scyldings bore to their vessels
All that the land-king had in his palace,
Such trinkets and treasures they took as, on searching,
At Finn's they could find. They ferried to Daneland
The excellent woman on oversea journey,
35 Led her to their land-folk." The lay was concluded,
The gleeman's recital. Shouts again rose then,
Bench-glee resounded, bearers then offered
Wine from wonder-vats. Wealhtheo advanced then
Going 'neath gold-crown, where the good ones were seated
40 Uncle and nephew; their peace was yet mutual,
True each to the other. And Unferth the spokesman
Sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings:
Each trusted his spirit that his mood was courageous,
Though at fight he had failed in faith to his kinsmen.
45 Said the queen of the Scyldings: "My lord and protector,
Treasure-bestower, take thou this beaker;
Joyance attend thee, gold-friend of heroes,

Anonymous

And greet thou the Geatmen with gracious responses!
So ought one to do. Be kind to the Geatmen,
50 In gifts not niggardly; anear and afar now
Peace thou enjoyest. Report hath informed me
Thou'lt have for a bairn the battle-brave hero.
Now is Heorot cleansèd, ring-palace gleaming;
Give while thou mayest many rewards,
55 And bequeath to thy kinsmen kingdom and people,
On wending thy way to the Wielder's splendor.
I know good Hrothulf, that the noble young troopers
He'll care for and honor, lord of the Scyldings,
If earth-joys thou endest earlier than he doth;
60 I reckon that recompense he'll render with kindness
Our offspring and issue, if that all he remember,
What favors of yore, when he yet was an infant,
We awarded to him for his worship and pleasure."
Then she turned by the bench where her sons were carous-
ing,
65 Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the heroes' offspring,
The war-youth together; there the good one was sitting
"Twixt the brothers twain, Beowulf Geatman.

XIX

BEOWULF RECEIVES FURTHER HONOR.

A beaker was borne him, and bidding to quaff it
Graciously given, and gold that was twisted
Pleasantly proffered, a pair of arm-jewels,
Rings and corslet, of collars the greatest
5 I've heard of 'neath heaven. Of heroes not any
More splendid from jewels have I heard 'neath the welkin,
Since Hama off bore the Brosingmen's necklace,
The bracteates and jewels, from the bright-shining city,

Beowulf

Eormenric's cunning craftiness fled from,
10 Chose gain everlasting. Geatish Higelac,
Grandson of Swerting, last had this jewel
When tramping 'neath banner the treasure he guarded,
The field-spoil defended; Fate offcarried him
When for deeds of daring he endured tribulation,
15 Hate from the Frisians; the ornaments bare he
O'er the cup of the currents, costly gem-treasures,
Mighty folk-leader, he fell 'neath his target;
The corpse of the king then came into charge of
The race of the Frankmen, the mail-shirt and collar:
20 Warmen less noble plundered the fallen,
When the fight was finished; the folk of the Geatmen
The field of the dead held in possession.
The choicest of mead-halls with cheering resounded.
Wealththeo discoursed, the war-troop addressed she:
25 "This collar enjoy thou, Beowulf worthy,
Young man, in safety, and use thou this armor,
Gems of the people, and prosper thou fully,
Show thyself sturdy and be to these liegemen
Mild with instruction! I'll mind thy requital.
30 Thou hast brought it to pass that far and near
Forever and ever earthmen shall honor thee,
Even so widely as ocean surroundeth
The blustering bluffs. Be, while thou livest,
A wealth-blessèd atheling. I wish thee most truly
35 Jewels and treasure. Be kind to my son, thou
Living in joyance! Here each of the nobles
Is true unto other, gentle in spirit,
Loyal to leader. The liegemen are peaceful,
The war-troops ready: well-drunken heroes,
40 Do as I bid ye." Then she went to the settle.
There was choicest of banquets, wine drank the heroes:
Weird they knew not, destiny cruel,
As to many an earlman early it happened,

Anonymous

When evening had come and Hrothgar had parted
45 Off to his manor, the mighty to slumber.
Warriors unnumbered warded the building
As erst they did often: the ale-settle bared they,
'Twas covered all over with beds and pillows.
Doomed unto death, down to his slumber
50 Bowed then a beer-thane. Their battle-shields placed they,
Bright-shining targets, up by their heads then;
O'er the atheling on ale-bench 'twas easy to see there
Battle-high helmet, burnie of ring-mail,
And mighty war-spear. 'Twas the wont of that people
55 To constantly keep them equipped for the battle,
At home or marching—in either condition—
At seasons just such as necessity ordered
As best for their ruler; that people was worthy.

XX

THE MOTHER OF GREDEL.

They sank then to slumber. With sorrow one paid for
His evening repose, as often betid them
While Grendel was holding the gold-bedecked palace,
Ill-deeds performing, till his end overtook him,
5 Death for his sins. 'Twas seen very clearly,
Known unto earth-folk, that still an avenger
Outlived the loathed one, long since the sorrow
Caused by the struggle; the mother of Grendel,
Devil-shaped woman, her woe ever minded,
10 Who was held to inhabit the horrible waters,
The cold-flowing currents, after Cain had become a
Slayer-with-edges to his one only brother,
The son of his sire; he set out then banished,
Marked as a murderer, man-joys avoiding,

Beowulf

15 Lived in the desert. Thence demons unnumbered
Fate-sent awoke; one of them Grendel,
Sword-cursèd, hateful, who at Heorot met with
A man that was watching, waiting the struggle,
Where a horrid one held him with hand-grapple sturdy;
20 Nathless he minded the might of his body,
The glorious gift God had allowed him,
And folk-ruling Father's favor relied on,
His help and His comfort: so he conquered the foeman,
The hell-spirit humbled: he unhappy departed then,
25 Reaved of his joyance, journeying to death-haunts,
Foeman of man. His mother moreover
Eager and gloomy was anxious to go on
Her mournful mission, mindful of vengeance
For the death of her son. She came then to Heorot
30 Where the Armor-Dane earlmen all through the building
Were lying in slumber. Soon there became then
Return to the nobles, when the mother of Grendel
Entered the folk-hall; the fear was less grievous
By even so much as the vigor of maidens,
35 War-strength of women, by warrior is reckoned,
When well-carved weapon, worked with the hammer,
Blade very bloody, brave with its edges,
Strikes down the boar-sign that stands on the helmet.
Then the hard-edgèd weapon was heaved in the building,
40 The brand o'er the benches, broad-lindens many
Hand-fast were lifted; for helmet he recked not,
For armor-net broad, whom terror laid hold of.
She went then hastily, outward would get her
Her life for to save, when some one did spy her;
45 Soon she had grappled one of the athelings
Fast and firmly, when fenward she hied her;
That one to Hrothgar was liefest of heroes
In rank of retainer where waters encircle,
A mighty shield-warrior, whom she murdered at slumber,

Anonymous

50 A broadly-famed battle-knight. Beowulf was absent,
But another apartment was erstwhile devoted
To the glory-decked Geatman when gold was distributed.
There was hubbub in Heorot. The hand that was famous
She grasped in its gore; grief was renewed then
55 In homes and houses: 'twas no happy arrangement
In both of the quarters to barter and purchase
With lives of their friends. Then the well-aged ruler,
The gray-headed war-thane, was woful in spirit,
When his long-trusted liegeman lifeless he knew of,
60 His dearest one gone. Quick from a room was
Beowulf brought, brave and triumphant.
As day was dawning in the dusk of the morning,
Went then that earlman, champion noble,
Came with comrades, where the clever one bided
65 Whether God all gracious would grant him a respite
After the woe he had suffered. The war-worthy hero
With a troop of retainers trod then the pavement
(The hall-building groaned), till he greeted the wise one,
The earl of the Ingwines; asked if the night had
70 Fully refreshed him, as fain he would have it.

XXI

HROTHGAR'S ACCOUNT OF THE MONSTERS.

Hrothgar rejoined, helm of the Scyldings:
"Ask not of joyance! Grief is renewed to
The folk of the Danemen. Dead is Æschere,
Yrmenlaf's brother, older than he,
5 My true-hearted counsellor, trusty adviser,
Shoulder-companion, when fighting in battle
Our heads we protected, when troopers were clashing,
And heroes were dashing; such an earl should be ever,

Beowulf

An erst-worthy atheling, as Æschere proved him.
10 The flickering death-spirit became in Heorot
His hand-to-hand murderer; I can not tell whither
The cruel one turned in the carcass exulting,
By cramming discovered. The quarrel she wreaked then,
That last night igone Grendel thou killedst
15 In grewsomest manner, with grim-holding clutches,
Since too long he had lessened my liege-troop and wasted
My folk-men so foully. He fell in the battle
With forfeit of life, and another has followed,
A mighty crime-worker, her kinsman avenging,
20 And henceforth hath 'stablished her hatred unyielding,
As it well may appear to many a liegeman,
Who mourneth in spirit the treasure-bestower,
Her heavy heart-sorrow; the hand is now lifeless
Which availed you in every wish that you cherished.
25 Land-people heard I, liegemen, this saying,
Dwellers in halls, they had seen very often
A pair of such mighty march-striding creatures,
Far-dwelling spirits, holding the moorlands:
One of them wore, as well they might notice,
30 The image of woman, the other one wretched
In guise of a man wandered in exile,
Except he was huger than any of earthmen;
Earth-dwelling people entitled him Grendel
In days of yore: they know not their father,
35 Whe'r ill-going spirits any were borne him
Ever before. They guard the wolf-coverts,
Lands inaccessible, wind-beaten nesses,
Fearfullest fen-deeps, where a flood from the mountains
'Neath mists of the nesses netherward rattles,
40 The stream under earth: not far is it henceward
Measured by mile-lengths that the mere-water standeth,
Which forests hang over, with frost-whiting covered,
A firm-rooted forest, the floods overshadow.

Anonymous

There ever at night one an ill-meaning portent
45 A fire-flood may see; 'mong children of men
None liveth so wise that wot of the bottom;
Though harassed by hounds the heath-stepper seek for,
Fly to the forest, firm-antlered he-deer,
Spurred from afar, his spirit he yieldeth,
50 His life on the shore, ere in he will venture
To cover his head. Uncanny the place is:
Thence upward ascendeth the surging of waters,
Wan to the welkin, when the wind is stirring
The weathers unpleasing, till the air groweth gloomy,
55 And the heavens lower. Now is help to be gotten
From thee and thee only! The abode thou know'st not,
The dangerous place where thou'rt able to meet with
The sin-laden hero: seek if thou darest!
For the feud I will fully fee thee with money,
60 With old-time treasure, as erstwhile I did thee,
With well-twisted jewels, if away thou shalt get thee."

XXII

BEOWULF SEEKS GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's son:
"Grieve not, O wise one! for each it is better,
His friend to avenge than with vehemence wail him;
Each of us must the end-day abide of
5 His earthly existence; who is able accomplish
Glory ere death! To battle-thane noble
Lifeless lying, 'tis at last most fitting.
Arise, O king, quick let us hasten
To look at the footprint of the kinsman of Grendel!
10 I promise thee this now: to his place he'll escape not,
To embrace of the earth, nor to mountainous forest,

Beowulf

Nor to depths of the ocean, wherever he wanders.
Practice thou now patient endurance
Of each of thy sorrows, as I hope for thee soothly!"

15 Then up sprang the old one, the All-Wielder thanked he,
Ruler Almighty, that the man had outspoken.
Then for Hrothgar a war-horse was decked with a bridle,
Curly-maned courser. The clever folk-leader
Stately proceeded: stepped then an earl-troop

20 Of linden-wood bearers. Her footprints were seen then
Widely in wood-paths, her way o'er the bottoms,
Where she faraway fared o'er fen-country murky,
Bore away breathless the best of retainers
Who pondered with Hrothgar the welfare of country.

25 The son of the athelings then went o'er the stony,
Declivitous cliffs, the close-covered passes,
Narrow passages, paths unfrequented,
Nesses abrupt, nicker-haunts many;
One of a few of wise-mooded heroes,

30 He onward advanced to view the surroundings,
Till he found unawares woods of the mountain
O'er hoar-stones hanging, holt-wood unjoyful;
The water stood under, welling and gory.
'Twas irksome in spirit to all of the Danemen,

35 Friends of the Scyldings, to many a liegeman
Sad to be suffered, a sorrow unlittle
To each of the earlmen, when to Æschere's head they
Came on the cliff. The current was seething
With blood and with gore (the troopers gazed on it).

40 The horn anon sang the battle-song ready.
The troop were all seated; they saw 'long the water then
Many a serpent, mere-dragons wondrous
Trying the waters, nickers a-lying
On the cliffs of the nesses, which at noonday full often

45 Go on the sea-deeps their sorrowful journey,
Wild-beasts and wormkind; away then they hastened

Anonymous

Hot-mooded, hateful, they heard the great clamor,
The war-trumpet winding. One did the Geat-prince
Sunder from earth-joys, with arrow from bowstring,
50 From his sea-struggle tore him, that the trusty war-missile
Pierced to his vitals; he proved in the currents
Less doughty at swimming whom death had offcarried.
Soon in the waters the wonderful swimmer
Was straitened most sorely with sword-pointed boar-spears,
55 Pressed in the battle and pulled to the cliff-edge;
The liegemen then looked on the loath-fashioned stranger.
Beowulf donned then his battle-equipments,
Cared little for life; inlaid and most ample,
The hand-woven corslet which could cover his body,
60 Must the wave-deeps explore, that war might be powerless
To harm the great hero, and the hating one's grasp might
Not peril his safety; his head was protected
By the light-flashing helmet that should mix with the bot-
toms,
Trying the eddies, treasure-emblazoned,
65 Encircled with jewels, as in seasons long past
The weapon-smith worked it, wondrously made it,
With swine-bodies fashioned it, that thenceforward no lon-
ger
Brand might bite it, and battle-sword hurt it.
And that was not least of helpers in prowess
70 That Hrothgar's spokesman had lent him when straitened;
And the hilted hand-sword was Hrunting entitled,
Old and most excellent 'mong all of the treasures;
Its blade was of iron, blotted with poison,
Hardened with gore; it failed not in battle
75 Any hero under heaven in hand who it brandished,
Who ventured to take the terrible journeys,
The battle-field sought; not the earliest occasion
That deeds of daring 'twas destined to 'complish.
Ecglaf's kinsman minded not soothly,

Beowulf

80 Exulting in strength, what erst he had spoken
Drunken with wine, when the weapon he lent to
A sword-hero bolder; himself did not venture
‘Neath the strife of the currents his life to endanger,
To fame-deeds perform; there he forfeited glory,
85 Repute for his strength. Not so with the other
When he clad in his corslet had equipped him for battle.

XXIII

BEOWULF’S FIGHT WITH GRENDEL’S MOTHER.

Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow’s son:
“Recall now, oh, famous kinsman of Healfdene,
Prince very prudent, now to part I am ready,
Gold-friend of earlmen, what erst we agreed on,
5 Should I lay down my life in lending thee assistance,
When my earth-joys were over, thou wouldst evermore
serve me
In stead of a father; my faithful thanemen,
My trusty retainers, protect thou and care for,
Fall I in battle: and, Hrothgar beloved,
10 Send unto Higelac the high-valued jewels
Thou to me hast allotted. The lord of the Geatmen
May perceive from the gold, the Hrethling may see it
When he looks on the jewels, that a gem-giver found I
Good over-measure, enjoyed him while able.
15 And the ancient heirloom Unferth permit thou,
The famed one to have, the heavy-sword splendid
The hard-edgèd weapon; with Hrunting to aid me,
I shall gain me glory, or grim-death shall take me.”
The atheling of Geatmen uttered these words and
20 Heroic did hasten, not any rejoinder
Was willing to wait for; the wave-current swallowed

Anonymous

The doughty-in-battle. Then a day's-length elapsed ere
He was able to see the sea at its bottom.
Early she found then who fifty of winters
25 The course of the currents kept in her fury,
Grisly and greedy, that the grim one's dominion
Some one of men from above was exploring,
Forth did she grab them, grappled the warrior
With horrible clutches; yet no sooner she injured
30 His body unscathed: the burnie out-guarded,
That she proved but powerless to pierce through the armor,
The limb-mail locked, with loath-grabbing fingers.
The sea-wolf bare then, when bottomward came she,
The ring-prince homeward, that he after was powerless
35 (He had daring to do it) to deal with his weapons,
But many a mere-beast tormented him swimming,
Flood-beasts no few with fierce-biting tusks did
Break through his burnie, the brave one pursued they.
The earl then discovered he was down in some cavern
40 Where no water whatever anywise harmed him,
And the clutch of the current could come not anear him,
Since the roofed-hall prevented; brightness a-gleaming
Fire-light he saw, flashing resplendent.
The good one saw then the sea-bottom's monster,
45 The mighty mere-woman; he made a great onset
With weapon-of-battle, his hand not desisted
From striking, that war-blade struck on her head then
A battle-song greedy. The stranger perceived then
The sword would not bite, her life would not injure,
50 But the falchion failed the folk-prince when straitened:
Erst had it often onsets encountered,
Oft cloven the helmet, the fated one's armor:
'Twas the first time that ever the excellent jewel
Had failed of its fame. Firm-mooded after,
55 Not heedless of valor, but mindful of glory,
Was Higelac's kinsman; the hero-chief angry

Beowulf

Cast then his carved-sword covered with jewels
That it lay on the earth, hard and steel-pointed;
He hoped in his strength, his hand-grapple sturdy.
60 So any must act whenever he thinketh
To gain him in battle glory unending,
And is reckless of living. The lord of the War-Geats
(He shrank not from battle) seized by the shoulder
The mother of Grendel; then mighty in struggle
65 Swung he his enemy, since his anger was kindled,
That she fell to the floor. With furious grapple
She gave him requital early thereafter,
And stretched out to grab him; the strongest of warriors
Faint-mooded stumbled, till he fell in his traces,
70 Foot-going champion. Then she sat on the hall-guest
And wielded her war-knife wide-bladed, flashing,
For her son would take vengeance, her one only bairn.
His breast-armor woven bode on his shoulder;
It guarded his life, the entrance defended
75 'Gainst sword-point and edges. Ecgtheow's son there
Had fatally journeyed, champion of Geatmen,
In the arms of the ocean, had the armor not given,
Close-woven corslet, comfort and succor,
And had God most holy not awarded the victory,
80 All-knowing Lord; easily did heaven's
Ruler most righteous arrange it with justice;
Uprose he erect ready for battle.

XXIV

BEOWULF IS DOUBLE-CONQUEROR.

Then he saw mid the war-gems a weapon of victory,
An ancient giant-sword, of edges a-doughty,
Glory of warriors: of weapons 'twas choicest,

Anonymous

Only 'twas larger than any man else was
5 Able to bear to the battle-encounter,
The good and splendid work of the giants.
He grasped then the sword-hilt, knight of the Scyldings,
Bold and battle-grim, brandished his ring-sword,
Hopeless of living, hotly he smote her,
10 That the fiend-woman's neck firmly it grappled,
Broke through her bone-joints, the bill fully pierced her
Fate-cursèd body, she fell to the ground then:
The hand-sword was bloody, the hero exulted.
The brand was brilliant, brightly it glimmered,
15 Just as from heaven gemlike shineth
The torch of the firmament. He glanced 'long the building,
And turned by the wall then, Higelac's vassal
Raging and wrathful raised his battle-sword
Strong by the handle. The edge was not useless
20 To the hero-in-battle, but he speedily wished to
Give Grendel requital for the many assaults he
Had worked on the West-Danes not once, but often,
When he slew in slumber the subjects of Hrothgar,
Swallowed down fifteen sleeping retainers
25 Of the folk of the Danemen, and fully as many
Carried away, a horrible prey.
He gave him requital, grim-raging champion,
When he saw on his rest-place weary of conflict
Grendel lying, of life-joys bereavèd,
30 As the battle at Heorot erstwhile had scathed him;
His body far bounded, a blow when he suffered,
Death having seized him, sword-smiting heavy,
And he cut off his head then. Early this noticed
The clever carles who as comrades of Hrothgar
35 Gazed on the sea-deeps, that the surging wave-currents
Were mightily mingled, the mere-flood was gory:
Of the good one the gray-haired together held converse,
The hoary of head, that they hoped not to see again

Beowulf

The atheling ever, that exulting in victory
40 He'd return there to visit the distinguished folk-ruler:
Then many concluded the mere-wolf had killed him.
The ninth hour came then. From the ness-edge departed
The bold-mooded Scyldings; the gold-friend of heroes
Homeward betook him. The strangers sat down then
45 Soul-sick, sorrowful, the sea-waves regarding:
They wished and yet weened not their well-loved friend-
lord
To see any more. The sword-blade began then,
The blood having touched it, contracting and shriveling
With battle-icicles; 'twas a wonderful marvel
50 That it melted entirely, likest to ice when
The Father unbindeth the bond of the frost and
Unwindeth the wave-bands, He who wieldeth dominion
Of times and of tides: a truth-firm Creator.
Nor took he of jewels more in the dwelling,
55 Lord of the Weders, though they lay all around him,
Than the head and the handle handsome with jewels;
The brand early melted, burnt was the weapon:
So hot was the blood, the strange-spirit poisonous
That in it did perish. He early swam off then
60 Who had bided in combat the carnage of haters,
Went up through the ocean; the eddies were cleansèd,
The spacious expanses, when the spirit from farland
His life put aside and this short-lived existence.
The seamen's defender came swimming to land then
65 Doughty of spirit, rejoiced in his sea-gift,
The bulky burden which he bore in his keeping.
The excellent vassals advanced then to meet him,
To God they were grateful, were glad in their chieftain,
That to see him safe and sound was granted them.
70 From the high-minded hero, then, helmet and burnie
Were speedily loosened: the ocean was putrid,
The water 'neath welkin weltered with gore.

Anonymous

- Forth did they fare, then, their footsteps retracing,
Merry and mirthful, measured the earth-way,
75 The highway familiar: men very daring
Bare then the head from the sea-cliff, burdening
Each of the earlmen, excellent-valiant.
Four of them had to carry with labor
The head of Grendel to the high towering gold-hall
80 Upstuck on the spear, till fourteen most-valiant
And battle-brave Geatmen came there going
Straight to the palace: the prince of the people
Measured the mead-ways, their mood-brave companion.
The atheling of earlmen entered the building,
85 Deed-valiant man, adorned with distinction,
Doughty shield-warrior, to address King Hrothgar:
Then hung by the hair, the head of Grendel
Was borne to the building, where beer-thanen were drink-
ing,
Loth before earlmen and eke 'fore the lady:
90 The warriors beheld then a wonderful sight.

XXV

BEOWULF BRINGS HIS TROPHIES.—HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

- Beowulf spake, offspring of Ecgtheow:
“Lo! we blithely have brought thee, bairn of Healfdene,
Prince of the Scyldings, these presents from ocean
Which thine eye looketh on, for an emblem of glory.
5 I came off alive from this, narrowly 'scaping:
In war 'neath the water the work with great pains I
Performed, and the fight had been finished quite nearly,
Had God not defended me. I failed in the battle
Aught to accomplish, aided by Hrunting,
10 Though that weapon was worthy, but the Wielder of earth-folk

Beowulf

Gave me willingly to see on the wall a
Heavy old hand-sword hanging in splendor
(He guided most often the lorn and the friendless),
That I swung as a weapon. The wards of the house then
15 I killed in the conflict (when occasion was given me).
Then the battle-sword burned, the brand that was lifted,
As the blood-current sprang, hottest of war-sweats;
Seizing the hilt, from my foes I offbore it;
I avenged as I ought to their acts of malignity,
20 The murder of Danemen. I then make thee this promise,
Thou'lt be able in Heorot careless to slumber
With thy throng of heroes and the thanes of thy people
Every and each, of greater and lesser,
And thou needest not fear for them from the selfsame di-
rection
25 As thou formerly fearest, oh, folk-lord of Scyldings,
End-day for earlmen." To the age-hoary man then,
The gray-haired chieftain, the gold-fashioned sword-hilt,
Old-work of giants, was thereupon given;
Since the fall of the fiends, it fell to the keeping
30 Of the wielder of Danemen, the wonder-smith's labor,
And the bad-mooded being abandoned this world then,
Opponent of God, victim of murder,
And also his mother; it went to the keeping
Of the best of the world-kings, where waters encircle,
35 Who the scot divided in Scylding dominion.
Hrothgar discoursed, the hilt he regarded,
The ancient heirloom where an old-time contention's
Beginning was graven: the gurgling currents,
The flood slew thereafter the race of the giants,
40 They had proved themselves daring: that people was loth to
The Lord everlasting, through lash of the billows
The Father gave them final requital.
So in letters of rune on the clasp of the handle
Gleaming and golden, 'twas graven exactly,

Anonymous

45 Set forth and said, whom that sword had been made for,
Finest of irons, who first it was wrought for,
Wreathed at its handle and gleaming with serpents.
The wise one then said (silent they all were)
Son of old Healfdene: "He may say unrefuted
50 Who performs 'mid the folk-men fairness and truth
(The hoary old ruler remembers the past),
That better by birth is this bairn of the nobles!
Thy fame is extended through far-away countries,
Good friend Beowulf, o'er all of the races,
55 Thou holdest all firmly, hero-like strength with
Prudence of spirit. I'll prove myself grateful
As before we agreed on; thou granted for long shalt
Become a great comfort to kinsmen and comrades,
A help unto heroes. Heremod became not
60 Such to the Scyldings, successors of Ecgwela;
He grew not to please them, but grievous destruction,
And diresome death-woes to Danemen attracted;
He slew in anger his table-companions,
Trustworthy counsellors, till he turned off lonely
65 From world-joys away, wide-famous ruler:
Though high-ruling heaven in hero-strength raised him,
In might exalted him, o'er men of all nations
Made him supreme, yet a murderous spirit
Grew in his bosom: he gave then no ring-gems
70 To the Danes after custom; endured he unjoyful
Standing the straits from strife that was raging,
Longsome folk-sorrow. Learn then from this,
Lay hold of virtue! Though laden with winters,
I have sung thee these measures. 'Tis a marvel to tell it,
75 How all-ruling God from greatness of spirit
Giveth wisdom to children of men,
Manor and earlship: all things He ruleth.
He often permitteth the mood-thought of man of
The illustrious lineage to lean to possessions,

Beowulf

80 Allows him earthly delights at his manor,
A high-burg of heroes to hold in his keeping,
Maketh portions of earth-folk hear him,
And a wide-reaching kingdom so that, wisdom failing him,
He himself is unable to reckon its boundaries;
85 He liveth in luxury, little debars him,
Nor sickness nor age, no treachery-sorrow
Becloudeth his spirit, conflict nowhere,
No sword-hate, appeareth, but all of the world doth
Wend as he wisheth; the worse he knoweth not,
90 Till arrant arrogance inward pervading,
Waxeth and springeth, when the warder is sleeping,
The guard of the soul: with sorrows encompassed,
Too sound is his slumber, the slayer is near him,
Who with bow and arrow aimeth in malice.

XXVI

HROTHGAR MORALIZES.—REST AFTER LABOR.

“Then bruised in his bosom he with bitter-toothed missile
Is hurt ‘neath his helmet: from harmful pollution
He is powerless to shield him by the wonderful mandates
Of the loath-cursèd spirit; what too long he hath holden
5 Him seemeth too small, savage he hoardeth,
Nor boastfully giveth gold-plated rings,
The fate of the future flouts and forgetteth
Since God had erst given him greatness no little,
Wielder of Glory. His end-day anear,
10 It afterward happens that the bodily-dwelling
Fleetingly fadeth, falls into ruins;
Another lays hold who doleth the ornaments,
The nobleman’s jewels, nothing lamenting,
Heedeth no terror. Oh, Beowulf dear,

Anonymous

15 Best of the heroes, from bale-strife defend thee,
And choose thee the better, counsels eternal;
Beware of arrogance, world-famous champion!
But a little-while lasts thy life-vigor's fulness;
'Twill after hap early, that illness or sword-edge
20 Shall part thee from strength, or the grasp of the fire,
Or the wave of the current, or clutch of the edges,
Or flight of the war-spear, or age with its horrors,
Or thine eyes' bright flashing shall fade into darkness:
'Twill happen full early, excellent hero,
25 That death shall subdue thee. So the Danes a half-century
I held under heaven, helped them in struggles
'Gainst many a race in middle-earth's regions,
With ash-wood and edges, that enemies none
On earth molested me. Lo! offsetting change, now,
30 Came to my manor, grief after joyance,
When Grendel became my constant visitor,
Inveterate hater: I from that malice
Continually travailed with trouble no little.
Thanks be to God that I gained in my lifetime,
35 To the Lord everlasting, to look on the gory
Head with mine eyes, after long-lasting sorrow!
Go to the bench now, battle-adornèd
Joy in the feasting: of jewels in common
We'll meet with many when morning appeareth."
40 The Geatman was gladsome, ganged he immediately
To go to the bench, as the clever one bade him.
Then again as before were the famous-for-prowess,
Hall-inhabiters, handsomely banqueted,
Feasted anew. The night-veil fell then
45 Dark o'er the warriors. The courtiers rose then;
The gray-haired was anxious to go to his slumbers,
The hoary old Scylding. Hankered the Geatman,
The champion doughty, greatly, to rest him:
An earlman early outward did lead him,

Beowulf

50 Fagged from his faring, from far-country springing,
Who for etiquette's sake all of a liegeman's
Needs regarded, such as seamen at that time
Were bounden to feel. The big-hearted rested;
The building uptowered, spacious and gilded,
55 The guest within slumbered, till the sable-clad raven
Blithely foreboded the beacon of heaven.
Then the bright-shining sun o'er the bottoms came going;
The warriors hastened, the heads of the peoples
Were ready to go again to their peoples,
60 The high-mooded farer would faraway thenceward
Look for his vessel. The valiant one bade then,
Offspring of Ecglaaf, off to bear Hrunting,
To take his weapon, his well-beloved iron;
He him thanked for the gift, saying good he accounted
65 The war-friend and mighty, nor chid he with words then
The blade of the brand: 'twas a brave-mooded hero.
When the warriors were ready, arrayed in their trappings,
The atheling dear to the Danemen advanced then
On to the dais, where the other was sitting,
70 Grim-mooded hero, greeted King Hrothgar.

XXVII

SORROW AT PARTING.

Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's offspring:
"We men of the water wish to declare now
Fared from far-lands, we're firmly determined
To seek King Higelac. Here have we fity
5 Been welcomed and feasted, as heart would desire it;
Good was the greeting. If greater affection
I am anywise able ever on earth to
Gain at thy hands, ruler of heroes,

Anonymous

Than yet I have done, I shall quickly be ready
10 For combat and conflict. O'er the course of the waters
Learn I that neighbors alarm thee with terror,
As haters did whilom, I hither will bring thee
For help unto heroes henchmen by thousands.
I know as to Higelac, the lord of the Geatmen,
15 Though young in years, he yet will permit me,
By words and by works, ward of the people,
Fully to furnish thee forces and bear thee
My lance to relieve thee, if liegemen shall fail thee,
And help of my hand-strength; if Hrethric be treating,
20 Bairn of the king, at the court of the Geatmen,
He thereat may find him friends in abundance:
Faraway countries he were better to seek for
Who trusts in himself." Hrothgar discoursed then,
Making rejoinder: "These words thou hast uttered
25 All-knowing God hath given thy spirit!
Ne'er heard I an earlman thus early in life
More clever in speaking; thou'rt cautious of spirit,
Mighty of muscle, in mouth-answers prudent.
I count on the hope that, happen it ever
30 That missile shall rob thee of Hrethel's descendant,
Edge-horrid battle, and illness or weapon
Deprive thee of prince, of people's protector,
And life thou yet holdest, the Sea-Geats will never
Find a more fitting folk-lord to choose them,
35 Gem-ward of heroes, than _thou_ mightest prove thee,
If the kingdom of kinsmen thou carest to govern.
Thy mood-spirit likes me the longer the better,
Beowulf dear: thou hast brought it to pass that
To both these peoples peace shall be common,
40 To Geat-folk and Danemen, the strife be suspended,
The secret assailings they suffered in yore-days;
And also that jewels be shared while I govern
The wide-stretching kingdom, and that many shall visit

Beowulf

Others o'er the ocean with excellent gift-gems:
45 The ring-adorned bark shall bring o'er the currents
Presents and love-gifts. This people I know
Tow'rd foeman and friend firmly established,
After ancient etiquette everywise blameless."
Then the warden of earlmen gave him still farther,
50 Kinsman of Healfdene, a dozen of jewels,
Bade him safely seek with the presents
His well-beloved people, early returning.
Then the noble-born king kissed the distinguished,
Dear-lovèd liegeman, the Dane-prince saluted him,
55 And claspèd his neck; tears from him fell,
From the gray-headed man: he two things expected,
Agèd and reverend, but rather the second,
That bold in council they'd meet thereafter.
The man was so dear that he failed to suppress the
60 Emotions that moved him, but in mood-fetters fastened
The long-famous hero longeth in secret
Deep in his spirit for the dear-beloved man
Though not a blood-kinsman. Beowulf thenceward,
Gold-splendid warrior, walked o'er the meadows
65 Exulting in treasure: the sea-going vessel
Riding at anchor awaited its owner.
As they pressed on their way then, the present of Hrothgar
Was frequently referred to: a folk-king indeed that
Everyway blameless, till age did debar him
70 The joys of his might, which hath many oft injured.

XXVIII

THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY.—THE TWO QUEENS.

Then the band of very valiant retainers
Came to the current; they were clad all in armor,

Anonymous

In link-woven burnies. The land-warder noticed
The return of the earlmen, as he erstwhile had seen them;
5 Nowise with insult he greeted the strangers
From the naze of the cliff, but rode on to meet them;
Said the bright-armed visitors vesselward traveled
Welcome to Weders. The wide-bosomed craft then
Lay on the sand, laden with armor,
10 With horses and jewels, the ring-stemmèd sailer:
The mast uptowered o'er the treasure of Hrothgar.
To the boat-ward a gold-bound brand he presented,
That he was afterwards honored on the ale-bench more
highly
As the heirloom's owner. Set he out on his vessel,
15 To drive on the deep, Dane-country left he.
Along by the mast then a sea-garment fluttered,
A rope-fastened sail. The sea-boat resounded,
The wind o'er the waters the wave-floater nowise
Kept from its journey; the sea-goer traveled,
20 The foamy-necked floated forth o'er the currents,
The well-fashioned vessel o'er the ways of the ocean,
Till they came within sight of the cliffs of the Geatmen,
The well-known headlands. The wave-goer hastened
Driven by breezes, stood on the shore.
25 Prompt at the ocean, the port-ward was ready,
Who long in the past outlooked in the distance,
At water's-edge waiting well-lovèd heroes;
He bound to the bank then the broad-bosomed vessel
Fast in its fetters, lest the force of the waters
30 Should be able to injure the ocean-wood winsome.
Bade he up then take the treasure of princes,
Plate-gold and fretwork; not far was it thence
To go off in search of the giver of jewels:
Hrethel's son Higelac at home there remaineth,
35 Himself with his comrades close to the sea-coast.
The building was splendid, the king heroic,

Beowulf

Great in his hall, Hygd very young was,
Fine-mooded, clever, though few were the winters
That the daughter of Hæreth had dwelt in the borough;
40 But she nowise was cringing nor niggard of presents,
Of ornaments rare, to the race of the Geatmen.
Thrytho nursed anger, excellent folk-queen,
Hot-burning hatred: no hero whatever
‘Mong household companions, her husband excepted
45 Dared to adventure to look at the woman
With eyes in the daytime; but he knew that death-chains
Hand-wreathed were wrought him: early thereafter,
When the hand-strife was over, edges were ready,
That fierce-raging sword-point had to force a decision,
50 Murder-bale show. Such no womanly custom
For a lady to practise, though lovely her person,
That a weaver-of-peace, on pretence of anger
A beloved liegeman of life should deprive.
Soothly this hindered Heming’s kinsman;
55 Other ale-drinking earlmen asserted
That fearful folk-sorrows fewer she wrought them,
Tracherous doings, since first she was given
Adorned with gold to the war-hero youthful,
For her origin honored, when Offa’s great palace
60 O’er the fallow flood by her father’s instructions
She sought on her journey, where she afterwards fully,
Famed for her virtue, her fate on the king’s-seat
Enjoyed in her lifetime, love did she hold with
The ruler of heroes, the best, it is told me,
65 Of all of the earthmen that oceans encompass,
Of earl-kindreds endless; hence Offa was famous
Far and widely, by gifts and by battles,
Spear-valiant hero; the home of his fathers
He governed with wisdom, whence Eomær did issue
70 For help unto heroes, Heming’s kinsman,
Grandson of Garmund, great in encounters.

XXIX

BEOWULF AND HIGELAC.

Then the brave one departed, his band along with him,
Seeking the sea-shore, the sea-marches treading,
The wide-stretching shores. The world-candle glimmered,
The sun from the southward; they proceeded then onward,
5 Early arriving where they heard that the troop-lord,
Ongentheow's slayer, excellent, youthful
Folk-prince and warrior was distributing jewels,
Close in his castle. The coming of Beowulf
Was announced in a message quickly to Higelac,
10 That the folk-troop's defender forth to the palace
The linden-companion alive was advancing,
Secure from the combat courtward a-going.
The building was early inward made ready
For the foot-going guests as the good one had ordered.
15 He sat by the man then who had lived through the struggle,
Kinsman by kinsman, when the king of the people
Had in lordly language saluted the dear one,
In words that were formal. The daughter of Hæreth
Coursed through the building, carrying mead-cups:
20 She loved the retainers, tendered the beakers
To the high-minded Geatmen. Higelac 'gan then
Pleasantly plying his companion with questions
In the high-towering palace. A curious interest
Tormented his spirit, what meaning to see in
25 The Sea-Geats' adventures: "Beowulf worthy,
How throve your journeying, when thou thoughtest sud-
denly
Far o'er the salt-streams to seek an encounter,
A battle at Heorot? Hast bettered for Hrothgar,
The famous folk-leader, his far-published sorrows
30 Any at all? In agony-billows

Beowulf

I mused upon torture, distrusted the journey
Of the beloved liegeman; I long time did pray thee
By no means to seek out the murderous spirit,
To suffer the South-Danes themselves to decide on
35 Grappling with Grendel. To God I am thankful
To be suffered to see thee safe from thy journey.”
Beowulf answered, bairn of old Ecgtheow:
“’Tis hidden by no means, Higelac chieftain,
From many of men, the meeting so famous,
40 What mournful moments of me and of Grendel
Were passed in the place where he pressing affliction
On the Victory-Scyldings scathefully brought,
Anguish forever; that all I avengèd,
So that any under heaven of the kinsmen of Grendel
45 Needeth not boast of that cry-in-the-morning,
Who longest liveth of the loth-going kindred,
Encompassed by moorland. I came in my journey
To the royal ring-hall, Hrothgar to greet there:
Soon did the famous scion of Healfdene,
50 When he understood fully the spirit that led me,
Assign me a seat with the son of his bosom.
The troop was in joyance; mead-glee greater
’Neath arch of the ether not ever beheld I
’Mid hall-building holders. The highly-famed queen,
55 Peace-tie of peoples, oft passed through the building,
Cheered the young troopers; she oft tendered a hero
A beautiful ring-band, ere she went to her sitting.
Oft the daughter of Hrothgar in view of the courtiers
To the earls at the end the ale-vessel carried,
60 Whom Freaware I heard then hall-sitters title,
When nail-adorned jewels she gave to the heroes:
Gold-bedecked, youthful, to the glad son of Froda
Her faith has been plighted; the friend of the Scyldings,
The guard of the kingdom, hath given his sanction,
65 And counts it a vantage, for a part of the quarrels,

Anonymous

A portion of hatred, to pay with the woman.
Somewhere not rarely, when the ruler has fallen,
The life-taking lance relaxeth its fury
For a brief breathing-spell, though the bride be charming!

XXX

BEOWULF NARRATES HIS ADVENTURES TO HIGELAC.

“It well may discomfit the prince of the Heathobards
And each of the thanemen of earls that attend him,
When he goes to the building escorting the woman,
That a noble-born Daneman the knights should be feasting:
5 There gleam on his person the leavings of elders
Hard and ring-bright, Heathobards’ treasure,
While they wielded their arms, till they misled to the battle
Their own dear lives and beloved companions.
He saith at the banquet who the collar beholdeth,
10 An ancient ash-warrior who earlmen’s destruction
Clearly recalleth (cruel his spirit),
Sadly beginneth sounding the youthful
Thane-champion’s spirit through the thoughts of his bosom,
War-grief to waken, and this word-answer speaketh:
15 ‘Art thou able, my friend, to know when thou seest it
The brand which thy father bare to the conflict
In his latest adventure, ‘neath visor of helmet,
The dearly-loved iron, where Danemen did slay him,
And brave-mooded Scyldings, on the fall of the heroes,
20 (When vengeance was sleeping) the slaughter-place wielded?
E’en now some man of the murderer’s progeny
Exulting in ornaments enters the building,
Boasts of his blood-shedding, offbearth the jewel
Which thou shouldst wholly hold in possession!’

Beowulf

25 So he urgeth and mindeth on every occasion
With woe-bringing words, till waxeth the season
When the woman's thane for the works of his father,
The bill having bitten, blood-gory sleepeth,
Fated to perish; the other one thenceward
30 'Scapeth alive, the land knoweth thoroughly.
Then the oaths of the earlmen on each side are broken,
When rancors unresting are raging in Ingeld
And his wife-love waxeth less warm after sorrow.
So the Heathobards' favor not faithful I reckon,
35 Their part in the treaty not true to the Danemen,
Their friendship not fast. I further shall tell thee
More about Grendel, that thou fully mayst hear,
Ornament-giver, what afterward came from
The hand-rush of heroes. When heaven's bright jewel
40 O'er earthfields had glided, the stranger came raging,
The horrible night-fiend, us for to visit,
Where wholly unharmed the hall we were guarding.
To Hondscio happened a hopeless contention,
Death to the doomed one, dead he fell foremost,
45 Girded war-champion; to him Grendel became then,
To the vassal distinguished, a tooth-weaponed murderer,
The well-beloved henchman's body all swallowed.
Not the earlier off empty of hand did
The bloody-toothed murderer, mindful of evils,
50 Wish to escape from the gold-giver's palace,
But sturdy of strength he strove to outdo me,
Hand-ready grappled. A glove was suspended
Spacious and wondrous, in art-fetters fastened,
Which was fashioned entirely by touch of the craftman
55 From the dragon's skin by the devil's devices:
He down in its depths would do me unsadly
One among many, deed-doer raging,
Though sinless he saw me; not so could it happen
When I in my anger upright did stand.

Anonymous

60 'Tis too long to recount how requital I furnished
For every evil to the earlmen's destroyer;
'Twas there, my prince, that I proudly distinguished
Thy land with my labors. He left and retreated,
He lived his life a little while longer:
65 Yet his right-hand guarded his footstep in Heorot,
And sad-mooded thence to the sea-bottom fell he,
Mournful in mind. For the might-rush of battle
The friend of the Scyldings, with gold that was plated,
With ornaments many, much requited me,
70 When daylight had dawned, and down to the banquet
We had sat us together. There was chanting and joyance:
The age-stricken Scylding asked many questions
And of old-times related; oft light-ringing harp-strings,
Joy-telling wood, were touched by the brave one;
75 Now he uttered measures, mourning and truthful,
Then the large-hearted land-king a legend of wonder
Truthfully told us. Now troubled with years
The age-hoary warrior afterward began to
Mourn for the might that marked him in youth-days;
80 His breast within boiled, when burdened with winters
Much he remembered. From morning till night then
We joyed us therein as etiquette suffered,
Till the second night season came unto earth-folk.
Then early thereafter, the mother of Grendel
85 Was ready for vengeance, wretched she journeyed;
Her son had death ravished, the wrath of the Geatmen.
The horrible woman avengèd her offspring,
And with mighty mainstrength murdered a hero.
There the spirit of Æschere, agèd adviser,
90 Was ready to vanish; nor when morn had lightened
Were they anywise suffered to consume him with fire,
Folk of the Danemen, the death-weakened hero,
Nor the belovèd liegeman to lay on the pyre;
She the corpse had offcarried in the clutch of the foeman

Beowulf

95 'Neath mountain-brook's flood. To Hrothgar 'twas saddest
Of pains that ever had preyed on the chieftain;
By the life of thee the land-prince then me
Besought very sadly, in sea-currents' eddies
To display my prowess, to peril my safety,
100 Might-deeds accomplish; much did he promise.
I found then the famous flood-current's cruel,
Horrible depth-warder. A while unto us two
Hand was in common; the currents were seething
With gore that was clotted, and Grendel's fierce mother's
105 Head I offhacked in the hall at the bottom
With huge-reaching sword-edge, hardly I wrested
My life from her clutches; not doomed was I then,
But the warden of earlmen afterward gave me
Jewels in quantity, kinsman of Healfdene.

XXXI

GIFT-GIVING IS MUTUAL.

"So the beloved land-prince lived in decorum;
I had missed no rewards, no meeds of my prowess,
But he gave me jewels, regarding my wishes,
Healfdene his bairn; I'll bring them to thee, then,
5 Atheling of earlmen, offer them gladly.
And still unto thee is all my affection:
But few of my folk-kin find I surviving
But thee, dear Higelac!" Bade he in then to carry
The boar-image, banner, battle-high helmet,
10 Iron-gray armor, the excellent weapon,
In song-measures said: "This suit-for-the-battle
Hrothgar presented me, bade me expressly,
Wise-mooded atheling, thereafter to tell thee
The whole of its history, said King Heregar owned it,

Anonymous

15 Dane-prince for long; yet he wished not to give then
The mail to his son, though dearly he loved him,
Hereward the hardy. Hold all in joyance!”
I heard that there followed hard on the jewels
Two braces of stallions of striking resemblance,
20 Dappled and yellow; he granted him usance
Of horses and treasures. So a kinsman should bear him,
No web of treachery weave for another,
Nor by cunning craftiness cause the destruction
Of trusty companion. Most precious to Higelac,
25 The bold one in battle, was the bairn of his sister,
And each unto other mindful of favors.
I am told that to Hygd he proffered the necklace,
Wonder-gem rare that Wealhtheow gave him,
The troop-leader’s daughter, a trio of horses
30 Slender and saddle-bright; soon did the jewel
Embellish her bosom, when the beer-feast was over.
So Ecgtheow’s bairn brave did prove him,
War-famous man, by deeds that were valiant,
He lived in honor, beloved companions
35 Slew not carousing; his mood was not cruel,
But by hand-strength hugest of heroes then living
The brave one retained the bountiful gift that
The Lord had allowed him. Long was he wretched,
So that sons of the Geatmen accounted him worthless,
40 And the lord of the liegemen loth was to do him
Mickle of honor, when mead-cups were passing;
They fully believed him idle and sluggish,
An indolent atheling; to the honor-blest man there
Came requital for the cuts he had suffered.
45 The folk-troop’s defender bade fetch to the building
The heirloom of Hrethel, embellished with gold,
So the brave one enjoined it; there was jewel no richer
In the form of a weapon ‘mong Geats of that era;
In Beowulf’s keeping he placed it and gave him

Beowulf

50 Seven of thousands, manor and lordship.
Common to both was land 'mong the people,
Estate and inherited rights and possessions,
To the second one specially spacious dominions,
To the one who was better. It afterward happened
55 In days that followed, befell the battle-thanes,
After Higelac's death, and when Heardred was murdered
With weapons of warfare 'neath well-covered targets,
When valiant battlemen in victor-band sought him,
War-Scyfling heroes harassed the nephew
60 Of Hereric in battle. To Beowulf's keeping
Turned there in time extensive dominions:
He fittingly ruled them a fifty of winters
(He a man-ruler wise was, manor-ward old) till
A certain one 'gan, on gloom-darkening nights, a
65 Dragon, to govern, who guarded a treasure,
A high-rising stone-cliff, on heath that was grayish:
A path 'neath it lay, unknown unto mortals.
Some one of earthmen entered the mountain,
The heathenish hoard laid hold of with ardor;

XXXII

THE HOARD AND THE DRAGON.

He sought of himself who sorely did harm him,
But, for need very pressing, the servant of one of
The sons of the heroes hate-blows evaded,
5 Seeking for shelter and the sin-driven warrior
Took refuge within there. He early looked in it,
...
...
when the onset surprised him,
10 He a gem-vessel saw there: many of suchlike

Anonymous

Ancient ornaments in the earth-cave were lying,
As in days of yore some one of men of
Illustrious lineage, as a legacy monstrous,
There had secreted them, careful and thoughtful,
15 Dear-valued jewels. Death had offsnatched them,
In the days of the past, and the one man moreover
Of the flower of the folk who fared there the longest,
Was fain to defer it, friend-mourning warder,
A little longer to be left in enjoyment
20 Of long-lasting treasure. A barrow all-ready
Stood on the plain the stream-currents nigh to,
New by the ness-edge, unnethe of approaching:
The keeper of rings carried within a
Ponderous deal of the treasure of nobles,
25 Of gold that was beaten, briefly he spake then:
“Hold thou, O Earth, now heroes no more may,
The earnings of earlmen. Lo! erst in thy bosom
Worthy men won them; war-death hath ravished,
Perilous life-bale, all my warriors,
30 Liegemen belovèd, who this life have forsaken,
Who hall-pleasures saw. No sword-bearer have I,
And no one to burnish the gold-plated vessel,
The high-valued beaker: my heroes are vanished.
The hardy helmet behung with gilding
35 Shall be reaved of its riches: the ring-cleansers slumber
Who were charged to have ready visors-for-battle,
And the burnie that bided in battle-encounter
O’er breaking of war-shields the bite of the edges
Moulds with the hero. The ring-twisted armor,
40 Its lord being lifeless, no longer may journey
Hanging by heroes; harp-joy is vanished,
The rapture of glee-wood, no excellent falcon
Swoops through the building, no swift-footed charger
Grindeth the gravel. A grievous destruction
45 No few of the world-folk widely hath scattered!”

Beowulf

So, woful of spirit one after all
Lamented mournfully, moaning in sadness
By day and by night, till death with its billows
Dashed on his spirit. Then the ancient dusk-scather
50 Found the great treasure standing all open,
He who flaming and fiery flies to the barrows,
Naked war-dragon, nightly escapeth
Encompassed with fire; men under heaven
Widely beheld him. 'Tis said that he looks for
55 The hoard in the earth, where old he is guarding
The heathenish treasure; he'll be nowise the better.
So three-hundred winters the waster of peoples
Held upon earth that excellent hoard-hall,
Till the forementioned earlman angered him bitterly:
60 The beat-plated beaker he bare to his chieftain
And fullest remission for all his remissness
Begged of his liegelord. Then the hoard was discovered,
The treasure was taken, his petition was granted
The lorn-mooded liegeman. His lord regarded
65 The old-work of earth-folk—'twas the earliest occasion.
When the dragon awoke, the strife was renewed there;
He snuffed 'long the stone then, stout-hearted found he
The footprint of foeman; too far had he gone
With cunning craftiness close to the head of
70 The fire-spewing dragon. So undoomed he may 'scape from
Anguish and exile with ease who possesseth
The favor of Heaven. The hoard-warden eagerly
Searched o'er the ground then, would meet with the person
That caused him sorrow while in slumber reclining;
75 Gleaming and wild he oft went round the cavern,
All of it outward; not any of earthmen
Was seen in that desert. Yet he joyed in the battle,
Rejoiced in the conflict; oft he turned to the barrow,
Sought for the gem-cup; this he soon perceived then
80 That some man or other had discovered the gold,

Anonymous

The famous folk-treasure. Not fain did the hoard-ward
Wait until evening; then the ward of the barrow
Was angry in spirit, the loathed one wished to
Pay for the dear-valued drink-cup with fire.
85 Then the day was done as the dragon would have it,
He no longer would wait on the wall, but departed
Fire-impelled, flaming. Fearful the start was
To earls in the land, as it early thereafter
To their giver-of-gold was grievously ended.

XXXIII

BRAVE THOUGH AGED.—REMINISCENCES.

The stranger began then to vomit forth fire,
To burn the great manor; the blaze then glimmered
For anguish to earlmen, not anything living
Was the hateful air-goer willing to leave there.
5 The war of the worm widely was noticed,
The feud of the foeman afar and anear,
How the enemy injured the earls of the Geatmen,
Harried with hatred: back he hied to the treasure,
To the well-hidden cavern ere the coming of daylight.
10 He had circled with fire the folk of those regions,
With brand and burning; in the barrow he trusted,
In the wall and his war-might: the weening deceived him.
Then straight was the horror to Beowulf published,
Early forsooth, that his own native homestead,
15 The best of buildings, was burning and melting,
Gift-seat of Geatmen. 'Twas a grief to the spirit
Of the good-mooded hero, the greatest of sorrows:
The wise one weened then that wielding his kingdom
'Gainst the ancient commandments, he had bitterly angered
20 The Lord everlasting; with lorn meditations

Beowulf

His bosom welled inward, as was nowise his custom.
The fire-spewing dragon fully had wasted
The fastness of warriors, the water-land outward,
The manor with fire. The folk-ruling hero,
25 Prince of the Weders, was planning to wreak him.
The warmen's defender bade them to make him,
Earlmen's atheling, an excellent war-shield
Wholly of iron: fully he knew then
That wood from the forest was helpless to aid him,
30 Shield against fire. The long-worthy ruler
Must live the last of his limited earth-days,
Of life in the world and the worm along with him,
Though he long had been holding hoard-wealth in plenty.
Then the ring-prince disdained to seek with a war-band,
35 With army extensive, the air-going ranger;
He felt no fear of the foeman's assaults and
He counted for little the might of the dragon,
His power and prowess: for previously dared he
A heap of hostility, hazarded dangers,
40 War-thane, when Hrothgar's palace he cleansèd,
Conquering combatant, clutched in the battle
The kinsmen of Grendel, of kindred detested.
'Twas of hand-fights not least where Higelac was slaugh-
tered,
When the king of the Geatmen with clashings of battle,
45 Friend-lord of folks in Frisian dominions,
Offspring of Hrethrel perished through sword-drink,
With battle-swords beaten; thence Beowulf came then
On self-help relying, swam through the waters;
He bare on his arm, lone-going, thirty
50 Outfits of armor, when the ocean he mounted.
The Hetwars by no means had need to be boastful
Of their fighting afoot, who forward to meet him
Carried their war-shields: not many returned from
The brave-mooded battle-knight back to their homesteads.

Anonymous

55 Ecgtheow's bairn o'er the bight-courses swam then,
Lone-goer lorn to his land-folk returning,
Where Hygd to him tendered treasure and kingdom,
Rings and dominion: her son she not trusted,
To be able to keep the kingdom devised him
60 'Gainst alien races, on the death of King Higelac.
Yet the sad ones succeeded not in persuading the atheling
In any way ever, to act as a suzerain
To Heardred, or promise to govern the kingdom;
Yet with friendly counsel in the folk he sustained him,
65 Gracious, with honor, till he grew to be older,
Wielded the Weders. Wide-fleeing outlaws,
Ohthere's sons, sought him o'er the waters:
They had stirred a revolt 'gainst the helm of the Scyflings,
The best of the sea-kings, who in Swedish dominions
70 Distributed treasure, distinguished folk-leader.
'Twas the end of his earth-days; injury fatal
By swing of the sword he received as a greeting,
Offspring of Higelac; Ongentheow's bairn
Later departed to visit his homestead,
75 When Heardred was dead; let Beowulf rule them,
Govern the Geatmen: good was that folk-king.

XXXIV

BEOWULF SEEKS THE DRAGON.—BEOWULF'S REMINISCENCES.

He planned requital for the folk-leader's ruin
In days thereafter, to Eadgils the wretched
Becoming an enemy. Ohthere's son then
Went with a war-troop o'er the wide-stretching currents
5 With warriors and weapons: with woe-journeys cold he
After avenged him, the king's life he took.
So he came off uninjured from all of his battles,

Beowulf

Perilous fights, offspring of Ecgtheow,
From his deeds of daring, till that day most momentous
10 When he fate-driven fared to fight with the dragon.
With eleven companions the prince of the Geatmen
Went lowering with fury to look at the fire-drake:
Inquiring he'd found how the feud had arisen,
Hate to his heroes; the highly-famed gem-vessel
15 Was brought to his keeping through the hand of th' informer.
That in the throng was thirteenth of heroes,
That caused the beginning of conflict so bitter,
Captive and wretched, must sad-mooded thenceward
Point out the place: he passed then unwillingly
20 To the spot where he knew of the notable cavern,
The cave under earth, not far from the ocean,
The anger of eddies, which inward was full of
Jewels and wares: a warden uncanny,
Warrior weaponed, wardered the treasure,
25 Old under earth; no easy possession
For any of earth-folk access to get to.
Then the battle-brave atheling sat on the naze-edge,
While the gold-friend of Geatmen gracious saluted
His fireside-companions: woe was his spirit,
30 Death-boding, wav'ring; Weird very near him,
Who must seize the old hero, his soul-treasure look for,
Dragging aloof his life from his body:
Not flesh-hidden long was the folk-leader's spirit.
Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's son:
35 "I survived in my youth-days many a conflict,
Hours of onset: that all I remember.
I was seven-winters old when the jewel-prince took me,
High-lord of heroes, at the hands of my father,
Hrethel the hero-king had me in keeping,
40 Gave me treasure and feasting, our kinship remembered;
Not ever was I _any_ less dear to him
Knight in the boroughs, than the bairns of his household,

Anonymous

Herebald and Hæthcyn and Higelac mine.
To the eldest unjustly by acts of a kinsman
45 Was murder-bed strewn, since him Hæthcyn from horn-bow
His sheltering chieftain shot with an arrow,
Erred in his aim and injured his kinsman,
One brother the other, with blood-sprinkled spear:
'Twas a feeless fight, finished in malice,
50 Sad to his spirit; the folk-prince however
Had to part from existence with vengeance untaken.
So to hoar-headed hero 'tis heavily crushing
To live to see his son as he rideth
Young on the gallows: then measures he chanteth,
55 A song of sorrow, when his son is hanging
For the raven's delight, and aged and hoary
He is unable to offer any assistance.
Every morning his offspring's departure
Is constant recalled: he cares not to wait for
60 The birth of an heir in his borough-enclosures,
Since that one through death-pain the deeds hath experi-
enced.
He heart-grieved beholds in the house of his son the
Wine-building wasted, the wind-lodging places
Reaved of their roaring; the riders are sleeping,
65 The knights in the grave; there's no sound of the harp-wood,
Joy in the yards, as of yore were familiar.

XXXV

REMINISCENCES BEOWULF'S LAST BATTLE.

"He seeks then his chamber, singeth a woe-song
One for the other; all too extensive
Seemed homesteads and plains. So the helm of the Weders
Mindful of Herebald heart-sorrow carried,

Beowulf

5 Stirred with emotion, nowise was able
To wreak his ruin on the ruthless destroyer:
He was unable to follow the warrior with hatred,
With deeds that were direful, though dear he not held him.
Then pressed by the pang this pain occasioned him,
10 He gave up glee, God-light elected;
He left to his sons, as the man that is rich does,
His land and fortress, when from life he departed.
Then was crime and hostility 'twixt Swedes and Geatmen,
O'er wide-stretching water warring was mutual,
15 Burdensome hatred, when Hrethel had perished,
And Ongentheow's offspring were active and valiant,
Wished not to hold to peace oversea, but
Round Hreosna-beorh often accomplished
Cruellest massacre. This my kinsman avengèd,
20 The feud and fury, as 'tis found on inquiry,
Though one of them paid it with forfeit of life-joys,
With price that was hard: the struggle became then
Fatal to Hæthcyn, lord of the Geatmen.
Then I heard that at morning one brother the other
25 With edges of irons egged on to murder,
Where Ongentheow maketh onset on Eofor:
The helmet crashed, the hoary-haired Scylfing
Sword-smitten fell, his hand then remembered
Feud-hate sufficient, refused not the death-blow.
30 The gems that he gave me, with jewel-bright sword I
'Quited in contest, as occasion was offered:
Land he allowed me, life-joy at homestead,
Manor to live on. Little he needed
From Gepids or Danes or in Sweden to look for
35 Trooper less true, with treasure to buy him;
'Mong foot-soldiers ever in front I would hie me,
Alone in the vanguard, and evermore gladly
Warfare shall wage, while this weapon endureth
That late and early often did serve me

Anonymous

40 When I proved before heroes the slayer of Dæghrefn,
 Knight of the Hugmen: he by no means was suffered
 To the king of the Frisians to carry the jewels,
 The breast-decoration; but the banner-possessor
 Bowed in the battle, brave-mooded atheling.

45 No weapon was slayer, but war-grapple broke then
 The surge of his spirit, his body destroying.
 Now shall weapon's edge make war for the treasure,
 And hand and firm-sword." Beowulf spake then,
 Boast-words uttered—the latest occasion:

50 "I braved in my youth-days battles unnumbered;
 Still am I willing the struggle to look for,
 Fame-deeds perform, folk-warden prudent,
 If the hateful despoiler forth from his cavern
 Seeketh me out!" Each of the heroes,

55 Helm-bearers sturdy, he thereupon greeted
 Belovèd co-liegemen—his last salutation:
 "No brand would I bear, no blade for the dragon,
 Wist I a way my word-boast to 'compleish
 Else with the monster, as with Grendel I did it;

60 But fire in the battle hot I expect there,
 Furious flame-burning: so I fixed on my body
 Target and war-mail. The ward of the barrow
 I'll not flee from a foot-length, the foeman uncanny.
 At the wall 'twill befall us as Fate decreeth,

65 Each one's Creator. I am eager in spirit,
 With the wingèd war-hero to away with all boasting.
 Bide on the barrow with burnies protected,
 Earls in armor, which of _us_ two may better
 Bear his disaster, when the battle is over.

70 'Tis no matter of yours, and man cannot do it,
 But me and me only, to measure his strength with
 The monster of malice, night-deeds to 'compleish.
 I with prowess shall gain the gold, or the battle,
 Direful death-woe will drag off your ruler!"

Beowulf

75 The mighty champion rose by his shield then,
Brave under helmet, in battle-mail went he
‘Neath steep-rising stone-cliffs, the strength he relied on
Of one man alone: no work for a coward.
Then he saw by the wall who a great many battles
80 Had lived through, most worthy, when foot-troops collided,
Stone-arches standing, stout-hearted champion,
Saw a brook from the barrow bubbling out thenceward:
The flood of the fountain was fuming with war-flame:
Not nigh to the hoard, for season the briefest
85 Could he brave, without burning, the abyss that was yawning,
The drake was so fiery. The prince of the Weders
Caused then that words came from his bosom,
So fierce was his fury; the firm-hearted shouted:
His battle-clear voice came in resounding
90 ‘Neath the gray-colored stone. Stirred was his hatred,
The hoard-ward distinguished the speech of a man;
Time was no longer to look out for friendship.
The breath of the monster issued forth first,
Vapory war-sweat, out of the stone-cave:
95 The earth re-echoed. The earl ‘neath the barrow
Lifted his shield, lord of the Geatmen,
Tow’rd the terrible stranger: the ring-twisted creature’s
Heart was then ready to seek for a struggle.
The excellent battle-king first brandished his weapon,
100 The ancient heirloom, of edges unblunted,
To the death-planners twain was terror from other.
The lord of the troopers intrepidly stood then
‘Gainst his high-rising shield, when the dragon coiled him-
Quickly together: in corslet he bided.
105 He went then in blazes, bended and striding,
Hasting him forward. His life and body
The targe well protected, for time-period shorter
Than wish demanded for the well-renowned leader,
Where he then for the first day was forced to be victor,

Anonymous

- 110 Famous in battle, as Fate had not willed it.
The lord of the Geatmen uplifted his hand then,
Smiting the fire-drake with sword that was precious,
That bright on the bone the blade-edge did weaken,
Bit more feebly than his folk-leader needed,
- 115 Burdened with bale-griefs. Then the barrow-protector,
When the sword-blow had fallen, was fierce in his spirit,
Flinging his fires, flamings of battle
Gleamed then afar: the gold-friend of Weders
Boasted no conquests, his battle-sword failed him
- 120 Naked in conflict, as by no means it ought to,
Long-trusty weapon. 'Twas no slight undertaking
That Ecgtheow's famous offspring would leave
The drake-cavern's bottom; he must live in some region
Other than this, by the will of the dragon,
- 125 As each one of earthmen existence must forfeit.
'Twas early thereafter the excellent warriors
Met with each other. Anew and afresh
The hoard-ward took heart (gasps heaved then his bosom):
Sorrow he suffered encircled with fire
- 130 Who the people erst governed. His companions by no means
Were banded about him, bairns of the princes,
With valorous spirit, but they sped to the forest,
Seeking for safety. The soul-deeps of one were
Ruffled by care: kin-love can never
- 135 Aught in him waver who well doth consider.

XXXVI

WIGLAF THE TRUSTY.—BEOWULF IS DESERTED BY FRIENDS AND
BY SWORD.

The son of Weohstan was Wiglaf entitled,
Shield-warrior precious, prince of the Scyflings,

Beowulf

Ælfhere's kinsman: he saw his dear liegelord
Enduring the heat 'neath helmet and visor.
5 Then he minded the holding that erst he had given him,
The Wægmunding warriors' wealth-blessèd homestead,
Each of the folk-rights his father had wielded;
He was hot for the battle, his hand seized the target,
The yellow-bark shield, he unsheathed his old weapon,
10 Which was known among earthmen as the relic of Eanmund,
Othere's offspring, whom, exiled and friendless,
Weohstan did slay with sword-edge in battle,
And carried his kinsman the clear-shining helmet,
The ring-made burnie, the old giant-weapon
15 That Onela gave him, his boon-fellow's armor,
Ready war-trappings: he the feud did not mention,
Though he'd fatally smitten the son of his brother.
Many a half-year held he the treasures,
The bill and the burnie, till his bairn became able,
20 Like his father before him, fame-deeds to 'complish;
Then he gave him 'mong Geatmen a goodly array of
Weeds for his warfare; he went from life then
Old on his journey. 'Twas the earliest time then
That the youthful champion might charge in the battle
25 Aiding his liegelord; his spirit was dauntless.
Nor did kinsman's bequest quail at the battle:
This the dragon discovered on their coming together.
Wiglaf uttered many a right-saying,
Said to his fellows, sad was his spirit:
30 "I remember the time when, tasting the mead-cup,
We promised in the hall the lord of us all
Who gave us these ring-treasures, that this battle-equip-
ment,
Swords and helmets, we'd certainly quite him,
Should need of such aid ever befall him:
35 In the war-band he chose us for this journey spontaneously,
Stirred us to glory and gave me these jewels,

Anonymous

Since he held and esteemed us trust-worthy spearmen,
Hardy helm-bearers, though this hero-achievement
Our lord intended alone to accomplish,
40 Ward of his people, for most of achievements,
Doings audacious, he did among earth-folk.
The day is now come when the ruler of earthmen
Needeth the vigor of valiant heroes:
Let us wend us towards him, the war-prince to succor,
45 While the heat yet rageth, horrible fire-fight.
God wot in me, 'tis mickle the liefer
The blaze should embrace my body and eat it
With my treasure-bestower. Meseemeth not proper
To bear our battle-shields back to our country,
50 'Less first we are able to fell and destroy the
Long-hating foeman, to defend the life of
The prince of the Weders. Well do I know 't isn't
Earned by his exploits, he only of Geatmen
Sorrow should suffer, sink in the battle:
55 Brand and helmet to us both shall be common,
Shield-cover, burnie." Through the bale-smoke he stalked
then,
Went under helmet to the help of his chieftain,
Briefly discoursing: "Beowulf dear,
Perform thou all fully, as thou formerly saidst,
60 In thy youthful years, that while yet thou livedst
Thou wouldst let thine honor not ever be lessened.
Thy life thou shalt save, mighty in actions,
Atheling undaunted, with all of thy vigor;
I'll give thee assistance." The dragon came raging,
65 Wild-mooded stranger, when these words had been uttered
('Twas the second occasion), seeking his enemies,
Men that were hated, with hot-gleaming fire-waves;
With blaze-billows burned the board to its edges:
The fight-armor failed then to furnish assistance
70 To the youthful spear-hero: but the young-agèd stripling

Beowulf

Quickly advanced 'neath his kinsman's war-target,
Since his own had been ground in the grip of the fire.
Then the warrior-king was careful of glory,
He soundly smote with sword-for-the-battle,
75 That it stood in the head by hatred driven;
Nægling was shivered, the old and iron-made
Brand of Beowulf in battle deceived him.
'Twas denied him that edges of irons were able
To help in the battle; the hand was too mighty
80 Which every weapon, as I heard on inquiry,
Outstruck in its stroke, when to struggle he carried
The wonderful war-sword: it waxed him no better.
Then the people-despoiler—third of his onsets—
Fierce-raging fire-drake, of feud-hate was mindful,
85 Charged on the strong one, when chance was afforded,
Heated and war-grim, seized on his neck
With teeth that were bitter; he bloody did wax with
Soul-gore seething; sword-blood in waves boiled.

XXXVII

THE FATAL STRUGGLE.—BEOWULF'S LAST MOMENTS.

Then I heard that at need of the king of the people
The upstanding earlman exhibited prowess,
Vigor and courage, as suited his nature;
He his head did not guard, but the high-minded liegeman's
5 Hand was consumed, when he succored his kinsman,
So he struck the strife-bringing strange-comer lower,
Earl-thane in armor, that _in_ went the weapon
Gleaming and plated, that 'gan then the fire
Later to lessen. The liegelord himself then
10 Retained his consciousness, brandished his war-knife,

Anonymous

Battle-sharp, bitter, that he bare on his armor:
The Weder-lord cut the worm in the middle.
They had felled the enemy (life drove out then
Puissant prowess), the pair had destroyed him,
15 Land-chiefs related: so a liegeman should prove him,
A thaneman when needed. To the prince 'twas the last of
His era of conquest by his own great achievements,
The latest of world-deeds. The wound then began
Which the earth-dwelling dragon erstwhile had wrought
him
20 To burn and to swell. He soon then discovered
That bitterest bale-woe in his bosom was raging,
Poison within. The atheling advanced then,
That along by the wall, he prudent of spirit
Might sit on a settle; he saw the giant-work,
25 How arches of stone strengthened with pillars
The earth-hall eternal inward supported.
Then the long-worthy liegeman laved with his hand the
Far-famous chieftain, gory from sword-edge,
Refreshing the face of his friend-lord and ruler,
30 Sated with battle, unbinding his helmet.
Beowulf answered, of his injury spake he,
His wound that was fatal (he was fully aware
He had lived his allotted life-days enjoying
The pleasures of earth; then past was entirely
35 His measure of days, death very near):
"My son I would give now my battle-equipments,
Had any of heirs been after me granted,
Along of my body. This people I governed
Fifty of winters: no king 'mong my neighbors
40 Dared to encounter me with comrades-in-battle,
Try me with terror. The time to me ordered
I bided at home, mine own kept fitly,
Sought me no snares, swore me not many
Oaths in injustice. Joy over all this

Beowulf

45 I'm able to have, though ill with my death-wounds;
Hence the Ruler of Earthmen need not charge me
With the killing of kinsmen, when cometh my life out
Forth from my body. Fare thou with haste now
To behold the hoard 'neath the hoar-grayish stone,
50 Well-lovèd Wiglaf, now the worm is a-lying,
Sore-wounded sleepeth, disseized of his treasure.
Go thou in haste that treasures of old I,
Gold-wealth may gaze on, together see lying
The ether-bright jewels, be easier able,
55 Having the heap of hoard-gems, to yield my
Life and the land-folk whom long I have governed."

XXXVIII

WIGLAF PLUNDERS THE DRAGON'S DEN.—BEOWULF'S DEATH.

Then heard I that Wihstan's son very quickly,
These words being uttered, heeded his liegeland
Wounded and war-sick, went in his armor,
His well-woven ring-mail, 'neath the roof of the barrow.
5 Then the trusty retainer treasure-gems many
Victorious saw, when the seat he came near to,
Gold-treasure sparkling spread on the bottom,
Wonder on the wall, and the worm-creature's cavern,
The ancient dawn-flier's, vessels a-standing,
10 Cups of the ancients of cleansers bereavèd,
Robbed of their ornaments: there were helmets in numbers,
Old and rust-eaten, arm-bracelets many,
Artfully woven. Wealth can easily,
Gold on the sea-bottom, turn into vanity
15 Each one of earthmen, arm him who pleaseth!
And he saw there lying an all-golden banner

Anonymous

High o'er the hoard, of hand-wonders greatest,
Linkèd with lacets: a light from it sparkled,
That the floor of the cavern he was able to look on,
20 To examine the jewels. Sight of the dragon
Not any was offered, but edge offcarried him.
Then I heard that the hero the hoard-treasure plundered,
The giant-work ancient reaved in the cavern,
Bare on his bosom the beakers and platters,
25 As himself would fain have it, and took off the standard,
The brightest of beacons; the bill had erst injured
(Its edge was of iron), the old-ruler's weapon,
Him who long had watched as ward of the jewels,
Who fire-terror carried hot for the treasure,
30 Rolling in battle, in middlemost darkness,
Till murdered he perished. The messenger hastened,
Not loth to return, hurried by jewels:
Curiosity urged him if, excellent-mooded,
Alive he should find the lord of the Weders
35 Mortally wounded, at the place where he left him.
'Mid the jewels he found then the famous old chieftain,
His liegelord belovèd, at his life's-end gory:
He thereupon 'gan to lave him with water,
Till the point of his word piercèd his breast-board.
40 Beowulf spake (the gold-gems he noticed),
The old one in sorrow: "For the jewels I look on
Thanks do I utter for all to the Ruler,
Wielder of Worship, with words of devotion,
The Lord everlasting, that He let me such treasures
45 Gain for my people ere death overtook me.
Since I've bartered the agèd life to me granted
For treasure of jewels, attend ye henceforward
The wants of the war-thanes; I can wait here no longer.
The battle-famed bid ye to build them a grave-hill,
50 Bright when I'm burned, at the brim-current's limit;
As a memory-mark to the men I have governed,

Beowulf

Aloft it shall tower on Whale's-Ness uprising,
That earls of the ocean hereafter may call it
Beowulf's barrow, those who barks ever-dashing
55 From a distance shall drive o'er the darkness of waters."
The bold-mooded troop-lord took from his neck then
The ring that was golden, gave to his liegeman,
The youthful war-hero, his gold-flashing helmet,
His collar and war-mail, bade him well to enjoy them:
60 "Thou art latest left of the line of our kindred,
Of Wægmunding people: Weird hath offcarried
All of my kinsmen to the Creator's glory,
Earls in their vigor: I shall after them fare."
'Twas the aged liegelord's last-spoken word in
65 His musings of spirit, ere he mounted the fire,
The battle-waves burning: from his bosom departed
His soul to seek the sainted ones' glory.

XXXIX

THE DEAD FOES.—WIGLAF'S BITTER TAUNTS.

It had wofully chanced then the youthful retainer
To behold on earth the most ardent-belovèd
At his life-days' limit, lying there helpless.
The slayer too lay there, of life all bereavèd,
5 Horrible earth-drake, harassed with sorrow:
The round-twisted monster was permitted no longer
To govern the ring-hoards, but edges of war-swords
Mightily seized him, battle-sharp, sturdy
Leavings of hammers, that still from his wounds
10 The flier-from-farland fell to the earth
Hard by his hoard-house, hopped he at midnight
Not e'er through the air, nor exulting in jewels
Suffered them to see him: but he sank then to earthward

Anonymous

Through the hero-chief's handwork. I heard sure it throve
then
15 But few in the land of liegemen of valor,
Though of every achievement bold he had proved him,
To run 'gainst the breath of the venomous scather,
Or the hall of the treasure to trouble with hand-blows,
If he watching had found the ward of the hoard-hall
20 On the barrow abiding. Beowulf's part of
The treasure of jewels was paid for with death;
Each of the twain had attained to the end of
Life so unlasting. Not long was the time till
The tardy-at-battle returned from the thicket,
25 The timid truce-breakers ten all together,
Who durst not before play with the lances
In the prince of the people's pressing emergency;
But blushing with shame, with shields they betook them,
With arms and armor where the old one was lying:
30 They gazed upon Wiglaf. He was sitting exhausted,
Foot-going fighter, not far from the shoulders
Of the lord of the people, would rouse him with water;
No whit did it help him; though he hoped for it keenly,
He was able on earth not at all in the leader
35 Life to retain, and nowise to alter
The will of the Wielder; the World-Ruler's power
Would govern the actions of each one of heroes,
As yet He is doing. From the young one forthwith then
Could grim-worded greeting be got for him quickly
40 Whose courage had failed him. Wiglaf discoursed then,
Weohstan his son, sad-mooded hero,
Looked on the hated: "He who soothness will utter
Can say that the liegelord who gave you the jewels,
The ornament-armor wherein ye are standing,
45 When on ale-bench often he offered to hall-men
Helmet and burnie, the prince to his liegemen,
As best upon earth he was able to find him,—

Beowulf

That he wildly wasted his war-gear undoubtedly
When battle o'ertook him. The troop-king no need had
50 To glory in comrades; yet God permitted him,
Victory-Wielder, with weapon unaided
Himself to avenge, when vigor was needed.
I life-protection but little was able
To give him in battle, and I 'gan, notwithstanding,
55 Helping my kinsman (my strength overtaxing):
He waxed the weaker when with weapon I smote on
My mortal opponent, the fire less strongly
Flamed from his bosom. Too few of protectors
Came round the king at the critical moment.
60 Now must ornament-taking and weapon-bestowing,
Home-joyance all, cease for your kindred,
Food for the people; each of your warriors
Must needs be bereavèd of rights that he holdeth
In landed possessions, when faraway nobles
65 Shall learn of your leaving your lord so basely,
The dastardly deed. Death is more pleasant
To every earlman than infamous life is!"

XL

THE MESSENGER OF DEATH.

Then he charged that the battle be announced at the hedge
Up o'er the cliff-edge, where the earl-troopers bided
The whole of the morning, mood-wretched sat them,
Bearers of battle-shields, both things expecting,
5 The end of his lifetime and the coming again of
The liegelord belovèd. Little reserved he
Of news that was known, who the ness-cliff did travel,
But he truly discoursed to all that could hear him:
"Now the free-giving friend-lord of the folk of the Weders,

Anonymous

10 The folk-prince of Geatmen, is fast in his death-bed,
By the deeds of the dragon in death-bed abideth;
Along with him lieth his life-taking foeman
Slain with knife-wounds: he was wholly unable
To injure at all the ill-planning monster
15 With bite of his sword-edge. Wiglaf is sitting,
Offspring of Wihstan, up over Beowulf,
Earl o'er another whose end-day hath reached him,
Head-watch holdeth o'er heroes unliving,
For friend and for foeman. The folk now expecteth
20 A season of strife when the death of the folk-king
To Frankmen and Frisians in far-lands is published.
The war-hatred waxed warm 'gainst the Hugmen,
When Higelac came with an army of vessels
Faring to Friesland, where the Frankmen in battle
25 Humbled him and bravely with overnight 'complished
That the mail-clad warrior must sink in the battle,
Fell 'mid his folk-troop: no fret-gems presented
The atheling to earlmen; aye was denied us
Merewing's mercy. The men of the Swedelands
30 For truce or for truth trust I but little;
But widely 'twas known that near Ravenswood Ongentheow
Sundered Hæthcyn the Hrethling from life-joys,
When for pride overweening the War-Scylfings first did
Seek the Geatmen with savage intentions.
35 Early did Ohthere's age-laden father,
Old and terrible, give blow in requital,
Killing the sea-king, the queen-mother rescued,
The old one his consort deprived of her gold,
Onela's mother and Ohthere's also,
40 And then followed the feud-nursing foemen till hardly,
Reaved of their ruler, they Ravenswood entered.
Then with vast-numbered forces he assaulted the remnant,
Weary with wounds, woe often promised
The livelong night to the sad-hearted war-troop:

Beowulf

- 45 Said he at morning would kill them with edges of weapons,
Some on the gallows for glee to the fowls.
Aid came after to the anxious-in-spirit
At dawn of the day, after Higelac's bugle
And trumpet-sound heard they, when the good one pro-
ceeded
- 50 And faring followed the flower of the troopers.

XLI

THE MESSENGER'S RETROSPECT.

- "The blood-stainèd trace of Swedes and Geatmen,
The death-rush of warmen, widely was noticed,
How the folks with each other feud did awaken.
The worthy one went then with well-beloved comrades,
- 5 Old and dejected to go to the fastness,
Ongentheo earl upward then turned him;
Of Higelac's battle he'd heard on inquiry,
The exultant one's prowess, despaired of resistance,
With earls of the ocean to be able to struggle,
- 10 'Gainst sea-going sailors to save the hoard-treasure,
His wife and his children; he fled after thenceward
Old 'neath the earth-wall. Then was offered pursuance
To the braves of the Swedemen, the banner to Higelac.
They fared then forth o'er the field-of-protection,
- 15 When the Hrethling heroes hedgeward had thronged them.
Then with edges of irons was Ongentheow driven,
The gray-haired to tarry, that the troop-ruler had to
Suffer the power solely of Eofor:
Wulf then wildly with weapon assaulted him,
- 20 Wonred his son, that for swinge of the edges
The blood from his body burst out in currents,
Forth 'neath his hair. He feared not however,

Anonymous

Gray-headed Scylfing, but speedily quited
The wasting wound-stroke with worse exchange,
25 When the king of thethane-troop thither did turn him:
The wise-mooded son of Wonred was powerless
To give a return-blow to the age-hoary man,
But his head-shielding helmet first hewed he to pieces,
That flecked with gore perforce he did totter,
30 Fell to the earth; not fey was he yet then,
But up did he spring though an edge-wound had reached
him.
Then Higelac's vassal, valiant and dauntless,
When his brother lay dead, made his broad-bladed weap-
on,
Giant-sword ancient, defence of the giants,
35 Bound o'er the shield-wall; the folk-prince succumbed then,
Shepherd of people, was pierced to the vitals.
There were many attendants who bound up his kinsman,
Carried him quickly when occasion was granted
That the place of the slain they were suffered to manage.
40 This pending, one hero plundered the other,
His armor of iron from Ongentheow ravished,
His hard-sword hilted and helmet together;
The old one's equipments he carried to Higelac.
He the jewels received, and rewards 'mid the troopers
45 Graciously promised, and so did accomplish:
The king of the Weders requited the war-rush,
Hrethel's descendant, when home he repaired him,
To Eofor and Wulf with wide-lavished treasures,
To each of them granted a hundred of thousands
50 In land and rings wrought out of wire:
None upon mid-earth needed to twit him
With the gifts he gave them, when glory they conquered;
And to Eofor then gave he his one only daughter,
The honor of home, as an earnest of favor.
55 That's the feud and hatred—as ween I 'twill happen—

Beowulf

The anger of earthmen, that earls of the Swedemen
Will visit on us, when they hear that our leader
Lifeless is lying, he who longtime protected
His hoard and kingdom 'gainst hating assailers,
60 Who on the fall of the heroes defended of yore
The deed-mighty Scyldings, did for the troopers
What best did avail them, and further moreover
Hero-deeds 'complished. Now is haste most fitting,
That the lord of liegemen we look upon yonder,
65 And _that_ one carry on journey to death-pyre
Who ring-presents gave us. Not aught of it all
Shall melt with the brave one—there's a mass of bright jew-
els,
Gold beyond measure, grewsomely purchased
And ending it all ornament-rings too
70 Bought with his life; these fire shall devour,
Flame shall cover, no earlman shall wear
A jewel-memento, nor beautiful virgin
Have on her neck rings to adorn her,
But wretched in spirit bereavèd of gold-gems
75 She shall oft with others be exiled and banished,
Since the leader of liegemen hath laughter forsaken,
Mirth and merriment. Hence many a war-spear
Cold from the morning shall be clutched in the fingers,
Heaved in the hand, no harp-music's sound shall
80 Waken the warriors, but the wan-coated raven
Fain over fey ones freely shall gabble,
Shall say to the eagle how he sped in the eating,
When, the wolf his companion, he plundered the slain.”
So the high-minded hero was rehearsing these stories
85 Loathsome to hear; he lied as to few of
Weirds and of words. All the war-troop arose then,
'Neath the Eagle's Cape sadly betook them,
Weeping and woful, the wonder to look at.
They saw on the sand then soulless a-lying,

Anonymous

90 His slaughter-bed holding, him who rings had given them
In days that were done; then the death-bringing moment
Was come to the good one, that the king very warlike,
Wielder of Weders, with wonder-death perished.
First they beheld there a creature more wondrous,
95 The worm on the field, in front of them lying,
The foeman before them: the fire-spewing dragon,
Ghostly and grisly guest in his terrors,
Was scorched in the fire; as he lay there he measured
Fifty of feet; came forth in the night-time
100 To rejoice in the air, thereafter departing
To visit his den; he in death was then fastened,
He would joy in no other earth-hollowed caverns.
There stood round about him beakers and vessels,
Dishes were lying and dear-valued weapons,
105 With iron-rust eaten, as in earth's mighty bosom
A thousand of winters there they had rested:
That mighty bequest then with magic was guarded,
Gold of the ancients, that earlman not any
The ring-hall could touch, save Ruling-God only,
110 Sooth-king of Vict'ries gave whom He wished to
(He is earth-folk's protector) to open the treasure,
E'en to such among mortals as seemed to Him proper.

XLII

WIGLAF'S SAD STORY.—THE HOARD CARRIED OFF.

Then 'twas seen that the journey prospered him little
Who wrongly within had the ornaments hidden
Down 'neath the wall. The warden erst slaughtered
Some few of the folk-troop: the feud then thereafter
5 Was hotly avengèd. 'Tis a wonder where,
When the strength-famous trooper has attained to the end

Beowulf

of

Life-days allotted, then no longer the man may
Remain with his kinsmen where mead-cups are flowing.

10 So to Beowulf happened when the ward of the barrow,
Assaults, he sought for: himself had no knowledge
How his leaving this life was likely to happen.
So to doomsday, famous folk-leaders down did
Call it with curses—who ‘complished it there—
That that man should be ever of ill-deeds convicted,
15 Confined in foul-places, fastened in hell-bonds,
Punished with plagues, who this place should e’er ravage.
He cared not for gold: rather the Wielder’s
Favor preferred he first to get sight of.

Wiglaf discoursed then, Wihstan his son:
20 “Oft many an earlman on one man’s account must
Sorrow endure, as to us it hath happened.
The liegelord beloved we could little prevail on,
Kingdom’s keeper, counsel to follow,
Not to go to the guardian of the gold-hoard, but let him
25 Lie where he long was, live in his dwelling
Till the end of the world. Met we a destiny
Hard to endure: the hoard has been looked at,
Been gained very grimly; too grievous the fate that
The prince of the people pricked to come thither.

30 I was therein and all of it looked at,
The building’s equipments, since access was given me,
Not kindly at all entrance permitted
Within under earth-wall. Hastily seized I
And held in my hands a huge-weighting burden
35 Of hoard-treasures costly, hither out bare them
To my liegelord beloved: life was yet in him,
And consciousness also; the old one discoursed then
Much and mournfully, commanded to greet you,
Bade that remembering the deeds of your friend-lord
40 Ye build on the fire-hill of corpses a lofty

Anonymous

Burial-barrow, broad and far-famous,
As 'mid world-dwelling warriors he was widely most hon-
ored
While he reveled in riches. Let us rouse us and hasten
Again to see and seek for the treasure,
45 The wonder 'neath wall. The way I will show you,
That close ye may look at ring-gems sufficient
And gold in abundance. Let the bier with promptness
Fully be fashioned, when forth we shall come,
And lift we our lord, then, where long he shall tarry,
50 Well-beloved warrior, 'neath the Wielder's protection."
Then the son of Wihstan bade orders be given,
Mood-valiant man, to many of heroes,
Holders of homesteads, that they hither from far,
Leaders of liegemen, should look for the good one
55 With wood for his pyre: "The flame shall now swallow
(The wan fire shall wax) the warriors' leader
Who the rain of the iron often abided,
When, sturdily hurled, the storm of the arrows
Leapt o'er linden-wall, the lance rendered service,
60 Furnished with feathers followed the arrow."
Now the wise-mooded son of Wihstan did summon
The best of the braves from the band of the ruler
Seven together; 'neath the enemy's roof he
Went with the seven; one of the heroes
65 Who fared at the front, a fire-blazing torch-light
Bare in his hand. No lot then decided
Who that hoard should havoc, when hero-earls saw it
Lying in the cavern uncared-for entirely,
Rusting to ruin: they rued then but little
70 That they hastily hence hauled out the treasure,
The dear-valued jewels; the dragon eke pushed they,
The worm o'er the wall, let the wave-currents take him,
The waters enwind the ward of the treasures.
There wounden gold on a wain was uploaded,

Beowulf

75 A mass unmeasured, the men-leader off then,
The hero hoary, to Whale's-Ness was carried.

XLIII

THE BURNING OF BEOWULF.

The folk of the Geatmen got him then ready
A pile on the earth strong for the burning,
Behung with helmets, hero-knights' targets,
And bright-shining burnies, as he begged they should have
them;
5 Then wailing war-heroes their world-famous chieftain,
Their liegeland beloved, laid in the middle.
Soldiers began then to make on the barrow
The largest of dead-fires: dark o'er the vapor
The smoke-cloud ascended, the sad-roaring fire,
10 Mingled with weeping (the wind-roar subsided)
Till the building of bone it had broken to pieces,
Hot in the heart. Heavy in spirit
They mood-sad lamented the men-leader's ruin;
And mournful measures the much-grieving widow
15 ...
...
...
...
...
20 ...
The men of the Weders made accordingly
A hill on the height, high and extensive,
Of sea-going sailors to be seen from a distance,
And the brave one's beacon built where the fire was,
25 In ten-days' space, with a wall surrounded it,
As wisest of world-folk could most worthily plan it.

Anonymous

They placed in the barrow rings and jewels,
All such ornaments as erst in the treasure
War-mooded men had won in possession:
30 The earnings of earlmen to earth they entrusted,
The gold to the dust, where yet it remaineth
As useless to mortals as in foregoing eras.
'Round the dead-mound rode then the doughty-in-battle,
Bairns of all twelve of the chiefs of the people,
35 More would they mourn, lament for their ruler,
Speak in measure, mention him with pleasure,
Weighed his worth, and his warlike achievements
Mightily commended, as 'tis meet one praise his
Liegelord in words and love him in spirit,
40 When forth from his body he fares to destruction.
So lamented mourning the men of the Geats,
Fond-loving vassals, the fall of their lord,
Said he was kindest of kings under heaven,
Gentlest of men, most winning of manner,
45 Friendliest to folk-troops and fondest of honor.

The End.



ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

THE VENERABLE BEDE

Translated by A. M. Sellar

BOOK ONE

I

Of the Situation
of Britain and
Ireland, and of
their ancient
inhabitants.

Britain, an island in the Atlantic, formerly called Albion, lies to the north-west, facing, though at a considerable distance, the coasts of Germany, France, and Spain, which form the greatest part of Europe. It extends 800 miles in length towards the north, and is 200 miles in breadth, except where several promontories extend further in breadth, by which its compass is made to be 4,875 miles. To the south lies Belgic Gaul. To its nearest shore there is an easy passage from the city of Rutubi Portus, by the English now corrupted into Reptacaestir. The distance from here across the sea to Gessoriacum, the nearest shore in the territory of the Morini, is fifty miles, or as some writers say, 450 furlongs. On the other side of the island, where it opens upon the boundless ocean, it has the islands called Orcades. Britain is rich in grain and trees, and is well adapted for feeding cattle and beasts of burden. It also

The Venerable Bede

produces vines in some places, and has plenty of land and water fowl of divers sorts; it is remarkable also for rivers abounding in fish, and plentiful springs. It has the greatest plenty of salmon and eels; seals are also frequently taken, and dolphins, as also whales; besides many sorts of shell-fish, such as mussels, in which are often found excellent pearls of all colours, red, purple, violet and green, but chiefly white. There is also a great abundance of snails, of which the scarlet dye is made, a most beautiful red, which never fades with the heat of the sun or exposure to rain, but the older it is, the more beautiful it becomes. It has both salt and hot springs, and from them flow rivers which furnish hot baths, proper for all ages and both sexes, in separate places, according to their requirements. For water, as St. Basil says, receives the quality of heat, when it runs along certain metals, and becomes not only hot but scalding. Britain is rich also in veins of metals, as copper, iron, lead, and silver; it produces a great deal of excellent jet, which is black and sparkling, and burns when put to the fire, and when set on fire, drives away serpents; being warmed with rubbing, it attracts whatever is applied to it, like amber. The island was formerly distinguished by twenty-eight famous cities, besides innumerable forts, which were all strongly secured with walls, towers, gates, and bars. And, because it lies almost under the North Pole, the nights are light in summer, so that at midnight the beholders are often in doubt whether the evening twilight still continues, or that of the morning has come; since the sun at night returns to the east in the northern regions without passing far beneath the earth. For this reason the days are of a great length in summer, and on the other hand, the nights in winter are eighteen hours long, for the sun then withdraws into southern parts. In like manner the nights are very short in summer, and the days in winter, that is, only six equinoctial hours. Whereas, in Armenia, Macedonia, Italy, and other countries of the same latitude, the longest day or night extends but to fifteen hours, and the shortest to nine.

There are in the island at present, following the number of the books in which the Divine Law was written, five languages of different nations employed in the study and confession of the one self-same knowledge, which is of highest truth and true sublimity, to wit, English, British, Scottish, Pictish, and Latin, the last having become common to all by the study of the Scriptures. But at first this island had no other inhabitants but the Britons, from whom it derived its name, and who, coming over into Britain, as is reported,

from Armorica, possessed themselves of the southern parts thereof. Starting from the south, they had occupied the greater part of the island, when it happened, that the nation of the Picts, putting to sea from Scythia, as is reported, in a few ships of war, and being driven by the winds beyond the bounds of Britain, came to Ireland and landed on its northern shores. There, finding the nation of the Scots, they begged to be allowed to settle among them, but could not succeed in obtaining their request. Ireland is the largest island next to Britain, and lies to the west of it; but as it is shorter than Britain to the north, so, on the other hand, it runs out far beyond it to the south, over against the northern part of Spain, though a wide sea lies between them. The Picts then, as has been said, arriving in this island by sea, desired to have a place granted them in which they might settle. The Scots answered that the island could not contain them both; but "We can give you good counsel," said they, "whereby you may know what to do; we know there is another island, not far from ours, to the eastward, which we often see at a distance, when the days are clear. If you will go thither, you can obtain settlements; or, if any should oppose you, we will help you." The Picts, accordingly, sailing over into Britain, began to inhabit the northern parts thereof, for the Britons had possessed themselves of the southern. Now the Picts had no wives, and asked them of the Scots; who would not consent to grant them upon any other terms, than that when any question should arise, they should choose a king from the female royal race rather than from the male: which custom, as is well known, has been observed among the Picts to this day. In process of time, Britain, besides the Britons and the Picts, received a third nation, the Scots, who, migrating from Ireland under their leader, Reuda, either by fair means, or by force of arms, secured to themselves those settlements among the Picts which they still possess. From the name of their commander, they are to this day called Dalreudini; for, in their language, Dal signifies a part.

Ireland is broader than Britain and has a much healthier and milder climate; for the snow scarcely ever lies there above three days: no man makes hay in the summer for winter's provision, or builds stables for his beasts of burden. No reptiles are found there, and no snake can live there; for, though snakes are often carried thither out of Britain, as soon as the ship comes near the shore, and the scent of the air reaches them, they die. On the contrary, almost all things in the island are efficacious against poison. In truth, we have

The Venerable Bede

known that when men have been bitten by serpents, the scrapings of leaves of books that were brought out of Ireland, being put into water, and given them to drink, have immediately absorbed the spreading poison, and assuaged the swelling.

The island abounds in milk and honey, nor is there any lack of vines, fish, or fowl; and it is noted for the hunting of stags and roe-deer. It is properly the country of the Scots, who, migrating from thence, as has been said, formed the third nation in Britain in addition to the Britons and the Picts.

There is a very large gulf of the sea, which formerly divided the nation of the Britons from the Picts; it runs from the west far into the land, where, to this day, stands a strong city of the Britons, called Alcluith. The Scots, arriving on the north side of this bay, settled themselves there.

How Caius Julius Caesar was the first Roman that came into Britain.

II

Now Britain had never been visited by the Romans, and was entirely unknown to them before the time of Caius Julius Caesar, who, in the year 693 after the foundation of Rome, but the sixtieth year before the Incarnation of our Lord, was consul with Lucius Bibulus. While he was making war upon the Germans and the Gauls, who were divided only by the river Rhine, he came into the province of the Morini, whence is the nearest and shortest passage into Britain. Here, having provided about eighty ships of burden and fast-sailing vessels, he sailed over into Britain; where, being first roughly handled in a battle, and then caught in a storm, he lost a considerable part of his fleet, no small number of foot-soldiers, and almost all his cavalry. Returning into Gaul, he put his legions into winter-quarters, and gave orders for building six hundred sail of both sorts. With these he again crossed over early in spring into Britain, but, whilst he was marching with the army against the enemy, the ships, riding at anchor, were caught in a storm and either dashed one against another, or driven upon the sands and wrecked. Forty of them were lost, the rest were, with much difficulty, repaired. Caesar's cavalry was, at the first encounter, defeated by the Britons, and there Labienus, the tribune, was slain. In the second engagement, with great hazard to his men, he defeated the Britons and put them to flight. Thence he proceeded to the river Thames, where a great multitude of the enemy had posted themselves on the

farther side of the river, under the command of Cassobellaunus, and fenced the bank of the river and almost all the ford under water with sharp stakes: the remains of these are to be seen to this day, apparently about the thickness of a man's thigh, cased with lead, and fixed immovably in the bottom of the river. This being perceived and avoided by the Romans, the barbarians, not able to stand the charge of the legions, hid themselves in the woods, whence they grievously harassed the Romans with repeated sallies. In the meantime, the strong state of the Trinovantes, with their commander Androgius, surrendered to Caesar, giving him forty hostages. Many other cities, following their example, made a treaty with the Romans. Guided by them, Caesar at length, after severe fighting, took the town of Cassobellaunus, situated between two marshes, fortified by sheltering woods, and plentifully furnished with all necessaries. After this, Caesar returned from Britain into Gaul, but he had no sooner put his legions into winter quarters, than he was suddenly beset and distracted with wars and sudden risings on every side.

How Claudius, the second of the Romans who came into Britain, brought the islands Orcades into subjection to the Roman empire; and Vespasian, sent by him, reduced the Isle of Wight under the dominion of the Romans.

III

In the year of Rome 798, Claudius, fourth emperor from Augustus, being desirous to approve himself a prince beneficial to the republic, and eagerly bent upon war and conquest on every side, undertook an expedition into Britain, which as it appeared, was roused to rebellion by the refusal of the Romans to give up certain deserters. No one before or after Julius Caesar had dared to land upon the island. Claudius crossed over to it, and within a very few days, without any fighting or bloodshed, the greater part of the island was surrendered into his hands. He also added to the Roman empire the Orcades, which lie in the ocean beyond Britain, and, returning to Rome in the sixth month after his departure, he gave his son the title of Britannicus. This war he concluded in the fourth year of his reign, which is the forty-sixth from the Incarnation of our Lord. In which year there came to pass a most grievous famine in Syria, which is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles to have been foretold by the prophet Agabus.

Vespasian, who was emperor after Nero, being sent into Britain by the same Claudius, brought also under the Roman dominion the Isle of Wight, which is close to Britain on the south, and is about thirty miles in length from

east to west, and twelve from north to south; being six miles distant from the southern coast of Britain at the east end, and three at the west. Nero, succeeding Claudius in the empire, undertook no wars at all; and, therefore, among countless other disasters brought by him upon the Roman state, he almost lost Britain; for in his time two most notable towns were there taken and destroyed.

How Lucius,
king of Britain,
writing to Pope
Eleutherus, de-
sired to be made
a Christian.

IV

In the year of our Lord 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, was made emperor, together with his brother, Aurelius Commodus. In their time, whilst the holy Eleutherus presided over the Roman Church, Lucius, king of Britain, sent a letter to him, entreating that by a mandate from him he might be made a Christian. He soon obtained his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith, which they had received, uncorrupted and entire, in peace and tranquillity until the time of the Emperor Diocletian.

How the Britons,
being ravaged
by the Scots and
Picts, sought
succour from the
Romans, who
coming a second
time, built a
wall across the
island; but when
this was broken
down at once
by the aforesaid
enemies, they
were reduced to
greater distress
than before.

XII

From that time, the British part of Britain, destitute of armed soldiers, of all military stores, and of the whole flower of its active youth, who had been led away by the rashness of the tyrants never to return, was wholly exposed to rapine, the people being altogether ignorant of the use of weapons. Whereupon they suffered many years from the sudden invasions of two very savage nations from beyond the sea, the Scots from the west, and the Picts from the north. We call these nations from beyond the sea, not on account of their being seated out of Britain, but because they were separated from that part of it which was possessed by the Britons, two broad and long inlets of the sea lying between them, one of which runs into the interior of Britain, from the Eastern Sea, and the other from the Western, though they do not reach so far as to touch one another. The eastern has in the midst of it the city Giudi. On the Western Sea, that is, on its right shore, stands the city of Alcluth, which in their language signifies the Rock Cluth, for it is close by the river of that name.

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

On account of the attacks of these nations, the Britons sent messengers to Rome with letters piteously praying for succour, and promising perpetual subjection, provided that the impending enemy should be driven away. An armed legion was immediately sent them, which, arriving in the island, and engaging the enemy, slew a great multitude of them, drove the rest out of the territories of their allies, and having in the meanwhile delivered them from their worst distress, advised them to build a wall between the two seas across the island, that it might secure them by keeping off the enemy. So they returned home with great triumph. But the islanders building the wall which they had been told to raise, not of stone, since they had no workmen capable of such a work, but of sods, made it of no use. Nevertheless, they carried it for many miles between the two bays or inlets of the sea of which we have spoken; to the end that where the protection of the water was wanting, they might use the rampart to defend their borders from the irruptions of the enemies. Of the work there erected, that is, of a rampart of great breadth and height, there are evident remains to be seen at this day. It begins at about two miles' distance from the monastery of Aebbercurnig, west of it, at a place called in the Pictish language Peanfahel, but in the English tongue, Penneltun, and running westward, ends near the city of Alcluith.

But the former enemies, when they perceived that the Roman soldiers were gone, immediately coming by sea, broke into the borders, trampled and overran all places, and like men mowing ripe corn, bore down all before them. Hereupon messengers were again sent to Rome miserably imploring aid, lest their wretched country should be utterly blotted out, and the name of a Roman province, so long renowned among them, overthrown by the cruelties of foreign races, might become utterly contemptible. A legion was accordingly sent again, and, arriving unexpectedly in autumn, made great slaughter of the enemy, obliging all those that could escape, to flee beyond the sea; whereas before, they were wont yearly to carry off their booty without any opposition. Then the Romans declared to the Britons, that they could not for the future undertake such troublesome expeditions for their sake, and advised them rather to take up arms and make an effort to engage their enemies, who could not prove too powerful for them, unless they themselves were enervated by cowardice. Moreover, thinking that it might be some help to the allies, whom they were forced to abandon, they constructed a strong

The Venerable Bede

stone wall from sea to sea, in a straight line between the towns that had been there built for fear of the enemy, where Severus also had formerly built a rampart. This famous wall, which is still to be seen, was raised at public and private expense, the Britons also lending their assistance. It is eight feet in breadth, and twelve in height, in a straight line from east to west, as is still evident to beholders. This being presently finished, they gave the dispirited people good advice, and showed them how to furnish themselves with arms. Besides, they built towers to command a view of the sea, at intervals, on the southern coast, where their ships lay, because there also the invasions of the barbarians were apprehended, and so took leave of their allies, never to return again.

After their departure to their own country, the Scots and Picts, understanding that they had refused to return, at once came back, and growing more confident than they had been before, occupied all the northern and farthest part of the island, driving out the natives, as far as the wall. Hereupon a timorous guard was placed upon the fortification, where, dazed with fear, they became ever more dispirited day by day. On the other side, the enemy constantly attacked them with barbed weapons, by which the cowardly defenders were dragged in piteous fashion from the wall, and dashed against the ground. At last, the Britons, forsaking their cities and wall, took to flight and were scattered. The enemy pursued, and forthwith followed a massacre more grievous than ever before; for the wretched natives were torn in pieces by their enemies, as lambs are torn by wild beasts. Thus, being expelled from their dwellings and lands, they saved themselves from the immediate danger of starvation by robbing and plundering one another, adding to the calamities inflicted by the enemy their own domestic broils, till the whole country was left destitute of food except such as could be procured in the chase.

XIII

In the year of our Lord 423, Theodosius, the younger, the forty-fifth from Augustus, succeeded Honorius and governed the Roman empire twenty-six years. In the eighth year of his reign, Palladius was sent by Celestinus, the Roman pontiff, to the Scots that believed in Christ, to be their first bishop. In the twenty-third year of his reign, Aetius, a man of note and a patrician, dis-

How in the reign of Theodosius the younger, in whose time Palladius was sent to the Scots that believed in Christ, the Britons begging assistance of Ætius, the consul, could not obtain it. [446 a.d.]

charged his third consulship with Symmachus for his colleague. To him the wretched remnant of the Britons sent a letter, which began thus:—"To Aetius, thrice Consul, the groans of the Britons." And in the sequel of the letter they thus unfolded their woes:—"The barbarians drive us to the sea; the sea drives us back to the barbarians: between them we are exposed to two sorts of death; we are either slaughtered or drowned." Yet, for all this, they could not obtain any help from him, as he was then engaged in most serious wars with Bledla and Attila, kings of the Huns. And though the year before this Bledla had been murdered by the treachery of his own brother Attila, yet Attila himself remained so intolerable an enemy to the Republic, that he ravaged almost all Europe, attacking and destroying cities and castles. At the same time there was a famine at Constantinople, and soon after a plague followed; moreover, a great part of the wall of that city, with fifty-seven towers, fell to the ground. Many cities also went to ruin, and the famine and pestilential state of the air destroyed thousands of men and cattle.

How the Britons, compelled by the great famine, drove the barbarians out of their territories; and soon after there ensued, along with abundance of corn, decay of morals, pestilence, and the downfall of the nation.

XIV

In the meantime, the aforesaid famine distressing the Britons more and more, and leaving to posterity a lasting memory of its mischievous effects, obliged many of them to submit themselves to the depredators; though others still held out, putting their trust in God, when human help failed. These continually made raids from the mountains, caves, and woods, and, at length, began to inflict severe losses on their enemies, who had been for so many years plundering the country. The bold Irish robbers thereupon returned home, intending to come again before long. The Picts then settled down in the farthest part of the island and afterwards remained there, but they did not fail to plunder and harass the Britons from time to time.

Now, when the ravages of the enemy at length abated, the island began to abound with such plenty of grain as had never been known in any age before; along with plenty, evil living increased, and this was immediately attended by the taint of all manner of crime; in particular, cruelty, hatred of truth, and love of falsehood; insomuch, that if any one among them happened to be milder than the rest, and more inclined to truth, all the rest abhorred and persecuted him unrestrainedly, as if he had been the enemy of Britain. Nor were the laity

only guilty of these things, but even our Lord's own flock, with its shepherds, casting off the easy yoke of Christ, gave themselves up to drunkenness, enmity, quarrels, strife, envy, and other such sins. In the meantime, on a sudden, a grievous plague fell upon that corrupt generation, which soon destroyed such numbers of them, that the living scarcely availed to bury the dead: yet, those that survived, could not be recalled from the spiritual death, which they had incurred through their sins, either by the death of their friends, or the fear of death. Whereupon, not long after, a more severe vengeance for their fearful crimes fell upon the sinful nation. They held a council to determine what was to be done, and where they should seek help to prevent or repel the cruel and frequent incursions of the northern nations; and in concert with their King Vortigern, it was unanimously decided to call the Saxons to their aid from beyond the sea, which, as the event plainly showed, was brought about by the Lord's will, that evil might fall upon them for their wicked deeds.

How the Angles,
being invited
into Britain, at
first drove off
the enemy; but
not long after,
making a league
with them,
turned their
weapons against
their allies.

XV

In the year of our Lord 449, Marcian, the forty-sixth from Augustus, being made emperor with Valentinian, ruled the empire seven years. Then the nation of the Angles, or Saxons, being invited by the aforesaid king, arrived in Britain with three ships of war and had a place in which to settle assigned to them by the same king, in the eastern part of the island, on the pretext of fighting in defence of their country, whilst their real intentions were to conquer it. Accordingly they engaged with the enemy, who were come from the north to give battle, and the Saxons obtained the victory. When the news of their success and of the fertility of the country, and the cowardice of the Britons, reached their own home, a more considerable fleet was quickly sent over, bringing a greater number of men, and these, being added to the former army, made up an invincible force. The newcomers received of the Britons a place to inhabit among them, upon condition that they should wage war against their enemies for the peace and security of the country, whilst the Britons agreed to furnish them with pay. Those who came over were of the three most powerful nations of Germany—Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. From the Jutes are descended the people of Kent, and of the Isle of Wight, including those in the province of the West-Saxons who are to this day called Jutes, seated opposite to the Isle of Wight. From the Saxons, that is, the country

which is now called Old Saxony, came the East-Saxons, the South-Saxons, and the West-Saxons. From the Angles, that is, the country which is called Angulus, and which is said, from that time, to have remained desert to this day, between the provinces of the Jutes and the Saxons, are descended the East-Angles, the Midland-Angles, the Mercians, all the race of the Northumbrians, that is, of those nations that dwell on the north side of the river Humber, and the other nations of the Angles. The first commanders are said to have been the two brothers Hengist and Horsa. Of these Horsa was afterwards slain in battle by the Britons,⁸⁸ and a monument, bearing his name, is still in existence in the eastern parts of Kent. They were the sons of Victgilsus, whose father was Vitta, son of Vecta, son of Woden; from whose stock the royal race of many provinces trace their descent. In a short time, swarms of the aforesaid nations came over into the island, and the foreigners began to increase so much, that they became a source of terror to the natives themselves who had invited them. Then, having on a sudden entered into league with the Picts, whom they had by this time repelled by force of arms, they began to turn their weapons against their allies. At first, they obliged them to furnish a greater quantity of provisions; and, seeking an occasion of quarrel, protested, that unless more plentiful supplies were brought them, they would break the league, and ravage all the island; nor were they backward in putting their threats into execution. In short, the fire kindled by the hands of the pagans, proved God's just vengeance for the crimes of the people; not unlike that which, being of old lighted by the Chaldeans, consumed the walls and all the buildings of Jerusalem. For here, too, through the agency of the pitiless conqueror, yet by the disposal of the just Judge, it ravaged all the neighbouring cities and country, spread the conflagration from the eastern to the western sea, without any opposition, and overran the whole face of the doomed island. Public as well as private buildings were overturned; the priests were everywhere slain before the altars; no respect was shown for office, the prelates with the people were destroyed with fire and sword; nor were there any left to bury those who had been thus cruelly slaughtered. Some of the miserable remnant, being taken in the mountains, were butchered in heaps. Others, spent with hunger, came forth and submitted themselves to the enemy, to undergo for the sake of food perpetual servitude, if they were not killed upon the spot. Some, with sorrowful hearts, fled beyond the seas. Others, remaining in their own country, led a miserable life of terror and anxiety of mind

among the mountains, woods and crags.

How the Britons
obtained their
first victory
over the Angles,
under the
command of
Ambrosius, a
Roman.

XVI

When the army of the enemy, having destroyed and dispersed the natives, had returned home to their own settlements, the Britons began by degrees to take heart, and gather strength, sallying out of the lurking places where they had concealed themselves, and with one accord imploring the Divine help, that they might not utterly be destroyed. They had at that time for their leader, Ambrosius Aurelianus, a man of worth, who alone, by chance, of the Roman nation had survived the storm, in which his parents, who were of the royal race, had perished. Under him the Britons revived, and offering battle to the victors, by the help of God, gained the victory. From that day, sometimes the natives, and sometimes their enemies, prevailed, till the year of the siege of Badon-hill, when they made no small slaughter of those enemies, about forty-four years after their arrival in England. But of this hereafter.

How the Britons,
being for a time
at rest from for-
eign invasions,
wore themselves
out by civil
wars, and at the
same time gave
themselves up
to more heinous
crimes.

XXII

In the meantime, in Britain, there was some respite from foreign, but not from civil war. The cities destroyed by the enemy and abandoned remained in ruins; and the natives, who had escaped the enemy, now fought against each other. Nevertheless, the kings, priests, private men, and the nobility, still remembering the late calamities and slaughters, in some measure kept within bounds; but when these died, and another generation succeeded, which knew nothing of those times, and was only acquainted with the existing peaceable state of things, all the bonds of truth and justice were so entirely broken, that there was not only no trace of them remaining, but only very few persons seemed to retain any memory of them at all. To other crimes beyond description, which their own historian, Gildas, mournfully relates, they added this—that they never preached the faith to the Saxons, or English, who dwelt amongst them. Nevertheless, the goodness of God did not forsake his people, whom he foreknew, but sent to the aforesaid nation much more worthy heralds of the truth, to bring it to the faith.

XXIII

How the holy Pope Gregory sent Augustine, with other monks, to preach to the English nation, and encouraged them by a letter of exhortation, not to desist from their labour. [596 a.d.]

In the year of our Lord 582, Maurice, the fifty-fourth from Augustus, ascended the throne, and reigned twenty-one years. In the tenth year of his reign, Gregory, a man eminent in learning and the conduct of affairs, was promoted to the Apostolic see of Rome, and presided over it thirteen years, six months and ten days. He, being moved by Divine inspiration, in the fourteenth year of the same emperor, and about the one hundred and fiftieth after the coming of the English into Britain, sent the servant of God, Augustine, and with him divers other monks, who feared the Lord, to preach the Word of God to the English nation. They having, in obedience to the pope's commands, undertaken that work, when they had gone but a little way on their journey, were seized with craven terror, and began to think of returning home, rather than proceed to a barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving nation, to whose very language they were strangers; and by common consent they decided that this was the safer course. At once Augustine, who had been appointed to be consecrated bishop, if they should be received by the English, was sent back, that he might, by humble entreaty, obtain of the blessed Gregory, that they should not be compelled to undertake so dangerous, toilsome, and uncertain a journey. The pope, in reply, sent them a letter of exhortation, persuading them to set forth to the work of the Divine Word, and rely on the help of God. The purport of which letter was as follows:

“Gregory, the servant of the servants of God, to the servants of our Lord. Forasmuch as it had been better not to begin a good work, than to think of desisting from one which has been begun, it behoves you, my beloved sons, to fulfil with all diligence the good work, which, by the help of the Lord, you have undertaken. Let not, therefore, the toil of the journey, nor the tongues of evil-speaking men, discourage you; but with all earnestness and zeal perform, by God's guidance, that which you have set about; being assured, that great labour is followed by the greater glory of an eternal reward. When Augustine, your Superior, returns, whom we also constitute your abbot, humbly obey him in all things; knowing, that whatsoever you shall do by his direction, will, in all respects, be profitable to your souls. Almighty God protect you with His grace, and grant that I may, in the heavenly country, see the fruits of your labour, inasmuch as, though I cannot labour with you, I shall partake in the joy of the reward, because I am willing to labour. God keep you in safety,

The Venerable Bede

my most beloved sons. Given the 23rd of July, in the fourteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the thirteenth year after the consulship of our lord aforesaid, and the fourteenth indiction.”

How he wrote
to the bishop of
Arles to entertain
them. [596 a.d.]

XXIV

The same venerable pope also sent at the same time a letter to Aetherius, archbishop of Arles, exhorting him to give favourable entertainment to Augustine on his way to Britain; which letter was in these words:

“To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow bishop Aetherius, Gregory, the servant of the servants of God. Although religious men stand in need of no recommendation with priests who have the charity which is pleasing to God; yet because an opportunity of writing has occurred, we have thought fit to send this letter to you, Brother, to inform you, that with the help of God we have directed thither, for the good of souls, the bearer of these presents, Augustine, the servant of God, of whose zeal we are assured, with other servants of God, whom it is requisite that your Holiness readily assist with priestly zeal, affording him all the comfort in your power. And to the end that you may be the more ready in your help, we have enjoined him to inform you particularly of the occasion of his coming; knowing, that when you are acquainted with it, you will, as the matter requires, for the sake of God, dutifully dispose yourself to give him comfort. We also in all things recommend to your charity, Candidus, the priest, our common son, whom we have transferred to the administration of a small patrimony in our Church. God keep you in safety, most reverend brother. Given the 23rd day of July, in the fourteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the thirteenth year after the consulship of our lord aforesaid, and the fourteenth indiction.”

How Augustine,
coming into
Britain, first
preached in the
Isle of Thanet
to the King of
Kent, and having
obtained licence
from him, went
into Kent, in
order to preach
therein. [597 a.d.]

XXV

Augustine, thus strengthened by the encouragement of the blessed Father Gregory, returned to the work of the Word of God, with the servants of Christ who were with him, and arrived in Britain. The powerful Ethelbert was at that time king of Kent; he had extended his dominions as far as the bound-

ary formed by the great river Humber, by which the Southern Saxons are divided from the Northern. On the east of Kent is the large Isle of Thanet, containing, according to the English way of reckoning, 600 families, divided from the mainland by the river Wantsum, which is about three furlongs in breadth, and which can be crossed only in two places; for at both ends it runs into the sea. On this island landed the servant of the Lord, Augustine, and his companions, being, as is reported, nearly forty men. They had obtained, by order of the blessed Pope Gregory, interpreters of the nation of the Franks, and sending to Ethelbert, signified that they were come from Rome, and brought a joyful message, which most undoubtedly assured to those that hearkened to it everlasting joys in heaven, and a kingdom that would never end, with the living and true God. The king hearing this, gave orders that they should stay in the island where they had landed, and be furnished with necessaries, till he should consider what to do with them. For he had before heard of the Christian religion, having a Christian wife of the royal family of the Franks, called Bertha; whom he had received from her parents, upon condition that she should be permitted to preserve inviolate the rites of her religion with the Bishop Liudhard, who was sent with her to support her in the faith. Some days after, the king came into the island, and sitting in the open air, ordered Augustine and his companions to come and hold a conference with him. For he had taken precaution that they should not come to him in any house, lest, by so coming, according to an ancient superstition, if they practised any magical arts, they might impose upon him, and so get the better of him. But they came endued with Divine, not with magic power, bearing a silver cross for their banner, and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board; and chanting litanies, they offered up their prayers to the Lord for the eternal salvation both of themselves and of those to whom and for whom they had come. When they had sat down, in obedience to the king's commands, and preached to him and his attendants there present the Word of life, the king answered thus: "Your words and promises are fair, but because they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot consent to them so far as to forsake that which I have so long observed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from far as strangers 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 desire not to harm you, but will give you favourable entertainment, and take care to supply you with all things necessary to your

The Venerable Bede

sustenance; nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as you can to your religion.” Accordingly he gave them an abode in the city of Canterbury, which was the metropolis of all his dominions, and, as he had promised, besides supplying them with sustenance, did not refuse them liberty to preach. It is told that, as they drew near to the city, after their manner, with the holy cross, and the image of our sovereign Lord and King, Jesus Christ, they sang in concert this litany: “We beseech thee, O Lord, for Thy great mercy, that Thy wrath and anger be turned away from this city, and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned. Hallelujah.”

How St. Augustine in Kent followed the doctrine and manner of life of the primitive Church, and settled his episcopal see in the royal city. [597 a.d.]

XXVI

As soon as they entered the dwelling-place assigned to them, they began to imitate the Apostolic manner of life in the primitive Church; applying themselves to constant prayer, watchings, and fastings; preaching the Word of life to as many as they could; despising all worldly things, as in nowise concerning them; receiving only their necessary food from those they taught; living themselves in all respects conformably to what they taught, and being always ready to suffer any adversity, and even to die for that truth which they preached. In brief, some believed and were baptized, admiring the simplicity of their blameless life, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine. There was on the east side of the city, a church dedicated of old to the honour of St. Martin, built whilst the Romans were still in the island, wherein the queen, who, as has been said before, was a Christian, was wont to pray. In this they also first began to come together, to chant the Psalms, to pray, to celebrate Mass, to preach, and to baptize, till when the king had been converted to the faith, they obtained greater liberty to preach everywhere and build or repair churches.

When he, among the rest, believed and was baptized, attracted by the pure life of these holy men and their gracious promises, the truth of which they established by many miracles, greater numbers began daily to flock together to hear the Word, and, forsaking their heathen rites, to have fellowship, through faith, in the unity of Christ’s Holy Church. It is told that the king, while he rejoiced at their conversion and their faith, yet compelled none to embrace Christianity, but only showed more affection to the believers, as to his fellow citizens in the kingdom of Heaven. For he had learned from

those who had instructed him and guided him to salvation, that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, not by compulsion. Nor was it long before he gave his teachers a settled residence suited to their degree in his metropolis of Canterbury, with such possessions of divers sorts as were necessary for them.

How St. Augustine, being made a bishop, sent to acquaint Pope Gregory with what had been done in Britain, and asked and received replies, of which he stood in need. [597-601 a.d.]

XXVII

In the meantime, Augustine, the man of God, went to Arles, and, according to the orders received from the holy Father Gregory, was ordained archbishop of the English nation, by Aetherius, archbishop of that city. Then returning into Britain, he sent Laurentius the priest and Peter the monk to Rome, to acquaint Pope Gregory, that the English nation had received the faith of Christ, and that he was himself made their bishop. At the same time, he desired his solution of some doubts which seemed urgent to him. He soon received fitting answers to his questions, which we have also thought meet to insert in this our history:

The First Question of the blessed Augustine, Bishop of the Church of Canterbury.—Concerning bishops, what should be their manner of conversation towards their clergy? or into how many portions the offerings of the faithful at the altar are to be divided? and how the bishop is to act in the Church?

Gregory, Pope of the City of Rome, answers.—Holy Scripture, in which we doubt not you are well versed, testifies to this, and in particular the Epistles of the Blessed Paul to Timothy, wherein he endeavours to show him what should be his manner of conversation in the house of God; but it is the custom of the Apostolic see to prescribe these rules to bishops when they are ordained: that all emoluments which accrue, are to be divided into four portions;—one for the bishop and his household, for hospitality and entertainment of guests; another for the clergy; a third for the poor; and the fourth for the repair of churches. But in that you, my brother, having been instructed in monastic rules, must not live apart from your clergy in the Church of the English, which has been lately, by the will of God, converted to the faith, you must establish the manner of conversation of our fathers in the primitive Church, among whom, none said that aught of the things which they possessed was his own, but they had all things common.

The Venerable Bede

But if there are any clerks not received into holy orders, who cannot live continent, they are to take wives, and receive their stipends outside of the community; because we know that it is written concerning the same fathers of whom we have spoken that a distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Care is also to be taken of their stipends, and provision to be made, and they are to be kept under ecclesiastical rule, that they may live orderly, and attend to singing of psalms, and, by the help of God, preserve their hearts and tongues and bodies from all that is unlawful. But as for those that live in common, there is no need to say anything of assigning portions, or dispensing hospitality and showing mercy; inasmuch as all that they have over is to be spent in pious and religious works, according to the teaching of Him who is the Lord and Master of all, "Give alms of such things as ye have over, and behold all things are clean unto you."

Augustine's Second Question.—Whereas the faith is one and the same, are there different customs in different Churches? and is one custom of Masses observed in the holy Roman Church, and another in the Church of Gaul?

Pope Gregory answers.—You know, my brother, the custom of the Roman Church in which you remember that you were bred up. But my will is, that if you have found anything, either in the Roman, or the Gallican, or any other Church, which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you should carefully make choice of the same, and sedulously teach the Church of the English, which as yet is new in the faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several Churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things. Choose, therefore, from every Church those things that are pious, religious, and right, and when you have, as it were, made them up into one bundle, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto.

Augustine's Third Question.—I beseech you, what punishment must be inflicted on one who steals anything from a church?

Gregory answers.—You may judge, my brother, by the condition of the thief, in what manner he is to be corrected. For there are some, who, having substance, commit theft; and there are others, who transgress in this matter through want. Wherefore it is requisite, that some be punished with fines, others with stripes; some with more severity, and some more mildly. And

when the severity is greater, it is to proceed from charity, not from anger; because this is done for the sake of him who is corrected, that he may not be delivered up to the fires of Hell. For it behoves us to maintain discipline among the faithful, as good parents do with their children according to the flesh, whom they punish with stripes for their faults, and yet they design to make those whom they chastise their heirs, and preserve their possessions for those whom they seem to visit in wrath. This charity is, therefore, to be kept in mind, and it dictates the measure of the punishment, so that the mind may do nothing beyond the rule prescribed by reason. You will add to this, how men are to restore those things which they have stolen from the church. But let not the Church take more than it has lost of its worldly possessions, or seek gain from vanities.

Augustine's Fourth Question.—Whether two full brothers may marry two sisters, who are of a family far removed from them?

Gregory answers.—Most assuredly this may lawfully be done; for nothing is found in Holy Writ on this matter that seems to contradict it.

Augustine's Fifth Question.—To what degree may the faithful marry with their kindred? and is it lawful to marry a stepmother or a brother's wife?

Gregory answers.—A certain secular law in the Roman commonwealth allows, that the son and daughter of a brother and sister, or of two full brothers, or two sisters, may be joined in matrimony; but we have found, by experience, that the offspring of such wedlock cannot grow up; and the Divine law forbids a man to “uncover the nakedness of his kindred.” Hence of necessity it must be the third or fourth generation of the faithful, that can be lawfully joined in matrimony; for the second, which we have mentioned, must altogether abstain from one another. To marry with one's stepmother is a heinous crime, because it is written in the Law, “Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father:” now the son, indeed, cannot uncover his father's nakedness; but in regard that it is written, “They twain shall be one flesh,” he that presumes to uncover the nakedness of his stepmother, who was one flesh with his father, certainly uncovers the nakedness of his father. It is also prohibited to marry with a sister-in-law, because by the former union she is become the brother's flesh. For which thing also John the Baptist was beheaded, and obtained the crown of holy martyrdom. For, though he was not ordered to deny Christ,

The Venerable Bede

and it was not for confessing Christ that he was killed, yet inasmuch as the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, said, "I am the Truth," because John was killed for the truth, he also shed his blood for Christ.

But forasmuch as there are many of the English, who, whilst they were still heathens, are said to have been joined in this unholy union, when they attain to the faith they are to be admonished to abstain, and be made to know that this is a grievous sin. Let them fear the dread judgement of God, lest, for the gratification of their carnal desires, they incur the torments of eternal punishment. Yet they are not on this account to be deprived of the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, lest they should seem to be punished for those things which they did through ignorance before they had received Baptism. For in these times the Holy Church chastises some things with zeal, and tolerates some in mercy, and is blind to some in her wisdom, and so, by forbearance and blindness often suppresses the evil that stands in her way. But all that come to the faith are to be admonished not to presume to do such things. And if any shall be guilty of them, they are to be excluded from the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. For as the offence is, in some measure, to be tolerated in those who did it through ignorance, so it is to be rigorously punished in those who do not fear to sin knowingly.

Augustine's Sixth Question.—Whether a bishop may be consecrated without other bishops being present, if there be so great a distance between them, that they cannot easily come together?

Gregory answers.—In the Church of England, of which you are as yet the only bishop, you cannot otherwise ordain a bishop than in the absence of other bishops. For when do bishops come over from Gaul, that they may be present as witnesses to you in ordaining a bishop? But we would have you, my brother, to ordain bishops in such a manner, that the said bishops may not be far [pg 054] asunder, to the end that there be no lack, but that at the ordination of a bishop other pastors also, whose presence is of great benefit, should easily come together. Thus, when, by the help of God, bishops shall have been ordained in places near to one another, no ordination of a bishop is to take place without assembling three or four bishops. For, even in spiritual affairs, we may take example by the temporal, that they may be wisely and discreetly conducted. For surely, when marriages are celebrated in the world,

some married persons are assembled, that those who went before in the way of matrimony, may also partake in the joy of the new union. Why, then, at this spiritual ordinance, wherein, by means of the sacred ministry, man is joined to God, should not such persons be assembled, as may either rejoice in the advancement of the new bishop, or jointly pour forth their prayers to Almighty God for his preservation?

Augustine's Seventh Question.—How are we to deal with the bishops of Gaul and Britain?

Gregory answers.—We give you no authority over the bishops of Gaul, because the bishop of Arles received the pall in the old times of my predecessors, and we must by no means deprive him of the authority he has received. If it shall therefore happen, my brother, that you go over into the province of Gaul, you are to concert with the said bishop of Arles, how, if there be any faults among the bishops, they may be amended. And if he shall be lukewarm in keeping up discipline, he is to be fired by your zeal; to whom we have also written, that aided by the presence of your Holiness in Gaul, he should exert himself to the utmost, and put away from the behaviour of the bishops all that is opposed to the command of our Creator. But you shall not have power to go beyond your own authority and judge the bishops of Gaul, but by persuading, and winning them, and showing good works for them to imitate, you shall recall the perverted to the pursuit of holiness; for it is written in the Law, “When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest bruise the ears with thine hand and eat; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbours' standing corn.” For thou mayest not apply the sickle of judgement in that harvest which thou seest to have been committed to another; but by the influence of good works thou shalt clear the Lord's wheat of the chaff of its vices, and convert it by exhortation and persuasion in the body of the Church, as it were, by eating. But whatsoever is to be done by authority, must be transacted with the aforesaid bishop of Arles, lest that should be omitted, which the ancient institution of the fathers has appointed. But as for all the bishops of Britain, we commit them to your care, that the unlearned may be taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority.

Augustine's Eighth Question.—Whether a woman with child ought to be

The Venerable Bede

baptized? Or when she has brought forth, after what time she may come into the church? As also, after how many days the infant born may be baptized, lest he be prevented by death? Or how long after her husband may have carnal knowledge of her? Or whether it is lawful for her to come into the church when she has her courses, or to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion? Or whether a man, under certain circumstances, may come into the church before he has washed with water? Or approach to receive the Mystery of the Holy Communion? All which things are requisite to be known by the ignorant nation of the English.

Gregory answers.—I do not doubt but that these questions have been put to you, my brother, and I think I have already answered you therein. But I believe you would wish the opinion which you yourself might give and hold to be confirmed by my reply also. Why should not a woman with child be baptized, since the fruitfulness of the flesh is no offence in the eyes of Almighty God? For when our first parents sinned in Paradise, they forfeited the immortality which they had received, by the just judgement of God. Because, therefore, Almighty God would not for their fault wholly destroy the human race, he both deprived man of immortality for his sin, and, at the same time, of his great goodness and loving-kindness, reserved to him the power of propagating his race after him. On what ground, then, can that which is preserved to human nature by the free gift of Almighty God, be excluded from the privilege of Holy Baptism? For it is very foolish to imagine that the gift can be opposed to grace in that Mystery in which all sin is blotted out. When a woman is delivered, after how many days she may come into the church, you have learnt from the teaching of the Old Testament, to wit, that she is to abstain for a male child thirty-three days, and sixty-six for a female. Now you must know that this is to be received in a mystery; for if she enters the church the very hour that she is delivered, to return thanks, she is not guilty of any sin; because the pleasure of the flesh is a fault, and not the pain; but the pleasure is in the copulation of the flesh, whereas there is pain in bringing forth the child. Wherefore it is said to the first mother of all, “In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.” If, therefore, we forbid a woman that has brought forth, to enter the church, we make a crime of her very punishment. To baptize either a woman who has brought forth, if there be danger of death, even the very hour that she brings forth, or that which she has brought forth the very hour it is

born, is in no way prohibited, because, as the grace of the Holy Mystery is to be with much discretion provided for those who are in full life and capable of understanding, so is it to be without any delay administered to the dying; lest, while a further time is sought to confer the Mystery of redemption, if a small delay intervene, the person that is to be redeemed be dead and gone.

Her husband is not to approach her, till the infant born be weaned. An evil custom is sprung up in the lives of married people, in that women disdain to suckle the children whom they bring forth, and give them to other women to suckle; which seems to have been invented on no other account but incontinency; because, as they will not be continent, they will not suckle the children whom they bear. Those women, therefore, who, from evil custom, give their children to others to bring up, must not approach their husbands till the time of purification is past. For even when there has been no child-birth, women are forbidden to do so, whilst they have their courses, insomuch that the Law condemns to death any man that shall approach unto a woman during her uncleanness. Yet the woman, nevertheless, must not be forbidden to come into the church whilst she has her courses; because the superfluity of nature cannot be imputed to her as a crime; and it is not just that she should be refused admittance into the church, for that which she suffers against her will. For we know, that the woman who had the issue of blood, humbly approaching behind our Lord's back, touched the hem of his garment, and her infirmity immediately departed from her. If, therefore, she that had an issue of blood might commendably touch the garment of our Lord, why may not she, who has her courses, lawfully enter into the church of God? But you may say, Her infirmity compelled her, whereas these we speak of are bound by custom. Consider, then, most dear brother, that all we suffer in this mortal flesh, through the infirmity of our nature, is ordained by the just judgement of God after the fall; for to hunger, to thirst, to be hot, to be cold, to be weary, is from the infirmity of our nature; and what else is it to seek food against hunger, drink against thirst, air against heat, clothes against cold, rest against weariness, than to procure a remedy against distempers? Thus to a woman her courses are a distemper. If, therefore, it was a commendable boldness in her, who in her disease touched our Lord's garment, why may not that which is allowed to one infirm person, be granted to all women, who, through the fault of their nature, are rendered infirm?

The Venerable Bede

She must not, therefore, be forbidden to receive the Mystery of the Holy Communion during those days. But if any one out of profound respect does not presume to do it, she is to be commended; yet if she receives it, she is not to be judged. For it is the part of noble minds in some manner to acknowledge their faults, even when there is no fault; because very often that is done without a fault, which, nevertheless, proceeded from a fault. Thus, when we are hungry, it is no sin to eat; yet our being hungry proceeds from the sin of the first man. The courses are no sin in women, because they happen naturally; yet, because our nature itself is so depraved, that it appears to be defiled even without the concurrence of the will, a defect arises from sin, and thereby human nature may itself know what it is become by judgement. And let man, who wilfully committed the offence, bear the guilt of that offence against his will. And, therefore, let women consider with themselves, and if they do not presume, during their courses, to approach the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord, they are to be commended for their praiseworthy consideration; but when they are carried away with love of the same Mystery to receive it according to the custom of the religious life, they are not to be restrained, as we said before. For as in the Old Testament the outward works are observed, so in the New Testament, that which is outwardly done, is not so diligently regarded as that which is inwardly thought, that the punishment may be with discernment. For whereas the Law forbids the eating of many things as unclean, yet our Lord says in the Gospel, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." And afterwards he added, expounding the same, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." Where it is abundantly shown, that that is declared by Almighty God to be polluted in deed, which springs from the root of a polluted thought. Whence also Paul the Apostle says, "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure." And presently, declaring the cause of that defilement, he adds, "For even their mind and conscience is defiled." If, therefore, meat is not unclean to him whose mind is not unclean, why shall that which a woman suffers according to nature, with a clean mind, be imputed to her as uncleanness?

A man who has approached his own wife is not to enter the church unless washed with water, nor is he to enter immediately although washed. The Law prescribed to the ancient people, that a man in such cases should be

washed with water, and not enter into the church before the setting of the sun. Which, nevertheless, may be understood spiritually, because a man acts so when the mind is led by the imagination to unlawful concupiscence; for unless the fire of concupiscence be first driven from his mind, he is not to think himself worthy of the congregation of the brethren, while he sees himself burdened by the iniquity of a perverted will. For though divers nations have divers opinions concerning this affair, and seem to observe different rules, it was always the custom of the Romans, from ancient times, for such an one to seek to be cleansed by washing, and for some time reverently to forbear entering the church. Nor do we, in so saying, assign matrimony to be a fault; but forasmuch as lawful intercourse cannot be had without the pleasure of the flesh, it is proper to forbear entering the holy place, because the pleasure itself cannot be without a fault. For he was not born of adultery or fornication, but of lawful marriage, who said, "Behold I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother brought me forth." For he who knew himself to have been conceived in iniquity, lamented that he was born from sin, because he bears the defect, as a tree bears in its bough the sap it drew from the root. In which words, however, he does not call the union of the married couple iniquity, but the will itself. For there are many things which are lawful and permitted, and yet we are somewhat defiled in doing them. As very often by being angry we correct faults, and at the same time disturb our own peace of mind; and though that which we do is right, yet it is not to be approved that our mind should be disturbed. For he who said, "My eye was disturbed with anger," had been angry at the vices of sinners. Now, seeing that only a calm mind can rest in the light of contemplation, he grieved that his eye was disturbed with anger; because, whilst he was correcting evil actions below, he was obliged to be confused and disturbed with regard to the contemplation of the highest things. Anger against vice is, therefore, commendable, and yet painful to a man, because he thinks that by his mind being agitated, he has incurred some guilt. Lawful commerce, therefore, must be for the sake of children, not of pleasure; and must be to procure offspring, not to satisfy vices. But if any man is led not by the desire of pleasure, but only for the sake of getting children, such a man is certainly to be left to his own judgement, either as to entering the church, or as to receiving the Mystery of the Body and Blood of our Lord, which he, who being placed in the fire cannot burn, is not to be forbidden by us to receive. But when, not the love of getting children, but of

The Venerable Bede

pleasure prevails, the pair have cause to lament their deed. For this the holy preaching concedes to them, and yet fills the mind with dread of the very concession. For when Paul the Apostle said, "Let him that cannot contain have his own wife;" he presently took care to subjoin, "But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment." For that is not granted by way of permission which is lawful, because it is just; and, therefore, that which he said he permitted, he showed to be an offence.

It is seriously to be considered, that when God was about to speak to the people on Mount Sinai, He first commanded them to abstain from women. And if purity of body was there so carefully required, where God spoke to the people by the means of a creature as His representative, that those who were to hear the words of God should abstain; how much more ought women, who receive the Body of Almighty God, to preserve themselves in purity of flesh, lest they be burdened with the very greatness of that inestimable Mystery? For this reason also, it was said to David, concerning his men, by the priest, that if they were clean in this particular, they should receive the shewbread, which they would not have received at all, had not David first declared them to be clean. Then the man, who, afterwards, has been washed with water, is also capable of receiving the Mystery of the Holy Communion, when it is lawful for him, according to what has been before declared, to enter the church.

Augustine's Ninth Question.—Whether after an illusion, such as is wont to happen in a dream, any man may receive the Body of our Lord, or if he be a priest, celebrate the Divine Mysteries?

Gregory answers.—The Testament of the Old Law, as has been said already in the article above, calls such a man polluted, and allows him not to enter into the church till the evening, after being washed with water. Which, nevertheless, a spiritual people, taking in another sense, will understand in the same manner as above; because he is imposed upon as it were in a dream, who, being tempted with uncleanness, is defiled by real representations in thought, and he is to be washed with water, that he may cleanse away the sins of thought with tears; and unless the fire of temptation depart before, may know himself to be in a manner guilty until the evening. But a distinction is very necessary in that illusion, and one must carefully consider what causes

it to arise in the mind of the person sleeping; for sometimes it proceeds from excess of eating or drinking; sometimes from the superfluity or infirmity of nature, and sometimes from the thoughts. And when it happens either through superfluity or infirmity of nature, such an illusion is not to be feared at all, because it is to be lamented, that the mind of the person, who knew nothing of it, suffers the same, rather than that he occasioned it. But when the appetite of gluttony commits excess in food, and thereupon the receptacles of the humours are oppressed, the mind thence contracts some guilt; yet not so much as to hinder the receiving of the Holy Mystery, or celebrating Mass, when a holy day requires it, or necessity obliges the Mystery to be shown forth, because there is no other priest in the place; for if there be others who can perform the ministry, the illusion proceeding from over-eating ought not to exclude a man from receiving the sacred Mystery; but I am of opinion he ought humbly to abstain from offering the sacrifice of the Mystery, but not from receiving it, unless the mind of the person sleeping has been disturbed with some foul imagination. For there are some, who for the most part so suffer the illusion, that their mind, even during the sleep of the body, is not defiled with filthy thoughts. In which case, one thing is evident, that the mind is guilty, not being acquitted even in its own judgement; for though it does not remember to have seen anything whilst the body was sleeping, yet it calls to mind that, when the body was awake, it fell into gluttony. But if the illusion of the sleeper proceeds from evil thoughts when he was awake, then its guilt is manifest to the mind; for the man perceives from what root that defilement sprang, because what he had consciously thought of, that he afterwards unconsciously endured. But it is to be considered, whether that thought was no more than a suggestion, or proceeded to delight, or, what is worse, consented to sin. For all sin is committed in three ways, viz., by suggestion, by delight, and by consent. Suggestion comes from the Devil, delight from the flesh, and consent from the spirit. For the serpent suggested the first offence, and Eve, as flesh, took delight in it, but Adam, as the spirit, consented. And when the mind sits in judgement on itself, it must clearly distinguish between suggestion and delight, and between delight and consent. For when the evil spirit suggests a sin to the mind, if there ensue no delight in the sin, the sin is in no way committed; but when the flesh begins to take delight in it, then sin begins to arise. But if it deliberately consents, then the sin is known to be full-grown. The seed, therefore, of sin is in the suggestion, the nourishment of it in de-

light, its maturity in the consent. And it often happens that what the evil spirit sows in the thought, in that the flesh begins to find delight, and yet the soul does not consent to that delight. And whereas the flesh cannot be delighted without the mind, yet the mind struggling against the pleasures of the flesh, is after a manner unwillingly bound by the carnal delight, so that through reason it opposes it, and does not consent, yet being bound by delight, it grievously laments being so bound. Wherefore that great soldier of our Lord's host, groaned and said, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Now if he was a captive, he did not fight; but he did fight; wherefore he was a captive and at the same time therefore fought against the law of the mind, which the law that is in the members opposed; but if he fought, he was no captive. Thus, then, man is, as I may say, a captive and yet free. Free on account of justice, which he loves, a captive by the delight which he unwillingly bears within him.

How Pope
Gregory wrote
to the bishop
of Arles to help
Augustine in the
work of God.
[601 a.d.]

XXVIII

Thus far the answers of the holy Pope Gregory, to the questions of the most reverend prelate, Augustine. Now the letter, which he says he had written to the bishop of Arles, was directed to Vergilius, successor to Aetherius, and was in the following words:

"To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow bishop, Vergilius; Gregory, servant of the servants of God. With how much kindness brethren, coming of their own accord, are to be entertained, is shown by this, that they are for the most part invited for the sake of brotherly love. Therefore, if our common brother, Bishop Augustine, shall happen to come to you, let your love, as is becoming, receive him with so great kindness and affection, that it may refresh him by the benefit of its consolation and show to others how brotherly charity is to be cultivated. And, since it often happens that those who are at a distance first learn from others the things that need correction, if he bring before you, my brother, any sins of bishops or others, do you, in conjunction with him, carefully inquire into the same, and show yourself so strict and earnest with regard to those things which offend God and provoke His wrath, that for the amendment of others, the punishment may fall upon

the guilty, and the innocent may not suffer under false report. God keep you in safety, most reverend brother. Given the 22nd day of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord, and the fourth indiction.”

XXIX

Moreover, the same Pope Gregory, hearing from Bishop Augustine, that the harvest which he had was great and the labourers but few, sent to him, together with his aforesaid envoys, certain fellow labourers and ministers of the Word, of whom the chief and foremost were Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, and Rufinianus, and by them all things in general that were necessary for the worship and service of the Church, to wit, sacred vessels and altar-cloths, also church-furniture, and vestments for the bishops and clerks, as likewise relics of the holy Apostles and martyrs; besides many manuscripts. He also sent a letter, wherein he signified that he had despatched the pall to him, and at the same time directed how he should constitute bishops in Britain. The letter was in these words:

“To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow bishop, Augustine; Gregory, the servant of the servants of God. Though it be certain, that the unspeakable rewards of the eternal kingdom are reserved for those who labour for Almighty God, yet it is requisite that we bestow on them the benefit of honours, to the end that they may by this recompense be encouraged the more vigorously to apply themselves to the care of their spiritual work. And, seeing that the new Church of the English is, through the bounty of the Lord, and your labours, brought to the grace of God, we grant you the use of the pall in the same, only for the celebration of the solemn service of the Mass; that so you may ordain twelve bishops in different places, who shall be subject to your jurisdiction. But the bishop of London shall, for the future, be always consecrated by his own synod, and receive the pall, which is the token of his office, from this holy and Apostolic see, which I, by the grace of God, now serve. But we would have you send to the city of York such a bishop as you shall think fit to ordain; yet so, that if that city, with the places adjoining, shall receive the Word of God, that bishop shall also ordain twelve bishops, and

How the same Pope sent to Augustine the Pall and a letter, along with several ministers of the Word. [601 a.d.]

enjoy the honour of a metropolitan; for we design, if we live, by the help of God, to bestow on him also the pall; and yet we would have him to be subject to your authority, my brother; but after your decease, he shall so preside over the bishops he shall have ordained, as to be in no way subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop of London. But for the future let there be this distinction as regards honour between the bishops of the cities of London and York, that he who has been first ordained have the precedence. But let them take counsel and act in concert and with one mind dispose whatsoever is to be done for zeal of Christ; let them judge rightly, and carry out their judgement without dissension.

“But to you, my brother, shall, by the authority of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, be subject not only those bishops whom you shall ordain, and those that shall be ordained by the bishop of York, but also all the prelates in Britain; to the end that from the words and manner of life of your Holiness they may learn the rule of a right belief and a good life, and fulfilling their office in faith and righteousness, they may, when it shall please the Lord, attain to the kingdom of Heaven. God preserve you in safety, most reverend brother.

“Given the 22nd of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord, and the fourth indiction.”

A copy of the letter which Pope Gregory sent to the Abbot Mellitus, then going into Britain. [601 a.d.]

XXX

The aforesaid envoys having departed, the blessed Father Gregory sent after them a letter worthy to be recorded, wherein he plainly shows how carefully he watched over the salvation of our country. The letter was as follows:

“To his most beloved son, the Abbot Mellitus; Gregory, the servant of the servants of God. We have been much concerned, since the departure of our people that are with you, because we have received no account of the success of your journey. Howbeit, when Almighty God has led you to the most reverend Bishop Augustine, our brother, tell him what I have long been considering in my own mind concerning the matter of the English people; to wit, that the temples of the idols in that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let water be consecrated and

sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed there. For if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more freely resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And because they are used to slaughter many oxen in sacrifice to devils, some solemnity must be given them in exchange for this, as that on the day of the dedication, or the natiivities of the holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they should build themselves huts of the boughs of trees about those churches which have been turned to that use from being temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer animals to the Devil, but kill cattle and glorify God in their feast, and return thanks to the Giver of all things for their abundance; to the end that, whilst some outward gratifications are retained, they may the more easily consent to the inward joys. For there is no doubt that it is impossible to cut off every thing at once from their rude natures; because he who endeavours to ascend to the highest place rises by degrees or steps, and not by leaps. Thus the Lord made Himself known to the people of Israel in Egypt; and yet He allowed them the use, in His own worship, of the sacrifices which they were wont to offer to the Devil, commanding them in His sacrifice to kill animals, to the end that, with changed hearts, they might lay aside one part of the sacrifice, whilst they retained another; and although the animals were the same as those which they were wont to offer, they should offer them to the true God, and not to idols; and thus they would no longer be the same sacrifices. This then, dearly beloved, it behoves you to communicate to our aforesaid brother, that he, being placed where he is at present, may consider how he is to order all things. God preserve you in safety, most beloved son.

“Given the 17th of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord, and the fourth indiction.”

BOOK TWO

Of the death of
the blessed Pope
Gregory.[604
a.d.]

I

At this time, that is, in the year of our Lord 605, the blessed Pope Gregory, after having most gloriously governed the Roman Apostolic see thirteen years, six months, and ten days, died, and was translated to an eternal abode in the kingdom of Heaven. Of whom, seeing that by his zeal he converted our nation, the English, from the power of Satan to the faith of Christ, it behoves us to discourse more at large in our Ecclesiastical History, for we may rightly, nay, we must, call him our apostle; because, as soon as he began to wield the pontifical power over all the world, and was placed over the Churches long before converted to the true faith, he made our nation, till then enslaved to idols, the Church of Christ, so that concerning him we may use those words of the Apostle; “if he be not an apostle to others, yet doubtless he is to us; for the seal of his apostleship are we in the Lord.”

He was by nation a Roman, son of Gordianus, tracing his descent from ancestors that were not only noble, but religious. Moreover Felix, once bishop of the same Apostolic see, a man of great honour in Christ and in the Church, was his forefather. Nor did he show his nobility in religion by less strength of devotion than his parents and kindred. But that nobility of this world which was seen in him, by the help of the Divine Grace, he used only to gain the glory of eternal dignity; for soon quitting his secular habit, he entered a monastery, wherein he began to live with so much grace of perfection that (as he was wont afterwards with tears to testify) his mind was above all transitory things; that he rose superior to all that is subject to change; that he used to think of nothing but what was heavenly; that, whilst detained by the body, he broke through the bonds of the flesh by contemplation; and that he even loved death, which is a penalty to almost all men, as the entrance into life, and the reward of his labours. This he used to say of himself, not to boast of his progress in virtue, but rather to bewail the falling off which he imagined he had sustained through his pastoral charge. Indeed, once in a private conversation with his deacon, Peter, after having enumerated the former virtues of his soul, he added sorrowfully, “But now, on account of the pastoral charge, it is entangled with the affairs of laymen, and, after so fair an appearance of

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

inward peace, is defiled with the dust of earthly action. And having wasted itself on outward things, by turning aside to the affairs of many men, even when it desires the inward things, it returns to them undoubtedly impaired. I therefore consider what I endure, I consider what I have lost, and when I behold what I have thrown away, that which I bear appears the more grievous.”

So spake the holy man constrained by his great humility. But it behoves us to believe that he lost nothing of his monastic perfection by reason of his pastoral charge, but rather that he gained greater profit through the labour of converting many, than by the former calm of his private life, and chiefly because, whilst holding the pontifical office, he set about organizing his house like a monastery. And when first drawn from the monastery, ordained to the ministry of the altar, and sent to Constantinople as representative of the Apostolic see, though he now took part in the secular affairs of the palace, yet he did not abandon the fixed course of his heavenly life; for some of the brethren of his monastery, who had followed him to the royal city in their brotherly love, he employed for the better observance of monastic rule, to the end that at all times, by their example, as he writes himself, he might be held fast to the calm shore of prayer, as it were, with the cable of an anchor, whilst he should be tossed up and down by the ceaseless waves of worldly affairs; and daily in the intercourse of studious reading with them, strengthen his mind shaken with temporal concerns. By their company he was not only guarded against the assaults of the world, but more and more roused to the exercises of a heavenly life.

For they persuaded him to interpret by a mystical exposition the book of the blessed Job, which is involved in great obscurity; nor could he refuse to undertake that work, which brotherly affection imposed on him for the future benefit of many; but in a wonderful manner, in five and thirty books of exposition, he taught how that same book is to be understood literally; how to be referred to the mysteries of Christ and the Church; and in what sense it is to be adapted to every one of the faithful. This work he began as papal representative in the royal city, but finished it at Rome after being made pope. Whilst he was still in the royal city, by the help of the grace of Catholic truth, he crushed in its first rise a new heresy which sprang up there, concerning the state of our resurrection. For Eutychius, bishop of that city, taught, that our body, in the glory of resurrection, would be impalpable, and

The Venerable Bede

more subtle than wind and air. The blessed Gregory hearing this, proved by force of truth, and by the instance of the Resurrection of our Lord, that this doctrine was every way opposed to the orthodox faith. For the Catholic faith holds that our body, raised by the glory of immortality, is indeed rendered subtle by the effect of spiritual power, but is palpable by the reality of nature; according to the example of our Lord's Body, concerning which, when risen from the dead, He Himself says to His disciples, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." In maintaining this faith, the venerable Father Gregory so earnestly strove against the rising heresy, and with the help of the most pious emperor, Tiberius Constantine, so fully suppressed it, that none has been since found to revive it.

He likewise composed another notable book, the "Liber Pastoralis," wherein he clearly showed what sort of persons ought to be preferred to rule the Church; how such rulers ought to live; with how much discrimination they ought to instruct the different classes of their hearers, and how seriously to reflect every day on their own frailty. He also wrote forty homilies on the Gospel, which he divided equally into two volumes; and composed four books of Dialogues, in which, at the request of his deacon, Peter, he recounted the virtues of the more renowned saints of Italy, whom he had either known or heard of, as a pattern of life for posterity; to the end that, as he taught in his books of Expositions what virtues men ought to strive after, so by describing the miracles of saints, he might make known the glory of those virtues. Further, in twenty-two homilies, he showed how much light is latent in the first and last parts of the prophet Ezekiel, which seemed the most obscure. Besides which, he wrote the "Book of Answers," to the questions of the holy Augustine, the first bishop of the English nation, as we have shown above, inserting the same book entire in this history; and the useful little "Synodical Book," which he composed with the bishops of Italy on necessary matters of the Church; as well as private letters to certain persons. And it is the more wonderful that he could write so many lengthy works, seeing that almost all the time of his youth, to use his own words, he was frequently tormented with internal pain, constantly enfeebled by the weakness of his digestion, and oppressed by a low but persistent fever. But in all these troubles, forasmuch as he carefully reflected that, as the Scripture testifies, "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," the more severely he suffered under those present

evils, the more he assured himself of his eternal hope.

Thus much may be said of his immortal genius, which could not be crushed by such severe bodily pains. Other popes applied themselves to building churches or adorning them with gold and silver, but Gregory was wholly intent upon gaining souls. Whatsoever money he had, he took care to distribute diligently and give to the poor, that his righteousness might endure for ever, and his horn be exalted with honour; so that the words of the blessed Job might be truly said of him, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgement was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." And a little after: "If I have withheld," says he, "the poor from their desire; or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof: (for from my youth compassion grew up with me, and from my mother's womb it came forth with me.)"

To his works of piety and righteousness this also may be added, that he saved our nation, by the preachers he sent hither, from the teeth of the old enemy, and made it partaker of eternal liberty. Rejoicing in the faith and salvation of our race, and worthily commending it with praise, he says, in his exposition of the blessed Job, "Behold, the tongue of Britain, which only knew how to utter barbarous cries, has long since begun to raise the Hebrew Hallelujah to the praise of God! Behold, the once swelling ocean now serves prostrate at the feet of the saints; and its wild upheavals, which earthly princes could not subdue with the sword, are now, through the fear of God, bound by the lips of priests with words alone; and the heathen that stood not in awe of troops of warriors, now believes and fears the tongues of the humble! For he has received a message from on high and mighty works are revealed; the strength of the knowledge of God is given him, and restrained by the fear of the Lord, he dreads to do evil, and with all his heart desires to attain to everlasting grace." In which words the blessed Gregory shows us this also, that St. Augustine and his companions brought the English to receive the truth,

The Venerable Bede

not only by the preaching of words, but also by showing forth heavenly signs.

The blessed Pope Gregory, among other things, caused Masses to be celebrated in the churches of the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, over their bodies. And in the celebration of Masses, he added three petitions of the utmost perfection: "And dispose our days in thy peace, and bid us to be preserved from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of thine elect."

He governed the Church in the days of the Emperors Mauritius and Phocas, and passing out of this life in the second year of the same Phocas, he departed to the true life which is in Heaven. His body was buried in the church of the blessed Apostle Peter before the sacristy, on the 12th day of March, to rise one day in the same body in glory with the rest of the holy pastors of the Church. On his tomb was written this epitaph:

Receive, O Earth, his body taken from thine own; thou canst restore it, when God calls to life. His spirit rises to the stars; the claims of death shall not avail against him, for death itself is but the way to new life. In this tomb are laid the limbs of a great pontiff, who yet lives for ever in all places in countless deeds of mercy. Hunger and cold he overcame with food and raiment, and shielded souls from the enemy by his holy teaching. And whatsoever he taught in word, that he fulfilled in deed, that he might be a pattern, even as he spake words of mystic meaning. By his guiding love he brought the Angles to Christ, gaining armies for the Faith from a new people. This was thy toil, thy task, thy care, thy aim as shepherd, to offer to thy Lord abundant increase of the flock. So, Consul of God, rejoice in this thy triumph, for now thou hast the reward of thy works for evermore.

Nor must we pass by in silence the story of the blessed Gregory, handed down to us by the tradition of our ancestors, which explains his earnest care for the salvation of our nation. It is said that one day, when some merchants had lately arrived at Rome, many things were exposed for sale in the market place, and much people resorted thither to buy: Gregory himself went with the rest, and saw among other wares some boys put up for sale, of fair complexion, with pleasing countenances, and very beautiful hair. When he beheld them, he asked, it is said, from what region or country they were brought? and was told, from the island of Britain, and that the inhabitants were like that in appearance. He again inquired whether those islanders were

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

Christians, or still involved in the errors of paganism, and was informed that they were pagans. Then fetching a deep sigh from the bottom of his heart, "Alas! what pity," said he, "that the author of darkness should own men of such fair countenances; and that with such grace of outward form, their minds should be void of inward grace." He therefore again asked, what was the name of that nation? and was answered, that they were called Angles. "Right," said he, "for they have an angelic face, and it is meet that such should be co-heirs with the Angels in heaven. What is the name of the province from which they are brought?" It was replied, that the natives of that province were called Deiri. "Truly are they De ira," said he, "saved from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that province called?" They told him his name was Aelli; and he, playing upon the name, said, "Allelujah, the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts."

Then he went to the bishop of the Roman Apostolic see (for he was not himself then made pope), and entreated him to send some ministers of the Word into Britain to the nation of the English, that it might be converted to Christ by them; declaring himself ready to carry out that work with the help of God, if the Apostolic Pope should think fit to have it done. But not being then able to perform this task, because, though the Pope was willing to grant his request, yet the citizens of Rome could not be brought to consent that he should depart so far from the city, as soon as he was himself made Pope, he carried out the long-desired work, sending, indeed, other preachers, but himself by his exhortations and prayers helping the preaching to bear fruit. This account, which we have received from a past generation, we have thought fit to insert in our Ecclesiastical History.

IX

At this time the nation of the Northumbrians, that is, the English tribe dwelling on the north side of the river Humber, with their king, Edwin, received the Word of faith through the preaching of Paulinus, of whom we have before spoken. This king, as an earnest of his reception of the faith, and his share in the heavenly kingdom, received an increase also of his temporal realm, for he reduced under his dominion all the parts of Britain that were provinces either of the English, or of the Britons, a thing which no English

Of the reign of King Edwin, and how Paulinus, coming to preach the Gospel, first converted his daughter and others to the mysteries of the faith of Christ. [625-626 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

king had ever done before; and he even subjected to the English the Mevanian islands, as has been said above. The more important of these, which is to the southward, is the larger in extent, and more fruitful, containing nine hundred and sixty families, according to the English computation; the other contains above three hundred.

The occasion of this nation's reception of the faith was the alliance by marriage of their aforesaid king with the kings of Kent, for he had taken to wife Ethelberg, otherwise called Tata, daughter to King Ethelbert. When he first sent ambassadors to ask her in marriage of her brother Eadbald, who then reigned in Kent, he received the answer, "That it was not lawful to give a Christian maiden in marriage to a pagan husband, lest the faith and the mysteries of the heavenly King should be profaned by her union with a king that was altogether a stranger to the worship of the true God." This answer being brought to Edwin by his messengers, he promised that he would in no manner act in opposition to the Christian faith, which the maiden professed; but would give leave to her, and all that went with her, men and women, bishops and clergy, to follow their faith and worship after the custom of the Christians. Nor did he refuse to accept that religion himself, if, being examined by wise men, it should be found more holy and more worthy of God.

So the maiden was promised, and sent to Edwin, and in accordance with the agreement, Paulinus, a man beloved of God, was ordained bishop, to go with her, and by daily exhortations, and celebrating the heavenly Mysteries, to confirm her and her company, lest they should be corrupted by intercourse with the pagans. Paulinus was ordained bishop by the Archbishop Justus, on the 21st day of July, in the year of our Lord 625, and so came to King Edwin with the aforesaid maiden as an attendant on their union in the flesh. But his mind was wholly bent upon calling the nation to which he was sent to the knowledge of truth; according to the words of the Apostle, "To espouse her to the one true Husband, that he might present her as a chaste virgin to Christ." Being come into that province, he laboured much, not only to retain those that went with him, by the help of God, that they should not abandon the faith, but, if haply he might, to convert some of the pagans to the grace of the faith by his preaching. But, as the Apostle says, though he laboured long in the Word, "The god of this world blinded the minds of them that believed not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them."

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

The next year there came into the province one called Eumer, sent by the king of the West-Saxons, whose name was Cuichelm, to lie in wait for King Edwin, in hopes at once to deprive him of his kingdom and his life. He had a two-edged dagger, dipped in poison, to the end that, if the wound inflicted by the weapon did not avail to kill the king, it might be aided by the deadly venom. He came to the king on the first day of the Easter festival, at the river Derwent, where there was then a royal township, and being admitted as if to deliver a message from his master, whilst unfolding in cunning words his pretended embassy, he started up on a sudden, and unsheathing the dagger under his garment, assaulted the king. When Lilla, the king's most devoted servant, saw this, having no buckler at hand to protect the king from death, he at once interposed his own body to receive the blow; but the enemy struck home with such force, that he wounded the king through the body of the slaughtered thegn. Being then attacked on all sides with swords, in the confusion he also slew impiously with his dagger another of the thegns, whose name was Forthhere.

On that same holy Easter night, the queen had brought forth to the king a daughter, called Eanfled. The king, in the presence of Bishop Paulinus, gave thanks to his gods for the birth of his daughter; and the bishop, on his part, began to give thanks to Christ, and to tell the king, that by his prayers to Him he had obtained that the queen should bring forth the child in safety, and without grievous pain. The king, delighted with his words, promised, that if God would grant him life and victory over the king by whom the murderer who had wounded him had been sent, he would renounce his idols, and serve Christ; and as a pledge that he would perform his promise, he delivered up that same daughter to Bishop Paulinus, to be consecrated to Christ. She was the first to be baptized of the nation of the Northumbrians, and she received Baptism on the holy day of Pentecost, along with eleven others of her house. At that time, the king, being recovered of the wound which he had received, raised an army and marched against the nation of the West-Saxons; and engaging in war, either slew or received in surrender all those of whom he learned that they had conspired to murder him. So he returned victorious into his own country, but he would not immediately and unadvisedly embrace the mysteries of the Christian faith, though he no longer worshipped idols, ever since he made the promise that he would serve Christ; but first

The Venerable Bede

took heed earnestly to be instructed at leisure by the venerable Paulinus, in the knowledge of faith, and to confer with such as he knew to be the wisest of his chief men, inquiring what they thought was fittest to be done in that case. And being a man of great natural sagacity, he often sat alone by himself a long time in silence, deliberating in the depths of his heart how he should proceed, and to which religion he should adhere.

How Pope Boniface, by letter, exhorted the same king to embrace the faith. [Circ. 625 a.d.]

X

At this time he received a letter from Pope Boniface exhorting him to embrace the faith, which was as follows:

Copy of the letter of the most blessed and apostolic pope of the church of the city of Rome, Boniface, addressed to the illustrious Edwin, king of the English.

“To the illustrious Edwin, king of the English, Bishop Boniface, the servant of the servants of God. Although the power of the Supreme Deity cannot be expressed by the function of human speech, seeing that, by its own greatness, it so consists in invisible and unsearchable eternity, that no keenness of wit can comprehend or express how great it is; yet inasmuch as His Humanity, having opened the doors of the heart to receive Himself, mercifully, by secret inspiration, puts into the minds of men such things as It reveals concerning Itself, we have thought fit to extend our episcopal care so far as to make known to you the fulness of the Christian faith; to the end that, bringing to your knowledge the Gospel of Christ, which our Saviour commanded should be preached to all nations, we might offer to you the cup of the means of salvation.

“Thus the goodness of the Supreme Majesty, which, by the word alone of His command, made and created all things, the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, disposing the order by which they should subsist, hath, ordaining all things, with the counsel of His co-eternal Word, and the unity of the Holy Spirit, made man after His own image and likeness, forming him out of the mire of the earth; and granted him such high privilege of distinction, as to place him above all else; so that, preserving the bounds of the law of his being, his substance should be established to eternity. This God,—Fa-

ther, Son, and Holy Ghost, the undivided Trinity,—from the east unto the west, through faith by confession to the saving of their souls, men worship and adore as the Creator of all things, and their own Maker; to Whom also the heights of empire and the powers of the world are subject, because the pre-eminence of all kingdoms is granted by His disposition. It hath pleased Him, therefore, in the mercy of His loving kindness, and for the greater benefit of all His creatures, by the fire of His Holy Spirit wonderfully to kindle the cold hearts even of the nations seated at the extremities of the earth in the knowledge of Himself.

“For we suppose, since the two countries are near together, that your Highness has fully understood what the clemency of our Redeemer has effected in the enlightenment of our illustrious son, King Eadbald, and the nations under his rule; we therefore trust, with assured confidence that, through the long-suffering of Heaven, His wonderful gift will be also conferred on you; since, indeed, we have learnt that your illustrious consort, who is discerned to be one flesh with you, has been blessed with the reward of eternity, through the regeneration of Holy Baptism. We have, therefore, taken care by this letter, with all the goodwill of heartfelt love, to exhort your Highness, that, abhorring idols and their worship, and despising the foolishness of temples, and the deceitful flatteries of auguries, you believe in God the Father Almighty, and His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, to the end that, believing and being released from the bonds of captivity to the Devil, you may, through the co-operating power of the Holy and undivided Trinity, be partaker of the eternal life.

“How great guilt they lie under, who adhere in their worship to the pernicious superstition of idolatry, appears by the examples of the perishing of those whom they worship. Wherefore it is said of them by the Psalmist, ‘All the gods of the nations are devils, but the Lord made the heavens.’ And again, ‘Eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not. Therefore they are made like unto those that place the hope of their confidence in them.’ For how can they have power to help any man, that are made out of corruptible matter, by the hands of your inferiors and subjects, and on which, by employing human art, you have bestowed a lifeless similitude of members? which, moreover, unless they be moved by

The Venerable Bede

you, will not be able to walk; but, like a stone fixed in one place, being so formed, and having no understanding, sunk in insensibility, have no power of doing harm or good. We cannot, therefore, by any manner of discernment conceive how you come to be so deceived as to follow and worship those gods, to whom you yourselves have given the likeness of a body.

“It behoves you, therefore, by taking upon you the sign of the Holy Cross, by which the human race has been redeemed, to root out of your hearts all the accursed deceitfulness of the snares of the Devil, who is ever the jealous foe of the works of the Divine Goodness, and to put forth your hands and with all your might set to work to break in pieces and destroy those which you have hitherto fashioned of wood or stone to be your gods. For the very destruction and decay of these, which never had the breath of life in them, nor could in any wise receive feeling from their makers, may plainly teach you how worthless that was which you hitherto worshipped. For you yourselves, who have received the breath of life from the Lord, are certainly better than these which are wrought with hands, seeing that Almighty God has appointed you to be descended, after many ages and through many generations, from the first man whom he formed. Draw near, then, to the knowledge of Him Who created you, Who breathed the breath of life into you, Who sent His only-begotten Son for your redemption, to save you from original sin, that being delivered from the power of the Devil’s perversity and wickedness, He might bestow on you a heavenly reward.

“Hearken to the words of the preachers, and the Gospel of God, which they declare to you, to the end that, believing, as has been said before more than once, in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the indivisible Trinity, having put to flight the thoughts of devils, and driven from you the temptations of the venomous and deceitful enemy, and being born again of water and the Holy Ghost, you may, through the aid of His bounty, dwell in the brightness of eternal glory with Him in Whom you shall have believed.

“We have, moreover, sent you the blessing of your protector, the blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, to wit, a shirt of proof with one gold ornament, and one cloak of Ancyra, which we pray your Highness to accept with all the goodwill with which it is sent by us.”

XI

How Pope Boniface advised the king's consort to use her best endeavours for his salvation. [Circ.625 a.d.]

The same pope also wrote to King Edwin's consort, Ethelberg, to this effect:

The copy of the letter of the most blessed and apostolic Boniface, pope of the city of Rome, to Ethelberg, king Edwin's queen.

“To the illustrious lady his daughter, Queen Ethelberg, Boniface, bishop, servant of the servants of God. The goodness of our Redeemer has in His abundant Providence offered the means of salvation to the human race, which He rescued, by the shedding of His precious Blood, from the bonds of captivity to the Devil; to the end that, when He had made known His name in divers ways to the nations, they might acknowledge their Creator by embracing the mystery of the Christian faith. And this the mystical purification of your regeneration plainly shows to have been bestowed upon the mind of your Highness by God's gift. Our heart, therefore, has greatly rejoiced in the benefit bestowed by the bounty of the Lord, for that He has vouchsafed, in your confession, to kindle a spark of the orthodox religion, by which He might the more easily inflame with the love of Himself the understanding, not only of your illustrious consort, but also of all the nation that is subject to you.

“For we have been informed by those, who came to acquaint us with the laudable conversion of our illustrious son, King Eadbald, that your Highness, also, having received the wonderful mystery of the Christian faith, continually excels in the performance of works pious and acceptable to God; that you likewise carefully refrain from the worship of idols, and the deceits of temples and auguries, and with unimpaired devotion, give yourself so wholly to the love of your Redeemer, as never to cease from lending your aid in spreading the Christian faith. But when our fatherly love earnestly inquired concerning your illustrious consort, we were given to understand, that he still served abominable idols, and delayed to yield obedience in giving ear to the voice of the preachers. This occasioned us no small grief, that he that is one flesh with you still remained a stranger to the knowledge of the supreme and undivided Trinity. Whereupon we, in our fatherly care, have not delayed to admonish and exhort your Christian Highness, to the end that, filled with the support of the Divine inspiration, you should not defer to strive, both in season and

The Venerable Bede

out of season, that with the co-operating power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, your husband also may be added to the number of Christians; that so you may uphold the rights of marriage in the bond of a holy and unblemished union. For it is written, ‘They twain shall be one flesh.’ How then can it be said, that there is unity in the bond between you, if he continues a stranger to the brightness of your faith, separated from it by the darkness of detestable error?

“Wherefore, applying yourself continually to prayer, do not cease to beg of the long-suffering of the Divine Mercy the benefits of his illumination; to the end, that those whom the union of carnal affection has manifestly made in a manner to be one body, may, after this life continue in perpetual fellowship, by the unity of faith. Persist, therefore, illustrious daughter, and to the utmost of your power endeavour to soften the hardness of his heart by carefully making known to him the Divine precepts; pouring into his mind a knowledge of the greatness of that mystery which you have received by faith, and of the marvellous reward which, by the new birth, you have been made worthy to obtain. Inflammate the coldness of his heart by the message of the Holy Ghost, that he may put from him the deadness of an evil worship, and the warmth of the Divine faith may kindle his understanding through your frequent exhortations; and so the testimony of Holy Scripture may shine forth clearly, fulfilled by you, ‘The unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife.’ For to this end you have obtained the mercy of the Lord’s goodness, that you might restore with increase to your Redeemer the fruit of faith and of the benefits entrusted to your hands. That you may be able to fulfil this task, supported by the help of His loving kindness we do not cease to implore with frequent prayers.

“Having premised thus much, in pursuance of the duty of our fatherly affection, we exhort you, that when the opportunity of a bearer shall offer, you will with all speed comfort us with the glad tidings of the wonderful work which the heavenly Power shall vouchsafe to perform by your means in the conversion of your consort, and of the nation subject to you; to the end, that our solicitude, which earnestly awaits the fulfilment of its desire in the soul’s salvation of you and yours, may, by hearing from you, be set at rest; and that we, discerning more fully the light of the Divine propitiation shed abroad in you, may with a joyful confession abundantly return due thanks to God, the

Giver of all good things, and to the blessed Peter, the chief of the Apostles.

“We have, moreover, sent you the blessing of your protector, the blessed Peter, the chief of the Apostles, to wit, a silver looking-glass, and a gilded ivory comb, which we pray your Highness to accept with all the goodwill with which it is sent by us.”

XII

Thus wrote the aforesaid Pope Boniface for the salvation of King Edwin and his nation. But a heavenly vision, which the Divine Goodness was pleased once to reveal to this king, when he was in banishment at the court of Redwald, king of the Angles, was of no little use in urging him to receive and understand the doctrines of salvation. For when Paulinus perceived that it was a difficult task to incline the king’s proud mind to the humility of the way of salvation and the reception of the mystery of the life-giving Cross, and at the same time was employing the word of exhortation with men, and prayer to the Divine Goodness, for the salvation of Edwin and his subjects; at length, as we may suppose, it was shown him in spirit what the nature of the vision was that had been formerly revealed from Heaven to the king. Then he lost no time, but immediately admonished the king to perform the vow which he had made, when he received the vision, promising to fulfil it, if he should be delivered from the troubles of that time, and advanced to the throne.

The vision was this. When Ethelfrid, his predecessor, was persecuting him, he wandered for many years as an exile, hiding in divers places and kingdoms, and at last came to Redwald, beseeching him to give him protection against the snares of his powerful persecutor. Redwald willingly received him, and promised to perform what was asked of him. But when Ethelfrid understood that he had appeared in that province, and that he and his companions were hospitably entertained by Redwald, he sent messengers to bribe that king with a great sum of money to murder him, but without effect. He sent a second and a third time, offering a greater bribe each time, and, moreover, threatening to make war on him if his offer should be despised. Redwald, whether terrified by his threats, or won over by his gifts, complied with this request, and promised either to kill Edwin, or to deliver him up to the envoys. A faithful friend of his, hearing of this, went into his chamber, where

How Edwin was persuaded to believe by a vision which he had once seen when he was in exile. [Circ. 616 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

he was going to bed, for it was the first hour of the night; and calling him out, told him what the king had promised to do with him, adding, "If, therefore, you are willing, I will this very hour conduct you out of this province, and lead you to a place where neither Redwald nor Ethelfrid shall ever find you." He answered, "I thank you for your good will, yet I cannot do what you propose, and be guilty of being the first to break the compact I have made with so great a king, when he has done me no harm, nor shown any enmity to me; but, on the contrary, if I must die, let it rather be by his hand than by that of any meaner man. For whither shall I now fly, when I have for so many long years been a vagabond through all the provinces of Britain, to escape the snares of my enemies?" His friend went away; Edwin remained alone without, and sitting with a heavy heart before the palace, began to be overwhelmed with many thoughts, not knowing what to do, or which way to turn.

When he had remained a long time in silent anguish of mind, consumed with inward fire, on a sudden in the stillness of the dead of night he saw approaching a person, whose face and habit were strange to him, at sight of whom, seeing that he was unknown and unlooked for, he was not a little startled. The stranger coming close up, saluted him, and asked why he sat there in solitude on a stone troubled and wakeful at that time, when all others were taking their rest, and were fast asleep. Edwin, in his turn, asked, what it was to him, whether he spent the night within doors or abroad. The stranger, in reply, said, "Do not think that I am ignorant of the cause of your grief, your watching, and sitting alone without. For I know of a surety who you are, and why you grieve, and the evils which you fear will soon fall upon you. But tell me, what reward you would give the man who should deliver you out of these troubles, and persuade Redwald neither to do you any harm himself, nor to deliver you up to be murdered by your enemies." Edwin replied, that he would give such an one all that he could in return for so great a benefit. The other further added, "What if he should also assure you, that your enemies should be destroyed, and you should be a king surpassing in power, not only all your own ancestors, but even all that have reigned before you in the English nation?" Edwin, encouraged by these questions, did not hesitate to promise that he would make a fitting return to him who should confer such benefits upon him. Then the other spoke a third time and said, "But if he who should truly foretell that all these great blessings are about to befall you,

could also give you better and more profitable counsel for your life and salvation than any of your fathers or kindred ever heard, do you consent to submit to him, and to follow his wholesome guidance?" Edwin at once promised that he would in all things follow the teaching of that man who should deliver him from so many great calamities, and raise him to a throne.

Having received this answer, the man who talked to him laid his right hand on his head saying, "When this sign shall be given you, remember this present discourse that has passed between us, and do not delay the performance of what you now promise." Having uttered these words, he is said to have immediately vanished. So the king perceived that it was not a man, but a spirit, that had appeared to him.

Whilst the royal youth still sat there alone, glad of the comfort he had received, but still troubled and earnestly pondering who he was, and whence he came, that had so talked to him, his aforesaid friend came to him, and greeting him with a glad countenance, "Rise," said he, "go in; calm and put away your anxious cares, and compose yourself in body and mind to sleep; for the king's resolution is altered, and he designs to do you no harm, but rather to keep his pledged faith; for when he had privately made known to the queen his intention of doing what I told you before, she dissuaded him from it, reminding him that it was altogether unworthy of so great a king to sell his good friend in such distress for gold, and to sacrifice his honour, which is more valuable than all other adornments, for the love of money." In short, the king did as has been said, and not only refused to deliver up the banished man to his enemy's messengers, but helped him to recover his kingdom. For as soon as the messengers had returned home, he raised a mighty army to subdue Ethelfrid; who, meeting him with much inferior forces, (for Redwald had not given him time to gather and unite all his power,) was slain on the borders of the kingdom of Mercia, on the east side of the river that is called Idle. In this battle, Redwald's son, called Raegenheri, was killed. Thus Edwin, in accordance with the prophecy he had received, not only escaped the danger from his enemy, but, by his death, succeeded the king on the throne.

King Edwin, therefore, delaying to receive the Word of God at the preaching of Paulinus, and being wont for some time, as has been said, to sit many hours alone, and seriously to ponder with himself what he was to do,

and what religion he was to follow, the man of God came to him one day, laid his right hand on his head, and asked, whether he knew that sign? The king, trembling, was ready to fall down at his feet, but he raised him up, and speaking to him with the voice of a friend, said, “Behold, by the gift of God you have escaped the hands of the enemies whom you feared. Behold, you have obtained of His bounty the kingdom which you desired. Take heed not to delay to perform your third promise; accept the faith, and keep the precepts of Him Who, delivering you from temporal adversity, has raised you to the honour of a temporal kingdom; and if, from this time forward, you shall be obedient to His will, which through me He signifies to you, He will also deliver you from the everlasting torments of the wicked, and make you partaker with Him of His eternal kingdom in heaven.”

Of the Council
he held with
his chief men
concerning their
reception of the
faith of Christ,
and how the
high priest pro-
faned his own
altars. [627 a.d.]

XIII

The king, hearing these words, answered, that he was both willing and bound to receive the faith which Paulinus taught; but that he would confer about it with his chief friends and counsellors, to the end that if they also were of his opinion, they might all together be consecrated to Christ in the font of life. Paulinus consenting, the king did as he said; for, holding a council with the wise men, he asked of every one in particular what he thought of this doctrine hitherto unknown to them, and the new worship of God that was preached? The chief of his own priests, Coifi, immediately answered him, “O king, consider what this is which is now preached to us; for I verily declare to you what I have learnt beyond doubt, that the religion which we have hitherto professed has no virtue in it and no profit. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet there are many who receive greater favours from you, and are more preferred than I, and are more prosperous in all that they undertake to do or to get. Now if the gods were good for any thing, they would rather forward me, who have been careful to serve them with greater zeal. It remains, therefore, that if upon examination you find those new doctrines, which are now preached to us, better and more efficacious, we hasten to receive them without any delay.”

Another of the king’s chief men, approving of his wise words and exhortations, added thereafter: “The present life of man upon earth, O king, seems

to me, in comparison with that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the house wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your ealdormen and thegns, while the fire blazes in the midst, and the hall is warmed, but the wintry storms of rain or snow are raging abroad. The sparrow, flying in at one door and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry tempest; but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, passing from winter into winter again. So this life of man appears for a little while, but of what is to follow or what went before we know nothing at all. If, therefore, this new doctrine tells us something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed." The other elders and king's counsellors, by Divine prompting, spoke to the same effect.

But Coifi added, that he wished more attentively to hear Paulinus discourse concerning the God Whom he preached. When he did so, at the king's command, Coifi, hearing his words, cried out, "This long time I have perceived that what we worshipped was naught; because the more diligently I sought after truth in that worship, the less I found it. But now I freely confess, that such truth evidently appears in this preaching as can confer on us the gifts of life, of salvation, and of eternal happiness. For which reason my counsel is, O king, that we instantly give up to ban and fire those temples and altars which we have consecrated without reaping any benefit from them." In brief, the king openly assented to the preaching of the Gospel by Paulinus, and renouncing idolatry, declared that he received the faith of Christ: and when he inquired of the aforesaid high priest of his religion, who should first desecrate the altars and temples of their idols, with the precincts that were about them, he answered, "I; for who can more fittingly than myself destroy those things which I worshipped in my folly, for an example to all others, through the wisdom which has been given me by the true God?" Then immediately, in contempt of his vain superstitions, he desired the king to furnish him with arms and a stallion, that he might mount and go forth to destroy the idols; for it was not lawful before for the high priest either to carry arms, or to ride on anything but a mare. Having, therefore, girt a sword about him, with a spear in his hand, he mounted the king's stallion, and went his way to the idols. The multitude, beholding it, thought that he was mad; but as soon as he drew near the temple he did not delay to desecrate it by casting into it the spear which he held; and rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he

commanded his companions to tear down and set on fire the temple, with all its precincts. This place where the idols once stood is still shown, not far from York, to the eastward, beyond the river Derwent, and is now called Godmunddingaham, where the high priest, by the inspiration of the true God, profaned and destroyed the altars which he had himself consecrated.

How King
Edwin and his
nation became
Christians; and
where Paulinus
baptized them.
[627 a.d.]

XIV

King Edwin, therefore, with all the nobility of the nation, and a large number of the common sort, received the faith, and the washing of holy regeneration, in the eleventh year of his reign, which is the year of our Lord 627, and about one hundred and eighty after the coming of the English into Britain. He was baptized at York, on the holy day of Easter, being the 12th of April, in the church of St. Peter the Apostle, which he himself had built of timber there in haste, whilst he was a catechumen receiving instruction in order to be admitted to baptism. In that city also he bestowed upon his instructor and bishop, Paulinus, his episcopal see. But as soon as he was baptized, he set about building, by the direction of Paulinus, in the same place a larger and nobler church of stone, in the midst whereof the oratory which he had first erected should be enclosed. Having, therefore, laid the foundation, he began to build the church square, encompassing the former oratory. But before the walls were raised to their full height, the cruel death of the king left that work to be finished by Oswald his successor. Paulinus, for the space of six years from this time, that is, till the end of the king's reign, with his consent and favour, preached the Word of God in that country, and as many as were foreordained to eternal life believed and were baptized. Among them were Osfrid and Eadfrid, King Edwin's sons who were both born to him, whilst he was in banishment, of Quenburga, the daughter of Cearl, king of the Mercians.

Afterwards other children of his, by Queen Ethelberg, were baptized, Ethelhun and his daughter Ethelthryth, and another, Wuscfrea, a son; the first two were snatched out of this life whilst they were still in the white garments of the newly-baptized, and buried in the church at York. Yffi, the son of Osfrid, was also baptized, and many other noble and royal persons. So great was then the fervour of the faith, as is reported, and the desire for the laver of salvation among the nation of the Northumbrians, that Paulinus at

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

a certain time coming with the king and queen to the royal township, which is called Adgefrin, stayed there with them thirty-six days, fully occupied in catechizing and baptizing; during which days, from morning till night, he did nothing else but instruct the people resorting from all villages and places, in Christ's saving Word; and when they were instructed, he washed them with the water of absolution in the river Glen, which is close by. This township, under the following kings, was abandoned, and another was built instead of it, at the place called Maelmin.

These things happened in the province of the Bernicians; but in that of the Deiri also, where he was wont often to be with the king, he baptized in the river Swale, which runs by the village of Cataract; for as yet oratories, or baptisteries, could not be built in the early infancy of the Church in those parts. But in Campodonum, where there was then a royal township, he built a church which the pagans, by whom King Edwin was slain, afterwards burnt, together with all the place. Instead of this royal seat the later kings built themselves a township in the country called Loidis. But the altar, being of stone, escaped the fire and is still preserved in the monastery of the most reverend abbot and priest, Thrydwulf, which is in the forest of Elmet.

XV

Edwin was so zealous for the true worship, that he likewise persuaded Earpwald, king of the East Angles, and son of Redwald, to abandon his idolatrous superstitions, and with his whole province to receive the faith and mysteries of Christ. And indeed his father Redwald had long before been initiated into the mysteries of the Christian faith in Kent, but in vain; for on his return home, he was seduced by his wife and certain perverse teachers, and turned aside from the sincerity of the faith; and thus his latter state was worse than the former; so that, like the Samaritans of old, he seemed at the same time to serve Christ and the gods whom he served before; and in the same temple he had an altar for the Christian Sacrifice, and another small one at which to offer victims to devils. Aldwulf, king of that same province, who lived in our time, testifies that this temple had stood until his time, and that he had seen it when he was a boy. The aforesaid King Redwald was noble by birth, though ignoble in his actions, being the son of Tytilus, whose father was Uuffa, from

How the province of the East Angles received the faith of Christ. [627-628 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

whom the kings of the East Angles are called Uuffings.

Earpwald, not long after he had embraced the Christian faith, was slain by one Ricbert, a pagan; and from that time the province was in error for three years, till Sigbert succeeded to the kingdom, brother to the same Earpwald, a most Christian and learned man, who was banished, and went to live in Gaul during his brother's life, and was there initiated into the mysteries of the faith, whereof he made it his business to cause all his province to partake as soon as he came to the throne. His exertions were nobly promoted by Bishop Felix, who, coming to Honorius, the archbishop, from the parts of Burgundy, where he had been born and ordained, and having told him what he desired, was sent by him to preach the Word of life to the aforesaid nation of the Angles. Nor were his good wishes in vain; for the pious labourer in the spiritual field reaped therein a great harvest of believers, delivering all that province (according to the inner signification of his name) from long iniquity and unhappiness, and bringing it to the faith and works of righteousness, and the gifts of everlasting happiness. He had the see of his bishopric appointed him in the city Dommoc, and having presided over the same province with pontifical authority seventeen years, he ended his days there in peace.

How Paulinus
preached in the
province of Lind-
sey; and of the
character of the
reign of Edwin.
[Circ. 628 a.d.]

XVI

Paulinus also preached the Word to the province of Lindsey, which is the first on the south side of the river Humber, stretching as far as the sea; and he first converted to the Lord the reeve of the city of Lincoln, whose name was Blaecca, with his whole house. He likewise built, in that city, a stone church of beautiful workmanship; the roof of which has either fallen through long neglect, or been thrown down by enemies, but the walls are still to be seen standing, and every year miraculous cures are wrought in that place, for the benefit of those who have faith to seek them. In that church, when Justus had departed to Christ, Paulinus consecrated Honorius bishop in his stead, as will be hereafter mentioned in its proper place. A certain priest and abbot of the monastery of Peartaneu, a man of singular veracity, whose name was Deda, told me concerning the faith of this province that an old man had informed him that he himself had been baptized at noon-day, by Bishop Paulinus, in the presence of King Edwin, and with him a great multitude of the people, in

the river Trent, near the city, which in the English tongue is called Tiouulfingacaestir; and he was also wont to describe the person of the same Paulinus, saying that he was tall of stature, stooping somewhat, his hair black, his visage thin, his nose slender and aquiline, his aspect both venerable and awe-inspiring. He had also with him in the ministry, James, the deacon, a man of zeal and great fame in Christ and in the church, who lived even to our days.

It is told that there was then such perfect peace in Britain, wheresoever the dominion of King Edwin extended, that, as is still proverbially said, a woman with her new-born babe might walk throughout the island, from sea to sea, without receiving any harm. That king took such care for the good of his nation, that in several places where he had seen clear springs near the highways, he caused stakes to be fixed, with copper drinking-vessels hanging on them, for the refreshment of travellers; nor durst any man touch them for any other purpose than that for which they were designed, either through the great dread they had of the king, or for the affection which they bore him. His dignity was so great throughout his dominions, that not only were his banners borne before him in battle, but even in time of peace, when he rode about his cities, townships, or provinces, with his thegns, the standard-bearer was always wont to go before him. Also, when he walked anywhere along the streets, that sort of banner which the Romans call Tufa, and the English, Thuuf, was in like manner borne before him.

XVII

At that time Honorius, successor to Boniface, was Bishop of the Apostolic see. When he learned that the nation of the Northumbrians, with their king, had been, by the preaching of Paulinus, converted to the faith and confession of Christ, he sent the pall to the said Paulinus, and with it letters of exhortation to King Edwin, with fatherly love inflaming his zeal, to the end that he and his people should persist in belief of the truth which they had received. The contents of which letter were as follow:

“To his most noble son, and excellent lord, Edwin king of the Angles, Bishop Honorius, servant of the servants of God, greeting. The wholeheartedness of your Christian Majesty, in the worship of your Creator, is so inflamed with the fire of faith, that it shines out far and wide, and, being report-

How Edwin received letters of exhortation from Pope Honorius, who also sent the pall to Paulinus. [634 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

ed throughout the world, brings forth plentiful fruits of your labours. For the terms of your kingship you know to be this, that taught by orthodox preaching the knowledge of your King and Creator, you believe and worship God, and as far as man is able, pay Him the sincere devotion of your mind. For what else are we able to offer to our God, but our readiness to worship Him and to pay Him our vows, persisting in good actions, and confessing Him the Creator of mankind? And, therefore, most excellent son, we exhort you with such fatherly love as is meet, to labour to preserve this gift in every way, by earnest striving and constant prayer, in that the Divine Mercy has vouchsafed to call you to His grace; to the end that He, Who has been pleased to deliver you from all errors, and bring you to the knowledge of His name in this present world, may likewise prepare a place for you in the heavenly country. Employing yourself, therefore, in reading frequently the works of my lord Gregory, your Evangelist, of apostolic memory, keep before your eyes that love of his doctrine, which he zealously bestowed for the sake of your souls; that his prayers may exalt your kingdom and people, and present you faultless before Almighty God. We are preparing with a willing mind immediately to grant those things which you hoped would be by us ordained for your bishops, and this we do on account of the sincerity of your faith, which has been made known to us abundantly in terms of praise by the bearers of these presents. We have sent two palls to the two metropolitans, Honorius and Paulinus; to the intent, that when either of them shall be called out of this world to his Creator, the other may, by this authority of ours, substitute another bishop in his place; which privilege we are induced to grant by the warmth of our love for you, as well as by reason of the great extent of the provinces which lie between us and you; that we may in all things support your devotion and likewise satisfy your desires. May God's grace preserve your Highness in safety!"

How Honorius,
who succeeded
Justus in the
bishopric of
Canterbury,
received the pall
and letters from
Pope Honorius.
[634 a.d.]

XVIII

In the meantime, Archbishop Justus was taken up to the heavenly kingdom, on the 10th of November, and Honorius, who was elected to the see in his stead, came to Paulinus to be ordained, and meeting him at Lincoln was there consecrated the fifth prelate of the Church of Canterbury from Augustine. To him also the aforesaid Pope Honorius sent the pall, and a letter, wherein he ordains the same that he had before ordained in his epistle

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

to King Edwin, to wit, that when either the Archbishop of Canterbury or of York shall depart this life, the survivor, being of the same degree, shall have power to ordain another bishop in the room of him that is departed; that it might not be necessary always to undertake the toilsome journey to Rome, at so great a distance by sea and land, to ordain an archbishop. Which letter we have also thought fit to insert in this our history:

“Honorius to his most beloved brother Honorius: Among the many good gifts which the mercy of our Redeemer is pleased to bestow on His servants He grants to us in His bounty, graciously conferred on us by His goodness, the special blessing of realizing by brotherly intercourse, as it were face to face, our mutual love. For which gift we continually render thanks to His Majesty; and we humbly beseech Him, that He will ever confirm your labour, beloved, in preaching the Gospel, and bringing forth fruit, and following the rule of your master and head, the holy Gregory; and that, for the advancement of His Church, He may by your means raise up further increase; to the end, that through faith and works, in the fear and love of God, what you and your predecessors have already gained from the seed sown by our lord Gregory, may grow strong and be further extended; that so the promises spoken by our Lord may hereafter be brought to pass in you; and that these words may summon you to everlasting happiness: ‘Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.’ And again, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ And we, most beloved brothers, sending you first these words of exhortation out of our enduring charity, do not fail further to grant those things which we perceive may be suitable for the privileges of your Churches.

“Wherefore, in accordance with your request, and that of the kings our sons, we do hereby in the name of the blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, grant you authority, that when the Divine Grace shall call either of you to Himself, the survivor shall ordain a bishop in the room of him that is deceased. To which end also we have sent a pall to each of you, beloved, for celebrating the said ordination; that by the authority which we hereby commit to you, you may make an ordination acceptable to God; because the long distance of sea and land that lies between us and you, has obliged us to grant you this, that no loss may happen to your Church in any way, on any pretext

whatever, but that the devotion of the people committed to you may increase the more. God preserve you in safety, most dear brother! Given the 11th day of June, in the reign of these our lords and emperors, in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Heraclius, and the twenty-third after his consulship; and in the twenty-third of his son Constantine, and the third after his consulship; and in the third year of the most prosperous Caesar, his son Heraclius, the seventh indiction; that is, in the year of our Lord, 634.”

How the aforesaid Honorius first, and afterwards John, wrote letters to the nation of the Scots, concerning the observance of Easter, and the Pelagian heresy. [640 a.d.]

XIX

The same Pope Honorius also wrote to the Scots, whom he had found to err in the observance of the holy Festival of Easter, as has been shown above, with subtlety of argument exhorting them not to think themselves, few as they were, and placed in the utmost borders of the earth, wiser than all the ancient and modern Churches of Christ, throughout the world; and not to celebrate a different Easter, contrary to the Paschal calculation and the decrees of all the bishops upon earth sitting in synod. Likewise John, who succeeded Severinus, successor to the same Honorius, being yet but Pope elect, sent to them letters of great authority and erudition for the purpose of correcting the same error; evidently showing, that Easter Sunday is to be found between the fifteenth of the moon and the twenty-first, as was approved in the Council of Nicaea. He also in the same epistle admonished them to guard against the Pelagian heresy, and reject it, for he had been informed that it was again springing up among them. The beginning of the epistle was as follows:

“To our most beloved and most holy Tomianus, Columbanus, Cromanus, Dinnaus, and Baithanus, bishops; to Cromanus, Ernianus, Laistranus, Scellanus, and Segenus, priests; to Saranus and the rest of the Scottish doctors and abbots, Hilarus, the arch-presbyter, and vice-gerent of the holy Apostolic See; John, the deacon, and elect in the name of God; likewise John, the chief of the notaries and vice-gerent of the holy Apostolic See, and John, the servant of God, and counsellor of the same Apostolic See. The writings which were brought by the bearers to Pope Severinus, of holy memory, were left, when he departed from the light of this world, without an answer to the questions contained in them. Lest any obscurity should long remain undisputed in a matter of so great moment, we opened the same, and found that some

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

in your province, endeavouring to revive a new heresy out of an old one, contrary to the orthodox faith, do through the darkness of their minds reject our Easter, when Christ was sacrificed; and contend that the same should be kept with the Hebrews on the fourteenth of the moon.”

By this beginning of the epistle it evidently appears that this heresy arose among them in very late times, and that not all their nation, but only some of them, were involved in the same.

After having laid down the manner of keeping Easter, they add this concerning the Pelagians in the same epistle:

“And we have also learnt that the poison of the Pelagian heresy again springs up among you; we, therefore, exhort you, that you put away from your thoughts all such venomous and superstitious wickedness. For you cannot be ignorant how that execrable heresy has been condemned; for it has not only been abolished these two hundred years, but it is also daily condemned by us and buried under our perpetual ban; and we exhort you not to rake up the ashes of those whose weapons have been burnt. For who would not detest that insolent and impious assertion, ‘That man can live without sin of his own free will, and not through the grace of God?’ And in the first place, it is blasphemous folly to say that man is without sin, which none can be, but only the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who was conceived and born without sin; for all other men, being born in original sin, are known to bear the mark of Adam’s transgression, even whilst they are without actual sin, according to the saying of the prophet, ‘For behold, I was conceived in iniquity; and in sin did my mother give birth to me.’”

XX

Edwin reigned most gloriously seventeen years over the nations of the English and the Britons, six whereof, as has been said, he also was a soldier in the kingdom of Christ. Caedwalla, king of the Britons, rebelled against him, being supported by the vigorous Penda, of the royal race of the Mercians, who from that time governed that nation for twenty-two years with varying success. A great battle being fought in the plain that is called Haethfelth, Edwin was killed on the 12th of October, in the year of our Lord 633, being

How Edwin being slain, Paulinus returned into Kent, and had the bishopric of Rochester conferred upon him. [633 a.d.]

then forty-eight years of age, and all his army was either slain or dispersed. In the same war also, Osfrid, one of his sons, a warlike youth, fell before him; Eadfrid, another of them, compelled by necessity, went over to King Penda, and was by him afterwards slain in the reign of Oswald, contrary to his oath. At this time a great slaughter was made in the Church and nation of the Northumbrians; chiefly because one of the chiefs, by whom it was carried on, was a pagan, and the other a barbarian, more cruel than a pagan; for Penda, with all the nation of the Mercians, was an idolater, and a stranger to the name of Christ; but Caedwalla, though he professed and called himself a Christian, was so barbarous in his disposition and manner of living, that he did not even spare women and innocent children, but with bestial cruelty put all alike to death by torture, and overran all their country in his fury for a long time, intending to cut off all the race of the English within the borders of Britain. Nor did he pay any respect to the Christian religion which had sprung up among them; it being to this day the custom of the Britons to despise the faith and religion of the English, and to have no part with them in anything any more than with pagans. King Edwin's head was brought to York, and afterwards taken into the church of the blessed Peter the Apostle, which he had begun, but which his successor Oswald finished, as has been said before. It was laid in the chapel of the holy Pope Gregory, from whose disciples he had received the word of life.

The affairs of the Northumbrians being thrown into confusion at the moment of this disaster, when there seemed to be no prospect of safety except in flight, Paulinus, taking with him Queen Ethelberg, whom he had before brought thither, returned into Kent by sea, and was very honourably received by the Archbishop Honorius and King Eadbald. He came thither under the conduct of Bassus, a most valiant thegn of King Edwin, having with him Eanfled, the daughter, and Wuscfrea, the son of Edwin, as well as Yffi, the son of Osfrid, Edwin's son. Afterwards Ethelberg, for fear of the kings Eadbald and Oswald, sent Wuscfrea and Yffi over into Gaul to be bred up by King Dagobert, who was her friend; and there they both died in infancy, and were buried in the church with the honour due to royal children and to Christ's innocents. He also brought with him many rich goods of King Edwin, among which were a large gold cross, and a golden chalice, consecrated to the service of the altar, which are still preserved, and shown in the church of Canterbury.

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

At that time the church of Rochester had no pastor, for Romanus, the bishop thereof, being sent on a mission to Pope Honorius by Archbishop Justus, was drowned in the Italian Sea; and thus Paulinus, at the request of Archbishop Honorius and King Eadbald, took upon him the charge of the same, and held it until he too, in his own time, departed to heaven, with the fruits of his glorious labours; and, dying in that Church, he left there the pall which he had received from the Pope of Rome. He had left behind him in his Church at York, James, the deacon, a true churchman and a holy man, who continuing long after in that Church, by teaching and baptizing, rescued much prey from the ancient enemy; and from him the village, where he chiefly dwelt, near Cataract, has its name to this day. He had great skill in singing in church, and when the province was afterwards restored to peace, and the number of the faithful increased, he began to teach church music to many, according to the custom of the Romans, or of the Cantuarians. And being old and full of days, as the Scripture says, he went the way of his fathers.

BOOK THREE

I

Edwin being slain in battle, the kingdom of the Deiri, to which province his family belonged, and where he first began to reign, passed to Osric, the son of his uncle Aelfric, who, through the preaching of Paulinus, had also received the mysteries of the faith. But the kingdom of the Bernicians—for into these two provinces the nation of the Northumbrians was formerly divided—passed to Eanfrid, the son of Ethelfrid, who derived his origin from the royal family of that province. For all the time that Edwin reigned, the sons of the aforesaid Ethelfrid, who had reigned before him, with many of the younger nobility, lived in banishment among the Scots or Picts, and were there instructed according to the doctrine of the Scots, and were renewed with the grace of Baptism. Upon the death of the king, their enemy, they were allowed to return home, and the aforesaid Eanfrid, as the eldest of them, became king of the Bernicians. Both those kings, as soon as they obtained the government of their earthly kingdoms, abjured and betrayed the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom to which they had been admitted, and again delivered

How King Edwin's next successors lost both the faith of their nation and the kingdom; but the most Christian King Oswald retrieved both. [633 a.d.]

themselves up to defilement and perdition through the abominations of their former idolatry.

But soon after, the king of the Britons, Caedwalla, the unrighteous instrument of rightful vengeance, slew them both. First, in the following summer, he put Osric to death; for, being rashly besieged by him in the municipal town, he sallied out on a sudden with all his forces, took him by surprise, and destroyed him and all his army. Then, when he had occupied the provinces of the Northumbrians for a whole year, not ruling them like a victorious king, but ravaging them like a furious tyrant, he at length put an end to Eanfrid, in like manner, when he unadvisedly came to him with only twelve chosen soldiers, to sue for peace. To this day, that year is looked upon as ill-omened, and hateful to all good men; as well on account of the apostacy of the English kings, who had renounced the mysteries of the faith, as of the outrageous tyranny of the British king. Hence it has been generally agreed, in reckoning the dates of the kings, to abolish the memory of those faithless monarchs, and to assign that year to the reign of the following king, Oswald, a man beloved of God. This king, after the death of his brother Eanfrid, advanced with an army, small, indeed, in number, but strengthened with the faith of Christ; and the impious commander of the Britons, in spite of his vast forces, which he boasted nothing could withstand, was slain at a place called in the English tongue Denisesburna, that is, the brook of Denis.

II

The place is shown to this day, and held in much veneration, where Oswald, being about to engage in this battle, erected the symbol of the Holy Cross, and knelt down and prayed to God that he would send help from Heaven to his worshippers in their sore need. Then, we are told, that the cross being made in haste, and the hole dug in which it was to be set up, the king himself, in the ardour of his faith, laid hold of it and held it upright with both his hands, till the earth was heaped up by the soldiers and it was fixed. Thereupon, uplifting his voice, he cried to his whole army, "Let us all kneel, and together beseech the true and living God Almighty in His mercy to defend us from the proud and cruel enemy; for He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation." All did as he had com-

How, among
innumerable
other miracles of
healing wrought
by the wood of
the cross, which
King Oswald,
being ready to
engage against
the barbarians,
erected, a certain
man had his
injured arm
healed. [634 a.d.]

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

manded, and accordingly advancing towards the enemy with the first dawn of day, they obtained the victory, as their faith deserved. In the place where they prayed very many miracles of healing are known to have been wrought, as a token and memorial of the king's faith; for even to this day, many are wont to cut off small splinters from the wood of the holy cross, and put them into water, which they give to sick men or cattle to drink, or they sprinkle them therewith, and these are presently restored to health.

The place is called in the English tongue Hefenfelth, or the Heavenly Field, which name it undoubtedly received of old as a presage of what was afterwards to happen, denoting, that the heavenly trophy was to be erected, the heavenly victory begun, and heavenly miracles shown forth to this day. The place is near the wall in the north which the Romans formerly drew across the whole of Britain from sea to sea, to restrain the onslaught of the barbarous nations, as has been said before. Hither also the brothers of the church of Hagustald, which is not far distant, long ago made it their custom to resort every year, on the day before that on which King Oswald was afterwards slain, to keep vigils there for the health of his soul, and having sung many psalms of praise, to offer for him in the morning the sacrifice of the Holy Oblation. And since that good custom has spread, they have lately built a church there, which has attached additional sanctity and honour in the eyes of all men to that place; and this with good reason; for it appears that there was no symbol of the Christian faith, no church, no altar erected throughout all the nation of the Bernicians, before that new leader in war, prompted by the zeal of his faith, set up this standard of the Cross as he was going to give battle to his barbarous enemy.

Nor is it foreign to our purpose to relate one of the many miracles that have been wrought at this cross. One of the brothers of the same church of Hagulstald, whose name is Bothelm, and who is still living, a few years ago, walking carelessly on the ice at night, suddenly fell and broke his arm; he was soon tormented with a most grievous pain in the broken part, so that he could not lift his arm to his mouth for the anguish. Hearing one morning that one of the brothers designed to go up to the place of the holy cross, he desired him, on his return, to bring him a piece of that sacred wood, saying, he believed that with the mercy of God he might thereby be healed. The brother did as he was desired; and returning in the evening, when the brothers were sitting at

table, gave him some of the old moss which grew on the surface of the wood. As he sat at table, having no place to bestow the gift which was brought him, he put it into his bosom; and forgetting, when he went to bed, to put it away, left it in his bosom. Awaking in the middle of the night, he felt something cold lying by his side, and putting his hand upon it to feel what it was, he found his arm and hand as sound as if he had never felt any such pain.

How the same king Oswald, asking a bishop of the Scottish nation, had Aidan sent him, and granted him an episcopal see in the Isle of Lindisfarne. [635 a.d.]

III

The same Oswald, as soon as he ascended the throne, being desirous that all the nation under his rule should be endued with the grace of the Christian faith, whereof he had found happy experience in vanquishing the barbarians, sent to the elders of the Scots, among whom himself and his followers, when in banishment, had received the sacrament of Baptism, desiring that they would send him a bishop, by whose instruction and ministry the English nation, which he governed, might learn the privileges and receive the Sacraments of the faith of our Lord. Nor were they slow in granting his request; for they sent him Bishop Aidan, a man of singular gentleness, piety, and moderation; having a zeal of God, but not fully according to knowledge; for he was wont to keep Easter Sunday according to the custom of his country, which we have before so often mentioned, from the fourteenth to the twentieth of the moon; the northern province of the Scots, and all the nation of the Picts, at that time still celebrating Easter after that manner, and believing that in this observance they followed the writings of the holy and praiseworthy Father Anatolius. Whether this be true, every instructed person can easily judge. But the Scots which dwelt in the South of Ireland had long since, by the admonition of the Bishop of the Apostolic see, learned to observe Easter according to the canonical custom.

On the arrival of the bishop, the king appointed him his episcopal see in the island of Lindisfarne, as he desired. Which place, as the tide ebbs and flows, is twice a day enclosed by the waves of the sea like an island; and again, twice, when the beach is left dry, becomes contiguous with the land. The king also humbly and willingly in all things giving ear to his admonitions, industriously applied himself to build up and extend the Church of Christ in his kingdom; wherein, when the bishop, who was not perfectly skilled in the

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

English tongue, preached the Gospel, it was a fair sight to see the king himself interpreting the Word of God to his ealdormen and thegns, for he had thoroughly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment. From that time many came daily into Britain from the country of the Scots, and with great devotion preached the Word to those provinces of the English, over which King Oswald reigned, and those among them that had received priest's orders, administered the grace of Baptism to the believers. Churches were built in divers places; the people joyfully flocked together to hear the Word; lands and other property were given of the king's bounty to found monasteries; English children, as well as their elders, were instructed by their Scottish teachers in study and the observance of monastic discipline. For most of those who came to preach were monks. Bishop Aidan was himself a monk, having been sent out from the island called Hii, whereof the monastery was for a long time the chief of almost all those of the northern Scots, and all those of the Picts, and had the direction of their people. That island belongs to Britain, being divided from it by a small arm of the sea, but had been long since given by the Picts, who inhabit those parts of Britain, to the Scottish monks, because they had received the faith of Christ through their preaching.

IV

In the year of our Lord 565, when Justin, the younger, the successor of Justinian, obtained the government of the Roman empire, there came into Britain from Ireland a famous priest and abbot, marked as a monk by habit and manner of life, whose name was Columba, to preach the word of God to the provinces of the northern Picts, who are separated from the southern parts belonging to that nation by steep and rugged mountains. For the southern Picts, who dwell on this side of those mountains, had, it is said, long before forsaken the errors of idolatry, and received the true faith by the preaching of Bishop Ninias, a most reverend and holy man of the British nation, who had been regularly instructed at Rome in the faith and mysteries of the truth; whose episcopal see, named after St. Martin the bishop, and famous for a church dedicated to him (wherein Ninias himself and many other saints rest in the body), is now in the possession of the English nation. The place belongs to the province of the Bernicians, and is commonly called the White House, because he there built a church of stone, which was not usual

When the nation
of the Picts
received the faith
of Christ. [565
a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

among the Britons.

Columba came into Britain in the ninth year of the reign of Bridius, who was the son of Meilochon, and the powerful king of the Pictish nation, and he converted that nation to the faith of Christ, by his preaching and example. Wherefore he also received of them the gift of the aforesaid island whereon to found a monastery. It is not a large island, but contains about five families, according to the English computation; his successors hold it to this day; he was also buried therein, having died at the age of seventy-seven, about thirty-two years after he came into Britain to preach. Before he crossed over into Britain, he had built a famous monastery in Ireland, which, from the great number of oaks, is in the Scottish tongue called Dearthach—The Field of Oaks. From both these monasteries, many others had their beginning through his disciples, both in Britain and Ireland; but the island monastery where his body lies, has the pre-eminence among them all.

That island has for its ruler an abbot, who is a priest, to whose jurisdiction all the province, and even the bishops, contrary to the usual method, are bound to be subject, according to the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a priest and monk; of whose life and discourses some records are said to be preserved by his disciples. But whatsoever he was himself, this we know for certain concerning him, that he left successors renowned for their continence, their love of God, and observance of monastic rules. It is true they employed doubtful cycles in fixing the time of the great festival, as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the observance of Easter, by reason of their being so far away from the rest of the world; but they earnestly practised such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the Prophets, the Gospels and the Apostolic writings. This manner of keeping Easter continued among them no little time, to wit, for the space of 150 years, till the year of our Lord 715.

But then the most reverend and holy father and priest, Egbert, of the English nation, who had long lived in banishment in Ireland for the sake of Christ, and was most learned in the Scriptures, and renowned for long perfection of life, came among them, corrected their error, and led them to observe the true and canonical day of Easter; which, nevertheless, they did not always keep on the fourteenth of the moon with the Jews, as some imagined, but on

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

Sunday, although not in the proper week. For, as Christians, they knew that the Resurrection of our Lord, which happened on the first day of the week, was always to be celebrated on the first day of the week; but being rude and barbarous, they had not learned when that same first day after the Sabbath, which is now called the Lord's day, should come. But because they had not failed in the grace of fervent charity, they were accounted worthy to receive the full knowledge of this matter also, according to the promise of the Apostle, "And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Of which we shall speak more fully hereafter in its proper place.

V

Of the life of
Bishop Aidan.
[635 a.d.]

From this island, then, and the fraternity of these monks, Aidan was sent to instruct the English nation in Christ, having received the dignity of a bishop. At that time Segeni, abbot and priest, presided over that monastery. Among other lessons in holy living, Aidan left the clergy a most salutary example of abstinence and continence; it was the highest commendation of his doctrine with all men, that he taught nothing that he did not practise in his life among his brethren; for he neither sought nor loved anything of this world, but delighted in distributing immediately among the poor whom he met whatsoever was given him by the kings or rich men of the world. He was wont to traverse both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity; to the end that, as he went, he might turn aside to any whomsoever he saw, whether rich or poor, and call upon them, if infidels, to receive the mystery of the faith, or, if they were believers, strengthen them in the faith, and stir them up by words and actions to giving of alms and the performance of good works.

His course of life was so different from the slothfulness of our times, that all those who bore him company, whether they were tonsured or laymen, had to study either reading the Scriptures, or learning psalms. This was the daily employment of himself and all that were with him, wheresoever they went; and if it happened, which was but seldom, that he was invited to the king's table, he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a little food, made haste to be gone, either to read with his brethren or to pray. At that time, many religious men and women, led by his example, adopted the custom of pro-

The Venerable Bede

longing their fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, till the ninth hour, throughout the year, except during the fifty days after Easter. Never, through fear or respect of persons, did he keep silence with regard to the sins of the rich; but was wont to correct them with a severe rebuke. He never gave money to the powerful men of the world, but only food, if he happened to entertain them; and, on the contrary, whatsoever gifts of money he received from the rich, he either distributed, as has been said, for the use of the poor, or bestowed in ransoming such as had been wrongfully sold for slaves. Moreover, he afterwards made many of those he had ransomed his disciples, and after having taught and instructed them, advanced them to priest's orders.

It is said, that when King Oswald had asked a bishop of the Scots to administer the Word of faith to him and his nation, there was first sent to him another man of more harsh disposition, who, after preaching for some time to the English and meeting with no success, not being gladly heard by the people, returned home, and in an assembly of the elders reported, that he had not been able to do any good by his teaching to the nation to whom he had been sent, because they were intractable men, and of a stubborn and barbarous disposition. They then, it is said, held a council and seriously debated what was to be done, being desirous that the nation should obtain the salvation it demanded, but grieving that they had not received the preacher sent to them. Then said Aidan, who was also present in the council, to the priest in question, "Methinks, brother, that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been, and did not at first, conformably to the Apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine, till, being by degrees nourished with the Word of God, they should be capable of receiving that which is more perfect and of performing the higher precepts of God." Having heard these words, all present turned their attention to him and began diligently to weigh what he had said, and they decided that he was worthy to be made a bishop, and that he was the man who ought to be sent to instruct the unbelieving and unlearned; since he was found to be endued preeminently with the grace of discretion, which is the mother of the virtues. So they ordained him and sent him forth to preach; and, as time went on, his other virtues became apparent, as well as that temperate discretion which had marked him at first.

VI

Of King
Oswald's won-
derful piety and
religion. [635-642
a.d.]

King Oswald, with the English nation which he governed, being instructed by the teaching of this bishop, not only learned to hope for a heavenly kingdom unknown to his fathers, but also obtained of the one God, Who made heaven and earth, a greater earthly kingdom than any of his ancestors. In brief, he brought under his dominion all the nations and provinces of Britain, which are divided into four languages, to wit, those of the Britons, the Picts, the Scots, and the English. Though raised to that height of regal power, wonderful to relate, he was always humble, kind, and generous to the poor and to strangers.

To give one instance, it is told, that when he was once sitting at dinner, on the holy day of Easter, with the aforesaid bishop, and a silver dish full of royal dainties was set before him, and they were just about to put forth their hands to bless the bread, the servant, whom he had appointed to relieve the needy, came in on a sudden, and told the king, that a great multitude of poor folk from all parts was sitting in the streets begging alms of [he king; he immediately ordered the meat set before him to be carried to the poor, and the dish to be broken in pieces and divided among them. At which sight, the bishop who sat by him, greatly rejoicing at such an act of piety, clasped his right hand and said, "May this hand never decay." This fell out according to his prayer, for his hands with the arms being cut off from his body, when he was slain in battle, remain uncorrupted to this day, and are kept in a silver shrine, as revered relics, in St. Peter's church in the royal city, which has taken its name from Bebb, one of its former queens. Through this king's exertions the provinces of the Deiri and the Bernicians, which till then had been at variance, were peacefully united and moulded into one people. He was nephew to King Edwin through his sister Acha; and it was fit that so great a predecessor should have in his own family such an one to succeed him in his religion and sovereignty.

XXV

How the ques-
tion arose about
the due time of
keeping Easter,
with those that
came out of Scot-
land.[664 a.d.]

In the meantime, Bishop Aidan being taken away from this life, Finan, who was ordained and sent by the Scots, succeeded him in the bishopric, and built a church in the Isle of Lindisfarne, fit for the episcopal see; nevertheless,

The Venerable Bede

after the manner of the Scots, he made it, not of stone, but entirely of hewn oak, and covered it with reeds; and it was afterwards dedicated in honour of the blessed Peter the Apostle, by the most reverend Archbishop Theodore. Eadbert, also bishop of that place, took off the thatch, and caused it to be covered entirely, both roof and walls, with plates of lead.

At this time, a great and frequently debated question arose about the observance of Easter; those that came from Kent or Gaul affirming, that the Scots celebrated Easter Sunday contrary to the custom of the universal Church. Among them was a most zealous defender of the true Easter, whose name was Ronan, a Scot by nation, but instructed in the rule of ecclesiastical truth in Gaul or Italy. Disputing with Finan, he convinced many, or at least induced them to make a more strict inquiry after the truth; yet he could not prevail upon Finan, but, on the contrary, embittered him the more by reproof, and made him a professed opponent of the truth, for he was of a violent temper. James, formerly the deacon of the venerable Archbishop Paulinus, as has been said above, observed the true and Catholic Easter, with all those that he could instruct in the better way. Queen Eanfled and her followers also observed it as she had seen it practised in Kent, having with her a Kentish priest who followed the Catholic observance, whose name was Romanus. Thus it is said to have sometimes happened in those times that Easter was twice celebrated in one year; and that when the king, having ended his fast, was keeping Easter, the queen and her followers were still fasting, and celebrating Palm Sunday. Whilst Aidan lived, this difference about the observance of Easter was patiently tolerated by all men, for they well knew, that though he could not keep Easter contrary to the custom of those who had sent him, yet he industriously laboured to practise the works of faith, piety, and love, according to the custom of all holy men; for which reason he was deservedly beloved by all, even by those who differed in opinion concerning Easter, and was held in veneration, not only by less important persons, but even by the bishops, Honorius of Canterbury, and Felix of the East Angles.

But after the death of Finan, who succeeded him, when Colman, who was also sent from Scotland, came to be bishop, a greater controversy arose about the observance of Easter, and other rules of ecclesiastical life. Whereupon this question began naturally to influence the thoughts and hearts of many who feared, lest haply, having received the name of Christians, they might

run, or have run, in vain. This reached the ears of the rulers, King Oswy and his son Alchfrid. Now Oswy, having been instructed and baptized by the Scots, and being very perfectly skilled in their language, thought nothing better than what they taught; but Alchfrid, having for his teacher in Christianity the learned Wilfrid, who had formerly gone to Rome to study ecclesiastical doctrine, and spent much time at Lyons with Dalphinus, archbishop of Gaul, from whom also he had received the crown of ecclesiastical tonsure, rightly thought that this man's doctrine ought to be preferred before all the traditions of the Scots. For this reason he had also given him a monastery of forty families, at a place called Inhrypum; which place, not long before, he had given for a monastery to those that were followers of the Scots; but forasmuch as they afterwards, being left to their choice, preferred to quit the place rather than alter their custom, he gave it to him, whose life and doctrine were worthy of it.

Agilbert, bishop of the West Saxons, above-mentioned, a friend of King Alchfrid and of Abbot Wilfrid, had at that time come into the province of the Northumbrians, and was staying some time among them; at the request of Alchfrid, he made Wilfrid a priest in his aforesaid monastery. He had in his company a priest, whose name was Agatho. The question being raised there concerning Easter and the tonsure and other ecclesiastical matters, it was arranged, that a synod should be held in the monastery of Streanaeshalch, which signifies the Bay of the Lighthouse, where the Abbess Hilda, a woman devoted to the service of God, then ruled; and that there this question should be decided. The kings, both father and son, came thither, and the bishops, Colman with his Scottish clerks, and Agilbert with the priests Agatho and Wilfrid. James and Romanus were on their side; but the Abbess Hilda and her followers were for the Scots, as was also the venerable Bishop Cedd, long before ordained by the Scots, as has been said above, and he acted in that council as a most careful interpreter for both parties.

King Oswy first made an opening speech, in which he said that it behoved those who served one God to observe one rule of life; and as they all expected the same kingdom in heaven, so they ought not to differ in the celebration of the heavenly mysteries; but rather to inquire which was the truer tradition, that it might be followed by all in common; he then commanded his bishop, Colman, first to declare what the custom was which he observed, and whence

The Venerable Bede

it derived its origin. Then Colman said, "The Easter which I keep, I received from my elders, who sent me hither as bishop; all our forefathers, men beloved of God, are known to have celebrated it after the same manner; and that it may not seem to any contemptible and worthy to be rejected, it is the same which the blessed John the Evangelist, the disciple specially beloved of our Lord, with all the churches over which he presided, is recorded to have celebrated." When he had said thus much, and more to the like effect, the king commanded Agilbert to make known the manner of his observance and to show whence it was derived, and on what authority he followed it. Agilbert answered, "I beseech you, let my disciple, the priest Wilfrid, speak in my stead; because we both concur with the other followers of the ecclesiastical tradition that are here present, and he can better and more clearly explain our opinion in the English language, than I can by an interpreter."

Then Wilfrid, being ordered by the king to speak, began thus:—"The Easter which we keep, we saw celebrated by all at Rome, where the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, lived, taught, suffered, and were buried; we saw the same done by all in Italy and in Gaul, when we travelled through those countries for the purpose of study and prayer. We found it observed in Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, and all the world, wherever the Church of Christ is spread abroad, among divers nations and tongues, at one and the same time; save only among these and their accomplices in obstinacy, I mean the Picts and the Britons, who foolishly, in these two remote islands of the ocean, and only in part even of them, strive to oppose all the rest of the world." When he had so said, Colman answered, "It is strange that you choose to call our efforts foolish, wherein we follow the example of so great an Apostle, who was thought worthy to lean on our Lord's bosom, when all the world knows him to have lived most wisely." Wilfrid replied, "Far be it from us to charge John with folly, for he literally observed the precepts of the Mosaic Law, whilst the Church was still Jewish in many points, and the Apostles, lest they should give cause of offence to the Jews who were among the Gentiles, were not able at once to cast off all the observances of the Law which had been instituted by God, in the same way as it is necessary that all who come to the faith should forsake the idols which were invented by devils. For this reason it was, that Paul circumcised Timothy, that he offered sacrifice in the temple, that he shaved his head with Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth; for no other advantage

than to avoid giving offence to the Jews. Hence it was, that James said to the same Paul, ‘Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the Law.’ And yet, at this time, when the light of the Gospel is spreading throughout the world, it is needless, nay, it is not lawful, for the faithful either to be circumcised, or to offer up to God sacrifices of flesh. So John, according to the custom of the Law, began the celebration of the feast of Easter, on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening, not regarding whether the same happened on a Saturday, or any other week-day. But when Peter preached at Rome, being mindful that our Lord arose from the dead, and gave to the world the hope of resurrection, on the first day of the week, he perceived that Easter ought to be kept after this manner: he always awaited the rising of the moon on the fourteenth day of the first month in the evening, according to the custom and precepts of the Law, even as John did. And when that came, if the Lord’s day, then called the first day of the week, was the next day, he began that very evening to celebrate Easter, as we all do at the present time. But if the Lord’s day did not fall the next morning after the fourteenth moon, but on the sixteenth, or the seventeenth, or any other moon till the twenty-first, he waited for that, and on the Saturday before, in the evening, began to observe the holy solemnity of Easter. Thus it came to pass, that Easter Sunday was only kept from the fifteenth moon to the twenty-first. Nor does this evangelical and apostolic tradition abolish the Law, but rather fulfil it; the command being to keep the passover from the fourteenth moon of the first month in the evening to the twenty-first moon of the same month in the evening; which observance all the successors of the blessed John in Asia, since his death, and all the Church throughout the world, have since followed; and that this is the true Easter, and the only one to be celebrated by the faithful, was not newly decreed by the council of Nicaea, but only confirmed afresh; as the history of the Church informs us.

“Thus it is plain, that you, Colman, neither follow the example of John, as you imagine, nor that of Peter, whose tradition you oppose with full knowledge, and that you neither agree with the Law nor the Gospel in the keeping of your Easter. For John, keeping the Paschal time according to the decree of the Mosaic Law, had no regard to the first day of the week, which you do not practise, seeing that you celebrate Easter only on the first day after the Sabbath. Peter celebrated Easter Sunday between the fifteenth and the

The Venerable Bede

twenty-first moon, which you do not practise, seeing that you observe Easter Sunday from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon; so that you often begin Easter on the thirteenth moon in the evening, whereof neither the Law made any mention, nor did our Lord, the Author and Giver of the Gospel, on that day either eat the old passover in the evening, or deliver the Sacraments of the New Testament, to be celebrated by the Church, in memory of His Passion, but on the fourteenth. Besides, in your celebration of Easter, you utterly exclude the twenty-first moon, which the Law ordered to be specially observed. Thus, as I have said before, you agree neither with John nor Peter, nor with the Law, nor the Gospel, in the celebration of the greatest festival.”

To this Colman rejoined: “Did the holy Anatolius, much commended in the history of the Church, judge contrary to the Law and the Gospel, when he wrote, that Easter was to be celebrated from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon? Is it to be believed that our most reverend Father Columba and his successors, men beloved by God, who kept Easter after the same manner, judged or acted contrary to the Divine writings? Whereas there were many among them, whose sanctity was attested by heavenly signs and miracles which they wrought; whom I, for my part, doubt not to be saints, and whose life, customs, and discipline I never cease to follow.”

“It is evident,” said Wilfrid, “that Anatolius was a most holy, learned, and commendable man; but what have you to do with him, since you do not observe his decrees? For he undoubtedly, following the rule of truth in his Easter, appointed a cycle of nineteen years, which either you are ignorant of, or if you know it, though it is kept by the whole Church of Christ, yet you despise it as a thing of naught. He so computed the fourteenth moon in our Lord’s Paschal Feast, that according to the custom of the Egyptians, he acknowledged it to be the fifteenth moon on that same day in the evening; so in like manner he assigned the twentieth to Easter-Sunday, as believing that to be the twenty-first moon, when the sun had set. That you are ignorant of the rule of this distinction is proved by this, that you sometimes manifestly keep Easter before the full moon, that is, on the thirteenth day. Concerning your Father Columba and his followers, whose sanctity you say you imitate, and whose rule and precepts confirmed by signs from Heaven you say that you follow, I might answer, then when many, in the day of judgement, shall say to our Lord, that in His name they have prophesied, and have cast out devils, and

done many wonderful works, our Lord will reply, that He never knew them. But far be it from me to speak thus of your fathers, for it is much more just to believe good than evil of those whom we know not. Wherefore I do not deny those also to have been God's servants, and beloved of God, who with rude simplicity, but pious intentions, have themselves loved Him. Nor do I think that such observance of Easter did them much harm, as long as none came to show them a more perfect rule to follow; for assuredly I believe that, if any teacher, reckoning after the Catholic manner, had come among them, they would have as readily followed his admonitions, as they are known to have kept those commandments of God, which they had learned and knew.

“But as for you and your companions, you certainly sin, if, having heard the decrees of the Apostolic see, nay, of the universal Church, confirmed, as they are, by Holy Scripture, you scorn to follow them; for, though your fathers were holy, do you think that those few men, in a corner of the remotest island, are to be preferred before the universal Church of Christ throughout the world? And if that Columba of yours, (and, I may say, ours also, if he was Christ's servant,) was a holy man and powerful in miracles, yet could he be preferred before the most blessed chief of the Apostles, to whom our Lord said, ‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven?’?”

When Wilfrid had ended thus, the king said, “Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord?” He answered, “It is true, O king!” Then said he, “Can you show any such power given to your Columba?” Colman answered, “None.” Then again the king asked, “Do you both agree in this, without any controversy, that these words were said above all to Peter, and that the keys of the kingdom of Heaven were given to him by our Lord?” They both answered, “Yes.” Then the king concluded, “And I also say unto you, that he is the door-keeper, and I will not gainsay him, but I desire, as far as I know and am able, in all things to obey his laws, lest haply when I come to the gates of the kingdom of Heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys.” The king having said this, all who were seated there or standing by, both great and small, gave their assent, and renouncing the less perfect custom, hastened to conform to that which they had found to be better.

BOOK FOUR

XIX

How Queen
Ethelthryth al-
ways preserved
her virginity,
and her body
suffered no
corruption in the
grave. [660-696
a.d.]

King Egfrid took to wife Ethelthryth, the daughter of Anna, king of the East Angles, of whom mention has been often made; a man of true religion, and altogether noble in mind and deed. She had before been given in marriage to another, to wit, Tondbert, ealdorman of the Southern Gyrwas; but he died soon after he had married her, and she was given to the aforesaid king. Though she lived with him twelve years, yet she preserved the glory of perfect virginity, as I was informed by Bishop Wilfrid, of blessed memory, of whom I inquired, because some questioned the truth thereof; and he told me that he was an undoubted witness to her virginity, forasmuch as Egfrid promised to give him many lands and much money if he could persuade the queen to consent to fulfil her marriage duty, for he knew the queen loved no man more than himself. And it is not to be doubted that this might take place in our age, which true histories tell us happened sometimes in former ages, by the help of the same Lord who promises to abide with us always, even unto the end of the world. For the divine miracle whereby her flesh, being buried, could not suffer corruption, is a token that she had not been defiled by man.

She had long asked of the king that he would permit her to lay aside worldly cares, and to serve only Christ, the true King, in a monastery; and having at length with difficulty prevailed, she entered the monastery of the Abbess Aebba, who was aunt to King Egfrid, at the place called the city of Coludi, having received the veil of the religious habit from the hands of the aforesaid Bishop Wilfrid; but a year after she was herself made abbess in the district called Elge, where, having built a monastery, she began, by the example of a heavenly life and by her teaching, to be the virgin mother of many virgins dedicated to God. It is told of her that from the time of her entering the monastery, she would never wear any linen but only woollen garments, and would seldom wash in a hot bath, unless just before the greater festivals, as Easter, Whitsuntide, and the Epiphany, and then she did it last of all, when the other handmaids of Christ who were there had been washed, served by her and her attendants. She seldom ate more than once a day, excepting on the greater festivals, or some urgent occasion. Always, except when grievous

sickness prevented her, from the time of matins till day-break, she continued in the church at prayer. Some also say, that by the spirit of prophecy she not only foretold the pestilence of which she was to die, but also, in the presence of all, revealed the number of those that should be then snatched away from this world out of her monastery. She was taken to the Lord, in the midst of her flock, seven years after she had been made abbess; and, as she had ordered, was buried among them in a wooden coffin in her turn, according to the order in which she had passed away.

She was succeeded in the office of abbess by her sister Sexburg,⁶⁶⁵ who had been wife to Earconbert, king of Kent. This abbess, when her sister had been buried sixteen years, thought fit to take up her bones, and, putting them into a new coffin, to translate them into the church. Accordingly she ordered some of the brothers to find a stone whereof to make a coffin for this purpose. They went on board ship, for the district of Ely is on every side encompassed with water and marshes, and has no large stones, and came to a small deserted city, not far from thence, which, in the language of the English, is called Grantacaestir, and presently, near the city walls, they found a white marble coffin, most beautifully wrought, and fitly covered with a lid of the same sort of stone. Perceiving, therefore, that the Lord had prospered their journey, they returned thanks to Him and carried it to the monastery.

When the grave was opened and the body of the holy virgin and bride of Christ was brought into the light of day, it was found as free from corruption as if she had died and been buried on that very day; as the aforesaid Bishop Wilfrid, and many others that know it, testify. But the physician, Cynifrid, who was present at her death, and when she was taken up out of the grave, had more certain knowledge. He was wont to relate that in her sickness she had a very great tumour under her jaw. "And I was ordered," said he, "to lay open that tumour to let out the noxious matter in it, which I did, and she seemed to be somewhat more easy for two days, so that many thought she might recover from her infirmity; but on the third day she was attacked by the former pains, and being soon snatched out of the world, she exchanged all pain and death for everlasting life and health. And when, so many years after, her bones were to be taken out of the grave, a pavilion being spread over it, and all the congregation, the brothers on the one side, and the sisters on the other, standing about it singing, while the abbess, with a few others, had gone

The Venerable Bede

within to take up and wash the bones, on a sudden we heard the abbess within cry out with a loud voice, 'Glory be to the name of the Lord.' Not long after they called me in, opening the door of the pavilion, and I found the body of the holy virgin taken out of the grave and laid on a bed, like one asleep; then taking off the veil from the face, they also showed me that the incision which I had made was healed up; so that, in marvellous wise, instead of the open gaping wound with which she had been buried, there then appeared only the slightest trace of a scar. Besides, all the linen clothes in which the body had been wrapped, appeared entire and as fresh as if they had been that very day put about her chaste limbs."

It is said that when she was sore troubled with the aforesaid tumour and pain in her jaw and neck, she took great pleasure in that sort of sickness, and was wont to say, "I know of a surety that I deservedly bear the weight of my trouble on my neck, for I remember that, when I was a young maiden, I bore on it the needless weight of necklaces; and therefore I believe the Divine goodness would have me endure the pain in my neck, that so I may be absolved from the guilt of my needless levity, having now, instead of gold and pearls, the fiery heat of a tumour rising on my neck." It happened also that by the touch of those same linen clothes devils were expelled from bodies possessed, and other diseases were at divers times healed; and the coffin wherein she was first buried is said to have cured some of infirmities of the eyes, who, praying with their heads resting upon that coffin, were presently relieved of the pain or dimness in their eyes. So they washed the virgin's body, and having clothed it in new garments, brought it into the church, and laid it in the sarcophagus that had been brought, where it is held in great veneration to this day. The sarcophagus was found in a wonderful manner to fit the virgin's body as if it had been made purposely for her, and the place for the head, which was fashioned separately, appeared exactly shaped to the measurement of her head.

Elge is in the province of the East Angles, a district of about six hundred families, of the nature of an island, encompassed, as has been said, with marshes or waters, and therefore it has its name from the great plenty of eels taken in those marshes; there the aforesaid handmaid of Christ desired to have a monastery, because, as we have before mentioned, she came, according to the flesh, of that same province of the East Angles.

It seems fitting to insert in this history a hymn concerning virginity, which we composed in elegiac verse many years ago, in praise and honour of the same queen and bride of Christ, and therefore truly a queen, because the bride of Christ; and to imitate the method of Holy Scripture, wherein many songs are inserted in the history, and these, as is well known, are composed in metre and verse.

“Trinity, Gracious, Divine, Who rulest all the ages; favour my task, Trinity, Gracious, Divine.

“Let Maro sound the trumpet of war, let us sing the gifts of peace; the gifts of Christ we sing, let Maro sound the trumpet of war.

“Chaste is my song, no rape of guilty Helen; light tales shall be told by the wanton, chaste is my song.

“I will tell of gifts from Heaven, not wars of hapless Troy; I will tell of gifts from Heaven, wherein the earth is glad.

“Lo! the high God comes to the womb of a holy virgin, to be the Saviour of men, lo! the high God comes.

“A hallowed maid gives birth to Him Who gave the world its being; Mary, the gate of God, a maiden gives Him birth.

“The company of her fellows rejoices over the Virgin Mother of Him Who wields the thunder; a shining virgin band, the company of her fellows rejoices.

“Her honour has made many a blossom to spring from that pure shoot, virgin blossoms her honour has made to spring.

“Scorched by the fierce flames, the maiden Agatha yielded not; in like manner Eulalia endures, scorched by the fierce flames.

“The lofty soul of chaste Tecla overcomes the wild beasts; chaste Euphemia overcomes the accursed wild beasts.

“Agnes joyously laughs at the sword, herself stronger than steel, Cecilia joyously laughs at the foemen’s sword.

The Venerable Bede

“Many a triumph is mighty throughout the world in temperate hearts; throughout the world love of the temperate life is mighty.

“Yea, and our day likewise a peerless maiden has blessed; peerless our Ethelthryth shines.

“Child of a noble sire, and glorious by royal birth, more noble in her Lord’s sight, the child of a noble sire.

“Thence she receives queenly honour and a sceptre in this world; thence she receives honour, awaiting higher honour above.

“What need, gracious lady, to seek an earthly lord, even now given to the Heavenly Bridegroom?”

“Christ is at hand, the Bridegroom (why seek an earthly lord?) that thou mayst follow even now, methinks, in the steps of the Mother of Heaven’s King, that thou too mayst be a mother in God.

“Twelve years she had reigned, a bride dedicated to God, then in the cloister dwelt, a bride dedicated to God.

“To Heaven all consecrated she lived, abounding in lofty deeds, then to Heaven all consecrated she gave up her soul.

“Twice eight Novembers the maid’s fair flesh lay in the tomb, nor did the maid’s fair flesh see corruption in the tomb.

“This was Thy work, O Christ, that her very garments were bright and undefiled even in the grave; O Christ, this was Thy work.

“The dark serpent flies before the honour due to the holy raiment; disease is driven away, and the dark serpent flies.

“Rage fills the foe who of old conquered Eve; exultant the maiden triumphs and rage fills the foe.

“Behold, O bride of God, thy glory upon earth; the glory that awaits thee in the Heavens behold, O bride of God.

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

“In gladness thou receivest gifts, bright amidst the festal torches; behold! the Bridegroom comes, in gladness thou receivest gifts.

“And a new song thou singest to the tuneful harp; a new-made bride, thou exultest in the tuneful hymn.

“None can part her from them which follow the Lamb enthroned on high, whom none had severed from the Love enthroned on high.”

XXIII

Of the life and death of the Abbess Hilda. [614-680 a.d.]

In the year after this, that is the year of our Lord 680, the most religious handmaid of Christ, Hilda, abbess of the monastery that is called Streanaeshalch, as we mentioned above, after having done many heavenly deeds on earth, passed thence to receive the rewards of the heavenly life, on the 17th of November, at the age of sixty-six years. Her life falls into two equal parts, for the first thirty-three years of it she spent living most nobly in the secular habit; and still more nobly dedicated the remaining half to the Lord in the monastic life. For she was nobly born, being the daughter of Hereric, nephew to King Edwin, and with that king she also received the faith and mysteries of Christ, at the preaching of Paulinus, of blessed memory, the first bishop of the Northumbrians, and preserved the same undefiled till she attained to the vision of our Lord in Heaven.

When she had resolved to quit the secular habit, and to serve Him alone, she withdrew into the province of the East Angles, for she was allied to the king there; being desirous to cross over thence into Gaul, forsaking her native country and all that she had, and so to live a stranger for our Lord's sake in the monastery of Cale, that she might the better attain to the eternal country in heaven. For her sister Heresuid, mother to Aldwulf, king of the East Angles, was at that time living in the same monastery, under regular discipline, waiting for an everlasting crown; and led by her example, she continued a whole year in the aforesaid province, with the design of going abroad; but afterwards, Bishop Aidan recalled her to her home, and she received land to

The Venerable Bede

the extent of one family on the north side of the river Wear; where likewise for a year she led a monastic life, with very few companions.

After this she was made abbess in the monastery called Heruteu, which monastery had been founded, not long before, by the pious handmaid of Christ, Heiu, who is said to have been the first woman in the province of the Northumbrians who took upon her the vows and habit of a nun, being consecrated by Bishop Aidan; but she, soon after she had founded that monastery, retired to the city of Calcaria, which is called Kaelcacaestir by the English, and there fixed her dwelling. Hilda, the handmaid of Christ, being set over that monastery, began immediately to order it in all things under a rule of life, according as she had been instructed by learned men; for Bishop Aidan, and others of the religious that knew her, frequently visited her and loved her heartily, and diligently instructed her, because of her innate wisdom and love of the service of God.

When she had for some years governed this monastery, wholly intent upon establishing a rule of life, it happened that she also undertook either to build or to set in order a monastery in the place called Streanaeshalh, and this work which was laid upon her she industriously performed; for she put this monastery under the same rule of monastic life as the former; and taught there the strict observance of justice, piety, chastity, and other virtues, and particularly of peace and charity; so that, after the example of the primitive Church, no one there was rich, and none poor, for they had all things common, and none had any private property. Her prudence was so great, that not only meaner men in their need, but sometimes even kings and princes, sought and received her counsel; she obliged those who were under her direction to give so much time to reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of justice, that many might readily be found there fit for the priesthood and the service of the altar.

Indeed we have seen five from that monastery who afterwards became bishops, and all of them men of singular merit and sanctity, whose names were Bosa, Aetla, Oftfor, John, and Wilfrid. Of the first we have said above that he was consecrated bishop of York; of the second, it may be briefly stated that he was appointed bishop of Dorchester. Of the last two we shall tell hereafter, that the former was ordained bishop of Hagustald, the other of the

church of York; of the third, we may here mention that, having applied himself to the reading and observance of the Scriptures in both the monasteries of the Abbess Hilda, at length being desirous to attain to greater perfection, he went into Kent, to Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory; where having spent some time in sacred studies, he resolved to go to Rome also, which, in those days, was esteemed a very salutary undertaking. Returning thence into Britain, he took his way into the province of the Hwiccas, where King Osric then ruled, and continued there a long time, preaching the Word of faith, and showing an example of good life to all that saw and heard him. At that time, Bosel, the bishop of that province, laboured under such weakness of body, that he could not himself perform episcopal functions; for which reason, Offfor was, by universal consent, chosen bishop in his stead, and by order of King Ethelred, consecrated by Bishop Wilfrid, of blessed memory, who was then Bishop of the Midland Angles, because Archbishop Theodore was dead, and no other bishop ordained in his place. A little while before, that is, before the election of the aforesaid man of God, Bosel, Tatfrid, a man of great industry and learning, and of excellent ability, had been chosen bishop for that province, from the monastery of the same abbess, but had been snatched away by an untimely death, before he could be ordained.

Thus this handmaid of Christ, the Abbess Hilda, whom all that knew her called Mother, for her singular piety and grace, was not only an example of good life, to those that lived in her monastery, but afforded occasion of amendment and salvation to many who lived at a distance, to whom the blessed fame was brought of her industry and virtue. For it was meet that the dream of her mother, Bregusuid, during her infancy, should be fulfilled. Now Bregusuid, at the time that her husband, Hereric, lived in banishment, under Cerdic, king of the Britons, where he was also poisoned, fancied, in a dream, that he was suddenly taken away from her and she was seeking for him most carefully, but could find no sign of him anywhere. After an anxious search for him, all at once she found a most precious necklace under her garment, and whilst she was looking on it very attentively, it seemed to shine forth with such a blaze of light that it filled all Britain with the glory of its brilliance. This dream was doubtless fulfilled in her daughter that we speak of, whose life was an example of the works of light, not only blessed to herself, but to many who desired to live aright.

The Venerable Bede

When she had governed this monastery many years, it pleased Him Who has made such merciful provision for our salvation, to give her holy soul the trial of a long infirmity of the flesh, to the end that, according to the Apostle's example, her virtue might be made perfect in weakness. Struck down with a fever, she suffered from a burning heat, and was afflicted with the same trouble for six years continually; during all which time she never failed either to return thanks to her Maker, or publicly and privately to instruct the flock committed to her charge; for taught by her own experience she admonished all men to serve the Lord dutifully, when health of body is granted to them, and always to return thanks faithfully to Him in adversity, or bodily infirmity. In the seventh year of her sickness, when the disease turned inwards, her last day came, and about cockcrow, having received the voyage provision of Holy Housel, and called together the handmaids of Christ that were within the same monastery, she admonished them to preserve the peace of the Gospel among themselves, and with all others; and even as she spoke her words of exhortation, she joyfully saw death come, or, in the words of our Lord, passed from death unto life.

That same night it pleased Almighty God, by a manifest vision, to make known her death in another monastery, at a distance from hers, which she had built that same year, and which is called Hacanós. There was in that monastery, a certain nun called Begu, who, having dedicated her virginity to the Lord, had served Him upwards of thirty years in the monastic life. This nun was resting in the dormitory of the sisters, when on a sudden she heard in the air the well-known sound of the bell, which used to awake and call them to prayers, when any one of them was taken out of this world, and opening her eyes, as she thought, she saw the roof of the house open, and a light shed from above filling all the place. Looking earnestly upon that light, she saw the soul of the aforesaid handmaid of God in that same light, being carried to heaven attended and guided by angels. Then awaking, and seeing the other sisters lying round about her, she perceived that what she had seen had been revealed to her either in a dream or a vision; and rising immediately in great fear, she ran to the virgin who then presided in the monastery in the place of the abbess, and whose name was Frigyth, and, with many tears and lamentations, and heaving deep sighs, told her that the Abbess Hilda, mother of them all, had departed this life, and had in her sight ascended to the gates of eternal

light, and to the company of the citizens of heaven, with a great light, and with angels for her guides. Frigyth having heard it, awoke all the sisters, and calling them to the church, admonished them to give themselves to prayer and singing of psalms, for the soul of their mother; which they did earnestly during the remainder of the night; and at break of day, the brothers came with news of her death, from the place where she had died. They answered that they knew it before, and then related in order how and when they had learnt it, by which it appeared that her death had been revealed to them in a vision that same hour in which the brothers said that she had died. Thus by a fair harmony of events Heaven ordained, that when some saw her departure out of this world, the others should have knowledge of her entrance into the eternal life of souls. These monasteries are about thirteen miles distant from each other.

It is also told, that her death was, in a vision, made known the same night to one of the virgins dedicated to God, who loved her with a great love, in the same monastery where the said handmaid of God died. This nun saw her soul ascend to heaven in the company of angels; and this she openly declared, in the very same hour that it happened, to those handmaids of Christ that were with her; and aroused them to pray for her soul, even before the rest of the community had heard of her death. The truth of which was known to the whole community in the morning. This same nun was at that time with some other handmaids of Christ, in the remotest part of the monastery, where the women who had lately entered the monastic life were wont to pass their time of probation, till they were instructed according to rule, and admitted into the fellowship of the community.

XXIV

There was in the monastery of this abbess a certain brother, marked in a special manner by the grace of God, for he was wont to make songs of piety and religion, so that whatever was expounded to him out of Scripture, he turned ere long into verse expressive of much sweetness and penitence, in English, which was his native language. By his songs the minds of many were often fired with contempt of the world, and desire of the heavenly life. Others of the English nation after him attempted to compose religious poems, but none could equal him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from men,

That there was in her monastery a brother, on whom the gift of song was bestowed by Heaven.[680 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

neither was he taught by man, but by God's grace he received the free gift of song, for which reason he never could compose any trivial or vain poem, but only those which concern religion it behoved his religious tongue to utter. For having lived in the secular habit till he was well advanced in years, he had never learned anything of versifying; and for this reason sometimes at a banquet, when it was agreed to make merry by singing in turn, if he saw the harp come towards him, he would rise up from table and go out and return home.

Once having done so and gone out of the house where the banquet was, to the stable, where he had to take care of the cattle that night, he there composed himself to rest at the proper time. Thereupon one stood by him in his sleep, and saluting him, and calling him by his name, said, "Cædmon, sing me something." But he answered, "I cannot sing, and for this cause I left the banquet and retired hither, because I could not sing." Then he who talked to him replied, "Nevertheless thou must needs sing to me." "What must I sing?" he asked. "Sing the beginning of creation," said the other. Having received this answer he straightway began to sing verses to the praise of God the Creator, which he had never heard, the purport whereof was after this manner: "Now must we praise the Maker of the heavenly kingdom, the power of the Creator and His counsel, the deeds of the Father of glory. How He, being the eternal God, became the Author of all wondrous works, Who being the Almighty Guardian of the human race, first created heaven for the sons of men to be the covering of their dwelling place, and next the earth." This is the sense but not the order of the words as he sang them in his sleep; for verses, though never so well composed, cannot be literally translated out of one language into another without loss of their beauty and loftiness. Awakening from his sleep, he remembered all that he had sung in his dream, and soon added more after the same manner, in words which worthily expressed the praise of God.

In the morning he came to the reeve who was over him, and having told him of the gift he had received, was conducted to the abbess, and bidden, in the presence of many learned men, to tell his dream, and repeat the verses, that they might all examine and give their judgement upon the nature and origin of the gift whereof he spoke. And they all judged that heavenly grace had been granted to him by the Lord. They expounded to him a passage of sacred history or doctrine, enjoining upon him, if he could, to put it into

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

verse. Having undertaken this task, he went away, and returning the next morning, gave them the passage he had been bidden to translate, rendered in most excellent verse. Whereupon the abbess, joyfully recognizing the grace of God in the man, instructed him to quit the secular habit, and take upon him monastic vows; and having received him into the monastery, she and all her people admitted him to the company of the brethren, and ordered that he should be taught the whole course of sacred history. So he, giving ear to all that he could learn, and bearing it in mind, and as it were ruminating, like a clean animal, turned it into most harmonious verse; and sweetly singing it, made his masters in their turn his hearers. He sang the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the history of Genesis, the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, their entrance into the promised land, and many other histories from Holy Scripture; the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection of our Lord, and His Ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the teaching of the Apostles; likewise he made many songs concerning the terror of future judgement, the horror of the pains of hell, and the joys of heaven; besides many more about the blessings and the judgements of God, by all of which he endeavoured to draw men away from the love of sin, and to excite in them devotion to well-doing and perseverance therein. For he was a very religious man, humbly submissive to the discipline of monastic rule, but inflamed with fervent zeal against those who chose to do otherwise; for which reason he made a fair ending of his life.

For when the hour of his departure drew near, it was preceded by a bodily infirmity under which he laboured for the space of fourteen days, yet it was of so mild a nature that he could talk and go about the whole time. In his neighbourhood was the house to which those that were sick, and like to die, were wont to be carried. He desired the person that ministered to him, as the evening came on of the night in which he was to depart this life, to make ready a place there for him to take his rest. The man, wondering why he should desire it, because there was as yet no sign of his approaching death, nevertheless did his bidding. When they had lain down there, and had been conversing happily and pleasantly for some time with those that were in the house before, and it was now past midnight, he asked them, whether they had the Eucharist within? They answered, "What need of the Eucharist? for you are not yet appointed to die, since you talk so merrily with us, as if

The Venerable Bede

you were in good health.” “Nevertheless,” said he, “bring me the Eucharist.” Having received It into his hand, he asked, whether they were all in charity with him, and had no complaint against him, nor any quarrel or grudge. They answered, that they were all in perfect charity with him, and free from all anger; and in their turn they asked him to be of the same mind towards them. He answered at once, “I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God.” Then strengthening himself with the heavenly Viaticum, he prepared for the entrance into another life, and asked how near the time was when the brothers should be awakened to sing the nightly praises of the Lord? They answered, “It is not far off.” Then he said, “It is well, let us await that hour;” and signing himself with the sign of the Holy Cross, he laid his head on the pillow, and falling into a slumber for a little while, so ended his life in silence.

Thus it came to pass, that as he had served the Lord with a simple and pure mind, and quiet devotion, so he now departed to behold His Presence, leaving the world by a quiet death; and that tongue, which had uttered so many wholesome words in praise of the Creator, spake its last words also in His praise, while he signed himself with the Cross, and commended his spirit into His hands; and by what has been here said, he seems to have had foreknowledge of his death.

Of the vision
that appeared to
a certain man of
God before the
monastery of the
city Coludi was
burned down.

XXV

At this time, the monastery of virgins, called the city of Coludi, above-mentioned, was burned down, through carelessness; and yet all that knew it might have been aware that it happened by reason of the wickedness of those who dwelt in it, and chiefly of those who seemed to be the greatest. But there wanted not a warning of the approaching punishment from the Divine mercy whereby they might have been led to amend their ways, and by fasting and tears and prayers, like the Ninevites, have averted the anger of the just Judge.

For there was in that monastery a man of the Scottish race, called Adaman, leading a life entirely devoted to God in continence and prayer, inasmuch that he never took any food or drink, except only on Sundays and Thursdays; and often spent whole nights in watching and prayer. This strictness in austerity of life he had first adopted from the necessity of correcting the evil that was in him; but in process of time the necessity became a custom.

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

For in his youth he had been guilty of some sin for which, when he came to himself, he conceived a great horror, and dreaded lest he should be punished for the same by the righteous Judge. Betaking himself, therefore, to a priest, who, he hoped, might show him the way of salvation, he confessed his guilt, and desired to be advised how he might escape the wrath to come. The priest having heard his offence, said, "A great wound requires greater care in the healing thereof; wherefore give yourself as far as you are able to fasting and psalms, and prayer, to the end that thus coming before the presence of the Lord in confession," you may find Him merciful. But he, being oppressed with great grief by reason of his guilty conscience, and desiring to be the sooner loosed from the inward fetters of sin, which lay heavy upon him, answered, "I am still young in years and strong of body, and shall, therefore, easily bear all whatsoever you shall enjoin me to do, if so be that I may be saved in the day of the Lord, even though you should bid me spend the whole night standing in prayer, and pass the whole week in abstinence." The priest replied, "It is much for you to continue for a whole week without bodily sustenance; it is enough to observe a fast for two or three days; do this till I come again to you in a short time, when I will more fully show you what you ought to do, and how long to persevere in your penance." Having so said, and prescribed the measure of his penance, the priest went away, and upon some sudden occasion passed over into Ireland, which was his native country, and returned no more to him, as he had appointed. But the man remembering this injunction and his own promise, gave himself up entirely to tears of penitence, holy vigils and continence; so that he only took food on Thursdays and Sundays, as has been said; and continued fasting all the other days of the week. When he heard that his priest had gone to Ireland, and had died there, he ever after observed this manner of abstinence, which had been appointed for him as we have said; and as he had begun that course through the fear of God, in penitence for his guilt, so he still continued the same unremittingly for the love of God, and through delight in its rewards.

Having practised this carefully for a long time, it happened that he had gone on a certain day to a distance from the monastery, accompanied by one the brothers; and as they were returning from this journey, when they drew near to the monastery, and beheld its lofty buildings, the man of God burst into tears, and his countenance discovered the trouble of his heart. His com-

The Venerable Bede

panion, perceiving it, asked what was the reason, to which he answered: "The time is at hand when a devouring fire shall reduce to ashes all the buildings which you here behold, both public and private." The other, hearing these words, when they presently came into the monastery, told them to Aebba, the mother of the community. She with good cause being much troubled at that prediction, called the man to her, and straitly questioned him concerning the matter and how he came to know it. He answered, "Being engaged one night lately in watching and singing psalms, on a sudden I saw one standing by me whose countenance I did not know, and I was startled at his presence, but he bade me not to fear, and speaking to me like a friend he said, 'You do well in that you have chosen rather at this time of rest not to give yourself up to sleep, but to continue in watching and prayer.' I answered, 'I know I have great need to continue in wholesome watching and earnest prayer to the Lord to pardon my transgressions.' He replied, 'You speak truly, for you and many more have need to redeem their sins by good works, and when they cease from temporal labours, then to labour the more eagerly for desire of eternal blessings; but this very few do; for I, having now gone through all this monastery in order, have looked into the huts and beds of all, and found none of them except yourself busy about the health of his soul; but all of them, both men and women, are either sunk in slothful sleep, or are awake in order to commit sin; for even the cells that were built for prayer or reading, are now converted into places of feasting, drinking, talking, and other delights; the very virgins dedicated to God, laying aside the respect due to their profession, whensoever they are at leisure, apply themselves to weaving fine garments, wherewith to adorn themselves like brides, to the danger of their state, or to gain the friendship of strange men; for which reason, as is meet, a heavy judgement from Heaven with raging fire is ready to fall on this place and those that dwell therein.'?" The abbess said, "Why did you not sooner reveal to me what you knew?" He answered, "I was afraid to do it, out of respect to you, lest you should be too much afflicted; yet you may have this comfort, that the blow will not fall in your days." This vision being made known, the inhabitants of that place were for a few days in some little fear, and leaving off their sins, began to do penance; but after the death of the abbess they returned to their former defilement, nay, they committed worse sins; and when they said "Peace and safety," the doom of the aforesaid judgement came suddenly upon them.

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

That all this fell out after this manner, was told me by my most reverend fellow-priest, Aedgils, who then lived in that monastery. Afterwards, when many of the inhabitants had departed thence, on account of the destruction, he lived a long time in our monastery, and died there. We have thought fit to insert this in our History, to admonish the reader of the works of the Lord, how terrible He is in His doing toward the children of men, lest haply we should at some time or other yield to the snares of the flesh, and dreading too little the judgement of God, fall under His sudden wrath, and either in His righteous anger be brought low with temporal losses, or else be more strictly tried and snatched away to eternal perdition.

XXVI

Of the death of
the Kings Egfrid
and Hlothere.
[684-685 a.d.]

In the year of our Lord 684, Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, sending his general, Berct, with an army into Ireland, miserably laid waste that unoffending nation, which had always been most friendly to the English; insomuch that the invading force spared not even the churches or monasteries. But the islanders, while to the utmost of their power they repelled force with force, implored the assistance of the Divine mercy, and with constant imprecations invoked the vengeance of Heaven; and though such a curse cannot inherit the kingdom of God, yet it was believed, that those who were justly cursed on account of their impiety, soon suffered the penalty of their guilt at the avenging hand of God. For the very next year, when that same king had rashly led his army to ravage the province of the Picts, greatly against the advice of his friends, and particularly of Cuthbert, of blessed memory, who had been lately ordained bishop, the enemy made a feigned retreat, and the king was drawn into a narrow pass among remote mountains, and slain, with the greater part of the forces he had led thither, on the 20th of May, in the fortieth year of his age, and the fifteenth of his reign. His friends, as has been said, advised him not to engage in this war; but since he had the year before refused to listen to the most reverend father, Egbert, advising him not to attack the Scots, who were doing him no harm, it was laid upon him as a punishment for his sin, that he should now not listen to those who would have prevented his death.

From that time the hopes and strength of the Anglian kingdom “began to ebb and fall away;” for the Picts recovered their own lands, which had been

The Venerable Bede

held by the English, and so did also the Scots that were in Britain; and some of the Britons regained their liberty, which they have now enjoyed for about forty-six years. Among the many English that then either fell by the sword, or were made slaves, or escaped by flight out of the country of the Picts, the most reverend man of God, Trumwine, who had been made bishop over them, withdrew with his people that were in the monastery of Aebbercurnig, in the country of the English, but close by the arm of the sea which is the boundary between the lands of the English and the Picts. Having commended his followers, wheresoever he could, to his friends in the monasteries, he chose his own place of abode in the monastery, which we have so often mentioned, of servants and handmaids of God, at Streanaeshalch; and there for many years, with a few of his own brethren, he led a life in all monastic austerity, not only to his own benefit, but to the benefit of many others, and dying there, he was buried in the church of the blessed Peter the Apostle, with the honour due to his life and rank. The royal virgin, Elfled, with her mother, Eanfled, whom we have mentioned before, then presided over that monastery; but when the bishop came thither, that devout teacher found in him the greatest help in governing, and comfort in her private life. Aldfrid succeeded Egfrid in the throne, being a man most learned in the Scriptures, said to be brother to Egfrid, and son to King Oswy; he nobly retrieved the ruined state of the kingdom, though within narrower bounds.

The same year, being the 685th from the Incarnation of our Lord, Hlothere, king of Kent, died on the 6th of February, when he had reigned twelve years after his brother Egbert, who had reigned nine years: he was wounded in battle with the South Saxons, whom Edric, the son of Egbert, had raised against him, and died whilst his wound was being dressed. After him, this same Edric reigned a year and a half. On his death, kings of doubtful title, or of foreign origin, for some time wasted the kingdom, till the lawful king, Wictred, the son of Egbert, being settled in the throne, by his piety and zeal delivered his nation from foreign invasion.

How Cuthbert, a man of God, was made bishop; and how he lived and taught whilst still in the monastic life. [685 a.d.]

XXVII

In the same year in which King Egfrid departed this life, he, as has been said, caused the holy and venerable Cuthbert to be ordained bishop of the

church of Lindisfarne. He had for many years led a solitary life, in great continence of body and mind, in a very small island, called Farne, in the ocean about nine miles distant from that same church. From his earliest childhood he had always been inflamed with the desire of a religious life; and he adopted the name and habit of a monk when he was quite a young man: he first entered the monastery of Mailros, which is on the bank of the river Tweed, and was then governed by the Abbot Eata, a man of great gentleness and simplicity, who was afterward made bishop of the church of Hagustald or Lindisfarne, as has been said above. The provost of the monastery at that time was Boisil, a priest of great virtue and of a prophetic spirit. Cuthbert, humbly submitting himself [pg 289] to this man's direction, from him received both a knowledge of the Scriptures, and an example of good works.

After he had departed to the Lord, Cuthbert became provost of that monastery, where he instructed many in the rule of monastic life, both by the authority of a master, and the example of his own behaviour. Nor did he bestow his teaching and his example in the monastic life on his monastery alone, but laboured far and wide to convert the people dwelling round about from the life of foolish custom, to the love of heavenly joys; for many profaned the faith which they held by their wicked actions; and some also, in the time of a pestilence, neglecting the mysteries of the faith which they had received, had recourse to the false remedies of idolatry, as if they could have put a stop to the plague sent from God, by incantations, amulets, or any other secrets of the Devil's art. In order to correct the error of both sorts, he often went forth from the monastery, sometimes on horseback, but oftener on foot, and went to the neighbouring townships, where he preached the way of truth to such as had gone astray; which Boisil also in his time had been wont to do. It was then the custom of the English people, that when a clerk or priest came to a township, they all, at his summons, flocked together to hear the Word; willingly heard what was said, and still more willingly practised those things that they could hear and understand. And such was Cuthbert's skill in speaking, so keen his desire to persuade men of what he taught, such a light shone in his angelic face, that no man present dared to conceal from him the secrets of his heart, but all openly revealed in confession what they had done, thinking doubtless that their guilt could in nowise be hidden from him; and having confessed their sins, they wiped them out by fruits worthy of repentance, as

The Venerable Bede

he bade them. He was wont chiefly to resort to those places and preach in those villages which were situated afar off amid steep and wild mountains, so that others dreaded to go thither, and whereof the poverty and barbarity rendered them inaccessible to other teachers. But he, devoting himself entirely to that pious labour, so industriously ministered to them with his wise teaching, that when he went forth from the monastery, he would often stay a whole week, sometimes two or three, or even sometimes a full month, before he returned home, continuing among the hill folk to call that simple people by his preaching and good works to the things of Heaven.

This venerable servant of the Lord, having thus spent many years in the monastery of Mailros, and there become conspicuous by great tokens of virtue, his most reverend abbot, Eata, removed him to the isle of Lindisfarne, that he might there also, by his authority as provost and by the example of his own practice, instruct the brethren in the observance of regular discipline; for the same reverend father then governed that place also as abbot. From ancient times, the bishop was wont to reside there with his clergy, and the abbot with his monks, who were likewise under the paternal care of the bishop; because Aidan, who was the first bishop of the place, being himself a monk, brought monks thither, and settled the monastic institution there; as the blessed Father Augustine is known to have done before in Kent, when the most reverend Pope Gregory wrote to him, as has been said above, to this effect: "But in that you, my brother, having been instructed in monastic rules, must not live apart from your clergy in the Church of the English, which has been lately, by the will of God, converted to the faith, you must establish the manner of conversation of our fathers in the primitive Church, among whom, none said that aught of the things which they possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

How the same St.
Cuthbert, living
the life of an
Anchorite, by his
prayers obtained
a spring in a dry
soil, and had a
crop from seed
sown by the la-
bour of his hands
out of season.
[676 a.d.]

XXVIII

After this, Cuthbert, as he grew in goodness and intensity of devotion, attained also to a hermit's life of contemplation in silence and solitude, as we have mentioned. But forasmuch as many years ago we wrote enough concerning his life and virtues, both in heroic verse and prose, it may suffice at present only to mention this, that when he was about to go to the island, he

declared to the brothers, "If by the grace of God it shall be granted to me, that I may live in that place by the labour of my hands, I will willingly abide there; but if not, God willing, I will very soon return to you." The place was quite destitute of water, corn, and trees; and being infested by evil spirits, was very ill suited for human habitation; but it became in all respects habitable, at the desire of the man of God; for at his coming the wicked spirits departed. When, after expelling the enemy, he had, with the help of the brethren, built himself a narrow dwelling, with a mound about it, and the necessary cells in it, to wit, an oratory and a common living room, he ordered the brothers to dig a pit in the floor of the room, although the ground was hard and stony, and no hopes appeared of any spring. When they had done this relying upon the faith and prayers of the servant of God, the next day it was found to be full of water, and to this day affords abundance of its heavenly bounty to all that resort thither. He also desired that instruments for husbandry might be brought him, and some wheat; but having prepared the ground and sown the wheat at the proper season, no sign of a blade, not to speak of ears, had sprouted from it by the summer. Hereupon, when the brethren visited him according to custom, he ordered barley to be brought him, if haply it were either the nature of the soil, or the will of God, the Giver of all things, that such grain rather should grow there. He sowed it in the same field, when it was brought him, after the proper time of sowing, and therefore without any likelihood of its bearing fruit; but a plentiful crop immediately sprang up, and afforded the man of God the means which he had desired of supporting himself by his own labour.

When he had here served God in solitude many years, the mound which encompassed his dwelling being so high, that he could see nothing from it but heaven, which he thirsted to enter, it happened that a great synod was assembled in the presence of King Egfrid, near the river Alne, at a place called Aduifyrði, which signifies "at the two fords," in which Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory, presided, and there Cuthbert was, with one mind and consent of all, chosen bishop of the church of Lindisfarne. They could not, however, draw him from his hermitage, though many messengers and letters were sent to him. At last the aforesaid king himself, with the most holy Bishop Trumwine, and other religious and powerful men, sailed to the island; many also of the brothers from the isle of Lindisfarne itself, assembled

The Venerable Bede

together for the same purpose: they all knelt, and conjured him by the Lord, with tears and entreaties, till they drew him, also in tears, from his beloved retreat, and forced him to go to the synod. When he arrived there, he was very reluctantly overcome by the unanimous resolution of all present, and compelled to take upon himself the duties of the episcopate; being chiefly prevailed upon by the words of Boisil, the servant of God, who, when he had prophetically foretold all things that were to befall him, had also predicted that he should be a bishop. Nevertheless, the consecration was not appointed immediately; but when the winter, which was then at hand, was over, it was carried out at Easter, in the city of York, and in the presence of the aforesaid King Egfrid; seven bishops coming together for his consecration, among whom, Theodore, of blessed memory, was Primate. He was first elected bishop of the church of Hagustald, in the place of Tunbert, who had been deposed from the episcopate; but because he chose rather to be placed over the church of Lindisfarne, in which he had lived, it was thought fit that Eata should return to the see of the church of Hagustald, to which he had been first ordained, and that Cuthbert should take upon him the government of the church of Lindisfarne.

Following the example of the blessed Apostles, he adorned the episcopal dignity by his virtuous deeds; for he both protected the people committed to his charge by constant prayer, and roused them, by wholesome admonitions, to thoughts of Heaven. He first showed in his own life what he taught others to do, a practice which greatly strengthens all teaching; for he was above all things inflamed with the fire of Divine charity, of sober mind and patient, most diligently intent on devout prayers, and kindly to all that came to him for comfort. He thought it stood in the stead of prayer to afford the weak brethren the help of his exhortation, knowing that he who said "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," said likewise, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour." He was noted for penitential abstinence, and was always through the grace of compunction, intent upon heavenly things. And when he offered up to God the Sacrifice of the saving Victim, he commended his prayer to the Lord, not with uplifted voice, but with tears drawn from the bottom of his heart.

XXIX

How this bishop foretold that his own death was at hand to the anchorite Herebert. [687 a.d.]

Having spent two years in his bishopric, he returned to his island and hermitage, being warned of God that the day of his death, or rather of his entrance into that life which alone can be called life, was drawing near; as he, at that time, with his wonted candour, signified to certain persons, though in words which were somewhat obscure, but which were nevertheless afterwards plainly understood; while to others he declared the same openly.

There was a certain priest, called Herebert, a man of holy life, who had long been united with the man of God, Cuthbert, in the bonds of spiritual friendship. This man leading a solitary life in the island of that great lake from which the river Derwent flows at its beginning, was wont to visit him every year, and to receive from him the teaching of everlasting salvation. Hearing that Bishop Cuthbert was come to the city of Lugubalia, he went thither to him, according to his custom, seeking to be more and more inflamed in heavenly desires through his wholesome admonitions. Whilst they alternately entertained one another with draughts of the celestial life, the bishop, among other things, said, "Brother Herebert, remember at this time to ask me and speak to me concerning all whereof you have need to ask and speak; for, when we part, we shall never again see one another with bodily eyesight in this world. For I know of a surety that the time of my departure is at hand, and that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle." Hearing these words, Herebert fell down at his feet, with tears and lamentations, and said, "I beseech you, by the Lord, not to forsake me; but to remember your most faithful companion, and entreat the mercy of God that, as we have served Him together upon earth, so we may depart together to behold His grace in Heaven. For you know that I have always endeavoured to live according to the words of your lips, and likewise whatsoever faults I have committed, either through ignorance or frailty, I have instantly sought to amend according to the judgement of your will." The bishop applied himself to prayer, and having presently had intimation in the spirit that he had obtained what he asked of the Lord, he said, "Rise, brother, and do not weep, but rejoice greatly because the mercy of Heaven has granted what we desired."

The event established the truth of this promise and prophecy, for after their parting, they never again saw one another in the flesh; but their spirits

The Venerable Bede

quitting their bodies on one and the same day, to wit, the 20th of March, were immediately united in fellowship in the blessed vision, and together translated to the heavenly kingdom by the ministry of angels. But Herebert was first wasted by a long-continued infirmity, through the dispensation of the Lord's mercy, as may be believed, to the end that if he was in any wise inferior in merit to the blessed Cuthbert, that which was lacking might be supplied by the chastening pain of a long sickness, that being thus made equal in grace to his intercessor, as he departed out of the body at one and the same time with him, so he might be accounted worthy to be received into the like abode of eternal bliss.

The most reverend father died in the isle of Farne, earnestly entreating the brothers that he might also be buried there, where he had served no small time under the Lord's banner. But at length yielding to their entreaties, he consented to be carried back to the isle of Lindisfarne, and there buried in the church. This being done, the venerable Bishop Wilfrid held the episcopal see of that church one year, till such time as a bishop should be chosen to be ordained in the room of Cuthbert. Afterwards Eadbert was ordained, a man renowned for his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, as also for his observance of the heavenly precepts, and chiefly for almsgiving, so that, according to the law, he gave every year the tenth part, not only of four-footed beasts, but also of all corn and fruit, as also of his garments, to the poor.

How his body was found altogether uncorrupted after it had been buried eleven years; and how his successor in the bishopric departed this world not long after. [698 a.d.]

XXX

In order to show forth the great glory of the life after death of the man of God, Cuthbert, whereas the loftiness of his life before his death had been revealed by the testimony of many miracles, when he had been buried eleven years, Divine Providence put it into the minds of the brethren to take up his bones. They thought to find them dry and all the rest of the body consumed and turned to dust, after the manner of the dead, and they desired to put them into a new coffin, and to lay them in the same place, but above the pavement, for the honour due to him. They made known their resolve to Bishop Eadbert, and he consented to it, and bade them to be mindful to do it on the anniversary of his burial. They did so, and opening the grave, found all the body whole, as if he were still alive, and the joints of the limbs pliable,

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

like one asleep rather than dead; besides, all the vestments in which he was clothed were not only undefiled, but marvellous to behold, being fresh and bright as at the first. The brothers seeing this, were struck with a great dread, and hastened to tell the bishop what they had found; he being then alone in a place remote from the church, and encompassed on all sides by the shifting waves of the sea. There he always used to spend the time of Lent, and was wont to pass the forty days before the Nativity of our Lord, in great devotion with abstinence and prayer and tears. There also his venerable predecessor, Cuthbert, had for some time served as the soldier of the Lord in solitude before he went to the isle of Farne.

They brought him also some part of the garments that had covered the holy body; which presents he thankfully accepted, and gladly heard of the miracles, and he kissed the garments even, with great affection, as if they had been still upon his father's body, and said, "Let new garments be put upon the body, in place of these you have brought, and so lay it in the coffin which you have prepared; for I know of a surety that the place will not long remain empty, which has been hallowed with so great grace of heavenly miracles; and how happy is he to whom the Lord, the Author and Giver of all bliss, shall vouchsafe to grant the privilege of resting therein." When the bishop had made an end of saying this and more in like manner, with many tears and great compunction and with faltering tongue, the brothers did as he had commanded them, and when they had wrapped the body in new garments, and laid it in a new coffin, they placed it above the pavement of the sanctuary. Soon after, Bishop Eadbert, beloved of God, fell grievously sick, and his fever daily increasing in severity, ere long, that is, on the 6th of May, he also departed to the Lord, and they laid his body in the grave of the blessed father Cuthbert, placing over it the coffin, with the uncorrupted remains of that father. The miracles of healing, sometimes wrought in that place testify to the merits of them both; of some of these we have before preserved the memory in the book of his life. But in this History we have thought fit to add some others which have lately come to our knowledge.

Of one that was
cured of a palsy
at his tomb.

XXXI

There was in that same monastery a brother whose name was Badudegn, who had for no small time ministered to the guests of the house, and is still living, having the testimony of all the brothers and strangers resorting thither, of being a man of much piety and religion, and serving the office put upon him only for the sake of the heavenly reward. This man, having one day washed in the sea the coverings or blankets which he used in the guest chamber, was returning home, when on the way, he was seized with a sudden infirmity, insomuch that he fell to the ground, and lay there a long time and could scarce at last rise again. When he got up, he felt one half of his body, from the head to the foot, struck with palsy, and with great trouble made his way home by the help of a staff. The disease increased by degrees, and as night approached, became still worse, so that when day returned, he could scarcely rise or walk alone. Suffering from this trouble, he conceived the wise resolve to go to the church, as best he could, and approach the tomb of the reverend father Cuthbert, and there, on his knees, humbly beseech the mercy of God that he might either be delivered from that disease, if it were well for him, or if by the grace of God it was ordained for him to be chastened longer by this affliction, that he might bear the pain which was laid upon him with patience and a quiet mind.

He did accordingly as he had determined, and supporting his weak limbs with a staff, entered the church. There prostrating himself before the body of the man of God, he prayed with pious earnestness, that, through his intercession, the Lord might be propitious to him. As he prayed, he seemed to fall into a deep sleep, and, as he was afterwards wont to relate, felt a large and broad hand touch his head, where the pain lay, and likewise pass over all that part of his body which had been benumbed by the disease, down to his feet. Gradually the pain departed and health returned. Then he awoke, and rose up in perfect health, and returning thanks to the Lord for his recovery, told the brothers what had been done for him; and to the joy of them all, returned the more zealously, as if chastened by the trial of his affliction, to the service which he was wont before to perform with care.

Moreover, the very garments which had been on Cuthbert's body, dedicated to God, either while he was alive, or after his death, were not without

the virtue of healing, as may be seen in the book of his life and miracles, by such as shall read it.

XXXII

Of one who was lately cured of a disease in his eye at the relics of St. Cuthbert.

Nor is that cure to be passed over in silence, which was performed by his relics three years ago, and was told me lately by the brother himself, on whom it was wrought. It happened in the monastery, which, being built near the river *Dacore*, has taken its name from the same, over which, at that time, the religious *Suidbert* presided as abbot. In that monastery was a youth whose eyelid was disfigured by an unsightly tumour, which growing daily greater, threatened the loss of the eye. The physicians endeavoured to mitigate it by applying ointments, but in vain. Some said it ought to be cut off; others opposed this course, for fear of greater danger. The brother having long laboured under this malady, when no human means availed to save his eye, but rather, it grew daily worse, on a sudden, through the grace of the mercy of God, it came to pass that he was cured by the relics of the holy father, *Cuthbert*. For when the brethren found his body uncorrupted, after having been many years buried, they took some part of the hair, to give, as relics, to friends who asked for them, or to show, in testimony of the miracle.

One of the priests of the monastery, named *Thruired*, who is now abbot there, had a small part of these relics by him at that time. One day he went into the church and opened the box of relics, to give some part of them to a friend who asked for it, and it happened that the youth who had the diseased eye was then in the church. The priest, having given his friend as much as he thought fit, gave the rest to the youth to put back into its place. But he having received the hairs of the holy head, prompted by some salutary impulse, applied them to the diseased eyelid, and endeavoured for some time, by the application of them, to abate and mitigate the tumour. Having done this, he again laid the relics in the box, as he had been bidden, believing that his eye would soon be cured by the hairs of the man of God, which had touched it; nor did his faith disappoint him. It was then, as he is wont to relate, about the second hour of the day; but while he was occupied with other thoughts and business of the day, on a sudden, about the sixth hour of the same, touching his eye, he found it and the eyelid as sound as if there never had been any

disfigurement or tumour on it.

BOOK FIVE

I

The venerable Ethelwald succeeded the man of God, Cuthbert, in the exercise of a solitary life, which he spent in the isle of Farne before he became a bishop. After he had received the priesthood, he consecrated his office by deeds worthy of that degree for many years in the monastery which is called Inhrypum. To the end that his merit and manner of life may be the more certainly made known, I will relate one miracle of his, which was told me by one of the brothers for and on whom the same was wrought; to wit, Guthfrid, the venerable servant and priest of Christ, who also, afterwards, as abbot, presided over the brethren of the same church of Lindisfarne, in which he was educated.

“I came,” says he, “to the island of Farne, with two others of the brethren, desiring to speak with the most reverend father, Ethelwald. Having been refreshed with his discourse, and asked for his blessing, as we were returning home, behold on a sudden, when we were in the midst of the sea, the fair weather in which we were sailing, was broken, and there arose so great and terrible a tempest, that neither sails nor oars were of any use to us, nor had we anything to expect but death. After long struggling with the wind and waves to no effect, at last we looked back to see whether it was possible by any means at least to return to the island whence we came, but we found that we were on all sides alike cut off by the storm, and that there was no hope of escape by our own efforts. But looking further, we perceived, on the island of Farne, our father Ethelwald, beloved of God, come out of his retreat to watch our course; for, hearing the noise of the tempest and raging sea, he had come forth to see what would become of us. When he beheld us in distress and despair, he bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in prayer for our life and safety; and as he finished his prayer, he calmed the swelling water, in such sort that the fierceness of the storm ceased on all sides, and fair winds attended us over a smooth sea to the very shore. When we had landed, and had pulled up our small vessel from the waves, the storm, which

How Ethelwald,
successor to
Cuthbert, lead-
ing a hermit's
life, calmed a
tempest by his
prayers when the
brethren were
in danger at sea.
[687-699 a.d.]

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

had ceased a short time for our sake, presently returned, and raged furiously during the whole day; so that it plainly appeared that the brief interval of calm had been granted by Heaven in answer to the prayers of the man of God, to the end that we might escape.”

The man of God remained in the isle of Farne twelve years, and died there; but was buried in the church of the blessed Apostle Peter, in the isle of Lindisfarne, beside the bodies of the aforesaid bishops. These things happened in the days of King Aldfrid, who, after his brother Egfrid, ruled the nation of the Northumbrians for nineteen years.

II

How Bishop John cured a dumb man by his blessing. [687 a.d.]

In the beginning of Aldfrid's reign, Bishop Eata died, and was succeeded in the bishopric of the church of Hagustald by the holy man John, of whom those that knew him well are wont to tell many miracles, and more particularly Berthun, a man worthy of all reverence and of undoubted truthfulness, and once his deacon, now abbot of the monastery called Inderauuda, that is, “In the wood of the Deiri”: some of which miracles we have thought fit to hand on to posterity. There is a certain remote dwelling enclosed by a mound, among scattered trees, not far from the church of Hagustald, being about a mile and a half distant and separated from it by the river Tyne, having an oratory dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, where the man of God used frequently, as occasion offered, and specially in Lent, to abide with a few companions and in quiet give himself to prayer and study. Having come hither once at the beginning of Lent to stay, he bade his followers find out some poor man labouring under any grievous infirmity, or want, whom they might keep with them during those days, to receive alms, for so he was always used to do.

There was in a township not far off, a certain youth who was dumb, known to the bishop, for he often used to come into his presence to receive alms. He had never been able to speak one word; besides, he had so much scurf and scab on his head, that no hair could ever grow on the top of it, but only some rough hairs stood on end round about it. The bishop caused this young man to be brought, and a little hut to be made for him within the enclosure of the dwelling, in which he might abide, and receive alms from him every day.

The Venerable Bede

When one week of Lent was over, the next Sunday he bade the poor man come to him, and when he had come, he bade him put his tongue out of his mouth and show it him; then taking him by the chin, he made the sign of the Holy Cross on his tongue, directing him to draw it back so signed into his mouth and to speak. "Pronounce some word," said he; "say 'gae,'?" which, in the language of the English, is the word of affirming and consenting, that is, yes. The youth's tongue was immediately loosed, and he spoke as he was bidden. The bishop then added the names of the letters: "Say A." He said A. "Say B;" he said B also. When he had repeated all the letters after the bishop, the latter proceeded to put syllables and words to him, and when he had repeated them all rightly he bade him utter whole sentences, and he did it. Nor did he cease all that day and the next night, as long as he could keep awake, as those who were present relate, to say something, and to express his private thoughts and wishes to others, which he could never do before; after the manner of the man long lame, who, when he was healed by the Apostles Peter and John, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising the Lord, rejoicing to have the use of his feet, which he had so long lacked. The bishop, rejoicing with him at his cure, caused the physician to take in hand the healing of the sores of his head. He did as he was bidden, and with the help of the bishop's blessing and prayers, a goodly head of hair grew as the skin was healed. Thus the youth became fair of countenance, ready of speech, with hair curling in comely fashion, whereas before he had been ill-favoured, miserable, and dumb. Thus filled with joy at his recovered health, notwithstanding that the bishop offered to keep him in his own household, he chose rather to return home.

How he healed
a sick maiden by
his prayers. [705
a.d.]

III

The same Berthun told another miracle concerning the said bishop. When the most reverend Wilfrid, after a long banishment, was admitted to the bishopric of the church of Hagustald, and the aforesaid John, upon the death of Bosa, a man of great sanctity and humility, was, in his place, appointed bishop of York, he himself came, once upon a time, to the monastery of nuns, at the place called Wetadun, where the Abbess Heriburg then presided. "When we were come thither," said he, "and had been received with great and universal joy, the abbess told us, that one of the nuns, who

was her own daughter after the flesh, laboured under a grievous sickness, for she had been lately let blood in the arm, and whilst she was under treatment, was seized with an attack of sudden pain, which speedily increased, while the wounded arm became worse, and so much swollen, that it could scarce be compassed with both hands; and she lay in bed like to die through excess of pain. Wherefore the abbess entreated the bishop that he would vouchsafe to go in and give her his blessing; for she believed that she would soon be better if he blessed her or laid his hands upon her. He asked when the maiden had been let blood, and being told that it was on the fourth day of the moon, said, 'You did very indiscreetly and unskilfully to let blood on the fourth day of the moon; for I remember that Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory, said, that blood-letting at that time was very dangerous, when the light of the moon is waxing and the tide of the ocean is rising. And what can I do for the maiden if she is like to die?'

"But the abbess still earnestly entreated for her daughter, whom she dearly loved, and designed to make abbess in her stead, and at last prevailed with him to go in and visit the sick maiden. Wherefore he went in, taking me with him to the maid, who lay, as I said, in sore anguish, and her arm swelling so greatly that it could not be bent at all at the elbow; and he stood and said a prayer over her, and having given his blessing, went out. Afterwards, as we were sitting at table, at the usual hour, some one came in and called me out, saying, 'Quoenburg' (that was the maid's name) 'desires that you should immediately go back to her.' This I did, and entering the chamber, I found her of more cheerful countenance, and like one in good health. And while I was sitting beside her, she said, 'Shall we call for something to drink?'—'Yes,' said I, 'and right glad am I, if you can.' When the cup was brought, and we had both drunk, she said, 'As soon as the bishop had said the prayer for me and given me his blessing and had gone out, I immediately began to mend; and though I have not yet recovered my former strength, yet all the pain is quite gone both from my arm, where it was most burning, and from all my body, as if the bishop had carried it away with him; notwithstanding the swelling of the arm still seems to remain.' But when we departed thence, the cure of the pain in her limbs was followed by the assuaging of the grievous swelling; and the maiden being thus delivered from pains and death, returned praise to our Lord and Saviour, in company with His other servants who were there."

IV

How he healed a
thegn's wife that
was sick, with
holy water.

The same abbot related another miracle, not unlike the former, of the aforesaid bishop. "Not very far from our monastery," he said, "to wit, about two miles off, was the township of one Puch, a thegn, whose wife had lain sick of a very grievous disease for nearly forty days, insomuch that for three weeks she could not be carried out of the chamber where she lay. It happened that the man of God was, at that time, called thither by the thegn to consecrate a church; and when that was done, the thegn desired him to come into his house and dine. The bishop declined, saying that he must return to the monastery, which was very near. The thegn, entreating him more earnestly, vowed he would also give alms to the poor, if so be that the bishop would vouchsafe to enter his house that day and break his fast. I joined my entreaties to his, promising in like manner to give alms for the relief of the poor, if he would but go and dine at the thegn's house, and give his blessing. Having at length, with much difficulty, prevailed, we went in to refresh ourselves. The bishop had sent to the woman that lay sick some of the holy water, which he had blessed for the consecration of the church, by one of the brothers who had come with me, ordering him to give her some to drink, and wash that part of her where he found that her pain was greatest, with some of the same water. This being done, the woman immediately got up whole and sound, and perceiving that she had not only been delivered from her long sickness, but at the same time had recovered the strength which she had lost for so great a time, she presented the cup to the bishop and to us, and continued serving us with meat and drink as she had begun, till dinner was over; following the example of the blessed Peter's wife's mother, who, having been sick of a fever, arose at the touch of our Lord's hand, and having forthwith received health and strength, ministered to them."

V

How he likewise
recalled by his
prayers a thegn's
servant from
death.

At another time also, being called to consecrate the church of a thegn named Addi, when he had performed the required duty, he was entreated by the thegn to go in to one of his servants, who lay dangerously ill, insomuch that having lost all use of his limbs, he seemed to be at the point of death; and moreover the coffin had been made ready wherein to bury him after his

death. The thegn urged his entreaties with tears, earnestly beseeching him that he would go in and pray for the servant, because his life was of great moment to him; and he believed that if the bishop would lay his hand upon him and give him his blessing, he would soon mend. So the bishop went in, and saw him very near death, and by his side the coffin in which he was to be laid for his burial, whilst all mourned. He said a prayer and blessed him, and going out, spake the wonted words of comfort, "Good health be yours and that speedily." Afterwards, when they were sitting at table, the servant sent to his lord, desiring that he would let him have a cup of wine, because he was thirsty. The thegn, rejoicing greatly that he could drink, sent him a cup of wine, blessed by the bishop; and, as soon as he had drunk it, he immediately got up, and, shaking off the heaviness of his infirmity, dressed himself and went forth, and going in to the bishop, saluted him and the other guests, saying that he also would gladly eat and drink with them. They bade him sit down with them at table, greatly rejoicing at his recovery. He sat down, ate and drank and made merry, and behaved himself like the rest of the company; and living many years after, continued in the same health which he had gained. The aforesaid abbot says this miracle was not wrought in his presence, but that he had it from those who were present.

VI

Nor do I think that this miracle, which Herebald, the servant of Christ, says was wrought upon himself by the bishop, is to be passed over in silence. He was then one of that bishop's clergy, but now presides as abbot in the monastery at the mouth of the river Tyne. "Living with him," said he, "and being very well acquainted with his course of life, I found it to be in all points worthy of a bishop, as far as it is lawful for men to judge; but I have known by the experience of others, and more particularly by my own, how great his merit was before Him Who seeth the heart; having been by his prayer and blessing recalled from the threshold of death and brought back to the way of life. For, when in the prime of my youth, I lived among his clergy, applying myself to reading and singing, but not having yet altogether withdrawn my heart from youthful pleasures, it happened one day that, as we were travelling with him, we came into a plain and open road, well fitted for galloping. The young men that were with him, and especially the laymen, began to entreat

How, both by his prayers and blessing, he recalled from death one of his clerks, who had bruised himself by a fall.

The Venerable Bede

the bishop to give them leave to gallop, and make trial of their horses one with another. He at first refused, saying that it was an idle request; but at last, overcome by the unanimous desire of so many, ‘Do so,’ said he, ‘if you will, but let Herebald have no part in the trial.’ Then I earnestly prayed that I might have leave to compete with the rest, for I relied on an excellent horse, which he had himself given me, but I could in no wise obtain my request.

“When they had several times galloped backwards and forwards, the bishop and I looking on, my wanton humour prevailed, and I could no longer refrain, but though he forbade me, I struck in among them at their sport, and began to ride with them at full speed; whereat I heard him call after me with a groan, ‘Alas! how much you grieve me by riding after that manner.’ Though I heard him, I went on against his command; but immediately the fiery horse taking a great leap over a hollow place in the way, I fell, and at once lost all sense and motion, like one dying; for there was in that place a stone, level with the ground, covered with only a thin coating of turf, and no other stone was to be found in all that expanse of plain; and it happened by chance, or rather by Divine Providence so ordering it, to punish my disobedience, that my head and my hand, which in falling I had put under my head, struck upon that stone, so that my thumb was broken and my skull fractured, and I became, as I said, like one dead.

“And because I could not move, they stretched a tent there for me to lie in. It was about the seventh hour of the day, and having lain still and as it were dead from that time till the evening, I then revived a little, and was carried home by my companions, and lay speechless all the night, vomiting blood, because something was broken within me by the fall. The bishop was very much grieved at my fall and my misfortune, for he bore me extraordinary affection. Nor would he stay that night, as he was wont, among his clergy; but spent it alone in watching and prayer, imploring the Divine goodness, as I suppose, for my preservation. Coming to me early in the morning, and having said a prayer over me, he called me by my name, and when I awoke as it were out of a heavy sleep, he asked whether I knew who it was that spoke to me? I opened my eyes and said, ‘Yes; you are my beloved bishop.’—‘Can you live?’ said he. I answered, ‘I can, through your prayers, if the Lord will.’

“He then laid his hand on my head, with the words of blessing, and re-

turned to prayer; when he came again to see me, in a short time, he found me sitting and able to talk; and, being moved by Divine inspiration, as it soon appeared, began to ask me, whether I knew for certain that I had been baptized? I answered that I knew beyond all doubt that I had been washed in the font of salvation, for the remission of sins, and I named the priest by whom I knew that I had been baptized. He replied, ‘If you were baptized by that priest, your baptism is not perfect; for I know him, and that when he was ordained priest, he could in no wise, by reason of the dulness of his understanding, learn the ministry of catechizing and baptizing; for which reason I enjoined upon him altogether to desist from presuming to exercise that ministry, which he could not duly perform.’ This said, he set himself to catechize me that same hour; and it came to pass that when he breathed on my face, straightway I felt better. He called the surgeon and ordered him to set and bind up my skull where it was fractured; and presently having received his blessing, I was so much better that I mounted on horseback the next day, and travelled with him to another place; and being soon after perfectly recovered, I was washed in the water of life.”

He continued in his bishopric thirty-three years, and then ascending to the heavenly kingdom, was buried in St. Peter’s Chapel, in his own monastery, which is called, “In the wood of the Deiri,” in the year of our Lord 721. For having, by his great age, become unable to govern his bishopric, he ordained Wilfrid, his priest, bishop of the church of York, and retired to the aforesaid monastery, and there ended his days in godly conversation.

XII

At this time a memorable miracle, and like to those of former days, was wrought in Britain; for, to the end that the living might be roused from the death of the soul, a certain man, who had been some time dead, rose again to the life of the body, and related many memorable things that he had seen; some of which I have thought fit here briefly to describe. There was a certain householder in that district of the Northumbrians which is called Incuneningum, who led a godly life, with all his house. This man fell sick, and his sickness daily increasing, he was brought to extremity, and died in the beginning of the night; but at dawn he came to life again, and suddenly sat up, whereat

How one in the province of the Northumbrians, rose from the dead, and related many things which he had seen, some to be greatly dreaded and some to be desired. [Circ. 696 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

all those that sat about the body weeping fled away in great terror, only his wife, who loved him better, though trembling and greatly afraid, remained with him. And he comforting her, said, "Fear not, for I am now in very deed risen from death whereof I was holden, and permitted again to live among men; nevertheless, hereafter I must not live as I was wont, but after a very different manner." Then rising immediately, he went to the oratory of the little town, and continuing in prayer till day, forthwith divided all his substance into three parts; one whereof he gave to his wife, another to his children, and the third, which he kept himself, he straightway distributed among the poor. Not long after, being set free from the cares of this world, he came to the monastery of Mailros, which is almost enclosed by the winding of the river Tweed, and having received the tonsure, went apart into a place of abode which the abbot had provided, and there he continued till the day of his death, in so great contrition of mind and mortifying of the body, that even if his tongue had been silent, his life would have declared that he had seen many things either to be dreaded or coveted, which were hidden from other men.

Thus he related what he had seen. "He that led me had a countenance full of light, and shining raiment, and we went in silence, as it seemed to me, towards the rising of the summer sun. And as we walked we came to a broad and deep valley of infinite length; it lay on our left, and one side of it was exceeding terrible with raging flames, the other no less intolerable for violent hail and cold snows drifting and sweeping through all the place. Both sides were full of the souls of men which seemed to be tossed from one side to the other as it were by a violent storm; for when they could no longer endure the fervent heat, the hapless souls leaped into the midst of the deadly cold; and finding no rest there, they leaped back again to be burnt in the midst of the unquenchable flames. Now whereas an innumerable multitude of misshapen spirits were thus tormented far and near with this interchange of misery, as far as I could see, without any interval of rest, I began to think that peradventure this might be Hell, of whose intolerable torments I had often heard men talk. My guide, who went before me, answered to my thought, saying, 'Think not so, for this is not the Hell you believe it to be.'

"When he had led me farther by degrees, sore dismayed by that dread sight, on a sudden I saw the place before us begin to grow dark and filled with shadows. When we entered into them, the shadows by degrees grew

so thick, that I could see nothing else, save only the darkness and the shape and garment of him that led me. As we went on 'through the shades in the lone night,' lo! on a sudden there appeared before us masses of foul flame constantly rising as it were out of a great pit, and falling back again into the same. When I had been led thither, my guide suddenly vanished, and left me alone in the midst of darkness and these fearful sights. As those same masses of fire, without intermission, at one time flew up and at another fell back into the bottom of the abyss, I perceived that the summits of all the flames, as they ascended were full of the spirits of men, which, like sparks flying upwards with the smoke, were sometimes thrown on high, and again, when the vapours of the fire fell, dropped down into the depths below. Moreover, a stench, foul beyond compare, burst forth with the vapours, and filled all those dark places.

"Having stood there a long time in much dread, not knowing what to do, which way to turn, or what end awaited me, on a sudden I heard behind me the sound of a mighty and miserable lamentation, and at the same time noisy laughter, as of a rude multitude insulting captured enemies. When that noise, growing plainer, came up to me, I beheld a crowd of evil spirits dragging five souls of men, wailing and shrieking, into the midst of the darkness, whilst they themselves exulted and laughed. Among those human souls, as I could discern, there was one shorn like a clerk, one a layman, and one a woman. The evil spirits that dragged them went down into the midst of the burning pit; and it came to pass that as they went down deeper, I could no longer distinguish between the lamentation of the men and the laughing of the devils, yet I still had a confused sound in my ears. In the meantime, some of the dark spirits ascended from that flaming abyss, and running forward, beset me on all sides, and with their flaming eyes and the noisome fire which they breathed forth from their mouths and nostrils, tried to choke me; and threatened to lay hold on me with fiery tongs, which they had in their hands, yet they durst in no wise touch me, though they assayed to terrify me. Being thus on all sides encompassed with enemies and shades of darkness, and casting my eyes hither and thither if haply anywhere help might be found whereby I might be saved, there appeared behind me, on the way by which I had come, as it were, the brightness of a star shining amidst the darkness; which waxing greater by degrees, came rapidly towards me: and when it drew near, all those evil spirits,

The Venerable Bede

that sought to carry me away with their tongs, dispersed and fled.

“Now he, whose approach put them to flight, was the same that led me before; who, then turning towards the right, began to lead me, as it were, towards the rising of the winter sun, and having soon brought me out of the darkness, led me forth into an atmosphere of clear light. While he thus led me in open light, I saw a vast wall before us, the length on either side, and the height whereof, seemed to be altogether boundless. I began to wonder why we went up to the wall, seeing no door in it, nor window, nor any way of ascent. But when we came to the wall, we were presently, I know not by what means, on the top of it, and lo! there was a wide and pleasant plain full of such fragrance of blooming flowers that the marvellous sweetness of the scents immediately dispelled the foul stench of the dark furnace which had filled my nostrils. So great was the light shed over all this place that it seemed to exceed the brightness of the day, or the rays of the noontide sun. In this field were innumerable companies of men clothed in white, and many seats of rejoicing multitudes. As he led me through the midst of bands of happy inhabitants, I began to think that this perchance might be the kingdom of Heaven, of which I had often heard tell. He answered to my thought, saying, ‘Nay, this is not the kingdom of Heaven, as you think.’

“When we had also passed those mansions of blessed spirits, and gone farther on, I saw before me a much more beautiful light than before, and therein heard sweet sounds of singing, and so wonderful a fragrance was shed abroad from the place, that the other which I had perceived before and thought so great, then seemed to me but a small thing; even as that wondrous brightness of the flowery field, compared with this which I now beheld, appeared mean and feeble. When I began to hope that we should enter that delightful place, my guide, on a sudden stood still; and straightway turning, led me back by the way we came.

“In our return, when we came to those joyous mansions of the white-robed spirits, he said to me, ‘Do you know what all these things are which you have seen?’ I answered, ‘No,’ and then he said, ‘That valley which you beheld terrible with flaming fire and freezing cold, is the place in which the souls of those are tried and punished, who, delaying to confess and amend their crimes, at length have recourse to repentance at the point of death, and so go

forth from the body; but nevertheless because they, even at their death, confessed and repented, they shall all be received into the kingdom of Heaven at the day of judgement; but many are succoured before the day of judgement, by the prayers of the living and their alms and fasting, and more especially by the celebration of Masses. Moreover that foul flaming pit which you saw, is the mouth of Hell, into which whosoever falls shall never be delivered to all eternity. This flowery place, in which you see this fair and youthful company, all bright and joyous, is that into which the souls of those are received who, indeed, when they leave the body have done good works, but who are not so perfect as to deserve to be immediately admitted into the kingdom of Heaven; yet they shall all, at the day of judgement, behold Christ, and enter into the joys of His kingdom; for such as are perfect in every word and deed and thought, as soon as they quit the body, forthwith enter into the kingdom of Heaven; in the neighbourhood whereof that place is, where you heard the sound of sweet singing amidst the savour of a sweet fragrance and brightness of light. As for you, who must now return to the body, and again live among men, if you will seek diligently to examine your actions, and preserve your manner of living and your words in righteousness and simplicity, you shall, after death, have a place of abode among these joyful troops of blessed souls which you behold. For when I left you for awhile, it was for this purpose, that I might learn what should become of you.' When he had said this to me, I much abhorred returning to the body, being delighted with the sweetness and beauty of the place which I beheld, and with the company of those I saw in it. Nevertheless, I durst not ask my guide anything; but thereupon, on a sudden, I found myself, I know not how, alive among men."

Now these and other things which this man of God had seen, he would not relate to slothful men, and such as lived negligently; but only to those who, being terrified with the dread of torments, or ravished with the hope of everlasting joys, would draw from his words the means to advance in piety. In the neighbourhood of his cell lived one Haemgils, a monk, and eminent in the priesthood, whose good works were worthy of his office: he is still living, and leading a solitary life in Ireland, supporting his declining age with coarse bread and cold water. He often went to that man, and by repeated questioning, heard of him what manner of things he had seen when out of the body; by whose account those few particulars which we have briefly set down came

The Venerable Bede

also to our knowledge. And he related his visions to King Aldfrid, a man most learned in all respects, and was by him so willingly and attentively heard, that at his request he was admitted into the monastery above-mentioned, and received the crown of the monastic tonsure; and the said king, whensoever he came into those parts, very often went to hear him. At that time the abbot and priest Ethelwald, a man of godly and sober life, presided over that monastery. He now occupies the episcopal see of the church of Lindisfarne, leading a life worthy of his degree.

He had a place of abode assigned him apart in that monastery, where he might give himself more freely to the service of his Creator in continual prayer. And inasmuch as that place was on the banks of the river, he was wont often to go into the same for the great desire he had to do penance in his body, and oftentimes to plunge in it, and to continue saying psalms or prayers in the same as long as he could endure it, standing still, while the waves flowed over him, sometimes up to the middle, and sometimes even to the neck in water; and when he went ashore, he never took off his cold, wet garments till they grew warm and dry on his body. And when in the winter the cracking pieces of ice were floating about him, which he had himself sometimes broken, to make room to stand or plunge in the river, and those who beheld it would say, "We marvel, brother Drythelm (for so he was called), that you are able to endure such severe cold;" he answered simply, for he was a simple and sober-spirited man, "I have seen greater cold." And when they said, "We marvel that you choose to observe so hard a rule of continence," he replied, "I have seen harder things." And so, until the day of his calling hence, in his unwearied desire of heavenly bliss, he subdued his aged body with daily fasting, and forwarded the salvation of many by his words and life.

How another
contrarywise
before his death
saw a book
containing his
sins, which was
shown him by
devils. [704-709
a.d.]

XIII

But contrarywise there was a man in the province of the Mercians, whose visions and words, but not his manner of life, were of profit to others, though not to himself. In the reign of Coenred, who succeeded Ethelred, there was a layman who was a king's thegn, no less acceptable to the king for his outward industry, than displeasing to him for his neglect of his own soul. The king diligently admonished him to confess and amend, and to forsake his evil

ways, lest he should lose all time for repentance and amendment by a sudden death. But though frequently warned, he despised the words of salvation, and promised that he would do penance at some future time. In the meantime, falling sick he betook himself to his bed, and was tormented with grievous pains. The king coming to him (for he loved the man much) exhorted him, even then, before death, to repent of his offences. But he answered that he would not then confess his sins, but would do it when he was recovered of his sickness, lest his companions should upbraid him with having done that for fear of death, which he had refused to do in health. He thought he spoke very bravely, but it afterwards appeared that he had been miserably deceived by the wiles of the Devil.

The disease increasing, when the king came again to visit and instruct him, he cried out straightway with a lamentable voice, "What will you now? What are you come for? for you can no longer do aught for my profit or salvation." The king answered, "Say not so; take heed and be of sound mind." "I am not mad," replied he, "but I now know the worst and have it for certain before my eyes." "What is that?" said the king. "Not long since," said he, "there came into this room two fair youths, and sat down by me, the one at my head, and the other at my feet. One of them drew forth a book most beautiful, but very small, and gave it me to read; looking into it, I there found all the good actions I had ever done in my life written down, and they were very few and inconsiderable. They took back the book and said nothing to me. Then, on a sudden, appeared an army of evil spirits of hideous countenance, and they beset this house without, and sitting down filled the greater part of it within. Then he, who by the blackness of his gloomy face, and his sitting above the rest, seemed to be the chief of them, taking out a book terrible to behold, of a monstrous size, and of almost insupportable weight, commanded one of his followers to bring it to me to read. Having read it, I found therein most plainly written in hideous characters, all the crimes I ever committed, not only in word and deed, but even in the least thought; and he said to those glorious men in white raiment who sat by me, 'Why sit ye here, since ye know of a surety that this man is ours?' They answered, 'Ye speak truly; take him and lead him away to fill up the measure of your damnation.' This said, they forthwith vanished, and two wicked spirits arose, having in their hands ploughshares, and one of them struck me on the head, and the other on the

foot. And these ploughshares are now with great torment creeping into the inward parts of my body, and as soon as they meet I shall die, and the devils being ready to snatch me away, I shall be dragged into the dungeons of hell.”

Thus spoke that wretch in his despair, and soon after died, and now in vain suffers in eternal torments that penance which he failed to suffer for a short time with the fruits of forgiveness. Of whom it is manifest, that (as the blessed Pope Gregory writes of certain persons) he did not see these things for his own sake, since they did not avail him, but for the sake of others, who, knowing of his end, should be afraid to put off the time of repentance, whilst they have leisure, lest, being prevented by sudden death, they should perish impenitent. And whereas he saw diverse books laid before him by the good and evil spirits, this was done by Divine dispensation, that we may keep in mind that our deeds and thoughts are not scattered to the winds, but are all kept to be examined by the Supreme Judge, and will in the end be shown us either by friendly angels or by the enemy. And whereas the angels first drew forth a white book, and then the devils a black one; the former a very small one, the latter one very great; it is to be observed, that in his first years he did some good actions, all which he nevertheless obscured by the evil actions of his youth. If, contrarywise, he had taken care in his youth to correct the errors of his boyhood, and by well-doing to put them away from the sight of God, he might have been admitted to the fellowship of those of whom the Psalm says, “Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” This story, as I learned it of the venerable Bishop Pechthelm, I have thought good to set forth plainly, for the salvation of such as shall read or hear it.

How another
in like manner,
being at the
point of death,
saw the place
of punishment
appointed for
him in Hell.

XIV

I myself knew a brother, would to God I had not known him, whose name I could mention if it were of any avail, dwelling in a famous monastery, but himself living infamously. He was oftentimes rebuked by the brethren and elders of the place, and admonished to be converted to a more chastened life; and though he would not give ear to them, they bore with him long and patiently, on account of their need of his outward service, for he was a cunning artificer. But he was much given to drunkenness, and other pleasures of

a careless life, and more used to stop in his workshop day and night, than to go to church to sing and pray and hear the Word of life with the brethren. For which reason it befell him according to the saying, that he who will not willingly humble himself and enter the gate of the church must needs be led against his will into the gate of Hell, being damned. For he falling sick, and being brought to extremity, called the brethren, and with much lamentation, like one damned, began to tell them, that he saw Hell opened, and Satan sunk in the depths thereof; and Caiaphas, with the others that slew our Lord, hard by him, delivered up to avenging flames. "In whose neighbourhood," said he, "I see a place of eternal perdition prepared for me, miserable wretch that I am." The brothers, hearing these words, began diligently to exhort him, that he should repent even then, whilst he was still in the flesh. He answered in despair, "There is no time for me now to change my course of life, when I have myself seen my judgement passed."

Whilst uttering these words, he died without having received the saving Viaticum, and his body was buried in the farthest parts of the monastery, nor did any one dare either to say Masses or sing psalms, or even to pray for him. Oh how far asunder hath God put light from darkness! The blessed Stephen, the first martyr, being about to suffer death for the truth, saw the heavens opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and where he was to be after death, there he fixed the eyes of his mind, that he might die the more joyfully. But this workman, of darkened mind and life, when death was at hand, saw Hell opened, and witnessed the damnation of the Devil and his followers; he saw also, unhappy wretch! his own prison among them, to the end that, despairing of salvation, he might himself die the more miserably, but might by his perdition afford cause of salvation to the living who should hear of it. This befell of late in the province of the Bernicians, and being noised abroad far and near, inclined many to do penance for their sins without delay. Would to God that this also might come to pass through the reading of our words!

XV

At this time a great part of the Scots in Ireland, and some also of the Britons in Britain, by the grace of God, adopted the reasonable and ecclesi-

How divers churches of the Scots, at the instance of Ad-man, adopted the Catholic Easter; and how the same wrote a book about the holy places. [703 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

astical time of keeping Easter. For when Adamnan, priest and abbot of the monks that were in the island of Hii, was sent by his nation on a mission to Aldfrid, king of the English, he abode some time in that province, and saw the canonical rites of the Church. Moreover, he was earnestly admonished by many of the more learned sort, not to presume to live contrary to the universal custom of the Church, either in regard to the observance of Easter, or any other ordinances whatsoever, with those few followers of his dwelling in the farthest corner of the world. Wherefore he so changed his mind, that he readily preferred those things which he had seen and heard in the English churches, to the customs which he and his people had hitherto followed. For he was a good and wise man, and excellently instructed in knowledge of the Scriptures. Returning home, he endeavoured to bring his own people that were in Hii, or that were subject to that monastery, into the way of truth, which he had embraced with all his heart; but he could not prevail. He sailed over into Ireland, and preaching to those people, and with sober words of exhortation making known to them the lawful time of Easter, he brought back many of them, and almost all that were free from the dominion of those of Hii, from the error of their fathers to the Catholic unity, and taught them to keep the lawful time of Easter.

Returning to his island, after having celebrated the canonical Easter in Ireland, he was instant in preaching the Catholic observance of the season of Easter in his monastery, yet without being able to achieve his end; and it so happened that he departed this life before the next year came round, the Divine goodness so ordaining it, that as he was a great lover of peace and unity, he should be taken away to everlasting life before he should be obliged, on the return of the season of Easter, to be at greater variance with those that would not follow him into the truth.

This same man wrote a book concerning the holy places, of great profit to many readers; his authority was the teaching and dictation of Arculf, a bishop of Gaul, who had gone to Jerusalem for the sake of the holy places; and having wandered over all the Promised Land, travelled also to Damascus, Constantinople, Alexandria, and many islands in the sea, and returning home by ship, was cast upon the western coast of Britain by a great tempest. After many adventures he came to the aforesaid servant of Christ, Adamnan, and being found to be learned in the Scriptures, and acquainted with the

holy places, was most gladly received by him and gladly heard, insomuch that whatsoever he said that he had seen worthy of remembrance in the holy places, Adaman straightway set himself to commit to writing. Thus he composed a work, as I have said, profitable to many, and chiefly to those who, being far removed from those places where the patriarchs and Apostles lived, know no more of them than what they have learnt by reading. Adaman presented this book to King Aldfrid, and through his bounty it came to be read by lesser persons. The writer thereof was also rewarded by him with many gifts and sent back into his country. I believe it will be of advantage to our readers if we collect some passages from his writings, and insert them in this our History.

XXII

Not long after, those monks also of the Scottish nation, who lived in the isle of Hii, with the other monasteries that were subject to them, were by the Lord's doing brought to the canonical observance with regard to Easter, and the tonsure. For in the year of our Lord 716, when Osred was slain, and Coenred took upon him the government of the kingdom of the Northumbrians, the father and priest, Egbert, beloved of God, and worthy to be named with all honour, whom we have before often mentioned, came to them from Ireland, and was honourably and joyfully received. Being a most gracious teacher, and most devout in practising those things which he taught, and being willingly heard by all, by his pious and diligent exhortations, he converted them from that deep-rooted tradition of their fathers, of whom may be said those words of the Apostle, "That they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." He taught them to celebrate the principal solemnity after the catholic and apostolic manner, as has been said, wearing on their heads the figure of an unending crown. It is manifest that this came to pass by a wonderful dispensation of the Divine goodness; to the end, that the same nation which had willingly, and without grudging, taken heed to impart to the English people that learning which it had in the knowledge of God, should afterwards, by means of the English nation, be brought, in those things which it had not, to a perfect rule of life. Even as, contrarywise, the Britons, who would not reveal to the English the knowledge which they had of the Christian faith, now, when the English people believe, and are in all points

How the monks of Hii, and the monasteries subject to them, began to celebrate the canonical Easter at the preaching of Egbert. [716 a.d.]

The Venerable Bede

instructed in the rule of the Catholic faith, still persist in their errors, halting and turned aside from the true path, expose their heads without a crown, and keep the Feast of Christ apart from the fellowship of the Church of Christ.

The monks of Hii, at the teaching of Egbert, adopted the catholic manner of conversation, under Abbot Dunchad, about eighty years after they had sent Bishop Aidan to preach to the English nation. The man of God, Egbert, remained thirteen years in the aforesaid island, which he had thus consecrated to Christ, as it were, by a new ray of the grace of fellowship and peace in the Church; and in the year of our Lord 729, in which Easter was celebrated on the 24th of April, when he had celebrated the solemnity of the Mass, in memory of the Resurrection of our Lord, that same day he departed to the Lord and thus finished, or rather never ceases endlessly to celebrate, with our Lord, and the Apostles, and the other citizens of heaven, the joy of that greatest festival, which he had begun with the brethren, whom he had converted to the grace of unity. And it was a wonderful dispensation of the Divine Providence, that the venerable man passed from this world to the Father, not only at Easter, but also when Easter was celebrated on that day, on which it had never been wont to be celebrated in those parts. The brethren rejoiced in the sure and catholic knowledge of the time of Easter, and were glad in that their father, by whom they had been brought into the right way, passing hence to the Lord should plead for them. He also gave thanks that he had so long continued in the flesh, till he saw his hearers accept and keep with him as Easter that day which they had ever before avoided. Thus the most reverend father being assured of their amendment, rejoiced to see the day of the Lord, and he saw it and was glad.

Of the present
state of the
English nation,
or of all Britain.
[725-731 a.d.]

XXIII

In the year of our Lord 725, being the seventh year of Osric, king of the Northumbrians, who had succeeded Coenred, Wictred, the son of Egbert, king of Kent, died on the 23rd of April, and left his three sons, Ethelbert, Eadbert, and Alric, heirs of that kingdom, which he had governed thirty-four years and a half. The next year Tobias, bishop of the church of Rochester, died, a most learned man, as has been said before; for he was disciple to those masters of blessed memory, Theodore, the archbishop, and Abbot

Hadrian, wherefore, as has been said, besides having a great knowledge of letters both ecclesiastical and general, he learned both the Greek and Latin tongues to such perfection, that they were as well known and familiar to him as his native language. He was buried in the chapel of St. Paul the Apostle, which he had built within the church of St. Andrew for his own place of burial. After him Aldwulf took upon him the office of bishop, having been consecrated by Archbishop Bertwald.

In the year of our Lord 729, two comets appeared about the sun, to the great terror of the beholders. One of them went before the sun in the morning at his rising, the other followed him when he set in the evening, as it were presaging dire disaster to both east and west; or without doubt one was the forerunner of the day, and the other of the night, to signify that mortals were threatened with calamities at both times. They carried their flaming brands towards the north, as it were ready to kindle a conflagration. They appeared in January, and continued nearly a fortnight. At which time a grievous blight fell upon Gaul, in that it was laid waste by the Saracens with cruel bloodshed; but not long after in that country they received the due reward of their unbelief. In that year the holy man of God, Egbert, departed to the Lord, as has been said above, on Easter day; and immediately after Easter, that is, on the 9th of May, Osric, king of the Northumbrians, departed this life, after he had reigned eleven years, and appointed Ceolwulf, brother to Coenred, who had reigned before him, his successor; the beginning and progress of whose reign have been so filled with many and great commotions and conflicts, that it cannot yet be known what is to be said concerning them, or what end they will have.

In the year of our Lord 731, Archbishop Bertwald died of old age, on the 13th of January, having held his see thirty-seven years, six months and fourteen days. In his stead, the same year, Tatwine, of the province of the Mercians, was made archbishop, having been a priest in the monastery called Briudun. He was consecrated in the city of Canterbury by the venerable men, Daniel, bishop of Winchester, Ingwald of London, Aldwin of Lichfield, and Aldwulf of Rochester, on Sunday, the 10th of June, being a man renowned for piety and wisdom, and of notable learning in Holy Scripture.

Thus at the present time, the bishops Tatwine and Aldwulf preside in

The Venerable Bede

the churches of Kent; Ingwald is bishop in the province of the East Saxons. In the province of the East Angles, the bishops are Aldbert and Hadulac; in the province of the West Saxons, Daniel and Forthere; in the province of the Mercians, Aldwin. Among those peoples who dwell beyond the river Severn to the westward, Walhstod is bishop; in the province of the Hwiccas, Wilfrid; in the province of Lindsey, Bishop Cynibert presides; the bishopric of the Isle of Wight belongs to Daniel, bishop of the city of Winchester. The province of the South Saxons, having now continued some years without a bishop, receives episcopal ministrations from the prelate of the West Saxons. All these provinces, and the other southern provinces, as far as the boundary formed by the river Humber, with their several kings, are subject to King Ethelbald.

But in the province of the Northumbrians, where King Ceolwulf reigns, four bishops now preside; Wilfrid in the church of York, Ethelwald in that of Lindisfarne, Acca in that of Hagustald, Pecthelm in that which is called the White House, which, as the number of the faithful has increased, has lately become an episcopal see, and has him for its first prelate. The Pictish people also at this time are at peace with the English nation, and rejoice in having their part in Catholic peace and truth with the universal Church. The Scots that inhabit Britain, content with their own territories, devise no plots nor hostilities against the English nation. The Britons, though they, for the most part, as a nation hate and oppose the English nation, and wrongfully, and from wicked lewdness, set themselves against the appointed Easter of the whole Catholic Church; yet, inasmuch as both Divine and human power withstand them, they can in neither purpose prevail as they desire; for though in part they are their own masters, yet part of them are brought under subjection to the English. In these favourable times of peace and calm, many of the Northumbrians, as well of the nobility as private persons, laying aside their weapons, and receiving the tonsure, desire rather both for themselves and their children to take upon them monastic vows, than to practise the pursuit of war. What will be the end hereof, the next age will see. This is for the present the state of all Britain; about two hundred and eighty-five years after the coming of the English into Britain, and in the 731st year of our Lord, in Whose kingdom that shall have no end let the earth rejoice; and Britain being one with them in the joy of His faith, let the multitude of isles be glad,

and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

XXIV

Chronological
recapitulation of
the whole work:
also concern-
ing the author
himself.

I have thought fit briefly to sum up those things which have been related at length under their particular dates, that they may be the better kept in memory.

In the sixtieth year before the Incarnation of our Lord, Caius Julius Cæsar, first of the Romans invaded Britain, and was victorious, yet could not maintain the supreme power there. [I, 2.]

In the year of our Lord, 46, Claudius, being the second of the Romans who came to Britain, received the surrender of a great part of the island, and added the Orkney islands to the Roman empire. [I, 3.]

In the year of our Lord 167, Eleuther, being made bishop at Rome, governed the Church most gloriously fifteen years. To whom Lucius, king of Britain, sent a letter, asking to be made a Christian, and succeeded in obtaining his request. [I, 4.]

In the year of our Lord 189, Severus, being made emperor, reigned seventeen years; he fortified Britain with a rampart from sea to sea. [I, 5.]

In the year 381, Maximus, being made emperor in Britain, crossed over into Gaul, and slew Gratian. [I, 9.]

In the year 409, Rome was overthrown by the Goths, from which time the Romans ceased to rule in Britain. [I, 11.]

In the year 430, Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine to the Scots that believed in Christ to be their first bishop. [I, 13.]

In the year 449, Marcian being made emperor with Valentinian, reigned seven years; in whose time the English, being called in by the Britons, came into Britain. [I, 15.]

In the year 538, an eclipse of the sun came to pass on the 16th of February, from the first hour until the third.

The Venerable Bede

In the year 540, an eclipse of the sun came to pass on the 20th of June, and the stars appeared during almost half an hour after the third hour of the day.

In the year 547, Ida began to reign; he was the founder of the royal family of the Northumbrians, and he reigned twelve years.

In the year 565, the priest, Columba, came out of Scotland, into Britain, to teach the Picts, and he built a monastery in the isle of Hii. [III, 4.]

In the year 596, Pope Gregory sent Augustine with monks into Britain, to preach the good tidings of the Word of God to the English nation. [I, 23.]

In the year 597, the aforesaid teachers arrived in Britain; being about the 150th year from the coming of the English into Britain. [I, 25.]

In the year 601, Pope Gregory sent the pall into Britain to Augustine, who was already made bishop; he sent also several ministers of the Word, among whom was Paulinus. [I, 29.]

In the year 603, a battle was fought at Degsastan. [I, 34.]

In the year 604, the East Saxons received the faith of Christ, under King Sabert, Mellitus being bishop. [II, 3.]

In the year 605, Gregory died. [II, 1.]

In the year 616, Ethelbert, king of Kent died. [II, 5.]

In the year 625, Paulinus was ordained bishop of the Northumbrians by Archbishop Justus. [II, 9.]

In the year 626, Eanfled, daughter of King Edwin, was baptized with twelve others, on the eve of Whitsunday. [Ib.]

In the year 627, King Edwin was baptized, with his nation, at Easter. [II, 14.]

In the year 633, King Edwin being killed, Paulinus returned to Kent. [II, 20.]

In the year 640, Eadbald, king of Kent, died. [III, 8.]

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

In the year 642, King Oswald was slain. [III, 9.]

In the year 644, Paulinus, formerly bishop of York, but then of the city of Rochester, departed to the Lord. [III, 14.]

In the year 651, King Oswin was killed, and Bishop Aidan died.

In the year 653, the Middle Angles, under their prince, Penda, were admitted to the mysteries of the faith. [III, 21.]

In the year 655, Penda was slain, and the Mercians became Christians. [III, 24.]

In the year 664, an eclipse came to pass; Earconbert, king of Kent, died; and Colman with the Scots returned to his people; a pestilence arose; Ceadda and Wilfrid were ordained bishops of the Northumbrians. [III, 26-28, IV, 1.]

In the year 668, Theodore was ordained bishop. [IV, 1.]

In the year 670, Oswy, king of the Northumbrians, died. [IV, 5.]

In the year 673, Egbert, king of Kent, died; and a synod was held at Hertford, in the presence of King Egfrid, Archbishop Theodore presiding: the synod was of great profit, and its decrees are contained in ten articles.

In the year 675, Wulfhere, king of the Mercians, [pg 385] when he had reigned seventeen years, died and left the government to his brother Ethelred.

In the year 676, Ethelred ravaged Kent. [IV, 12.]

In the year 678, a comet appeared; Bishop Wilfrid was driven from his see by King Egfrid; and Bosa, Eata, and Eadhaed were consecrated bishops in his stead. V, 19.]

In the year 679, Aelfwine was killed. [IV, 21.]

In the year 680, a synod was held in the plain of Haethfelth, concerning the Catholic faith, Archbishop Theodore presiding; John, the Roman abbot, was also present. The same year also the Abbess Hilda died at Streanaeshalch. [IV, 17, 18, 23.]

In the year 685, Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, was slain. The same

The Venerable Bede

year Hlothere, king of Kent, died. [IV, 26.]

In the year 688, Caedwald, king of the West Saxons, went to Rome from Britain. [V, 7.]

In the year 690, Archbishop Theodore died. [V, 8.]

In the year 697, Queen Osthryth was murdered by her own nobles, to wit, the nobles of the Mercians.

In the year 698, Berctred, an ealdorman of the king of the Northumbrians, was slain by the Picts.

In the year 704, Ethelred, after he had reigned thirty-one years over the nation of the Mercians, became a monk, and gave up the kingdom to Coenred. [V, 19.]

In the year 705, Aldfrid, king of the Northumbrians, died. [V, 18.]

In the year 709, Coenred, king of the Mercians, having reigned five years, went to Rome. [V, 19.]

In the year 711, the commander Bertfrid fought with the Picts.

In the year 716, Osred, king of the Northumbrians, was killed; and Ceolred, king of the Mercians, died; and the man of God, Egbert, brought the monks of Hii to observe the Catholic Easter and the ecclesiastical tunsure. [V, 22.]

In the year 725, Wictred, king of Kent, died. [V, 23.]

In the year 729, comets appeared; the holy Egbert passed away; and Osric died. [Ibid.]

In the year 731, Archbishop Bertwald died. [Ibid.]

The same year Tatwine was consecrated ninth archbishop of the church of Canterbury, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Ethelbald, king of the Mercians.

Thus much of the Ecclesiastical History of Britain, and more especially of the English nation, as far as I could learn either from the writings of the

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

ancients, or the tradition of our forefathers, or of my own knowledge, with the help of the Lord, I, Bede, the servant of Christ, and priest of the monastery of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, which is at Wearmouth and Jarrow, have set forth. Having been born in the territory of that same monastery, I was given, by the care of kinsmen, at seven years of age, to be educated by the most reverend Abbot Benedict, and afterwards by Ceolfrid, and spending all the remaining time of my life a dweller in that monastery, I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture; and amidst the observance of monastic rule, and the daily charge of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, or teaching, or writing. In the nineteenth year of my age, I received deacon's orders; in the thirtieth, those of the priesthood, both of them by the ministry of the most reverend Bishop John, and at the bidding of the Abbot Ceolfrid. From the time when I received priest's orders, till the fifty-ninth year of my age, I have made it my business, for my own needs and those of my brethren, to compile out of the works of the venerable Fathers, the following brief notes on the Holy Scriptures, and also to make some additions after the manner of the meaning and interpretation given by them:

On the Beginning of Genesis, to the birth of Isaac and the casting out of Ishmael, four books.

Concerning the Tabernacle and its Vessels, and of the Vestments of the Priests, three books.

On the first part of Samuel, to the Death of Saul, three books.

Concerning the Building of the Temple, of Allegorical Exposition, and other matters, two books.

Likewise on the Book of Kings, thirty Questions.

On the Proverbs of Solomon, three books.

On the Song of Songs, seven books.

On Isaiah, Daniel, the twelve Prophets, and Part of Jeremiah, Divisions of Chapters, collected from the Treatise of the blessed Jerome.

On Ezra and Nehemiah, three books.

The Venerable Bede

On the song of Habakkuk, one book.

On the Book of the blessed Father Tobias, one Book of Allegorical Explanation concerning Christ and the Church.

Also, Chapters of Readings on the Pentateuch of Moses, Joshua, and Judges;

On the Books of Kings and Chronicles;

On the Book of the blessed Father Job;

On the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs;

On the Prophets Isaiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

On the Gospel of Mark, four books.

On the Gospel of Luke, six books.

Of Homilies on the Gospel, two books.

On the Apostle, whatsoever I have found in the works of St. Augustine I have taken heed to transcribe in order.

On the Acts of the Apostles, two books.

On the seven Catholic Epistles, a book on each.

On the Revelation of St. John, three books.

Likewise, Chapters of Lessons on all the New Testament, except the Gospel.

Likewise a book of Epistles to divers Persons, of which one is of the Six Ages of the world; one of the Halting-places of the Children of Israel; one on the words of Isaiah, "And they shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited"; one of the Reason of Leap-Year, and one of the Equinox, according to Anatolius.

Likewise concerning the Histories of Saints: I translated the Book of the Life and Passion of St. Felix, Confessor, from the metrical work of Paulinus,

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

into prose; the Book of the Life and Passion of St. Anastasius, which was ill translated from the Greek, and worse amended by some ignorant person, I have corrected as to the sense as far as I could; I have written the Life of the Holy Father Cuthbert, who was both monk and bishop, first in heroic verse, and afterwards in prose.

The History of the Abbots of this monastery, in which I rejoice to serve the Divine Goodness, to wit, Benedict, Ceolfrid, and Huaetbert, in two books.

The Ecclesiastical History of our Island and Nation, in five books.

The Martyrology of the Festivals of the Holy Martyrs, in which I have carefully endeavoured to set down all whom I could find, and not only on what day, but also by what sort of combat, and under what judge they overcame the world.

A Book of Hymns in divers sorts of metre, or rhythm.

A Book of Epigrams in heroic or elegiac verse.

Of the Nature of Things, and of the Times, one book of each; likewise, of the Times, one larger book.

A book of Orthography arranged in Alphabetical Order.

Likewise a Book of the Art of Poetry, and to it I have added another little Book of Figures of Speech or Tropes; that is, of the Figures and Modes of Speech in which the Holy Scriptures are written.

And I beseech Thee, good Jesus, that to whom Thou hast graciously granted sweetly to drink in the words of Thy knowledge, Thou wilt also vouchsafe in Thy loving-kindness that he may one day come to Thee, the Fountain of all wisdom, and appear for ever before Thy face.

In the year 731 King Ceolwulf was taken prisoner, and tonsured, and sent back to his kingdom; Bishop Acca was driven from his see.

The Continuation of Bede.

In the year 732, Egbert was made Bishop of York, in the room of Wilfrid. Cynibert Bishop of Lindsey died.

In the year of our Lord 733, Archbishop Tatwine, having received the pall

The Venerable Bede

by Apostolic authority, ordained Alwic and Sigfrid, bishops.

In the year 733, there was an eclipse of the sun on the 14th day of August about the third hour, in such wise that the whole orb of the sun seemed to be covered with a black and gloomy shield.

In the year 734, the moon, on the 31st of January, about the time of cock-crowing, was, for about a whole hour, coloured blood-red, after which a blackness followed, and she regained her wonted light.

In the year from the Incarnation of Christ, 734, bishop Tatwine died.

In the year 735, Nothelm was ordained archbishop; and bishop Egbert, having received the pall from the Apostolic see, was the first to be established as archbishop after Paulinus, and he ordained Frithbert, and Frithwald bishops; and the priest Bede died.

In the year 737, an excessive drought rendered the land unfruitful; and Ceolwulf, voluntarily receiving the tonsure, left the kingdom to Eadbert.

In the year 739, Edilhart, king of the West-Saxons, died, as did Archbishop Nothelm.

In the year 740, Cuthbert was consecrated in Nothelm's stead. Ethelbald, king of the Mercians, cruelly and wrongfully wasted part of Northumbria, their king, Eadbert, with his army, being employed against the Picts. Bishop Ethelwald died also, and Conwulf, was consecrated in his stead. Arnwin and Eadbert were slain.

In the year 741, a great drought came upon the country. Charles, king of the Franks, died; and his sons, Caroloman and Pippin, reigned in his stead.

In the year 745, Bishop Wilfrid and Ingwald, Bishop of London, departed to the Lord.

In the year 747, the man of God, Herefrid, died.

In the year 750, Cuthred, king of the West Saxons, rose up against king Ethelbald and Oengus; Theodor and Eanred died; Eadbert added the plain of Kyle and other places to his dominions.

Ecclesiastical History of the English People

In the year 753, in the fifth year of King Eadbert, on the 9th of January, an eclipse of the sun came to pass; afterwards, in the same year and month, on the 24th day of January, the moon suffered an eclipse, being covered with a gloomy, black shield, in like manner as was the sun a little while before.

In the year 754, Boniface, called also Winfrid, Bishop of the Franks, received the crown of martyrdom, together with fifty-three others; and Redger was consecrated archbishop in his stead, by pope Stephen.

In the year 757, Ethelbald, king of the Mercians, was treacherously and miserably murdered, in the night, by his own guards; Beornred began his reign; Cyniwulf, king of the West Saxons, died; and the same year, Offa, having put Beornred to flight, sought to gain the kingdom of the Mercians by bloodshed.

In the year 758, Eadbert, king of the Northumbrians, receiving St. Peter's tonsure for the love of God, and to the end that he might take the heavenly country by force, left the kingdom to his son Oswulf.

In the year 755, Oswulf was wickedly murdered by his own thegns; and Ethelwald, being chosen the same year by his people, entered upon the kingdom; in whose second year there was great tribulation by reason of pestilence, which continued almost two years, divers grievous sicknesses raging, but more especially the disease of dysentery.

In the year 761, Oengus, king of the Picts, died; who, from the beginning to the end of his reign, continued to be a blood-stained and tyrannical butcher; Oswin was also slain.

In the year 765, King Aluchred came to the throne.

In the year 766 a.d., Archbishop Egbert, of the royal race, and endued with divine knowledge, as also Frithbert, both of them truly faithful bishops, departed to the Lord.

THE END.



LIFE OF CHARLEMAGNE

EINHARD

Translated by Samuel Turner

Preface

Since I have taken upon myself to narrate the public and private life, and no small part of the deeds, of my lord and foster-father, the most lent and most justly renowned King Charles, I have condensed the matter into as brief a form as possible. I have been careful not to omit any facts that could come to my knowledge, but at the same time not to offend by a prolix style those minds that despise everything modern, if one can possibly avoid offending by a new work men who seem to despise also the masterpieces of antiquity, the works of most learned and luminous writers. Very many of them, I have no doubt, are men devoted to a life of literary leisure, who feel that the affairs of the present generation ought not to be passed by, and who do not consider everything done today as unworthy of mention and deserving to be given over to silence and oblivion, but are nevertheless seduced by lust of immortality to celebrate the glorious deeds of other times by some sort of composition rather than to deprive posterity of the mention of their own names by not writing at all.

Be this as it may, I see no reason why I should refrain from entering upon a task of this kind, since no man can write with more accuracy than I of events that took place about me, and of facts concerning which I had personal

knowledge, ocular demonstration as the saying goes, and I have no means of ascertaining whether or not any one else has the subject in hand.

In any event, I would rather commit my story to writing, and hand it down to posterity in partnership with others, so to speak, than to suffer the most glorious life of this most excellent king, the greatest of all the princes of his day, and his illustrious deeds, hard for men of later times to imitate, to be wrapped in the darkness of oblivion.

But there are still other reasons, neither unwarrantable nor insufficient, in my opinion, that urge me to write on this subject, namely, the care that King Charles bestowed upon me in my childhood, and my constant friendship with himself and his children after I took up my abode at court. In this way he strongly endeared me to himself, and made me greatly his debtor as well in death as in life, so that were I unmindful of the benefits conferred upon me, to keep silence concerning the most glorious and illustrious deeds of a man who claims so much at my hands, and suffer his life to lack due eulogy and written memorial, as if he had never lived, I should deservedly appear ungrateful, and be so considered, albeit my powers are feeble, scanty, next to nothing indeed, and not at all adapted to write and set forth a life that would tax the eloquence of a Tully [note: Tully is Marcus Tullius Cicero].

I submit the book. It contains the history of a very great and distinguished man; but there is nothing in it to wonder at besides his deeds, except the fact that I, who am a barbarian, and very little versed in the Roman language, seem to suppose myself capable of writing gracefully and respectably in Latin, and to carry my presumption so far as to disdain the sentiment that Cicero is said in the first book of the *Tusculan Disputations* to have expressed when speaking of the Latin authors. His words are: "It is an outrageous abuse both of time and literature for a man to commit his thoughts to writing without having the ability either to arrange them or elucidate them, or attract readers by some charm of style." This dictum of the famous orator might have deterred me from writing if I had not made up my mind that it was better to risk the opinions of the world, and put my little talents for composition to the test, than to slight the memory of so great a man for the sake of sparing myself.

IX

Spanish Expedition

In the midst of this vigorous and almost uninterrupted struggle with the Saxons, he covered the frontier by garrisons at the proper points, and marched over the Pyrenees into Spain at the head of all the forces that he could muster. All the towns and castles that he attacked surrendered. and up to the time of his homeward march he sustained no loss whatever; but on his return through the Pyrenees he had cause to rue the treachery of the Gascons. That region is well adapted for ambushes by reason of the thick forests that cover it; and as the army was advancing in the long line of march necessitated by the narrowness of the road, the Gascons, who lay in ambush [778] on the top of a very high mountain, attacked the rear of the baggage train and the rear guard in charge of it, and hurled them down to the very bottom of the valley at Roncevalles, later celebrated in the Song of Roland. In the struggle that ensued they cut them off to a man; they then plundered the baggage, and dispersed with all speed in every direction under cover of approaching night. The lightness of their armor and the nature of the battle ground stood the Gascons in good stead on this occasion, whereas the Franks fought at a disadvantage in every respect, because of the weight of their armor and the unevenness of the ground. Eggihard, the King's steward; Anselm, Count Palatine; and Roland, Governor of the March of Brittany, with very many others, fell in this engagement. This ill turn could not be avenged for the nonce, because the enemy scattered so widely after carrying out their plan that not the least clue could be had to their whereabouts.

X

Submission of the Bretons and Beneventans

Charles also subdued the Bretons [786], who live on the sea coast, in the extreme western part of Gaul. When they refused to obey him, he sent an army against them, and compelled them to give hostages, and to promise to do his bidding. He afterwards entered Italy in person with his army [787], and passed through Rome to Capua, a city in Campania, where he pitched his camp and threatened the Beneventans with hostilities unless they should submit themselves to him. Their duke, Aragis, escaped the danger by sending his two sons, Rumold and Grimold, with a great sum of money to meet the King, begging him to accept them as hostages, and promising for himself and

his people compliance with all the King's commands, on the single condition that his personal attendance should not be required. The King took the welfare of the people into account rather than the stubborn disposition of the Duke, accepted the proffered hostages, and released him from the obligation to appear before him in consideration of his handsome gift. He retained the younger son only as hostage, and sent the elder back to his father, and returned to Rome, leaving commissioners with Aragis to exact the oath of allegiance, and administer it to the Beneventans. He stayed in Rome several days in order to pay his devotions at the holy places, and then came back to Gaul [787].

Tassilo and the
Bavarian Cam-
paign

XI

At this time, on a sudden, the Bavarian war broke out, but came to a speedy end. It was due to the arrogance and folly of Duke Tassilo. His wife [Liutberga], a daughter of King Desiderius, was desirous of avenging her father's banishment through the agency of her husband, and accordingly induced him to make a treaty with the Huns, the neighbors of the Bavarians on the east, and not only to leave the King's commands unfulfilled, but to challenge him to war. Charles' high spirit could not brook Tassilo's insubordination, for it seemed to him to pass all bounds; accordingly he straightway summoned his troops from all sides for a campaign against Bavaria and appeared in person with a great army on the river Lech, which forms the boundary between the Bavarians and the Alemanni. After Pitching his camp upon its banks, he determined to put the Duke's disposition to the test by an embassy before entering the province. Tassilo did not think that it was for his own or his people's good to persist, so he surrendered himself to the King, gave the hostages demanded, among them his own son Theodo, and promised by oath not to give ear to any one who should attempt to turn him from his allegiance; so this war, which bade fair to be very grievous, came very quickly to an end. Tassilo, however, was afterward summoned to the King's presence [788], and not suffered to depart, and the government of the province that he had had in charge was no longer intrusted to a duke, but to counts.

XII

Slavic War

After these uprisings had been thus quelled, war was declared against the Slavs who are commonly known among us as Wilzi, but properly, that is to say in their own tongue, are called Welatabians. The Saxons served in this campaign as auxiliaries among the tribes that followed the King's standard at his summons, but their obedience lacked sincerity and devotion. War was declared because the Slavs kept harassing the Abodriti, old allies of the Franks, by continual raids, in spite of all commands to the contrary. A gulf [ie the Baltic Sea] of unknown length, but nowhere more than a hundred miles wide, and in many parts narrower, stretches off towards the east from the Western Ocean. Many tribes have settlements on its shores; the Danes and Swedes, whom we call Northmen, on the northern shore and all the adjacent islands; but the southern shore is inhabited by the Slava and the Aisti [from whom derive the modern name of "Estonia"]; and various other tribes. The Welatabians, against whom the King now made war, were the chief of these; but in a single campaign [789], which he conducted in person, he so crushed and subdued them that they did not think it advisable thereafter to refuse obedience to his commands.

XIII

War with the Huns

The war against the Avars, or Huns, followed [791], and, except the Saxon war, was the greatest that he waged; he took it up with more spirit than any of his other wars, and made far greater preparations for it. He conducted one campaign in person in Pannonia, of which the Huns then had possession. He entrusted all subsequent operations to his son, Pepin, and the governors of the provinces, to counts even, and lieutenants. Although they most vigorously prosecuted the war, it only came to a conclusion after a seven years' struggle. The utter depopulation of Pannonia, and the site of the Khan's palace, now a desert, where not a trace of human habitation is visible bear witness how many battles were fought in those years, and how much blood was shed. The entire body of the Hun nobility perished in this contest, and all its glory with it. All the money and treasure that had been years amassing was seized, and no war in which the Franks have ever engaged within the memory of man brought them such riches and such booty. Up to that time the Huns

Einhard

had passed for, a poor people, but so much gold and silver was found in the Khan's palace, and so much valuable spoil taken in battle, that one may well think that the Franks took justly from the Huns what the Huns had formerly taken unjustly from other nations. Only two of the chief men of the Franks fell in this war - Eric, Duke of Friuli, who was killed in Tarsatch [799], a town on the coast of Liburnia by the treachery of the inhabitants; and Gerold, Governor of Bavaria, who met his death in Pannonia, slain [799], with two men that were accompanying him, by an unknown hand while he was marshaling his forces for battle against the Huns, and riding up and down the line encouraging his men. This war was otherwise almost a bloodless one so far as the Franks were concerned, and ended most satisfactorily, although by reason of its magnitude it was long protracted.

Danish War

XIV

The Saxon war next came to an end as successful as the struggle had been long. The Bohemian [805-806] and Linonian [808] wars that next broke out could not last long; both were quickly carried through under the leadership of the younger Charles. The last of these wars was the one declared against the Northmen called Danes. They began their career as pirates, but afterward took to laying waste the coasts of Gaul and Germany with their large fleet. Their King Godfred was so puffed with vain aspirations that he counted on gaining empire overall Germany, and looked upon Saxony and Frisia as his provinces. He had already subdued his neighbors the Abodriti, and made them tributary, and boasted that he would shortly appear with a great army before Aix-la-Chapelle [Aachen - Charlemagn's capital], where the King held his court. Some faith was put in his words, empty as they sound, and it is supposed that he would have attempted something of the sort if he had not been prevented by a premature death. He was murdered [810] by one of his own bodyguard, and so ended at once his life and the war that he had begun.

Extent of
Charlemagne's
Conquests

XV

Such are the wars, most skillfully planned and successfully fought, which this most powerful king waged during the forty-seven years of his reign. He so largely increased the Frank kingdom, which was already great and strong

when he received it at his father's hands, that more than double its former territory was added to it. The authority of the Franks was formerly confined to that part of Gaul included between the Rhine and the Loire, the Ocean and the Balearic Sea; to that part of Germany which is inhabited by the so-called Eastern Franks, and is bounded by Saxony and the Danube, the Rhine and the Saale-this stream separates the Thuringians from the Sorabians; and to the country of the Alemanni and Bavarians. By the wars above mentioned he first made tributary Aquitania, Gascony, and the whole of the region of the Pyrenees as far as the River Ebro, which rises in the land of the Navarrese, flows through the most fertile districts of Spain, and empties into the Balearic Sea, beneath the walls of the city of Tortosa. He next reduced and made tributary all Italy from Aosta to Lower Calabria, where the boundary line runs between the Beneventans and the Greeks, a territory more than a thousand miles" long; then Saxony, which constitutes no small part of Germany, and is reckoned to be twice as wide as the country inhabited by the Franks, while about equal to it in length; in addition, both Pannonias, Dacia beyond the Danube, and Istria, Liburnia, and Dalmatia, except the cities on the coast, which he left to the Greek Emperor for friendship's sake, and because of the treaty that he had made with him. In fine, he vanquished and made tributary all the wild and barbarous tribes dwelling in Germany between the Rhine and the Vistula, the Ocean and the Danube, all of which speak very much the same language, but differ widely from one another in customs and dress. The chief among them are the Welatabians, the Sorabians, the Abodriti, and the Bohemians, and he had to make war upon these; but the rest, by far the larger number, submitted to him of their own accord.

XVI

Foreign Relations

He added to the glory of his reign by gaining the good will of several kings and nations; so close, indeed, was the alliance that he contracted with Alfonso [II 791-842] King of Galicia and Asturias, that the latter, when sending letters or ambassadors to Charles, invariably styled himself his man. His munificence won the kings of the Scots also to pay such deference to his wishes that they never gave him any other title than lord or themselves than subjects and slaves: there are letters from them extant in which these feelings in his regard are expressed. His relations with Aaron [ie Harun Al-Rashid, 786-809], King

of the Persians, who ruled over almost the whole of the East, India excepted, were so friendly that this prince preferred his favor to that of all the kings and potentates of the earth, and considered that to him alone marks of honor and munificence were due. Accordingly, when the ambassadors sent by Charles to visit the most holy sepulcher and place of resurrection of our Lord and Savior presented themselves before him with gifts, and made known their master's wishes, he not only granted what was asked, but gave possession of that holy and blessed spot. When they returned, he dispatched his ambassadors with them, and sent magnificent gifts, besides stuffs, perfumes, and other rich products of the Eastern lands.. A few years before this, Charles had asked him for an elephant, and he sent the only one that he had. The Emperors of Constantinople, Nicephorus [I 802-811], Michael [I, 811-813], and Leo [V, 813-820], made advances to Charles, and sought friendship and alliance with him by several embassies; and even when the Greeks suspected him of designing to wrest the empire from them, because of his assumption of the title Emperor, they made a close alliance with him, that he might have no cause of offense. In fact, the power of the Franks was always viewed by the Greeks and Romans with a jealous eye, whence the Greek proverb "Have the Frank for your friend, but not for your neighbor."

XVII

This King, who showed himself so great in extending his empire and subduing foreign nations, and was constantly occupied with plans to that end, undertook also very many works calculated to adorn and benefit his kingdom, and brought several of them to completion. Among these, the most deserving of mention are the basilica of the Holy Mother of God at Aix-la-Chapelle, built in the most admirable manner, and a bridge over the Rhine at Mayence, half a mile long, the breadth of the river at this point. This bridge was destroyed by fire [May, 813] the year before Charles died, but, owing to his death so soon after, could not be repaired, although he had intended to rebuild it in stone. He began two palaces of beautiful workmanship - one near his manor called Ingelheim, not far from Mayence; the other at Nimeguen, on the Waal, the stream that washes the south side of the island of the Batavians. But, above all, sacred edifices were the object of his care throughout his whole kingdom; and whenever he found them falling to ruin from age, he

commanded the priests and fathers who had charge of them to repair them , and made sure by commissioners that his instructions were obeyed. He also fitted out a fleet for the war with the Northmen; the vessels required for this purpose were built on the rivers that flow from Gaul and Germany into the Northern Ocean. Moreover, since the Northmen continually overran and laid waste the Gallic and German coasts, he caused watch and ward to be kept in all the harbors, and at the mouths of rivers large enough to admit the entrance of vessels, to prevent the enemy from disembarking; and in the South, in Narbonensis and Septimania, and along the whole coast of Italy as far as Rome, he took the same precautions against the Moors, who had recently begun their piratical practices. Hence, Italy suffered no great harm in his time at the hands of the Moors, nor Gaul and Germany from the Northmen, save that the Moors got possession of the Etruscan town of Civita Vecchia by treachery, and sacked it, and the Northmen harried some of the islands in Frisia off the German coast.

XVIII

Private Life

Thus did Charles defend and increase as well, as beautify his, kingdom, as is well known; and here let me express my admiration of his great qualities and his extraordinary constancy alike in good and evil fortune. I will now forthwith proceed to give the details of his private and family life.

After his father's death, while sharing the kingdom with his brother, he bore his unfriendliness and jealousy most patiently, and, to the wonder of all, could not be provoked to be angry with him. Later he married a daughter of Desiderius, King of the Lombards, at the instance of his mother; but he repudiated her at the end of a year for some reason unknown, and married Hildegard, a woman of high birth, of Suabian origin. He had three sons by her - Charles, Pepin and Louis -and as many daughters - Hruodrud, Bertha, and Gisela. He had three other daughters besides these- Theoderada, Hiltrud, and Ruodhaid - two by his third wife, Fastrada, a woman of East Frankish (that is to say, of German) origin, and the third by a concubine, whose name for the moment escapes me. At the death of Fastrada [794], he married Liutgard, an Alemannic woman, who bore him no children. After her death [Jun 4, 800] he had three concubines - Gersuinda, a Saxon by

whom he had Adaltrud; Regina, who was the mother of Drogo and Hugh; and Ethelind, by whom he had Theodoric. Charles' mother, Berthrada, passed her old age with him in great honor; he entertained the greatest veneration for her; and there was never any disagreement between them except when he divorced the daughter of King Desiderius, whom he had married to please her. She died soon after Hildegard, after living to three grandsons and as many granddaughters in her son's house, and he buried her with great pomp in the Basilica of St. Denis, where his father lay. He had an only sister, Gisela, who had consecrated herself to a religious life from girlhood, and he cherished as much affection for her as for his mother. She also died a few years before him in the nunnery where she passed her life.

Private Life
(continued)
[Charles and the
Education of His
Children]

XIX

The plan that he adopted for his children's education was, first of all, to have both boys and girls instructed in the liberal arts, to which he also turned his own attention. As soon as their years admitted, in accordance with the custom of the Franks, the boys had to learn horsemanship, and to practise war and the chase, and the girls to familiarize themselves with cloth-making, and to handle distaff and spindle, that they might not grow indolent through idleness, and he fostered in them every virtuous sentiment. He only lost three of all his children before his death, two sons and one daughter, Charles, who was the eldest, Pepin, whom he had made King of Italy, and Hruodrud, his oldest daughter, whom he had betrothed to Constantine [VI, 780-802], Emperor of the Greeks. Pepin left one son, named Bernard, and five daughters, Adelaide, Atula, Guntrada, Berthaid and Theoderada. The King gave a striking proof of his fatherly affection at the time of Pepin's death [810]: he appointed the grandson to succeed Pepin, and had the granddaughters brought up with his own daughters. When his sons and his daughter died, he was not so calm as might have been expected from his remarkably strong mind, for his affections were no less strong, and moved him to tears. Again, when he was told of the death of Hadrian [796], the Roman Pontiff, whom he had loved most of all his friends, he wept as much as if he had lost a brother, or a very dear son. He was by nature most ready to contract friendships, and not only made friends easily, but clung to them persistently, and cherished most fondly those with whom he had formed such ties. He was so careful of

the training of his sons and daughters that he never took his meals without them when he was at home, and never made a journey without them; his sons would ride at his side, and his daughters follow him, while a number of his body-guard, detailed for their protection, brought up the rear. Strange to say, although they were very handsome women, and he loved them very dearly, he was never willing to marry any of them to a man of their own nation or to a foreigner, but kept them all at home until his death, saying that he could not dispense with their society. Hence, though other-wise happy, he experienced the malignity of fortune as far as they were concerned; yet he concealed his knowledge of the rumors current in regard to them, and of the suspicions entertained of their honor.

XX

Conspiracies
Against Charle-
magne

By one of his concubines he had a son, handsome in face, but hunch-backed, named Pepin, whom I omitted to mention in the list of his children. When Charles was at war with the Huns, and was wintering in Bavaria [792], this Pepin shammed sickness, and plotted against his father in company with some of the leading Franks, who seduced him with vain promises of the royal authority. When his deceit was discovered, and the conspirators were punished, his head was shaved, and he was suffered, in accordance with his wishes, to devote himself to a religious life in the monastery of Prüm. A formidable conspiracy against Charles had previously been set on foot in Germany, but all the traitors were banished, some of them without mutilation, others after their eyes had been put out. Three of them only lost their lives; they drew their swords and resisted arrest, and, after killing several men, were cut down, because they could not be otherwise overpowered. It is supposed that the cruelty of Queen Fastrada was the primary cause of these plots, and they were both due to Charles' apparent acquiescence in his wife's cruel conduct, and deviation from the usual kindness and gentleness of his disposition. All the rest of his life he was regarded by everyone with the utmost love and affection, so much so that not the least accusation of unjust rigor was ever made against him.

XXI

He liked foreigners, and was at great pains to take them under his protection. There were often so many of them, both in the palace and the kingdom, that they might reasonably have been considered a nuisance; but he, with his broad humanity, was very little disturbed by such annoyances, because he felt himself compensated for these great inconveniences by the praises of his generosity and the reward of high renown.

XXII

Charles was large and strong, and of lofty stature, though not disproportionately tall (his height is well known to have been seven times the length of his foot); the upper part of his head was round, his eyes very large and animated, nose a little long, hair fair, and face laughing and merry. Thus his appearance was always stately and dignified, whether he was standing or sitting; although his neck was thick and somewhat short, and his belly rather prominent; but the symmetry of the rest of his body concealed these defects. His gait was firm, his whole carriage manly, and his voice clear, but not so strong as his size led one to expect. His health was excellent, except during the four years preceding his death, when he was subject to frequent fevers; at the last he even limped a little with one foot. Even in those years he consulted rather his own inclinations than the advice of physicians, who were almost hateful to him, because they wanted him to give up roasts, to which he was accustomed, and to eat boiled meat instead. In accordance with the national custom, he took frequent exercise on horseback and in the chase, accomplishments in which scarcely any people in the world can equal the Franks. He enjoyed the exhalations from natural warm springs, and often practised swimming, in which he was such an adept that none could surpass him; and hence it was that he built his palace at Aixla-Chapelle, and lived there constantly during his latter years until his death. He used not only to invite his sons to his bath, but his nobles and friends, and now and then a troop of his retinue or body guard, so that a hundred or more persons sometimes bathed with him.

XXIII

Dress

He used to wear the national, that is to say, the Frank, dress—next his skin a linen shirt and linen breeches, and above these a tunic fringed with silk; while hose fastened by bands covered his lower limbs, and shoes his feet, and he protected his shoulders and chest in winter by a close-fitting coat of otter or marten skins. Over all he flung a blue cloak, and he always had a sword girt about him, usually one with a gold or silver hilt and belt; he sometimes carried a jewelled sword, but only on great feast-days or at the reception of ambassadors from foreign nations. He despised foreign costumes, however handsome, and never allowed himself to be robed in them, except twice in Rome, when he donned the Roman tunic, chlamys, and shoes; the first time at the request of Pope Hadrian, the second to gratify Leo, Hadrian's successor. On great feast-days he made use of embroidered clothes, and shoes bedecked with precious stones; his cloak was fastened by a golden buckle, and he appeared crowned with a diadem of gold and gems: but on other days his dress varied little from the common dress of the people.

XXIV

Habits

Charles was temperate in eating, and particularly so in drinking, for he abominated drunkenness in anybody, much more in himself and those of his household; but he could not easily abstain from food, and often complained that fasts injured his health. He very rarely gave entertainments, only on great feast-days, and then to large numbers of people. His meals ordinarily consisted of four courses, not counting the roast, which his huntsmen used to bring in on the spit; he was more fond of this than of any other dish. While at table, he listened to reading or music. The subjects of the readings were the stories and deeds of olden time: he was fond, too, of St. Augustine's books, and especially of the one entitled "The City of God."

He was so moderate in the use of wine and all sorts of drink that he rarely allowed himself more than three cups in the course of a meal. In summer after the midday meal, he would eat some fruit, drain a single cup, put off his clothes and shoes, just as he did for the night, and rest for two or three hours. He was in the habit of awaking and rising from bed four or five times during the night. While he was dressing and putting on his shoes, he not only gave

Einhard

audience to his friends, but if the Count of the Palace told him of any suit in which his judgment was necessary, he had the parties brought before him forthwith, took cognizance of the case, and gave his decision, just as if he were sitting on the Judgment-seat. This was not the only business that he transacted at this time, but he performed any duty of the day whatever, whether he had to attend to the matter himself, or to give commands concerning it to his officers.

Studies

XXV

Charles had the gift of ready and fluent speech, and could express whatever he had to say with the utmost clearness. He was not satisfied with command of his native language merely, but gave attention to the study of foreign ones, and in particular was such a master of Latin that he could speak it as well as his native tongue; but he could understand Greek better than he could speak it. He was so eloquent, indeed, that he might have passed for a teacher of eloquence. He most zealously cultivated the liberal arts, held those who taught them in great esteem, and conferred great honors upon them. He took lessons in grammar of the deacon Peter of Pisa, at that time an aged man. Another deacon, Albin of Britain, surnamed Alcuin, a man of Saxon extraction, who was the greatest scholar of the day, was his teacher in other branches of learning. The King spent much time and labour with him studying rhetoric, dialectics, and especially astronomy; he learned to reckon, and used to investigate the motions of the heavenly bodies most curiously, with an intelligent scrutiny. He also tried to write, and used to keep tablets and blanks in bed under his pillow, that at leisure hours he might accustom his hand to form the letters; however, as he did not begin his efforts in due season, but late in life, they met with ill success.

Piety

XXVI

He cherished with the greatest fervor and devotion the principles of the Christian religion, which had been instilled into him from infancy. Hence it was that he built the beautiful basilica at Aix-la-Chapelle, which he adorned with gold and silver and lamps, and with rails and doors of solid brass. He had the columns and marbles for this structure brought from Rome and Raven-

na, for he could not find such as were suitable elsewhere. He was a constant worshipper at this church as long as his health permitted, going morning and evening, even after nightfall, besides attending mass; and he took care that all the services there conducted should be administered with the utmost possible propriety, very often warning the sextons not to let any improper or unclean thing be brought into the building or remain in it. He provided it with a great number of sacred vessels of gold and silver and with such a quantity of clerical robes that not even the doorkeepers who fill the humblest office in the church were obliged to wear their everyday clothes when in the exercise of their duties. He was at great pains to improve the church reading and psalmody, for he was well skilled in both although he neither read in public nor sang, except in a low tone and with others.

XXVII

Generosity
[Charles and the
Roman Church]

He was very forward in succoring the poor, and in that gratuitous generosity which the Greeks call alms, so much so that he not only made a point of giving in his own country and his own kingdom, but when he discovered that there were Christians living in poverty in Syria, Egypt, and Africa, at Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Carthage, he had compassion on their wants, and used to send money over the seas to them. The reason that he zealously strove to make friends with the kings beyond seas was that he might get help and relief to the Christians living under their rule.

He cherished the Church of St. Peter the Apostle at Rome above all other holy and sacred places, and heaped its treasury with a vast wealth of gold, silver, and precious stones. He sent great and countless gifts to the popes; and throughout his whole reign the wish that he had nearest at heart was to re-establish the ancient authority of the city of Rome under his care and by his influence, and to defend and protect the Church of St. Peter, and to beautify and enrich it out of his own store above all other churches. Although he held it in such veneration, he only repaired to Rome to pay his vows and make his supplications four times during the whole forty-seven years that he reigned.

XXVIII

Charlemagne
Crowned Em-
peror

When he made his last journey thither, he also had other ends in view. The Romans had inflicted many injuries upon the Pontiff Leo, tearing out his eyes and cutting out his tongue, so that he had been compelled to call upon the King for help [Nov 24, 800]. Charles accordingly went to Rome, to set in order the affairs of the Church, which were in great confusion, and passed the whole winter there. It was then that he received the titles of Emperor and Augustus [Dec 25, 800], to which he at first had such an aversion that he declared that he would not have set foot in the Church the day that they were conferred, although it was a great feast-day, if he could have foreseen the design of the Pope. He bore very patiently with the jealousy which the Roman emperors showed upon his assuming these titles, for they took this step very ill; and by dint of frequent embassies and letters, in which he addressed them as brothers, he made their haughtiness yield to his magnanimity, a quality in which he was unquestionably much their superior.

XXIX

Reforms

It was after he had received the imperial name that, finding the laws of his people very defective (the Franks have two sets of laws, very different in many particulars), he determined to add what was wanting, to reconcile the discrepancies, and to correct what was vicious and wrongly cited in them. However, he went no further in this matter than to supplement the laws by a few capitularies, and those imperfect ones; but he caused the unwritten laws of all the tribes that came under his rule to be compiled and reduced to writing. He also had the old rude songs that celebrate the deeds and wars of the ancient kings written out for transmission to posterity. He began a grammar of his native language. He gave the months names in his own tongue, in place of the Latin and barbarous names by which they were formerly known among the Franks. He likewise designated the winds by twelve appropriate names; there were hardly more than four distinctive ones in use before. He called January, Wintarmanoth; February, Hornung; March, Lentzinmanoth; April, Ostarmanoth; May, Winnemanoth; June, Brachmanoth; July, Heuvimanoth; August, Aranmanoth; September, Witumanoth; October, Windumemanoth; Novemher, Herbistmanoth; December, Heilagmanoth. He styled the winds

as follows; Subsolanus, Ostroniwint; Eurus, Ostsundroni-, Euroauster, Sund-
ostroni; Auster, Sundroni; Austro-Africus, Sundwestroni; Africus, Westsun-
droni; Zephyrus, Westroni; Caurus, Westnordroni; Circius, Nordwestroni;
Septentrio, Nordroni; Aquilo, Nordostroni; Vulturnus, Ostnordroni.



LIFE OF ALFRED

ASSER

Translated by Dr. J.A. Giles

PART ONE

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 849, was born Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, at the royal village of Wanating, in Berkshire, which country has its name from the wood of Berroc, where the box-tree grows most abundantly. His genealogy is traced in the following order. King Alfred was the son of king Ethelwulf, who was the son of Egbert, who was the son of Elmund, who was the son of Eafa, who was the son of Eoppa, who the son of Ingild. Ingild, and Ina, the famous king of the West-Saxons, were two brothers. Ina went to Rome, and there ending this life honourably, entered the heavenly kingdom, to reign there forever with Christ. Ingild and Ina were the sons of Coenred, who was the son of Ceolwald, who was the son of Cudam, who was the son of Cuthwin, who was the son of Ceawlin, who was the son of Cynric, who was the son of Creoda, who was the son of Cerdic, who was the son of Elesa, who was the son of Gewis, from whom the Britons name all that nation Gegwis, who was the son of Brond, who was the son of Beldeg, who was the son of Woden, who was the son of Frithowald, who was the son of Frealaf, who was

the son of Frithuwulf, who was the son of Finn of Godwulf, who was the son of Gear, which Geat the pagans long worshipped as a god. Sedulius makes mention of him in his metrical Paschal poem, as follows: —

*When gentile poets with their fictions vain,
In tragic language and bombastic strain,
To their god Geat, comic deity,
Loud praises sing, &c.*

Geat was the son of Taetwa, who was the son of Beaw, who was the son of Sceldi, who was the son of Heremod, who was the son of Itermon, who was the son of Hathra, who was the son of Guala, who was the son of Bedwig, who was the son of Shem, who was the son of Noah, who was the son of Lamech, who was the son of Methusalem, who was the son of Enoch, who was the son of Malaleci, who was the son of Cainian, who was the son of Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam.

The mother of Alfred was named Osburga, a religious woman, noble both by birth and by nature; she was daughter of Oslac, the famous butler of king Ethtelwulf, which Oslac was a Goth by nation, descended from the Goths and Jutes, of the seed, namely, of Stuf and Whitgar, two brothers and counts; who, having received possession of the Isle of Wight from their uncle, King Cerdic, and his son Cynric their cousin, slew the few British inhabitants whom they could find in that island, at a place called Gwihtgaraburgh; for the other inhabitants of the island had either been slain, or escaped into exile.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 851, which was the third after the birth of king Alfred, Ceorl, earl of Devon, fought with the men of Devon against the pagans at a place called Wiegambeorg; and the Christians gained the victory; and that same year the pagans first wintered in the island called Sheppey, which means the Sheep-isle, and is situated in the river Thames between Essex and Kent, but is nearer to Kent than to Essex; it has in it a fine monastery.

The same year also a great army of the pagans came with three hundred and fifty ships to the mouth of the river Thames, and sacked Dorobernia, which is the city of the Cantuarians, and also the city of London, which lies on

Life of Alfred

the north bank of the river Thames, on the confines of Essex and Middlesex; but yet that city belongs in truth to Essex; and they put to flight Berthwulf, king of Mercia, with all the army, which he had led out to oppose them.

After these things, the aforesaid pagan host went into Surrey, which is a district situated on the south bank of the river Thames, and to the west of Kent. And Ethelwulf, king of the West-Saxons, and his son Ethelbald, with all their army, fought a long time against them at a place called Ac-lea, i.e. the Oak-plain, and there, after a lengthened battle, which was fought with much bravery on both sides, the greater part of the pagan multitude was destroyed and cut to pieces, so that we never heard of their being so defeated, either before or since, in any country, in one day; and the Christians gained an honourable victory, and were triumphant over their graves.

In the same year king Athelstan, son of king Ethelwulf, and earl Ealhere slew a large army of pagans in Kent, at a place called Sandwich, and took nine ships of their fleet; the others escaped by flight.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 853, which was the fifth of king Alfred, Burhred king of the Mercians, sent messengers, and prayed Ethelwulf, king of the West Saxons, to come and help him in reducing the midland Britons, who dwell between Mercia and the western sea, and who struggled against him most immoderately. So without delay, king Ethelwulf, having received the embassy, moved his army, and advanced with king Burhred against Britain, and immediately, on entering that country, he began to ravage it; and having reduced it under subjection to king Burhred, he returned home.

In the same year, king Ethelwulf sent his son Alfred, above-named, to Rome, with an honourable escort both of nobles and commoners. Pope Leo [the fourth] at that time presided over the apostolic see, and he anointed for king the aforesaid Alfred, and adopted him as his spiritual son. The same year also, earl Ealhere, with the men of Kent, and Iluda with the men of Surrey, fought bravely and resolutely against an army of the pagans, in the island, which is called in the Saxon tongue, Tenet, but Ruim in the British language. The battle lasted a long time, and many fell on both sides, and also were drowned in the water; and both the earls were there slain. In the same year also, after Easter, Ethelwulf, king of the West-Saxons, gave His daughter to Burhred, king of the Mercians, and the marriage was celebrated royally at

the royal vill of Chippenham.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 855, which was the seventh after the birth of the aforesaid king, Edmund the most glorious king of the East-Angles began to reign, on the eighth day before the kalends of January, i.e. on the birthday of our Lord, in the fourteenth year of his age. In this year also died Lothaire, the Roman emperor, son of the pious Lewis Augustus. In the same year the aforesaid venerable king Ethelwulf released the tenth part of all his kingdom from all royal service and tribute, and with a pen never to be forgotten, offered it up to God the One and the Three in One, in the cross of Christ, for the redemption of his own soul and of his predecessors. In the same year he went to Rome with much honour; and taking with him his son, the aforesaid king Alfred, for a second journey thither, because he loved him more than his other sons, he remained there a whole year; after which he returned to his own country, bringing with him Judith, daughter of Charles, the king of the Franks.

In the meantime, however, whilst king Ethelwulf was residing beyond the sea, a base deed was done, repugnant to the morals of all Christians, in the western part of Selwood. For king Ethelwald [son of king Ethelwulf] and Ealstan, bishop of the church of Sherborne, with Eanwulf, earl of the district of Somerton, are said to have made a conspiracy together, that king Ethelwulf, on his return from Rome, should never again be received into his kingdom. This crime, unheard-of in all previous ages, is ascribed by many to the bishop and earl alone, as resulting from their counsels. Many also ascribe it solely to the insolence of the king, because that king was pertinacious in this matter, and in many other perversities, as we have heard related by Ly certain persons; as also was proved by the result of that which follows.

For as he was returning from Rome, his son aforesaid, with all his counsellors, or, as I ought to say, his conspirators, attempted to perpetrate the crime of repulsing the king from his own kingdom; but neither did God permit the deed, nor would the nobles of all Saxony consent to it. For to prevent this irremediable evil to Saxony, of a son warring against his father, or rather of the whole nation carrying on civil war, either on the side of the one or the other, the extraordinary mildness of the father, seconded by the consent of all the nobles, divided between the two the kingdom which had

hitherto been undivided; the eastern parts were given to the father, and the western to the son; for where the father ought by just right to reign, there his unjust and obstinate son did reign; for the western part of Saxony is always preferable to the eastern.

When Ethelwulf, therefore, was coming from Rome, all that nation, as was fitting, so delighted in the arrival of the old man, that, if he permitted them, they would have expelled his rebellious son Ethelbald, with all his counsellors, out of the kingdom. But he, as we have said, acting with great clemency and prudent counsel, so wished things to be done, that the kingdom might not come into danger; and he placed Judith, daughter of king Charles, whom he had received from his father, by his own side on the regal throne, without any controversy or enmity from his nobles, even to the end of his life, contrary to the perverse custom of that nation. For the nation of the West-Saxons do not allow a queen to sit beside the king, nor to be called a queen, but only the king's wife; which stigma the elders of that land say arose from a certain obstinate and malevolent queen of the same nation, who did all things so contrary to her lord, and to all the people, that she not only earned for herself exclusion from the royal seat, but also entailed the same stigma upon those who came after her; for in consequence of the wickedness of that queen, all the nobles of that land swore together, that they would never let any king reign over them, who should attempt to place a queen on the throne by his side.

And because, as I think, it is not known to many whence this perverse and detestable custom arose in Saxony, contrary to the custom of all the Theotisean nations, it seems to me right to explain a little more fully what I have heard from my lord Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, as he also had heard it from many men of truth, who in great part recorded that fact.

There was in Mercia, in recent times, a certain valiant king, who was feared by all the kings and neighbouring states around. His name was Offa, and it was he who had the great rampart made from sea to sea between Britain and Mercia. His daughter, named Eadburga, was married to Bertric, king of the West-Saxons; who immediately, having the king's affections, and the control of almost all the kingdom, began to live tyrannically like her father, and to execrate every man whom Bertric loved, and to do all things hateful to

God and man, and to accuse all she could before the king, and so to deprive them insidiously of their life or power; and if she could not obtain the king's consent, she used to take them off by poison: as is ascertained to have been the case with a certain young man beloved by the king, whom she poisoned, finding that the King would not listen to any accusation against him. It is said, moreover, that king Bertric unwittingly tasted of the poison, though the queen intended to give it to the young man only, and so both of them perished.

Bertric therefore, being dead, the queen could remain no longer among the West-Saxons, but sailed beyond the sea with immense treasures, and went to the court of the great and famous Charles, king of the Franks. As she stood before the throne, and offered him money, Charles said to her, "Choose, Eadburga, between me and my son, who stands here with me." She replied, foolishly, and without deliberation, "If I am to have my choice, I choose your son, because he is younger than you." At which Charles smiled and answered, "If you had chosen me, you would have had my son; but as you have chosen him, you shall not have either of us."

However, he gave her a large convent of nuns, in which, having laid aside the secular habit and taken the religious dress, she discharged the office of abbess during a few years; for, as she is said to have lived irrationally in her own country, so she appears to have acted still more so in that foreign country; for being convicted of having had unlawful intercourse with a man of her own nation, she was expelled from the monastery by king Charles's order, and lived a vicious life of reproach in poverty and misery until her death; so that at last, accompanied by one slave only, as we have heard from many who saw her, she begged her bread daily at Pavia, and so miserably died.

Now king Ethelwulf lived two years after his return from Rome; during which, among many other good deeds of this present life, reflecting on his departure according to the way of all flesh, that his sons might not quarrel unreasonably after their father's death, he ordered a will or letter of instructions to be written, in which he ordered that his kingdom should be divided between his two eldest sons, his private inheritance between his sons, his daughters, and his relations, and the money which he left behind him between his sons and nobles, and for the good of his soul. Of this prudent policy we have thought fit to record a few instances out of many for posterity to imitate;

Life of Alfred

namely, such as are understood to belong principally to the needs of the soul; for the others, which relate only to human dispensation, it is not necessary to insert in this work, lest prolixity should create disgust in those who read or wish to hear my work. For the benefit of his soul, then, which he studied to promote in all things from his youth, he directed through all his hereditary dominions, that one poor man in ten, either native or foreigner, should be supplied with meat, drink, and clothing, by his successors, until the day of judgment; supposing, however, that the country should still be inhabited both by men and cattle, and should not become deserted. He commanded also a large sum of money, namely, three hundred mancuses, to be carried to Rome for the good of his soul, to be distributed in the following manner: namely, a hundred mancuses in honour of St. Peter, specially to buy oil for the lights of the church of that apostle on Easter eve, and also at the cock-crow: a hundred mancuses in honour of St. Paul, for the same purpose of buying oil for the church of St. Paul the apostle, to light the lamps on Easter eve and at the cock-crow; and a hundred mancuses for the universal apostolic pontiff.

But when king Ethelwulf was dead, and buried at Stemrugam, his son Ethelbald, contrary to God's prohibition and the dignity of a Christian, contrary also to the custom of all the pagans, ascended his father's bed, and married Judith, daughter of Charles, king of the Franks, and drew down much infamy upon himself from all who heard of it. During two years and a half of licentiousness after his father he held the government of the West-Saxons.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 856, which was the eighth after Alfred's birth, the second year of king Charles III, and the eighteenth year of the reign of Ethelwulf, king of the West-Saxons, Humbert, bishop of the East-Angles, anointed with oil and consecrated as king the glorious Edmund, with much rejoicing and great honour in the royal town called Burva, in which at that time was the royal seat, in the fifteenth year of his age, on a Friday, the twenty-fourth moon, being Christmas-day.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 860, which was the twelfth of king Alfred's age, died Ethelbald, king of the West-Saxons, and was buried at Sherborne. His brother Ethelbert, as was fitting, joined Kent, Surrey, and Sussex also to his dominion.

In his days a large army of pagans came up from the sea, and attacked

and destroyed the city of Winchester. As they were returning laden with booty to their ships, Osric, earl of Hampshire, with his men, and earl Ethelwulf, with the men of Berkshire, confronted them bravely; a severe battle took place, and the pagans were slain on every side; and, finding themselves unable to resist, took to flight like women, and the Christians obtained a triumph.

Ethelbert governed his kingdom five years in peace, with the love and respect of his subjects, who felt deep sorrow when he went the way of all flesh. His body was honourably interred at Sherborne by the side of his brothers.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 864, the pagans wintered in the isle of Thanet, and made a firm treaty with the men of Kent, who promised them money for adhering to their covenant; but the pagans, like cunning foxes, burst from their camp by night, and setting at naught their engagements, and spurning at the promised money, which they knew was less than they could get by plunder, they ravaged all the eastern coast of Kent.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 866, which was the eighteenth of king Alfred, Ethelred, brother of Ethelbert, king of the West Saxons, undertook the government of the kingdom for five years; and the same year a large fleet of pagans came to Britain from the Danube, and wintered in the kingdom of the Eastern-Saxons, which is called in Saxon East-Anglia; and there they became principally an army of cavalry. But, to speak in nautical phrase, I will no longer commit my vessel to the power of the waves and of its sails, or keeping off from land steer my round-about course through so many calamities of wars and series of years, but will return to that which first prompted me to this task; that is to say, I think it right in this place briefly to relate as much as has come to my knowledge about the character of my revered lord Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, during the years that he was an infant and a boy.

He was loved by his father and mother, and even by all the people, above all his brothers, and was educated altogether at the court of the king. As he advanced through the years of infancy and youth, his form appeared more comely than that of his brothers; in look, in speech, and in manners he was more graceful than they. His noble nature implanted in him from his cradle a love of wisdom above all things; but, with shame be it spoken, by the unworthy neglect of his parents and nurses, he remained illiterate even till he was twelve years old or more; but, he listened with serious attention to the

Saxon poems which he often heard recited, and easily retained them in his docile memory. He was a zealous practiser of hunting in all its branches, and hunted with great assiduity and success; for skill and good fortune in this art, as in all others, are among the gifts of God, as we also have often witnessed.

On a certain day, therefore, his mother was showing him and his brother a Saxon book of poetry, which she held in her hand, and said, "Whichever of you shall the soonest learn this volume shall have it for his own." Stimulated by these words, or rather by the Divine inspiration, and allured by the beautifully illuminated letter at the beginning of the volume, he spoke before all his brothers, who, though his seniors in age, were not so in grace, and answered, "Will you really give that book to one of us, that is to say, to him who can first understand and repeat it to you?" At this his mother smiled with satisfaction, and confirmed what she had before said. Upon which the boy took the book out of her hand, and went to his master to read it, and in due time brought it to his mother and recited it.

After this he learned the daily course, that is, the celebration of the hours, and afterwards certain psalms, and several prayers, contained in a certain book which he kept day and night in his bosom, as we ourselves have seen, and carried about with him to assist his prayers, amid all the bustle and business of this present life. But, sad to say, he could not gratify his most ardent wish to learn the liberal arts, because, as he said, there were no good readers at that time in all the kingdom of the West-Saxons.

This he confessed, with many lamentations and sighs, to have been one of his greatest difficulties and impediments in this life, namely, that when he was young and had the capacity for learning, he could not find teachers; but, when he was more advanced in life, he was harassed by so many diseases unknown to all the physicians of this island, as well as by internal and external anxieties of sovereignty, and by continual invasions of the pagans, and had his teachers and writers also so much disturbed, that there was no time for reading. But yet among the impediments of this present life, from infancy up to the present time, and, as I believe, even until his death, he continued to feel the same insatiable desire of knowledge, and still aspires after it.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 867, which was the nineteenth of the life of the aforesaid king Alfred, the army of pagans before mentioned

removed from the East-Angles to the city of York, which is situated on the north bank of the river Humber.

At that time a violent discord arose, by the instigation of the devil, among the inhabitants of Northumberland; as always is used to happen among a people who have incurred the wrath of God. For the Northumbrians at that time, as we have said, had expelled their lawful king Osbert, and appointed a certain tyrant named Aella, not of royal birth, over the affairs of the kingdom; but when the pagans approached, by divine providence, and the union of the nobles for the common good, that discord was a little appeased, and Osbert and Aella uniting their resources, and assembling an army, marched to York. The pagans fled at their approach, and attempted to defend themselves within the walls of the city. The Christians, perceiving their flight and the terror they were in, determined to destroy the walls of the town, which they succeeded in doing; for that city was not surrounded at that time with firm or strong walls, and when the Christians had made a breach as they had purposed, and many of them had entered into the town, the pagans, urged by despair and necessity, made a fierce sally upon them, slew them, routed them, and cut them down on all sides, both within and without the walls. In that battle fell almost all the Northumbrin warriors, with both the kings and a multitude of nobles; the remainder, who escaped, made peace with the pagans.

In the same year, Ealstan, bishop of the church of Sherborne, went the way of all flesh, after he had honourably ruled his see four years, and he was buried at Sherborne.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 868, which was the twentieth of king Alfred's life, there was a severe famine. Then the aforesaid revered king Alfred, but at that time occupying a subordinate station, asked and obtained in marriage a noble Mercian lady, daughter of Athelred, surnamed Mucil, earl of the Gaini. The mother of this lady was named Edburga, of the royal line of Mercia, whom we have often seen with our own eyes a few years before her death. She was a venerable lady, and after the decease of her husband, she remained many years a widow, even till her own death.

In the same year, the above-named army of pagans, leaving Northumberland, invaded Mercia and advanced to Nottingham, which is called in the British tongue, "Tiggocobauc," but in Latin, the "House of Caves," and they

Life of Alfred

wintered there that same year. Immediately on their approach, Burhred, king of Mercia, and all the nobles of that nation, sent messengers to Ethelred, king of the West-Saxons, and his brother Alfred, suppliantly entreating them to come and aid them in fighting against the aforesaid army. Their request was easily obtained; for the brothers, as soon as promised, assembled an immense army from all parts of their dominions, and entering Mercia, came to Nottingham, all eager for battle, and when the pagans, defended by the castle, refused to fight, and the Christians were unable to destroy the wall, peace was made between the Mercians and pagans, and the two brothers, Ethelred and Alfred, returned home with their troops.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 869, which was the twenty-first of king Alfred's life, there was a great famine and mortality of men, and a pestilence among the cattle. And the aforesaid army of the pagans, galloping back to Northumberland, went to York, and there passed the winter.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 870, which was the twenty-second of king Alfred's life, the above-named army of pagans, passed through Mercia into East-Anglia, and wintered at Thetford.

In the same year Edmund, king of the East-Angles, fought most fiercely against them; but, lamentable to say, the pagans triumphed, Edmund was slain in the battle, and the enemy reduced all that country to subjection.

In the same year Ceolnoth, archbishop of Canterbury, went the way of all flesh, and was buried peaceably in his own city.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 871, which was the twenty-third of king Alfred's life, the pagan army, of hateful memory, left the East-Angles, and entering the kingdom of the West-Saxons, came to the royal city, called Reading, situated on the south bank of the Thames, in the district called Berkshire; and there, on the third day after their arrival, their earls, with great part of the army, scoured the country for plunder, while the others made a rampart between the rivers Thames and Kennet on the right side of the same royal city. They were encountered by Ethelwulf, earl of Berkshire, with his men, at a place called Englefield; both sides fought bravely, and made long resistance. At length one of the pagan earls was slain, and the greater part of the army destroyed; upon which the rest saved themselves by flight, and the

Christians gained the victory.

Four days afterwards, Ethelred, king of the West-Saxons, and his brother Alfred, united their forces and marched to Reading, where, on their arrival, they cut to pieces the pagans whom they found outside the fortifications. But the pagans, nevertheless, sallied out from the gates, and a long and fierce engagement ensued. At last, grief to say, the Christians fled, the pagans obtained the victory, and the aforesaid earl Ethelwulf was among the slain.

Roused by this calamity, the Christians, in shame and indignation, within four days, assembled all their forces, and again encountered the pagan army at a place called Ashdune, which means the "Hill of the Ash." The pagans had divided themselves into two bodies, and began to prepare defences, for they had two kings and many earls, so they gave the middle part of the army to the two kings, and the other part to all their earls. Which the Christians perceiving, divided their army also into two troops, and also began to construct defences. But Alfred, as we have been told by those who were present, and would not tell an untruth, marched up promptly with his men to give them battle; for king Ethelred remained a long time in his tent in prayer, hearing the mass, and said that he would not leave it, till the priest had done, or abandon the divine protection for that of men. And he did so too, which afterwards availed him much with the Almighty, as we shall declare more fully in the sequel.

Now the Christians had determined that king Ethelred, with his men, should attack the two pagan kings, but that his brother Alfred, with his troops, should take the chance of war against the two earls. Things being so arranged, the king remained a long time in prayer, and the pagans came up rapidly to fight. Then Alfred, though possessing a subordinate authority, could no longer support the troops of the enemy, unless he retreated or charged upon them without waiting for his brother. At length he bravely led his troops against the hostile army, as they had before arranged, but without awaiting his brother's arrival; for he relied in the divine counsels, and forming his men into a dense phalanx, marched on at once to meet the foe.

But here I must inform those who are ignorant of the fact, that the field of battle was not equally advantageous to both parties. The pagans occupied the higher ground, and the Christians came up from below. There was also

a single thorn-tree, of strutted growth, but we have ourselves never seen it. Around this tree the opposing armies came together with loud shouts from all sides, the one party to pursue their wicked course, the other to fight for their lives, their dearest ties, and their country. And when both armies had fought long and bravely, at last the pagans, by the divine judgment, were no longer able to bear the attacks of the Christians, and having lost great part of their army, took to a disgraceful flight. One of their two kings, and five earls were there slain, together with many thousand pagans, who fell on all sides, covering with their bodies the whole plain of Ashdune.

There fell in that battle king Bagsac, earl Sidrac the elder, and earl Sidrac the younger, earl Osborn, earl Frene, and earl Harold; and the whole pagan army pursued its flight, not only until night but until the next day, even until they reached the stronghold from which they had sallied. The Christians followed, slaying all they could reach, until it became dark.

After fourteen days had elapsed, king Ethelred, with his brother Alfred, again joined their forces and marched to Basing to fight with the pagans. The enemy came together from all quarters, and after a long contest gained the victory. After this battle, another army came from beyond the sea, and joined them.

The same year, after Easter, the aforesaid king Ethelred, having bravely, honourably, and with good repute, governed his kingdom five years, through much tribulation, went the way of all flesh, and was buried in Wimborne Minster, where he awaits the coming of the Lord, and the first resurrection with the just.

The same year, the aforesaid Alfred, who had been up to that time only of secondary rank, whilst his brothers were alive, now, by God's permission, undertook the government of the whole kingdom, amid the acclamations of all the people; and if he had chosen, he might have done so before, whilst his brother above-named was still alive; for in wisdom and other qualities he surpassed all his brothers, and moreover, was warlike and victorious in all his wars. And when he had reigned one month, almost against his will, for he did not think he could alone sustain the multitude and ferocity of the pagans, though even during his brothers' lives, he had borne the woes of many, — he fought a battle with a few men, and on very unequal terms, against all the

army of the pagans, at a hill called Wilton, on the south bank of the river Wily, from which river the whole of that district is named, and after a long and fierce engagement, the pagans, seeing the danger they were in, and no longer able to bear the attack of their enemies, turned their backs and fled. But, oh, shame to say, they deceived their too audacious pursuers, and again rallying, gained the victory. Let no one be surprised that the Christians had but a small number of men, for the Saxons had been worn out by eight battles in one year, against the pagans, of whom they had slain one king, nine dukes, and innumerable troops of soldiers, besides endless skirmishes, both by night and by day, in which the oft-named Alfred, and all his chieftains, with their men, and several of his ministers, were engaged without rest or cessation against the pagans. How many thousand pagans fell in these numberless skirmishes God alone knows, over and above those who were slain in the eight battles above-mentioned. In the same year the Saxons made peace with the pagans, on condition that they should take their departure, and they did so.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 872, the twenty-fourth of king Alfred's life, the above-named army of pagans went to London, and there wintered. The Mercians made peace with them.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 873, the twenty-fifth of king Alfred, the above-named army, leaving London, went into the country of the Northumbrians, and there wintered in the district of Lindsey; and the Mercians again made treaty with them.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 874, the twenty-sixth since the birth of king Alfred, the army before so often mentioned left Lindsey and marched to Mercia, where they wintered at Repton. Also they compelled Burhred, king of Mercia, against his will, to leave his kingdom and go beyond the sea to Rome, in the twenty-second year of his reign. He did not long live after his arrival, but died there, and was honourably buried in the school of the Saxons, in St. Mary's church, where he awaits the Lord's coming and the first resurrection with the just. The pagans also, after his expulsion, subjected the whole kingdom of the Mercians to their dominion; but by a most miserable arrangement, gave it into the custody of a certain foolish man, named Ceolwulf, one of the king's ministers, on condition that he should restore it to them, whenever they should wish to have it again; and to guarantee this

Life of Alfred

agreement, he gave them hostages, and swore that he would not oppose their will, but be obedient to them in every respect.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 875, which was the 27th of king Alfred, the above-named army, leaving Repton, divided into two bodies, one of which went with Halfdene into Northumbria, and having wintered there near the Tyne, reduced all Northumberland to subjection; they also ravaged the Picts and the Strath- Clydensians. The other division, with Gothrum, Oskytel, and Anwiund, three kings of the pagans, went to a place called Grantabridge, and there wintered.

In the same year, king Alfred fought a battle by sea against six ships of the pagans, and took one of them; the rest escaped by flight.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 876, being the twenty- eighth year of king Alfred's life, the aforesaid army of the pagans, leaving Grantabridge by night, entered a castle called Wareham, where there is a monasterium of holy virgins between the two rivers Fraum and Trent, in the district which is called in British "Durnguers", but in Saxon "Thornsæta", placed in a most secure situation, except that it was exposed to danger on the western side from the nature of the ground. With this army Alfred made a solemn treaty, to the effect that they should depart out of the kingdom, and for this they made no hesitation to give as many hostages as he named; also they swore an oath over the Christian relics, which with king Alfred were next in veneration after the Deity himself, that they would depart speedily from the kingdom. But they again practised their usual treachery, and caring nothing for the hostages or their oaths, they broke the treaty, and sallying forth by night, slew all the horsemen that the king had round him, and turning off into Devon, to another place called in Saxon "Exauceaster", but in British "Cair-wise", which means in Latin, the city of the Ex, situated on the eastern bank of the river Wise, they directed their course suddenly towards the south sea, which divides Britain and Gaul, and there passed the winter.

In the same year, Halfdene, king of those parts, divided out the whole country of Northumberland between himself and his men, and settled there with his army. In the same year, Rollo with his followers penetrated into Normandy.

This same Rollo, duke of the Normans, whilst wintering in Old Britain, or England, at the head of his troops, enjoyed one night a vision revealing to him the future. See more of this Rollo in the Annals.

In the year 877, the pagans, on the approach of autumn, partly settled in Exeter, and partly marched for plunder into Mercia. The number of that disorderly crew increased every day, so that, if thirty thousand of them were slain in one battle, others took their places to double the number. Then King Alfred commanded boats and galleys, i.e. long ships, to be built throughout the Kingdom, in order to offer battle by sea to the enemy as they were coming. On board of these he placed seamen, and appointed them to watch the seas. Meanwhile he went himself to Exeter, where the pagans were, wintering, and having shut them up within the walls, laid siege to the town. He also gave orders to his sailors to prevent them from obtaining any supplies by sea; and his sailors were encountered by a fleet of a hundred and twenty ships full of armed soldiers, who were come to help their countrymen. As soon as the king's men knew that they were fitted with pagan soldiers, they leaped to their arms, and bravely attacked those barbaric tribes: but the pagans, who had now for almost a month been tossed and almost wrecked among the waves of the sea, fought vainly against them; their bands were discomfited in a moment, and all were sunk and drowned in the sea, at a place called Suanewic.

In the same year the army of pagans, leaving Wareham, partly on horseback and partly by water, arrived at Suanewic, where one hundred and twenty of their ships were lost; and king Alfred pursued their land-army as far as Exeter; there he made a covenant with them, and took hostages that they would depart.

The same year, in the month of August, that army went into Mercia, and gave part of that country to one Ceolwulf, a weak-minded man, and one of the king's ministers; the other part they divided among themselves.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 878, which was the thirtieth of King Alfred's life, the army above-mentioned left Exeter, and went to Chippenham, a royal villa, situated in the west of Wiltshire, and on the eastern bank of the river, which is called in British, the Avon. There they wintered, and drove many of the inhabitants of that country beyond the sea by the force of their arms, and by want of the necessaries of life. They reduced almost entirely to

Life of Alfred

subjection all the people of that country.

At the same time the above-named Alfred, king of the West-Saxons, with a few of his nobles, and certain soldiers and vassals, used to lead an unquiet life among the woodlands of the country of Somerset, in great tribulation; for he had none of the necessaries of life, except what he could forage openly or stealthily, by frequent sallies, from the pagans, or even from the Christians who had submitted to the rule of the pagans, and as we read in the Life of St. Neot, at the house of one of his cowherds.

But it happened on a certain day, that the countrywoman, wife of the cowherd, was preparing some loaves to bake, and the king, sitting at the hearth, made ready his bow and arrows and other warlike instruments. The unlucky woman spying the cakes burning at the fire, ran up to remove them, and rebuking the brave king, exclaimed:

*“Ca’sn thee mind the ke-aks, man, an’ doossen zee ‘em
burn?”*

*I’m boun thee’s eat ‘em vast enough, az zoon az ‘tiz the
turn.”*

The blundering woman little thought that it was king Alfred, who had fought so many battles against the pagans, and gained so many victories over them.

But the Almighty not only granted to the same glorious king victories over his enemies, but also permitted him to be harassed by them, to be sunk down by adversities, and depressed by the low estate of his followers, to the end that he might learn that there is one Lord of all things, to whom every knee doth bow, and in whose hand are the hearts of kings; who puts down the mighty from their seat and exalteth the humble; who suffers his servants when they are elevated at the summit of prosperity to be touched by the rod of adversity, that in their humility they may not despair of God’s mercy, and in their prosperity they may not boast of their honours, but may also know, to whom they owe all the things which they possess.

We may believe that the calamity was brought upon the king aforesaid, because, in the beginning of his reign, when he was a youth, and influenced

by youthful feelings, he would not listen to the petitions which his subjects made to him for help in their necessities, or for relief from those who oppressed them; but he repulsed them from him, and paid no heed to their requests. This particular gave much annoyance to the holy man St. Neot, who was his relation, and often foretold to him, in the spirit of prophecy, that he would suffer great adversity on this account; but Alfred neither attended to the reproof of the man of God, nor listened to his true prediction. Wherefore, seeing that a man's sins must be corrected either in this world or the next, the true and righteous Judge was willing that his sin should not go unpunished in this world, to the end that he might spare him in the world to come. From this cause, therefore, the aforesaid Alfred often fell into such great misery, that sometimes none of his subjects knew where he was or what had become of him.

In the same year the brother of Hingwar and Halfdene, with twenty-three ships, after much slaughter of the Christians, came from the country of Demetia, where he had wintered, and sailed to Devon, where, with twelve hundred others, he met with a miserable death, being slain while committing his misdeeds, by the king's servants, before the castle of Cynuit [Kynwith], into which many of the king's servants, with their followers, had fled for safety. The pagans, seeing that the castle was altogether unprepared and unfortified, except that it had walls in our own fashion, determined not to assault it, because it was impregnable and secure on all sides, except on the eastern, as we ourselves have seen, but they began to blockade it, thinking that those who were inside would soon surrender either from famine or want of water, for the castle had no spring near it. But the result did not fall out as they expected; for the Christians, before they began to suffer from want, inspired by Heaven, judging it much better to gain victory or death, attacked the pagans suddenly in the morning, and from the first cut them down in great numbers, slaying also their king, so that few escaped to their ships; and there they gained a very large booty, and amongst other things the standard called Raven; for they say that the three sisters of Hingwar and Hubba, daughters of Lodobroch, wove that flag and got it ready in one day. They say, moreover, that in every battle, wherever that flag went before them, if they were to gain the victory a live crow would appear flying on the middle of the flag; but if they were doom to be defeated it would hang down motionless, and this was

often proved to be so.

The same year, after Easter, king Alfred, with a few followers, made for himself a stronghold in a place called Athelney, and from thence sallied with his vassals and the nobles of Somersetshire, to make frequent assaults upon the pagans. Also, in the seventh week after Easter, he rode to the stone of Egbert, which is in the eastern part of the wood which is called Selwood, which means in Latin *Silva Magna*, the Great Wood, but in British *Coit-mawr*. Here he was met by all the neighbouring folk of Somersetshire, and Wiltshire, and Hampshire, who had not, for fear of the pagans, fled beyond the sea; and when they saw the king alive after such great tribulation, they received him, as he deserved, with joy and acclamations, and encamped there for one night. When the following day dawned, the king struck his camp, and went to Okely, where he encamped for one night. The next morning he removed to Edington, and there fought bravely and perseveringly against all the army of the pagans, whom, with the divine help, he defeated with great slaughter, and pursued them flying to their fortification. Immediately he slew all the men, and carried off all the booty that he could find without the fortress, which he immediately laid siege to with all his army; and when he had been there fourteen days, the pagans, driven by famine, cold, fear, and last of all by despair, asked for peace, on the condition that they should give the king as many hostages as he pleased, but should receive none of him in return, in which form they had never before made a treaty with any one. The king, hearing that, took pity upon them, and received such hostages as he chose; after which the pagans swore, moreover, that they would immediately leave the kingdom; and their king, Gothrun, promised to embrace Christianity, and receive baptism at king Alfred's hands. All of which articles he and his men fulfilled as they had promised. For after seven weeks Gothrun, king of the pagans, with thirty men chosen from the army, came to Alfred at a place called Aller, near Athelney, and there King Alfred, receiving him as his son by adoption, raised him up from the holy laver of baptism on the eighth day, at a royal villa named Wedmore, where were the holy chrism was poured upon him. After his baptism he remained twelve nights with the king, who, with all his nobles, gave him many fine houses.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 879, which was the thirty-first of king Alfred, the aforesaid army of pagans leaving Chippenham, as they had

promised, went to Cirencester, which is called in British “Cair Cori”, and is situate in the southern part of the Wiccii, and there they remained one year.

In the same year, a large army of pagans sailed from foreign parts into the river Thames, and joined the army which was already in the country. They wintered at Fulham near the river Thames.

In the same year an eclipse of the sun took place, between three o’clock and the evening, but nearer to three o’clock.

In the year of our Lord’s incarnation 880, which was the thirty- second of King Alfred, the above named army of pagans left Cirencester, and went among the East Angles, where they divided out the country and began to settle.

The same year the army of pagans, which had wintered at Fulham, left the island of Britain, and sailed over the sea to the eastern part of France, where they remained a year at a place called Ghent.

In the year of our Lord’s incarnation 881, which was the thirty- third of King Alfred’s life, the aforesaid army went higher up into France; and the French fought against them; and after the battle the pagans obtained horses and became an army of cavalry.

In the year of our Lord’s incarnation 882, the thirty-fourth of king Alfred’s life, the above named army steered their ships up into France by a river called the Mese [Meuse] and there wintered one year.

In the same year Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, fought a battle by sea against the pagan fleet, of which he captured two ships, having slain all who were on board; and the two commanders of two other ships, with all their crews, distressed by the battle and the wounds which they had received, laid down their arms and submitted to the king.

In the year of our Lord’s incarnation 883, which was the thirty- fifth of king Alfred’s life, the aforesaid army went up the river called Scald [Scheldt] to a convent of nuns called Cundoht [Conde] and there remained a year.

In the year of our Lord’s incarnation 884, which was the thirty- sixth of king Alfred’s life, the aforesaid army divided into two parts; one body of them

Life of Alfred

went into East France, and the other coming to Britain entered Kent, where they besieged a city called in Saxon Rochester, and situated on the eastern bank of the river Medway. Before the gate of the town the pagans suddenly erected a strong fortress, but yet they were unable to take the city, because the citizens defended themselves bravely, until king Alfred came up to help them with a large army. Then the pagans abandoned their fortress, and all their horses which they had brought with them out of France, and leaving behind them in the fortress the greater part of their prisoners, on the arrival of the king, fled immediately to their ships, and the Saxons immediately seized on the prisoners and horses left by the pagans; and so the pagans, compelled by stern necessity, returned the same summer to France.

In the same year Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, led his fleet, full of fighting men, out of Kent to the country of the East-Angles, for the sake of plunder; and, when they had arrived at the mouth of the river Stour, immediately thirteen ships of the pagans met them, prepared for battle; a fierce fight ensued, and all the pagans, after a brave resistance, were slain; all the ships, with all their money, were taken. After this, while the royal fleet were reposing, the pagans, who lived in the eastern part of England, assembled their ships, met the same royal fleet at sea in the mouth of the same river, and, after a naval battle, the pagans gained the victory.

PART TWO

In the same year, also, Carloman, king of the Western Franks, whilst hunting a wild boar, was miserably killed by a large animal of that species, which inflicted a dreadful wound on him with its tusk. His brother Louis [III], who had been king of the Franks, died the year before. These two brothers were sons of Louis, king of the Franks, who had died in the year above mentioned, in which the eclipse of the sun took place; and it was he whose daughter Judith was given by her father's wish in marriage to Ethelwulf, King of the West Saxons.

In the same year also a great army of the pagans came from Germany into the country of the ancient Saxons, which is called in Saxon Ealdseaxum. To oppose them the said Saxons and Frisons joined their forces, and fought bravely twice in that same year. In both those battles the Christians, with the

merciful aid of the Lord, obtained the victory.

In the same year also, Charles, king of the Almain, received, with universal consent, all the territories which lie between the Tyrrhenian sea and that gulf which runs between the old Saxons and the Gauls, except the kingdom of Armorica, i.e. Lesser Britain. This Charles was the son of King Louis, who was brother of Charles, King of the Franks, father of the aforesaid queen Judith; these two brothers were sons of Louis, but Louis was the son of the great, the ancient, and wise Charlemagne, who was the son of Pepin.

In the same year pope Martin, of blessed memory, went the way of all flesh; it was he who, in regard for Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, and at his request, freed the school of the Anglo-Saxons resident at Rome from all tribute and tax. He also sent many gifts on that occasion, among which was no small portion of the holy and venerable cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was suspended, for the general salvation of mankind.

In the same year also the army of pagans, which dwelt among the East Angles, disgracefully broke the peace which they had concluded with King Alfred.

Wherefore, to return to that from which I digressed, that I may not be compelled by my long navigation to abandon the port of rest which I was making for, I propose, as far as my knowledge will enable me, to speak of the life and character and just conduct of my lord Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, after he married the above named respected lady of Mercian race, his wife; and, with God's blessing, I will despatch it succinctly and briefly, as I promised, that I may not offend the delicate minds of my readers by prolixity in relating each new event.

His nuptials were honourably celebrated in Mercia, among innumerable multitudes of people of both sexes; and after continual feasts, both by night and by day, he was immediately seized, in presence of all the people, by sudden and overwhelming pain, as yet unknown to all the physicians; for it was unknown to all who were then present, and even to those who daily see him up to the present time, — which, sad to say! is the worst of all, that he should have protracted it so long from the twentieth to the fortieth year of his life, and even more than that through the space of so many years, — from what

cause so great a malady arose. For many thought that this was occasioned by the favour and fascination of the people who surrounded him; others, by some spite of the devil, who is ever jealous of the good; others, from an unusual kind of fever. He had this sort of severe disease from his childhood; but once, divine Providence so ordered it, that when he was on a visit to Cornwall for the sake of hunting, and had turned out of the road to pray in a certain chapel, in which rests the body of Saint Guerir, and now also St. Neot rests there, — for king Alfred was always from his infancy a frequent visitor of holy places for the sake of prayer and almsgiving, — he prostrated himself for private devotion, and, after some time spent therein, he entreated of God's mercy, that in his boundless clemency he would exchange the torments of the malady which then afflicted him for some other lighter disease; but with this condition, that such disease should not show itself outwardly in his body, lest he should be an object of contempt, and less able to benefit mankind; for he had great dread of leprosy or blindness, or any such complaint, as makes men useless or contemptible when it afflicts them. When he had finished his prayers, he proceeded on his journey, and not long after he felt within him that by the hand of the Almighty he was healed, according to his request, of his disorder, and that it was entirely eradicated, although he had first had even this complaint in the flower of his youth, by his devout and pious prayers and supplications to Almighty God. For if I may be allowed to speak briefly, but in a somewhat preposterous order, of his zealous piety to God in the flower of his youth, before he entered the marriage state, he wished to strengthen his mind in the observance of God's commandments, for he perceived that he could with difficulty abstain from gratifying his carnal desires; and, because he feared the anger of God, if he should do anything contrary to his will, he used often to rise in the morning at the cock-crow, and go to pray in the churches and at the relics of the saints. There he prostrated himself on the ground, and prayed that God in his mercy would strengthen his mind still more in his service by some infirmity such as he might bear, but not such as would render him imbecile and contemptible in his worldly duties; and when he had often prayed with much devotion to this effect, after an interval of some time, Providence vouchsafed to afflict him with the above-named disease, which he bore long and painfully for many years, and even despaired of life, until he entirely got rid of it by his prayers; but, sad to say! it was replaced, as we have said, at his marriage by another which incessantly tormented him, night

and day, from the twentieth to the forty-fourth year of his life. But if ever, by God's mercy, he was relieved from this infirmity for a single day or night, yet the fear and dread of that dreadful malady never left him, but rendered him almost useless, as he thought, for every duty, whether human or divine.

The sons and daughters, which he had by his wife above mentioned were Ethelfled the eldest, after whom came Edward, then Ethelgiva, then Ethelwitha, and Ethelwerd, besides those who died in their infancy, one of whom was Edmund. Ethelfled, when she arrived at a marriageable age, was united to Ethered, earl of Mercia; Ethelgiva also was dedicated to God, and submitted to the rules of a monastic life. Ethelwerd the youngest, by the divine counsels and the admirable prudence of the king, was consigned to the schools of learning, where, with the children of almost all the nobility of the country, and many also who were not noble, he prospered under the diligent care of his teachers. Books in both languages, namely, Latin and Saxon, were both read in the school. They also learned to write; so that before they were of an age to practice manly arts, namely, hunting and such pursuits as befit noblemen, they became studious and clever in the liberal arts. Edward and Ethelwitha were bred up in the king's court and received great attention from their attendants and nurses; nay, they continue to this day, with the love of all about them, and showing affability, and even gentleness towards all, both natives and foreigners, and in complete subjection to their father; nor, among their other studies which appertain to this life and are fit for noble youths, are they suffered to pass their time idly and unprofitably without learning the liberal arts; for they have carefully learned the Psalms and Saxon books, especially the Saxon poems, and are continually in the habit of making use of books.

In the meantime, the king, during the frequent wars and other trammels of this present life, the invasions of the pagans, and his own daily infirmities of body, continued to carry on the government, and to exercise hunting in all its branches; to teach his workers in gold and artificers of all kinds, his falconers, hawkers and dog-keepers; to build houses, majestic and good beyond all the precedents of his ancestors, by his new mechanical inventions; to recite the Saxon books, and especially to learn by heart the Saxon poems, and to make others learn them; and he alone never desisted from studying, most diligently, to the best of his ability; he attended the mass and other daily services

Life of Alfred

of religion; he was frequent in psalm-singing and prayer, at the hours both of the day and the night. He also went to the churches, as we have already said, in the night-time to pray, secretly, and unknown to his courtiers; he bestowed alms and largesses on both natives and foreigners of all countries; he was affable and pleasant to all, and curiously eager to investigate things unknown. Many Franks, Frisons, Gauls, pagans, Britons, Scots, and Armoricans, noble and ignoble, submitted voluntarily to his dominion; and all of them, according to their nation and deserving, were ruled, loved, honoured, and enriched with money and power. Moreover, the king was in the habit of hearing the divine scriptures read by his own countrymen, or, if by any chance it so happened, in company with foreigners, and he attended to it with sedulity and solicitude. His bishops, too, and all ecclesiastics, his earls and nobles, ministers and friends, were loved by him with wonderful affection, and their sons, who were bred up in the royal household, were no less dear to him than his own; he had them instructed in all kinds of good mortas, and among other things, never ceased to teach them letters night and day; but as if he had no consolation in all these things, and suffered to other annoyance either from within or without, yet he was harassed by daily and nightly affliction, that he complained to God, and to all who were admitted to his familiar love, that Almighty God had made him ignorant of divine wisdom, and of the liberal arts; in this emulating the pious, the wise, and wealthy Solomon, king of the Hebrews, who at first, despising all present glory and riches, asked wisdom of God, and found both, namely, wisdom and worldly glory; as it is written, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." But God, who is always the inspector of the thoughts of the mind within, and the instigator of all good intentions, and a most plentiful aider, that good desires may be formed, — for he would not instigate a man to good intentions, unless he also amply supplied that which the man justly and properly wishes to have, — instigated the king's mind within; as it is written, "I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me." He would avail himself of every opportunity to procure coadjutors in his good designs, to aid him in his strivings after wisdom, that he might attain to what he aimed at; and, like a prudent bird, which rising in summer with the early morning from her beloved nest, steers her rapid flight through the uncertain tracks of ether, and descends on the manifold and varied flowers of grasses, herbs, and shrubs, essaying that which pleases most, that she may bear it to

her home, so did he direct his eyes afar, and seek without, that which he had not within, namely, in his own kingdom.

But God at that time, as some consolation to the king's benevolence, yielding to his complaint, sent certain lights to illuminate him, namely, Wenefrith, bishop of the church of Worcester, a man well versed in divine scripture, who, by the king's command, first turned the books of the Dialogues of pope Gregory and Peter, his disciple, from Latin into Saxon, and sometimes putting sense for sense, interpreted them with clearness and elegance. After him was Plegmund, a Mercian by birth, archbishop of the church of Canterbury, a venerable man, and endowed with wisdom; Ethelstan also, and Werewulf, his priests and chaplains, Mercians by birth and erudite. These four had been invited out of Mercia by king Alfred, who exalted them with many honours and powers in the kingdom of the West-Saxons, besides the privileges which archbishop Plegmund and bishop Wenefrith enjoyed in Mercia. By their teaching and wisdom the king's desires increased unceasingly, and were gratified. Night and day, whenever he had leisure, he commanded such men as these to read books to him; for he never suffered himself to be without one of them, wherefore he possessed a knowledge of every book, though of himself he could not yet understand anything of books, for he had not yet learned to read any thing.

But the king's commendable avarice could not be gratified even in this; wherefore he sent messengers beyond the sea to Gaul, to procure teachers, and he invited from thence Grimbald, priest and monk, a venerable man, and good singer, adorned with every kind of ecclesiastical discipline and good morals, and most learned in holy scripture. He also obtained from thence John, also priest and monk, a man of most energetic talents, and learned in all kinds of literary science, and skilled in many other arts. By the teaching of these men the king's mind was much enlarged, and he enriched and honoured them with much influence.

In these times, I also came into Saxony out of the furthest coasts of Western Britain; and when I had proposed to go to him through many intervening provinces, I arrived in the country of the Saxons, who live on the right hand, which in Saxon is called Sussex, under the guidance of some of that nation; and there I first saw him in the royal vill, which is called Dene. He

received me with kindness, and among other familiar conversation, he asked me eagerly to devote myself to his service and become his friend, to leave every thing which I possessed on the left, or western bank of the Severn, and he promised he would give more than an equivalent for it in his own dominions. I replied that I could not incautiously and rashly promise such things; for it seemed to me unjust, that I should leave those sacred places in which I had been bred, educated, and crowned, and at last ordained, for the sake of any earthly honour and power, unless by compulsion. Upon this, he said, "If you cannot accede to this, at least, let me have your service in part: spend six months of the year with me here, and the other six in Britain." To this, I replied, "I could not even promise that easily or hastily without the advice of my friends." At length, however, when I perceived that he was anxious for my services, though I knew not why, I promised him that, if my life was spared, I would return to him after six months, with such a reply as should be agreeable to him as well as advantageous to me and mine. With this answer he was satisfied, and when I had given him a pledge to return at the appointed time, on the fourth day we left him and returned on horseback towards our own country.

After our departure, a violent fever seized me in the city of Winchester, where I lay for twelve months and one week, night and day, without hope of recovery. At the appointed time, therefore, I could not fulfil my promise of visiting him, and he sent messengers to hasten my journey, and to inquire the cause of my delay. As I was unable to ride to him, I sent a second messenger to tell him the cause of my delay, and assure him that, if I recovered from my infirmity, I would fulfil what I had promised. My complaint left me, and by the advice and consent of all my friends, for the benefit of that holy place, and of all who dwelt therein, I did as I had promised to the king, and devoted myself to his service, on the condition that I should remain with him six months in every year, either continuously, if I could spend six months with him at once, or alternately, three months in Britain and three in Saxony. For my friends hoped that they should sustain less tribulation and harm from king Hemeid, who often plundered that monastery and the parish of St. Deguus, and sometimes expelled the prelates, as they expelled archbishop Novis, my relation, and myself; if in any manner I could secure the notice and friendship of the king.

At that time, and long before, all the countries on the right hand side of Britain belonged to king Alfred and still belonged to him. For instance, king Hemeid, with all the inhabitants of the region of Demetia, compelled by the violence of the six sons of Rotri, had submitted to the dominion of the King. Howel also, son of Ris, king of Gleguising, and Brocmail and Fernmail, sons of Mouric, kings of Gwent, compelled by the violence and tyranny of earl Ethered and of the Mercians, of their own accord sought king Alfred, that they might enjoy his government and protection from him against their enemies. Helised, also, son of Tendyr, king of Brecon, compelled by the force of the same sons of Rotri, of his own accord sought the government of the aforesaid king; and Anarawd, son of Rotri, with his brother, at length abandoning the friendship of the Northumbrians, from which he received no good but harm, came into king Alfred's presence and eagerly sought his friendship. The king received him honourably, received him as his son by confirmation from the bishop's hand, and presented him with many gifts. Thus he became subject to the king with all his people, on the same condition, that he should be obedient to the king's will in all respects, in the same way as Ethered with the Mercians.

Nor was it in vain that all these princes gained the friendship of the king. For those who desired to augment their worldly power, obtained power; those who desired money, gained money; and in like way, those who desired his friendship, or both money and friendship, succeeded in getting what they wanted. But all of them gained his love and guardianship and defence from every quarter, even as the king with his men could protect himself.

When therefore I had come into his presence at the royal vill, called Leonaford, I was honourably received by him, and remained that time with him at his court eight months; during which I read to him whatever books he liked, and such as he had at hand; for this is his most usual custom, both night and day, amid his many other occupations of mind and body, either himself to read books, or to listen whilst others read them. And when I frequently asked his leave to depart, and could in no way obtain it, at length when I had made up my mind by all means to demand it, he called me to him at twilight, on Christmas eve, and gave me two letters, in which was a long list of all the things which were in two monasteries, called in Saxon, Ambresbury and Banwell; and on that same day he delivered to me those two monasteries with all

the things that were in them, and a silken pall of great value, and a lead for a strong man, of incense, adding these words, that he did not give me these trifling presents, because he was unwilling hereafter to give me greater; for in the course of time he unexpectedly gave me Exeter, with all the diocese which belonged to him in Saxony and in Cornwall, besides gifts every day, without number, in every kind of worldly wealth, which it would be too long to enumerate here, lest they should make my reader tired. But let no one suppose that I have mentioned these presents in this place for the sake of glory or flattery, or to obtain greater honour. I call God to witness, that I have not done so; but that I might certify to those who are ignorant, how profuse he is in giving, he then at once gave me permission to ride to those two rich monasteries and afterwards to return to my own country.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation, 886, which was the thirty- eighth since the birth of Alfred, the army so often before mentioned again fled the country, and went into the country of the Western Franks, directing their ships to the river called the Seine, and sailed up it as far as the city of Paris, and there they wintered and measured out their camp. They besieged that city a whole year, as far as the bridge, that they might prevent the inhabitants from making use of it; for the city is situated on a small island in the middle of the river; but by the merciful favour of God, and the brave defence of citizens, the army could not force their way inside the walls.

In the same year, Alfred, King of the Anglo-Saxons, after the burning of the cities and the slaying of the people, honourably rebuilt the city of London, and made it again habitable. He gave it into the custody of his son-in-law, Ethered, earl of Mercia, to which king all the Angles and Saxons, who before had been dispersed everywhere, or were in captivity with the pagans, voluntarily turned and submitted themselves to his dominion.

In the same year there arose a foul and deadly discord at Oxford, between Grimbold, with those learned men whom he had brought with him, and the old scholars whom he had found there, who, on his arrival, refused altogether to embrace the laws, modes, and forms of praelection instituted by the same Grimbold. During three years there had been no great dissension between them, but there was a secret enmity which afterwards broke out with great atrocity, clearer than the light itself. To appease this quarrel, that invin-

cible king Alfred, having been informed of the strife by a messenger from Grimbold, went to Oxford to put an end to the controversy, and endured much trouble in hearing the arguments and complaints which were brought forwards on both sides. The substance of the dispute was this: the old scholars contended, that literature had flourished at Oxford before the coming of Grimbold, although the number of scholars was smaller than in ancient time, because several had been driven away by the cruelty and tyranny of the pagans. They also proved and showed, by the undoubted testimony of ancient annals, that the orders and institutions of that place had been sanctioned by certain pious and learned men, as for instance by Saint Gildas, Melkinus, Nennius, Kentigern, and others, who had all grown old there in literature, and happily administered everything there in peace and concord; and also, that Saint Germanus had come to Oxford, and stopped there half a year, at the time when he went through Britain to preach against the Pelagian heresy; he wonderfully approved of the customs and institutions above-mentioned. The king, with unheard-of humility, listened to both sides carefully, and exhorted them again and again with pious and wholesome admonitions to cherish mutual love and concord. He therefore left them with this decision, that each party should follow their own counsel, and preserve their own institutions. Grimbold, displeased at this, immediately departed to the monastery at Winchester, which had been recently founded by King Alfred, and ordered a tomb to be carried to Winchester, in which he proposed, after this life, that his bones should be laid in the vault which had been made under the chancel of St. Peter's church in Oxford; which church the same Grimbold had built from its foundations, of stone polished with great care.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 887, which was the thirty-ninth of king Alfred's life, the above mentioned army of the pagans, leaving the city of Paris uninjured, because they could not succeed against it, sailed up the river Seine under the bridge, until they reached the mouth of the river Materne [Marne]; where they left the Seine, and, following for a long time the course of the Marne, at length, but not without much labour, they arrived at a place called Chezy, a royal vill, where they wintered one year. In the following year they entered the mouth of the river Ionna [Yonne], not without doing much damage to the country, and there remained one year.

In tho same year Charles, king of the Franks, went the way of all flesh;

but Arnulf, his brother's son, six weeks before he died, had expelled him from his kingdom. After his death five kings were appointed, and the kingdom was split into five parts; but the principal rank in the kingdom justly and deservedly devolved on Arnulf, save only that he committed an unworthy offence against his uncle. The other four kings promised fidelity and obedience to Arnulf, as was proper; for none of these four kings was hereditary on his father's side in his share of the kingdom, as was Arnulf; therefore, though the five kings were appointed immediately on the death of Charles, yet the empire remained in the hands of Arnulf.

Such, then, was the division of the kingdom; Arnulf received the countries on the east of the river Rhine; Rodulf the inner parts of the kingdom; Oda the western part; Beorngar and Guido, Lombardy, and those countries which are in that part of the mountains; but they did not keep these large dominions in peace, for they twice fought a pitched battle, and often mutually ravaged their kingdoms, and drove each other out of their dominions.

In the same year in which that [pagan] army left Paris and went to Chezy, Ethelhelm, earl of Wiltshire, carried to Rome the alms of king Alfred and of the Saxons.

In the same year Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, so often before mentioned, by divine inspiration, began, on one and the same day, to read and to interpret; but that I may explain this more fully to those who are ignorant, I will relate the cause of this long delay in beginning.

On a certain day we were both of us sitting in the king's chamber, talking on all kinds of subjects, as usual, and it happened that I read to him a quotation out of a certain book. He heard it attentively with both his ears, and addressed me with a thoughtful mind, showing me at the same moment a book which he carried in his bosom, wherein the daily courses and psalms, and prayers which he had read in his youth, were written, and he commanded me to write the same quotation in that book. Hearing this, and perceiving his ingenuous benevolence, and devout desire of studying the words of divine wisdom, I gave, though in secret, boundless thanks to Almighty God, who had implanted such a love of wisdom in the king's heart. But I could not find any empty space in that book wherein to write the quotation, for it was already full of various matters; wherefore I made a little delay, principally that I might

stir up the bright intellect of the king to a higher acquaintance with the divine testimonies. Upon his urging me to make haste and write it quickly, I said to him, "Are you willing that I should write that quotation on some leaf apart? For it is not certain whether we shall not find one or more other such extracts which will please you; and if that should so happen, we shall be glad that we have kept them apart." "Your plan is good," said he, and I gladly made haste to get ready a sheet, in the beginning of which I wrote what he bade me; and on that same day, I wrote therein, as I had anticipated, no less than three other quotations which pleased him; and from that time we daily talked together, and found out other quotations which pleased him, so that the sheet became full, and deservedly so; according as it is written, "The just man builds upon a moderate foundation, and by degrees passes to greater things." Thus, like a most productive bee, he flew here and there, asking questions, as he went, until he had eagerly and unceasingly collected many various flowers of divine scriptures, with which he thickly stored the cells of his mind.

Now when that first quotation was copied, he was eager at once to read, and to interpret in Saxon, and then to teach others; even as we read of that happy robber, who recognized his Lord, aye, the Lord of all men, as he was hanging in the blessed cross, and, saluting him with his bodily eyes only, because elsewhere he was all pierced with nails, cried, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" for it was only at the end of his life that he began to learn the rudiments of the Christian faith. But the king, inspired by God, began to study the rudiments of divine Scripture on the sacred solemnity of St. Martin [Nov. 11], and he continued to learn the flowers collected by certain masters, and to reduce them into the form of one book, as he was then able, although mixed one with another, until it became almost as large as a psalter. This book he called his *Enchiridion* or *Manual*, because he carefully kept it at hand day and night, and found, as he told me, no small consolation therein.

But as has already been written by a certain wise man,

"Of watchful minds are they whose pious care

It is to govern well,"

so must I be watchful, in that I just now drew a kind of comparison or similarity, though in dissimilar manner, between that happy robber and the

king; for the cross is hateful to every one, wherever there is suffering. But what can he do, if he cannot save himself or escape thence? Or by what art can he remain there and improve his cause? He must, therefore, whether he will or no, endure with pain and sorrow that which he is suffering.

Now the king was pierced with many nails of tribulation, though placed in the royal seat; for from the twentieth year of his age to the present year, which is his fortieth, he has been constantly afflicted with most severe attacks of an unknown complaint, so that he has not a moment's ease either from suffering the pain which it causes, or from the gloom which is thrown over him by the apprehension of its coming. Moreover, the constant invasions of foreign nations, by which he was continually harassed by land and sea, without any interval of quiet, were a just cause of disquiet. What shall I say of his repeated expeditions against the pagans, his wars, and incessant occupations of government? Of the daily embassies sent to him by foreign nations, from the Tyrrhenian sea to the farthest end of Ireland? For we have seen and read letters, accompanied with presents, which were sent to him by Abel the patriarch of Jerusalem. What shall I say of the cities and towns which he restored, and of others which he built, where none had been before? Of the royal halls and chambers, wonderfully erected by his command, with stone and wood? Of the royal villas constructed of stone, removed from their old site, and handsomely rebuilt by the king's command in more fitting places? Besides the disease above mentioned, he was disturbed by the quarrels of his friends, who would voluntarily endure little or no toil, though it was for the common necessity of the kingdom; but he alone, sustained by the divine aid, like a skillful pilot, strove to steer his ship, laden with much wealth, into the safe and much desired harbour of his country, though almost all his crew were tired, and suffered them not to faint or hesitate, though sailing amid the manifold waves and eddies of this present life.

For all his bishops, earls, nobles, favourite ministers, and prefects, who, next to God and the king, had the whole government of the kingdom, as is fitting, continually received from him instruction, respect, exhortation, and command; nay, at last, when they were disobedient, and his long patience was exhausted, he would reprove them severely, and censure at pleasure their vulgar folly and obstinacy; and in this way he directed their attention to the common interests of the kingdom. But, owing to the sluggishness of the peo-

ple, these admonitions of the king were either not fulfilled, or were begun late at the moment of necessity, and so ended less to the advantage of those who put them in execution; for I will say nothing of the castles which he ordered to be built, but which, being begun late, were never finished, because the hostile troops broke in upon them by land and sea, and, as often happened, the thwarters of the royal ordinances repented when it was too late, and blushed at their non-performance of his commands. I speak of repentance when it is too late, on the testimony of Scripture, whereby numberless persons have had cause for too much sorrow when many insidious evils have been wrought. But though by these means, sad to say, they may be bitterly afflicted and roused to sorrow by the loss of fathers, wives, children, ministers, servant-men, servant- maids, and furniture and household stuff, what is the use of hateful repentance when their kinsmen are dead, and they cannot aid them, or redeem those who are captive from captivity? For they are not able even to assist those who have escaped, as they have not wherewith to sustain even their own lives. They repented, therefore, when it was too late, and grieved at their incautious neglect of the king's commands, and they praised the royal wisdom with one voice, and tried with all their power to fulfil what they had before refused, namely, concerning the erection of castles, and other things generally useful to the whole kingdom.

Of his fixed purpose of holy meditation, which, in the midst of prosperity and adversity he never neglected, I cannot with advantage now omit to speak. For, whereas he often thought of the necessities of his soul, among the other good deeds to which his thoughts were night and day turned, he ordered that two monasteries should be built, one for monks at Athelney, which is a place surrounded by impassable marshes and rivers, where no one can enter but by boats, or by a bridge laboriously constructed between two other heights; at the western end of which bridge was erected a strong tower, of beautiful work, by command of the aforesaid king; and in this monastery he collected monks of all kinds, from every quarter, and placed them therein.

For at first, because he had no one of his own nation, noble and free by birth, who was willing to enter the monastic life, except children, who could neither choose good nor avoid evil in consequence of their tender years, because for many previous years the love of a monastic life had utterly decayed from that nation as well as from many other nations, though many monaster-

ies still remain in that country; yet, as no one directed the rule of that kind of life in a regular way, for what reason I cannot say, either from the invasions of foreigners which took place so frequently both by sea and land, or because that people abounded in riches of every kind, and so looked with contempt on the monastic life. It was for this reason that king Alfred sought to gather monks of different kinds to place in the same monastery.

First he placed there as abbat, John the priest and monk, an old Saxon by birth, then certain priests and deacons from beyond the sea; of whom, finding that he had not as large a number as he wished, he procured as many as possible of the same Gallic race, some of whom, being children, he ordered to be taught in the same monastery, and at a later period to be admitted to the monastic habit. I have myself seen a young lad of pagan birth who was educated in that monastery, and by no means the hindmost of them all.

There was also a deed done once in that monastery, which I would utterly consign to oblivion, although it is an unworthy deed; for throughout the whole of Scripture the base deeds of the wicked are interspersed among the blessed deeds of the just, as tares and darnel are sown among the wheat: good deeds are recorded that they may be praised and imitated, and that their imitators may be held in all honour; wicked deeds are there related, that they may be censured and avoided, and their imitators be reproved with all odium, contempt, and vengeance.

For once upon a time, a certain priest and a deacon, Gauls by birth, and two of the aforesaid monks, by the instigation of the devil, and excited by some secret jealousy, became so embittered in secret against their abbat, the above mentioned John, that, like Jews, they circumvented and betrayed their master. For whereas he had two servants, whom he had hired out of Gaul, they taught these such wicked practices, that in the night, when all men were enjoying the sweet tranquillity of sleep, they should make their way into the church armed, and shutting it behind them as usual, hide themselves therein, and wait for the moment when the abbat should enter the church alone. At length, when he should come alone to pray, and, bending his knees, bow before the holy altar, the men should rush on him with hostility, and try to slay him on the spot. They then should drag his lifeless body out of The church, and throw it down before the house of a certain harlot, as if he had been slain

whilst on a visit to her. This was their machination, adding crime to crime, as it is said, "The last error shall be worse than the first."

But the divine mercy, which always delights to aid the innocent, frustrated in great part the wicked design of the wicked men, so that it should not turn out in every respect as they had proposed.

When, therefore, the whole of the evil counsel had been explained by those wicked teachers to their wicked agents, and the night which had been fixed on as most fit was come, the two armed ruffians were placed, with a promise of impunity, to await in the church for the arrival of the abbat. In the middle of the night John, as usual, entered the church to pray, without any one's knowing of it, and knelt before the altar. The two ruffians rushed upon him with drawn swords, and dealt him some severe wounds. But he, being a man of a brave mind, and, as we have heard say, not unacquainted with the art of self-defence, if he had not been a follower of a better calling, no sooner heard the sound of the robbers, before he saw them, than he rose up against them before he was wounded, and, shouting as loud as he could, struggled against them, crying out that they were devils and not men; for he himself knew no better, as he thought that no men would dare to attempt such a deed. He was, however, wounded before any of his people could come to his help. His attendants, roused by the noise, were frightened when they heard the word devils, and both those two who, like Jews, sought to betray their master, and the others who knew nothing of the matter, rushed together to the doors of the church; but before they got there those ruffians escaped, leaving the abbat half dead. The monks raised the old man, in a fainting condition, and carried him home with tears and lamentations; nor did those two deceitful monks shed tears less than the innocent. But God's mercy did not allow so bold a deed to pass unpunished; the ruffians who perpetrated it, and all who urged them to it, were taken and put in prison, where, by various tortures, they came to a disgraceful end. Let us now return to our narrative.

Another monastery, also, was built by the same king as a residence for nuns, near the eastern gate of Shaftesbury; and his own daughter, Ethelgiva, was placed in it as abbess. With her many other noble ladies bound by the rules of the monastic life, dwell in that monastery. These two edifices were enriched by the king with much land, as well as personal property.

Life of Alfred

These things being thus disposed of, the king began, as was his practice, to consider within himself, what more he could do to augment and show forth his piety; what he had begun wisely, and thoughtfully conceived for the public benefit, as adhered to with equally beneficial result; for he had heard it out of the book of the law, that the Lord had promised to restore to him tenfold; and he knew that the Lord had kept his promise, and had actually restored to him tenfold. Encouraged by this example, and wishing to exceed the practices of his predecessors, he vowed humbly and faithfully to devote to God half his services, both day and night, and also half of all his wealth, such as lawfully and justly came annually into his possession; and this vow, as far as human discretion can perceive and keep, he skilfully and wisely endeavoured to fulfil. But, that he might, with his usual caution, avoid that which scripture warns us against: "If you offer aright, but do not divide aright, you sin," he considered how he might divide aright that which he had vowed to God; and as Solomon had said, "The heart of the king is in the hand of God," that is, his counsel he ordered with wise policy, which could come only from above, that his officers should first divide into two parts the revenues of every year.

When this division was made, he assigned the first part to worldly uses, and ordered that one-third of it should be paid to his soldiers, and also to his ministers, the nobles who dwelt at court where they discharged divers duties; for so the king's family was arranged at all times into three classes. The king's attendants were most wisely distributed into three companies, so that the first company should be on duty at court for one month, night and day, at the end of which they returned to their homes, and were relieved by the second company. At the end of the second month, in the same way, the third company relieved the second, who returned to their homes, where they spent two months, until their services were again wanted. The third company also gave place to the first in the same way, and also spent two months at home. Thus was the threefold division of the companies arranged at all times in the royal household.

To these therefore was paid the first of the three portions aforesaid, to each according to their respective dignities and peculiar services; the second to the operatives, whom he had collected from every nation, and had about him in large numbers, men skilled in every kind of construction; the third portion was assigned to foreigners who came to him out of every nation far

and near, whether they asked money of him or not, he cheerfully gave to each with wonderful munificence according to their respective merits, according to what is written: "God loveth a cheerful giver."

But the second part of all his revenues, which came yearly into his possession, and was included in the receipts of the exchequer, as we mentioned a little before, he, with ready devotion, gave to God, ordering his ministers to divide it carefully into four parts, on the condition that the first part should be discreetly bestowed on the poor of every nation who came to him; and on this subject he said that, as far as human discretion could guarantee, the remark of pope St. Gregory should be followed: "Give not much to whom you should give little, nor little to whom much, nor something to whom nothing, nor nothing to whom something." The second of the four portions was given to the two monasteries which he had built, and to those who therein had dedicated themselves to God's service, as we have mentioned above. The third portion was assigned to the school, which he had studiously collected together, consisting of many of the nobility of his own nation. The fourth portion was for the use of all the neighbouring monasteries in all Saxony and Mercia, and also during some years, in turn, to the churches and servants of God dwelling in Britain [Wales], Cornwall, Gaul, Armorica, Northumbria, and sometimes also in Ireland; according to his means, he either distributed to them beforehand, or afterwards, if life and success should not fail him.

When the king had arranged these matters, he remembered that sentence of divine scripture, "Whosoever will give alms, ought to begin from himself," and prudently began to reflect what he could offer to God from the service of his body and mind; for he proposed to consecrate to God no less out of this than he had done of things external to himself. Moreover, he promised, as far as his infirmity and his means would allow, to give up to God the half of his services, bodily and mental, by night and by day, voluntarily, and with all his might; but, inasmuch as he could not equally distinguish the lengths of the hours by night, on account of the darkness, and oftentimes of the day, on account of the storms and clouds, he began to consider, by what means and without any difficulty, relying on the mercy of God, he might discharge the promised tenor of his vow until his death.

After long reflection on these things, he at length, by a useful and shrewd

invention, commanded his chaplains to supply wax in a sufficient quantity, and he caused it to be weighed in such a manner that when there was so much of it in the scales, as would equal the weight of seventy-two pence, he caused the chaplains to make six candles thereof, each of equal length, so that each candle might have twelve divisions marked longitudinally upon it. By this plan, therefore, those six candles burned for twenty-four hours, a night and day, without fail, before the sacred relics of many of God's elect, which always accompanied him wherever he went; but sometimes when they would not continue burning a whole day and night, till the same hour that they were lighted the preceding evening, from the violence of the wind, which blew day and night without intermission through the doors and windows of the churches, the fissures of the divisions, the plankings, or the wall, or the thin canvass of the tents, they then unavoidably burned out and finished their course before the appointed time; the king therefore considered by what means he might shut out the wind, and so by a useful and cunning invention, he ordered a lantern to be beautifully constructed of wood and white ox-horn, which, when skilfully planed till it is thin, is no less transparent than a vessel of glass. This lantern, therefore, was wonderfully made of wood. and horn, as we before said, and by night a candle was put into it, which shone as brightly without as within, and was not extinguished by the wind; for the opening of the lantern was also closed up, according to the king's command, by a door made of horn.

By this contrivance, then, six candles, lighted in succession, lasted four and twenty hours, neither more nor less, and, when these were extinguished, others were lighted.

When all these things were properly arranged, the king, eager to give up to God the half of his daily service, as he had vowed, and more also, if his ability on the one hand, and his malady on the other, would allow him, showed himself a minute investigator of the truth in all his judgments, and this especially for the sake of the poor, to whose interest, day and night, among other duties of this life, he ever was wonderfully attentive. For in the whole Kingdom the poor, besides him, had few or no protectors; for all the powerful and noble of that country had turned their thoughts rather to secular than to heavenly things: each was more bent on secular matters, to his own profit, than on the public good.

He strove also, in his own judgments, for the benefit of both the noble and the ignoble, who often perversely quarrelled at the meetings of his earls and officers, so that hardly one of them admitted the justice of what had been decided by the earls and prefects, and in consequence of this pertinacious and obstinate dissension, all desired to have the judgment of the king, and both sides sought at once to gratify their desire. But if any one was conscious of injustice on his side in the suit, though by law and agreement he was compelled, however reluctant, to go before the king, yet with his own good will he never would consent to go. For he knew, that in the king's presence no part of his wrong would be hidden; and no wonder, for the king was a most acute investigator in passing sentence, as he was in all other things. He inquired into almost all the judgments which were given in his own absence, throughout all his dominion, whether they were just or unjust. If he perceived there was iniquity in those judgments, he summoned the judges, either through his own agency, or through others of his faithful servants, and asked them mildly, why they had judged so unjustly; whether through ignorance or malevolence; i.e., whether for the love or fear of any one, or hatred of others; or also for the desire of money. At length, if the judges acknowledged they had given judgment because they knew no better, he discreetly and moderately reproved their inexperience and folly in such terms as these: "I wonder truly at your insolence, that, whereas by God's favour and mine, you have occupied the rank and office of the wise, you have neglected the studies and labours of the wise. Either, therefore, at once give up the discharge of the temporal duties which you hold, or endeavour more zealously to study the lessons of wisdom. Such are my commands." At these words the earls and prefects would tremble and endeavour to turn all their thoughts to the study of justice, so that, wonderful to say, almost all his earls, prefects, and officers, though unlearned from their cradles, were sedulously bent upon acquiring learning, choosing rather laboriously to acquire the knowledge of a new discipline than to resign their functions; but if any one of them from old age or slowness of talent was unable to make progress in liberal studies, he commanded his son, if he had one, or one of his kinsmen, or, if there was no other person to be had, his own freedman or servant, whom he had some time before advanced to the office of reading, to recite Saxon books before him night and day, whenever he had any leisure, and they lamented with deep sighs, in their inmost hearts, that in their youth they had never attended to such studies; and they blessed

Life of Alfred

the young men of our days, who happily could be instructed in the liberal arts, whilst they execrated their own lot, that they had not learned these things in their youth, and now, when they are old, though wishing to learn them, they are unable. But this skill of young and old in acquiring letters, we have explained to the knowledge of the aforesaid king.



THE FOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS

Translated by Frederic H. Chase Jr.

Preface

THE most lowly monk and priest John to the most saintly and honored of God, Father Cosmas the most holy Bishop of Maiuma, greetings in the Lord. Being fully conscious of the limitations of my intelligence and of the insufficiency of my language, your Beatitude, I have hesitated to undertake a task exceeding my capabilities and to presume to enter into the Holy of Holies like some bold and foolhardy person, for I am wary of the danger that threatens those who attempt such things. The divine Moses, the lawgiver, withdrew from all sight of human things and abandoned the turbulent sea of life. He purified the eye of his soul by wiping away every material reflection, and only then did he become fit to receive the divine vision. Only then was he found worthy to behold the benevolent condescension of God the Word and His marvelous appearance in a bush and in immaterial fire, which, while it enkindled and burnt the tree and changed it into His splendor, did not consume or destroy it or alter its proper nature. He was the first to learn the name of HIM WHO is and who truly is super-essential, and he was entrusted by God with the leadership of his own countrymen. Yet, if he considered

himself as having impediment and slowness of tongue and thus unable publicly to execute the divine will and to be appointed a mediator between God and man then how am I, who am defiled and stained with every sort of sin, and who bear within myself the tumultuous seas of my conjectures, and who have purified neither my mind nor my understanding that they may serve as a mirror of God and His divine reflections; how am I, who have not sufficient power of speech to express such concepts, to utter those divine and ineffable things which surpass the comprehension of every rational creature? With these considerations in mind I have hesitated to undertake this book. Besides this, to tell the truth, I feared to accede to the request, lest I should incur ridicule on the double count of ignorance and of folly. The latter is quite serious, for the charge of ignorance may be excused provided the ignorance is not from laziness; but to add to ignorance a false pretension to knowledge is serious, blameworthy, and quite unpardonable, and it is a sure sign of a greater, if not the greatest, ignorance. On the other hand, however, the fruit of disobedience is death, while the humble and obedient man, because he has shown himself to be an imitator of Christ, is led from the lowest place to the highest. He receives from God the grace that illuminates, so that in the opening of his mouth he is filled with the Spirit. He becomes purified in heart and enlightened in understanding. When he opens his mouth, he receives the power of speech and has no concern as to what he shall say, because he is an instrument of the Spirit speaking within him. Therefore, in obedience through you to the Christ who in you exercises the pontifical office, I bow to your request and open my mouth, being confident that through your prayers it will be filled with the Spirit and that I, taking so much as He shall give and speaking this aloud, shall utter eloquently the fruit not of my own understanding but of the Spirit who giveth wisdom to the blind.

First of all I shall set forth the best contributions of the philosophers of the Greeks, because whatever there is of good has been given to men from above by God, since 'every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.' If, however, there is anything that is contrary to the truth, then it is a dark invention of the deceit of Satan and a fiction of the mind of an evil spirit, as that eminent theologian Gregory once said. In imitation of the method of the bee, I shall make my composition from those things which are conformable with the truth and from our enemies them-

The Fount of Knowledge

selves gather the fruit of salvation. But all that is worthless and falsely labeled as knowledge I shall reject. Then, next, after this, I shall set forth in order the absurdities of the heresies hated of God, so that by recognizing the lie we may more closely follow the truth. Then, with God's help and by His grace I shall expose the truth that truth which destroys deceit and puts falsehood to flight and which, as with golden fringes, has been embellished and adorned by the sayings of the divinely inspired prophets, the divinely taught fishermen, and the God-bearing shepherds and teachers that truth, the glory of which flashes out from within to brighten with its radiance, when they encounter it, them that are duly purified and rid of troublesome speculations. However, as I have said, I shall add nothing of my own, but shall gather together into one those things which have been worked out by the most eminent of teachers and make a compendium of them, being in all things obedient to your command. But I beseech you. Honored of God, to be indulgent with me, who have been obedient to your commands, and, receiving my obedience, to give me in return of the abundance of your prayers.

On Heresies

Section 101.

There is also the superstition of the Ishmaelites which to this day prevails and keeps people in error, being a forerunner of the Antichrist. They are descended from Ishmael, was born to Abraham of Agar, and for this reason they are called both Agarenes and Ishmaelites. They are also called Saracens, which is derived from *Σαρρακινοι*, or destitute of Sara, because of what Agar said to the angel: 'Sara hath sent me away destitute.' These used to be idolaters and worshiped the morning star and Aphrodite, whom in their own language they called Khabar, which means great. And so down to the time of Heraclius they were very great idolaters. From that time to the present a false prophet named Mohammed has appeared in their midst. This man, after having chanced upon the Old and New Testaments and likewise, it seems, having conversed with an Arian monk, devised his own heresy. Then, having insinuated himself into the good graces of the people by a show of seeming piety, he gave out that a certain book had been sent down to him from heaven. He had set down some ridiculous compositions in this book of his and he

gave it to them as an object of veneration.

He says that there is one God, creator of all things, who has neither been begotten nor has begotten. He says that the Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit, but a creature and a servant, and that He was begotten, without seed, of Mary the sister of Moses and Aaron. For, he says, the Word and God and the Spirit entered into Mary and she brought forth Jesus, who was a prophet and servant of God. And he says that the Jews wanted to crucify Him in violation of the law, and that they seized His shadow and crucified this. But the Christ Himself was not crucified, he says, nor did He die, for God out of His love for Him took Him to Himself into heaven. And he says this, that when the Christ had ascended into heaven God asked Him: O Jesus, didst thou say: "I am the Son of God and God"? And Jesus, he says, answered: 'Be merciful to me, Lord. Thou knowest that I did not say this and that I did not scorn to be thy servant. But sinful men have written that I made this statement, and they have lied about me and have fallen into error.' And God answered and said to Him: I know that thou didst not say this word.' There are many other extraordinary and quite ridiculous things in this book which he boasts was sent down to him from God. But when we ask: 'And who is there to testify that God gave him the book? And which of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would rise up?' - they are at a loss. And we remark that Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai, with God appearing in the sight of all the people in cloud, and fire, and darkness, and storm. And we say that all the Prophets from Moses on down foretold the coming of Christ and how Christ God (and incarnate Son of God) was to come and to be crucified and die and rise again, and how He was to be the judge of the living and dead. Then, when we say: 'How is it that this prophet of yours did not come in the same way, with others bearing witness to him? And how is it that God did not in your presence present this man with the book to which you refer, even as He gave the Law to Moses, with the people looking on and the mountain smoking, so that you, too, might have certainty?' - they answer that God does as He pleases. 'This' we say, 'We know, but we are asking how the book came down to your prophet. Then they reply that the book came down to him while he was asleep. Then we jokingly say to them that, as long as he received the book in his sleep and did not actually sense the operation, then the popular adage applies to him (which runs: You're spinning me dreams.)

The Fount of Knowledge

When we ask again: ‘How is it that when he enjoined us in this book of yours not to do anything or receive anything without witnesses, you did not ask him: “First do you show us by witnesses that you are a prophet and that you have come from God, and show us just what Scriptures there are that testify about you?”’ they are ashamed and remain silent. [Then we continue:] ‘Although you may not marry a wife without witnesses, or buy, or acquire property; although you neither receive an ass nor possess a beast of burden unwitnessed; and although you do possess both wives and property and asses and so on through witnesses, yet it is only your faith and your scriptures that you hold unsubstantiated by witnesses. For he who handed this down to you has no warranty from any source, nor is there anyone known who testified about him before he came. On the contrary, he received it while he was asleep.’

Moreover, they call us Hetaerists, or Associators, because, they say, we introduce an associate with God by declaring Christ to be the Son of God and God. We say to them in rejoinder: ‘The Prophets and the Scriptures have delivered this to us, and you, as you persistently maintain, accept the Prophets. So, if we wrongly declare Christ to be the Son of God, it is they who taught this and handed it on to us.’ But some of them say that it is by misinterpretation that we have represented the Prophets as saying such things, while others say that the Hebrews hated us and deceived us by writing in the name of the Prophets so that we might be lost. And again we say to them: ‘As long as you say that Christ is the Word of God and Spirit, why do you accuse us of being Hetaerists? For the word, and the spirit, is inseparable from that in which it naturally has existence. Therefore, if the Word of God is in God, then it is obvious that He is God. If, however, He is outside of God, then, according to you, God is without word and without spirit. Consequently, by avoiding the introduction of an associate with God you have mutilated Him. It would be far better for you to say that He has an associate than to mutilate Him, as if you were dealing with a stone or a piece of wood or some other inanimate object. Thus, you speak untruly when you call us Hetaerists; we retort by calling you Mutilators of God.’

They furthermore accuse us of being idolaters, because we venerate the cross, which they abominate. And we answer them: ‘How is it, then, that you rub yourselves against a stone in your Ka’ba and kiss and embrace it?’ Then

some of them say that Abraham had relations with Agar upon it, but others say that he tied the camel to it, when he was going to sacrifice Isaac. And we answer them: 'Since Scripture says that the mountain was wooded and had trees from which Abraham cut wood for the holocaust and laid it upon Isaac, and then he left the asses behind with the two young men, why talk nonsense? For in that place neither is it thick with trees nor is there passage for asses.' And they are embarrassed, but they still assert that the stone is Abraham's. Then we say: 'Let it be Abraham's, as you so foolishly say. Then, just because Abraham had relations with a woman on it or tied a camel to it, you are not ashamed to kiss it, yet you blame us for venerating the cross of Christ by which the power of the demons and the deceit of the Devil was destroyed.' This stone that they talk about is a head of that Aphrodite whom they used to worship and whom they called Khabar. Even to the present day, traces of the carving are visible on it to careful observers.

As has been related, this Mohammed wrote many ridiculous books, to each one of which he set a title. For example, there is the book *On Woman* in which he plainly makes legal provision for taking four wives and, if it be possible, a thousand concubines - as many as one can maintain, besides the four wives. He also made it legal to put away whichever wife one might wish, and, should one so wish, to take to oneself another in the same way. Mohammed had a friend named Zeid. This man had a beautiful wife with whom Mohammed fell in love. Once, when they were sitting together, Mohammed said: 'Oh, by the way, God has commanded me to take your wife. The other answered: You are an apostle. Do as God has told you and take my wife.' Rather - to tell the story over from the beginning he said to him: 'God has given me the command that you put away your wife.' And he put her away. Then several days later: 'Now,' he said, 'God has commanded me to take her.' Then, after he had taken her and committed adultery with her, he made this law: 'Let him who will put away his wife. And if, after having put her away, he should return to her, let another marry her. For it is not lawful to take her unless she have been married by another. Furthermore, if a brother puts away his wife, let his brother marry her, should he so wish.'

In the same book he gives such precepts as this: 'Work the land which God hath given thee and beautify it. And do this, and do it in such a manner' - not to repeat all the obscene things that he did.

The Fount of Knowledge

Then there is the book of *The Camel of God*. About this camel he says that there was a camel from God and that she drank the whole river and could not pass through two mountains, because there was not room enough. There were people in that place, he says, and they used to drink the water on one day, while the camel would drink it on the next. Moreover, by drinking the water she furnished them with nourishment, because she supplied them with milk instead of water. Then, because these men were evil, they rose up, he says, and killed the camel. However, she had an offspring, a little camel, which, he says, when the mother had been done away with, called upon God and God took it to Himself. Then we say to them: 'Where did that camel come from?' And they say that it was from God. Then we say: 'Was there another camel coupled with this one?' And they say: 'No.' 'Then how' we say, 'was it begotten?' For we see that your camel is without father and without mother and without genealogy, and that the one that begot it suffered evil. Neither is it evident who bred her. And also, this little camel was taken up. So why did not your prophet, with whom, according to what you say, God spoke, find out about the camel where it grazed, and who got milk by milking it? Or did she possibly, like her mother, meet with evil people and get destroyed? Or did she enter into paradise before you, so that you might have the river of milk that you so foolishly talk about? For you say that you have three rivers flowing in paradise one of water, one of wine, and one of milk. If your forerunner the camel is outside of paradise, it is obvious that she has dried up from hunger and thirst, or that others have the benefit of her milk and so your prophet is boasting idly of having conversed with God, because God did not reveal to him the mystery of the camel. But if she is in paradise, she is drinking water still, and you for lack of water will dry up in the midst of the paradise of delight. And if, there being no water, because the camel will have drunk it all up, you thirst for wine from the river of wine that is flowing by, you will become intoxicated from drinking pure wine and collapse under the influence of the strong drink and fall asleep. Then, suffering from a heavy head after sleeping and being sick from the wine, you will miss the pleasures of paradise. How, then, did it not enter into the mind of your prophet that this might happen to you in the paradise of delight? He never had any idea of what the camel is leading to now, yet you did not even ask him, when he held forth to you with his dreams on the subject of the three rivers. We plainly assure you that this wonderful camel of yours has preceded you into the souls

of asses, where you, too, like beasts are destined to go. And there there is the exterior darkness and everlasting punishment, roaring fire, sleepless worms, and hellish demons.'

Again, in the book of The Table, Mohammed says that the Christ asked God for a table and that it was given Him. For God, he says, said to Him: 'I have given to thee and thine an incorruptible table.'

And again, in the book of The Heifer, he says some other stupid and ridiculous things, which, because of their great number, I think must be passed over. He made it a law that they be circumcised and the women, too, and he ordered them not to keep the Sabbath and not to be baptized. And, while he ordered them to eat some of the things forbidden by the Law, he ordered them to abstain from others. He furthermore absolutely forbade the drinking of wine.

On the Orthodox Faith, Book I

Chapter 8.

Therefore, we believe in one God: one principle, without beginning, uncreated, unbegotten, indestructible and immortal, eternal, unlimited, uncircumscribed, unbounded, infinite in power, simple, uncompounded, incorporeal, unchanging, unaffected, unchangeable, inalterate, invisible, source of goodness and justice, light intellectual and inaccessible; power which no measure can give any idea of but which is measured only by His own will, for He can do all things whatsoever He pleases; maker of all things both visible and invisible, holding together all things and conserving them, provider for all, governing and dominating and ruling over all in unending and immortal reign; without contradiction, filling all things, contained by nothing, but Himself containing all things, being their conserver and first possessor; pervading all substances without being defiled, removed far beyond all things and every substance as being supersubstantial and surpassing all, supereminently divine and good and replete; appointing all the principalities and orders, set above every principality and order, above essence and life and speech and concept; light itself and goodness and being in so far as having neither being nor anything else that is from any other; the very source of being for all things that

The Fount of Knowledge

are, of life to the living, of speech to the articulate, and the cause of all good things for all; knowing all things before they begin to be; one substance, one godhead, one virtue, one will, one operation, one principality, one power, one domination, one kingdom; known in three perfect Persons and adored with one adoration, believed in and worshiped by every rational creature, united without confusion and distinct without separation, which is beyond understanding. We believe in Father and Son and Holy Ghost in whom we have been baptized. For it is thus that the Lord enjoined the Apostles: 'Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'

We believe in one Father, the principle and cause of all things, begotten of no one, who alone is uncaused and unbegotten, the maker of all things and by nature Father of His one and only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and Emitter of the All-Holy Spirit. We also believe in one Son of God, the only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was begotten of the Father before all the ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made; in regard to whom, when we say that He is before all ages, we mean that His begetting is outside of time and without beginning, for the Son of God was not brought from nothing into being; who is the brightness of the glory and the figure of the substance of the Father, His living power and wisdom, the subsistent Word, the substantial and perfect and living image of the invisible God. Actually, He was always with the Father, being begotten of Him eternally and without beginning. For the Father never was when the Son was not, but the Father and the Son begotten of Him exist together simultaneously, because the Father could not be so called without a Son. Now, if He was not Father when He did not have the Son, and then later became Father without having been Father before, then He was changed from not being Father to being Father, which is the worst of all blasphemies. For it is impossible to speak of God as naturally lacking the power of begetting. And the power of begetting is the power to beget of oneself, that is, of one's own substance, offspring similar to oneself in nature. Accordingly, it is impious to say that time intervened in the begetting of the Son and that the Son came into existence after the Father. For we say that the begetting of the Son is of the Father, that is to say, of His nature; and if we do not grant that the Son begotten of the Father exists together with Him from the beginning, then we

are introducing a change into the substance of the Father: namely, that He once was not Father, but became Father later. Now, creation, even if it was made at a later time, was not of the substance of God, but was brought from nothing into being by His will and power and does not involve any change in the nature of God. Begetting means producing of the substance of the begetter an offspring similar in substance to the begetter. Creation, on the other hand making is the bringing into being, from the outside and not from the substance of the creator, of something created and made entirely dissimilar in substance.

Therefore, neither the act of begetting nor that of creation has any effect on the one, unaffected, unvarying, unchanging, and ever-the-same God. For, being simple and uncompounded and, consequently, by nature unaffected and unchanging, He is by nature not subject to passion or change, whether from begetting or from creating, nor does He stand in need of any co-operation. On the contrary, because the begetting is an action belonging to His nature and proceeding from His substance, it is without beginning and eternal, so that the Begetter undergoes no change and so that He is not a first God and a later God, but receives no addition. But, since with God creation is a work of His will, it is not co-eternal with Him which is because it is not of the nature of that which is produced from nothing to be co-eternal with that which is without beginning and always existing. Indeed, God and man do not make in the same way. Thus, man does not bring anything from non-being into being. What man makes he makes from already existing material, not by just willing but by thinking it out beforehand and getting an idea of what he is to make and then working with his hands, toiling and troubling and oftentimes failing because the object of his endeavor does not turn out as he wished. God, on the other hand, has brought all things from nothing into being by a mere act of His will. Hence, God and man do not beget in the same way. For, since God is without time and without beginning, unaffected, unchanging, incorporeal, unique, and without end, He begets without time and without beginning, unaffectedly, unchangingly, and without copulation. Neither does His unfathomable begetting have beginning or end. It is without beginning, because He is immutable; it is unchanging, because He is unaffected and incorporeal; it is without copulation, also because He is incorporeal and because He is the only one God and without need of any other; it is

The Fount of Knowledge

unending and unceasing, because He is without time and without end and ever the same for that which is without beginning is without end, although that which is without end by a gift of grace is by no means without beginning, as is the case with the angels.

Accordingly, the ever-existing God begets without beginning and without end His own Word as a perfect being, lest God, whose nature and existence are outside of time, should beget in time. Now, it is obvious that man begets in quite another manner, since he is subject to birth and death and flux and increase, and since he is clothed with a body and has the male and female in his nature for the male has need of the female's help. May He be propitious to us who is beyond all things and surpasses all understanding and comprehension.

Therefore, the holy Catholic and apostolic Church teaches that the Father exists simultaneously with His only-begotten Son, who is begotten of Him without time or change or passion and in a manner beyond understanding, as only the God of all knows. They exist simultaneously, as does the fire with its light without the fire being first and the light afterwards, but both simultaneously. And just as the light is ever being begotten of the fire, is always in it, and is in no way separated from it, so also is the Son begotten of the Father without in any way being separated from Him, but always existing in Him. However, the light, which is inseparably begotten of the fire and always remains in it, does not have any individual existence apart from the fire, because it is a natural quality of the fire. On the other hand, the only-begotten Son of God, who was inseparably and indivisibly begotten of the Father and abides in Him always, does have His own individual existence apart from that of the Father.

Now the Word is also called 'Brightness' because He was begotten of the Father without copulation, without passion, without time, without change, and without separation. He is also called 'Son' and 'Figure of the substance of the Father' because He is perfect and distinctly subsistent and in all things like the Father except in the Father's being unbegotten. And He is called 'Only-begotten because He alone was begotten alone of the only Father. For neither is there any other begetting like that of the Son of God, nor is there any other Son of God. Thus, although the Holy Ghost does proceed from the Father, this is not by begetting but by procession. This is another manner

of existence and is just as incomprehensible and unknowable as is the begetting of the Son. Hence, the Son has all things whatsoever the Father has except the Father's being unbegotten, which does not imply any difference in substance, nor any quality, but, rather, a manner of existence. Thus, in the same way, Adam is unbegotten, because he was formed by God, while Seth is begotten, because he is the son of Adam; Eve, too, was not begotten, because she was produced from the rib of Adam. Yet, they do not differ in nature, because they are all human beings; they only differ in the manner of their existence.

Now, one ought to know that *αγενητον* written with one *v* means that which has not been created, or, in other words, that which is unoriginated; while *αγεννητον* written with two *v*'s means that which has not been begotten. Therefore, the first meaning implies a difference in essence, for it means that one essence is uncreated, or *αγέννητον* with; one *v*, while some other is created, or originated. On the other hand, the second meaning does not imply any difference in essence, because the first individual substance of every species of living being is unbegotten but not unoriginated. For they were created by the Creator, being brought into existence by His Word. But they were certainly not begotten, because there was no other like substance pre-existing from which they might have been begotten.

Thus, the first meaning applies to all three of the super-divine Persons of the sacred Godhead, for they are uncreated and of the same substance. On the other hand, the second meaning definitely does not apply to all three, because the Father alone is unbegotten in so far as He does not have His being from another person. And only the Son is begotten, for He is begotten of the substance of the Father without beginning and independently of time. And only the Holy Ghost proceeds: not begotten, but proceeding from the substance of the Father. Such is the teaching of sacred Scripture, but as to the manner of the begetting and the procession, this is beyond understanding.

This also should be known, that the terms 'paternity, sonship,' and 'procession' as applied to the blessed God-head did not originate with us, but, on the contrary, were handed down to us from Scripture, as the divine Apostle says: For this cause I bow my knee to the Father, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.

The Fount of Knowledge

And if we say that the Father is the principle of the Son and greater than the Son, we are not giving to understand that He comes before the Son either in time or in nature, for 'by him he made the world, nor in any other thing save causality. That is to say, we mean that the Son is begotten of the Father, and not the Father of the Son., and that the Father is naturally the cause of the Son. Similarly, we do not say that the fire comes from the light, but that the light comes from the fire. So, when we hear that the Father is the principle of the Son and greater than He, let us understand this as being by reason of His being the cause. And just as we do not say that the fire is of one substance and the light of another, neither is it proper to say that the

Father is of one substance and the Son of another; on the contrary, they are of one and the same substance. What is more, just as we say that the fire is made visible by the light coming from it, yet do not make the fire's light a subsidiary organ of the fire but, rather, a natural power; in the same way, we say that the Father does all things whatsoever through His only-begotten Son, not as through a subsidiary organ, but as through a natural and distinctly subsistent force. And just as we say that the fire gives light, and, again, that the fire's light gives light, so: 'What things soever the Father doth, these the Son also doth in like manner.' But the light was not created an individual substance apart from the fire, whereas the Son is a perfect individual substance inseparable from that of the Father, as we have set forth above. For it is impossible to find in creation any image which exactly portrays the manner of the Holy Trinity in Itself. For that which is created is also compounded, variable, changeable, circumscribed, having shape, and corruptible; so, how shall it show with any clarity the supersubstantial divine essence which is far removed from all such? It is evident that all creation is subject to these several conditions and that it is of its own nature subject to corruption.

We likewise believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and abides in the Son; who is adored and glorified together with the Father and the Son as consubstantial and co-eternal with Them; who is the true and authoritative Spirit of God and the source of wisdom and life and sanctification; who is God together with the Father and the Son and is so proclaimed; who is uncreated, complete, creative, almighty, all-working, all-powerful, infinite in power; who dominates all creation but is not dominated; who deifies but is not deified; who fills but is not filled; who

is shared in but does not share; who sanctifies but is not sanctified; who, as receiving the intercessions of all, is the Intercessor; who is like the Father and the Son in all things; who proceeds from, the Father and is communicated through the Son and is participated in by all creation; who through Himself creates and gives substance to all things and sanctifies and preserves them; who is distinctly subsistent and exists in His own Person indivisible and inseparable from the Father and the Son; who has all things whatsoever the Father and the Son have except the being unbegotten and the being begotten. For the Father is uncaused and unbegotten, because He is not from, anything, but has His being from Himself and does not have from any other anything whatsoever that He has. Rather, He Himself is the principle and cause by which all things naturally exist as they do. And the Son is begotten of the Father, while the Holy Ghost is Himself also of the Father although not by begetting, but by procession. Now, we have learned that there is a difference between begetting and procession, but what the manner of this difference is we have not learned at all. However, the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father are simultaneous.

Accordingly, all things whatsoever the Son has from the Father the Spirit also has, including His very being. And if the Father does not exist, then neither does the Son or the Spirit; and if the Father does not have something, then neither has the Son or the Spirit. Furthermore, because of the Father, that is, because of the fact that the Father is, the Son and the Spirit are; and because of the Father, the Son and the Spirit have everything that they have, that is to say, because of the fact that the Father has them, excepting the being unbegotten, the begetting, and the procession. For it is only in these personal properties that the three divine Persons differ from one another, being indivisibly divided by the distinctive note of each individual Person.

We say that each of the three has perfect distinct subsistence; not, however, in such a way as to understand one perfect nature compounded of three imperfect natures, but one simple essence, eminently and antecedently perfect, in three Persons. For, anything that is made up of imperfect things is most definitely compounded, and it is impossible for there to be a compound of perfect individual substances. Hence, we do not say that the species is of the Persons, but in the Persons. Those things which do not retain the species of the thing made of them we call imperfect. Thus, stone, wood, and iron

The Fount of Knowledge

are each perfect in themselves according to their individual natures; but in relation to a house built of them they are all imperfect, because no one of them by itself is a house.

And so we speak of perfect individual substances to avoid giving any idea of composition in the divine nature. For composition is the cause of disintegration. And again, we say that the three Persons are in one another, so as not to introduce a whole swarm of gods. By the three Persons we understand that God is uncompounded and without confusion; by the consubstantiality of the Persons and their existence in one another and by the indivisibility of the identity of will, operation, virtue, power, and, so to speak, motion we understand that God is one. For God and His Word and His Spirit are really one God.

On the Distinction of the Three Persons; and on Actuality and Reason and Thought.

One should know that it is one thing actually to observe something and another to see it through reason and thought. Thus, in all creatures there is an actual distinction to be seen between the individual substances. Peter is seen to be actually distinct from Paul. But, that which is held in common, the connection, and the unity is seen by reason and thought.

Thus, in our mind we see that Peter and Paul are of the same nature and have one common nature, for each is a rational mortal animal and each is a body animated by a rational and understanding soul. Hence, this common nature is perceived by the reason. Now, individual persons do not exist in one another at all, but each one is separate and by itself, that is to say, is distinct and considered in itself, since it has a great many things to distinguish it from the other. For, truly, they are separated in place and they differ in time, judgment, strength, form or shape, habit, temperament, dignity, manner of life, and all the other distinctive properties but most of all they differ by the fact that they do not exist in each other but separately. Hence, we speak of two, or three, or several men.

The aforesaid is true of all creation, but it is quite the contrary in the case of the holy, supersubstantial, all-transcendent, and incomprehensible Trinity.

For, here, that which is common and one is considered in actuality by reason of the co-eternity and identity of substance, operation, and will, and by reason of the agreement in judgment and the identity of power, virtue, and goodness I did not say similarity, but identity and by reason of the one surge of motion. For there is one essence, one goodness, one virtue, one intent, one operation, one power one and the same, not three similar one to another, but one and the same motion of the three Persons. And the oneness of each is not less with the others than it is with itself, that is to say, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are one in all things except the being unbegotten, the being begotten, and the procession. It is by thought that the distinction is perceived. For we know one God and Him in the properties of fatherhood, and sonship, and procession only. The difference we conceive of according to cause and effect and the perfection of the Person, that is to say. His manner of existing. For with the uncircumscribed Godhead we cannot speak of any difference in place, as we do with ourselves, because the Persons exist in one another, not so as to be confused, but so as to adhere closely together as expressed in the words of the Lord when He said: 'I in the Father and the Father in me.' Neither can we speak of a difference in will, or judgment, or operation, or virtue, or any other whatsoever of those things which in us give rise to a definite real distinction. For that reason, we do not call the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost three Gods, but one God, the Holy Trinity, in whom the Son and the Holy Ghost are related to one Cause without any composition or blending such as is the coalescence of Sabellius. For they are united, as we said, so as not to be confused, but to adhere closely together, and they have their circumincession one in the other without any blending or mingling and without change or division in substance such as is the division held by Arius. Thus, must one put it concisely, the Godhead is undivided in things divided, just as in three suns joined together without any intervening interval there is one blending and the union of the light. So, when we contemplate the Godhead, and the First Cause, and the Monarchy, and the unity and identity, so to speak, of the motion and will of the Godhead, and the identity of substance, virtue, operation, and dominion, then that which appears to us is One. But, when we contemplate the things in which the Godhead exists, or, to put it more accurately, those things which are the Godhead and which come from the First Cause independently of time, with equal glory, and inseparably that is, the Persons of the Son and the Spirit then we adore Three.

The Fount of Knowledge

One Father, the Father without beginning, that is to say, uncaused, for He is from no one. One Son, the Son who is not without beginning, that is to say, not uncaused, for He is from the Father; but, should you take the beginning as being in time, then He is without beginning, because He is the maker of the ages and not subject to time. One Spirit, the Holy Ghost coming forth from the Father, not by filiation but by procession. And, as the Father does not cease to be unbegotten because He has begotten, nor the Son cease to be begotten because He is begotten of the Unbegotten for how could He? so neither does the Spirit change into the Father or the Son, because He proceeds and is God. The property is unchangeable, since how would it otherwise remain a property should it be changed and transformed? Thus, if the Son is the Father, then He is not properly the Father, because there is only one who is properly the Father; and, if the Father is the Son, He is not properly the Son, because there is only one who is properly the Son, and only one who is properly the Holy Ghost.

One should know that we do not say that the Father is of anyone, but that we do say that He is the Father of the Son. We do not say that the Son is a cause or a father, but we do say that He is from the Father and is the Son of the Father. And we do say that the Holy Ghost is of the Father and we call Him the Spirit of the Father. Neither do we say that the Spirit is from the Son, but we call Him the Spirit of the Son Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,' says the divine Apostle, he is none of his. We also confess that He was manifested and communicated to us through the Son, for 'He breathed, it says, 'and he said to his disciples: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. It is just like the rays and brightness coming from the sun, for the sun is the source of its rays and brightness and the brightness is communicated to us through the rays, and that it is which lights us and is enjoyed by us. Neither do we say that the Son is of the Spirit, nor, most certainly, from the Spirit.

On the Orthodox Faith, Book II

Chapter 2

Now, because the good and transcendently good God was not content to contemplate Himself, but by a superabundance of goodness saw fit that there should be some things to benefit by and participate in His goodness,

St. John of Damascus

He brings all things from nothing into being and creates them, both visible and invisible, and man, who is made up of both. By thinking He creates, and, with the Word fulfilling and the Spirit perfecting, the object of His thought subsists.

Chapter 3

He is the maker and creator of the angels. He brought them from nothing into being and made them after His own image into a bodiless nature, some sort of spirit, as it were, and immaterial fire as the divine David says: 'Who maketh his angels spirits: and his ministers a burning fire.' And He determined their lightness, fieriness, heat, extreme acuity, their keenness in their desire for God and His service, and their being raised up and removed from every material consideration.

So, an angel is an intellectual substance, ever in motion, free, incorporeal, ministering to God, with the gift of immortality in its nature. And the form and the definition of this substance only the Creator understands. Now, compared with us, the angel is said to be incorporeal and immaterial, although in comparison with God, who alone is incomparable, everything proves to be gross and material for only the Divinity is truly immaterial and incorporeal.

So, the angel is of a nature which is rational, intelligent, free, and variable in judgment, that is, subject to voluntary change. It is only the Uncreated which is unchangeable. Also, every rational being is free. The angelic nature, then, in so far as it is rational and intelligent, is free; while, in so far as it is created, it is changeable and has the power to persevere and progress in good or to turn to evil.

Although man, by reason of the infirmity of his body, is capable of repentance, the angel, because of his incorporeality, is not.

The angel is immortal, not by nature, but by grace; for, naturally, everything that has beginning has an end, too. Only God is always existing rather, transcends always, because He who made the times is not subject to time but transcends it.

The Fount of Knowledge

The angels are secondary spiritual lights, who receive their brightness from that first Light which is without beginning. They have no need of tongue and hearing; rather, they communicate their individual thoughts and designs to one another without having recourse to the spoken word.

Now, all the angels were created by the Word and perfected by the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, and in accordance with their dignity and rank they enjoy brightness and grace.

The angels are circumscribed, because when they are in heaven they are not on earth, and when they are sent to earth by God they do not remain in heaven. However, they are not confined by walls or doors or bars or seals, because they are unbounded. I say that they are unbounded, because they do not appear exactly as they are to the just and to them that God wills them to appear to. On the contrary, they appear under such a different form as can be seen by those who behold them. Of course, only the Uncreated is by nature unbounded, for all creation is bounded by God who created it.

The angels do not receive their sanctification by the Spirit as something due their essence. It is by the grace of God that they prophesy. They have no need of marriage, precisely because they are not mortal.

Since they are intellects, they are in places intellectually and are not corporeally circumscribed. For by nature they do not have bodily shape and they are not extended in three dimensions; rather, they are present and act in space intellectually in whatsoever place they are commanded to do so, and they are not able to be present and act in different places at the same time.

Whether the angels are equal in essence or whether they differ from one another we do not know. Only God knows, who made them and knows all things. They do, however, differ from one another in brightness and station, either having their station in accordance with their brightness or enjoying their brightness in accordance with their station. They illuminate one another by the excellence of their rank or nature. Moreover, it is evident that the more excellent communicate their brightness and their knowledge to them that are inferior.

They are vigorous and prompt in the execution of the divine will and by

St. John of Damascus

a natural quickness they appear immediately in whatever place the divine pleasure may command. They watch over the parts of the earth and are set over nations and places in accordance with their disposition by the Creator. They direct our affairs and help us. Moreover, they are ever round about God for the very reason that in accordance with the divine will and command they are above us.

They are with difficulty moved towards evil, but they can be so moved. However, they cannot be moved toward evil not because of their nature, but by grace and their diligent pursuit of the only Good. They see God to such an extent as is possible for them, and this is their food.

Although, because they are incorporeal, they are superior to us and free of all bodily passion, they are certainly not passionless, because only the Divinity is passionless. They take whatever form the Lord may command, and thus they appear to men and reveal the divine mysteries to them. They live in heaven and have as their one work to sing the praises of God and minister to His sacred will.

As the most holy and sacred Dionysius the Areopagite, who is very well versed in theology, says, all theology, that is to say, sacred Scripture, has given the heavenly substances as nine in number. The divine initiator divides these into three orders of three. He says that the first of these is ever round about God and that to it has it been given to be united directly and immediately to Him. This is the order of the six-winged Seraphim and the many-eyed Cherubim and the most holy Thrones. The second order is that of the Dominations and the Virtues and the Powers. The third is that of the Principalities and the Archangels and the Angels.

Now, some say that the angels were made before all creation, as Gregory the Theologian says: 'First He conceived the angelic and heavenly powers, and His conception was an accomplished work. But there are others who say that they were made after the creation of the first heaven. However, they all agree that it was before the formation of man. For my part, I agree with the Theologian, because it was fitting for the spiritual substance to be created first and then the sensible and then finally man himself, from both.

Moreover, if there is anyone who says that there is any kind of substance

The Fount of Knowledge

whatsoever that the angels can create, he is the mouthpiece of his father, the Devil. For, since they are creatures, they are not creators. He who made all things, provides for all, and sustains them is God, who alone is un-created, who is praised and glorified in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Chapter 4

One of these angelic powers was chief of the terrestrial order and had been entrusted by God with the custody of the earth. Although he was not evil by nature, but good, and although he had been made for good and had in himself not the slightest trace of evil from the Creator, he did not keep the brightness and dignity which the Creator had bestowed upon him. By his free choice he turned from what was according to nature to what was against it. Having become stirred up against the God who created him and having willed to rebel against Him, he was the first to abandon good and become evil. For evil is no more than the privation of good, just as darkness is the absence of light. And good is spiritual light, while in the same way evil is spiritual darkness. Now, light was made by the Creator and it was good, for 'God saw all the things which he had made, and they were very good,' but darkness came by free will. And together with him a numberless horde of the angels that he had marshaled were torn away, and followed after him and fell. Hence, although they were of the same nature as the angels, they have become bad by freely turning from good to evil.

They have no power or strength against anyone, unless this be permitted them by the dispensation of God, as in the case of Job and as has been written in the Gospel about the swine. If God does give them permission, they have strength and change and transform themselves into whatever apparent form they may desire.

Neither the angels of God nor the evil spirits know the future. Nevertheless, they foretell it. The angels do so when God reveals the future to them and orders them to foretell it, for which reason whatever they say happens. On the other hand, the evil spirits foretell the future, sometimes by seeing the things that are to happen far ahead, and sometimes by guessing at them. For this reason one must not believe them, even though they may often speak

St. John of Damascus

the truth by the manner of which we have spoken. Moreover, they also know the Scriptures.

And so, all evil and the impure passions have been conceived by them and they have been permitted to visit attacks upon man. But they are unable to force anyone, for it is in our power either to accept the visitation or not. Wherefore, the unquenchable fire and everlasting torment have been prepared for the Devil and his evil spirits and for them who follow him.

One should note that the fall is to the angels just what death is to men. For, just as there is no repentance for men after their death, so is there none for the angels after their fall.

Chapter 5

Our God, who is glorified in trinity and unity, Himself 'made heaven and earth, and all things that are in them.' He brought all things from nothing into being: some, such as heaven, earth, air, fire, and water, from no pre-existing matter; and others, such as animals, plants and seeds, He made from those things which had their existence directly from Him. For, by the command of the Creator these last were made from earth, water, air, and fire.

Chapter 6

The heavens are the outer shell which contains both visible and invisible created things. For, enclosed and contained within them are the spiritual powers, which are the angels, and all sensible things. Only the Divinity is uncircumscribed, filling, containing, and surrounding all things, because He transcends all things and it is He who has created all.

Now, since Scripture speaks of 'heaven,' the 'heaven of heaven, and the 'heavens of heavens,' and says that the blessed Paul was caught up to the 'third heaven,' we say that in the creation of the universe we consider as heavens that which the pagan philosophers, making the teachings of Moses their own, call a starless sphere. And again, God called heaven the 'firmament,' which He ordered to be made in the midst of the water and so arranged that it was separated from the midst of the water above the firmament and from the midst of that which is below the firmament. Instructed by sacred Scripture, the divine Basil says that its substance is subtile - like smoke, as it were.

The Fount of Knowledge

Others say that it is watery, because it was made in the midst of the waters. And others say that it is made from the four elements. Still others say that it is a fifth body and distinct from the four elements.

Furthermore, some have surmised that the heavens surround the universe and have the form of a sphere which is everywhere the highest point, while the center of the space enclosed by it is the lowest point; and that the airier and lighter bodies have been assigned by the Creator to the higher positions, while the heavy and unbuoyant have been consigned to the lower, which is the center. Now, the lightest and the most buoyant of the elements is fire, so they say that it comes directly below the heavens. They call It ether. Just below the ether comes the air. Earth and water, since they are heavier and less buoyant, are said to be hung in the midmost position, so that by contrast they are below. The water, however, is lighter than the earth whence its greater mobility. Everywhere above this, like a blanket, lies the encircling air; everywhere around the air is the ether; and on the outside encircling them all are the heavens.

Furthermore, they say that the heavens revolve and that they so bind together the things contained within that they stay firmly together and do not fall apart.

They say that the heavens have seven spheres, one above the other. They further say that the substance of the heavens is very subtle, like smoke, and that in each one of the spheres is one of the planets. For they have said that there are seven planets: the Sun, the Moon, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Venus, and Saturn. Venus, they say, is sometimes the morning star and sometimes the evening star. They called them planets, or wanderers, because their motion is contrariwise to that of the heavens. For, while the heavens and the rest of the stars move from east to west, these alone have their motion from west to east. This we may know from the example of the moon, which moves back a little every evening.

Now, those who held that the heavens were spherical say that they are removed from the earth by an equal distance above, on the sides, and below. By 'below' and 'on the sides' I mean in so far as is apparent to our senses, because it logically follows that the heavens occupy the highest position at all points and the earth the lowest. They also say that the heavens surround the

earth like a sphere and by their very rapid movement carry the sun, moon, and stars around with them. And they say that, when the sun is over the earth, then it is day here, while when it is under the earth, it is night; but when the sun goes down under the earth, then it is night here and day there.

Others, however, have imagined the heavens to have the form of a hemisphere, because the inspired David says: 'Who stretchest out the heaven like a pavilion,' which means a tent; and the blessed Isaiah: 'He that establisheth the heavens like a vault'; and because the sun, the moon, and the stars, when they set, go round the earth from west to north and thence return again to the east. However, whichever way it may be, all things have been made and established by the command of God and have their foundation in the divine will and desire. 'For he spoke, and they were made: he commanded and they were created. He hath established them for ever, and for ages of ages: he hath made a decree and it shall not pass away.'

So there is a heaven of heaven, which is the first heaven and is above the firmament. But now, because God also called the firmament 'heaven', there are two heavens. However, it is customary for sacred Scripture to call the air heaven, too, because of its being seen above, as it says: 'O all ye fowls of the heaven, bless the Lord,' meaning the air, although the air is not heaven but a medium of passage for the fowls. Here we have the three heavens of which the divine Apostle spoke. Then, if you want to take the seven spheres as seven heavens, there will still be nothing contrary to the Word of Truth. It is also customary in the Hebrew tongue to speak of heaven in the plural as heavens. So, when Scripture meant to say 'heaven of heaven,' it said 'heavens of heavens,' which would mean precisely 'heaven of heaven' - that which is over the firmament and the waters which are above the heavens, whether over the air and the firmament or over the seven spheres of the firmament, or over the firmament expressed in the plural as 'heavens' according to the Hebraic usage.

Now, all things which have a beginning are subject to corruption as a logical consequence of their nature, and the heavens are no exception. It is by the grace of God that they are held together and sustained. Only the Divinity is by nature without beginning and without end. For this reason was it said that: 'They shall perish but thou remainest' However, the heavens will not entirely disappear: For they shall perish, and they shall be changed as a vesture, and

The Fount of Knowledge

there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

In size the heavens are much greater than the earth. Nevertheless, one must not inquire into the substance of the heavens, because we can know nothing about it.

Furthermore, let no one maintain that the heavens or the heavenly bodies are animate, for they are inanimate and without feeling. So, even though sacred Scripture says: 'Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad,' it is really calling upon the angels in heaven and the men on earth to rejoice. Of course, Scripture can personify inanimate things and talk about them as if they were alive, as for example: 'The sea saw and fled: Jordan was turned back,' and: 'What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou didst flee? and thou, O Jordan, that thou was turned back?' and again: mountains and hills are asked the reason for their skipping. In just the same way it is customary for us to say that 'the city was gathered together,' not intending to mean the houses, but the occupants of the houses. Still again, 'the heavens shew forth the glory of God' not by speaking in voice audible to sensible ears, but by manifesting to us through their own greatness the power of the Creator, and when we remark their beauty, we give glory to their Maker as the best of all artificers.

On the Orthodox Faith, Book III

Chapter 2

Now, an angel of the Lord was sent to the holy Virgin, who was descended from the tribe of David, 'for it is evident that our Lord sprung out of Juda: of which tribe no one attended on the altar,' as the divine Apostle said and concerning which we shall speak more fully later on. Bringing the good tidings to her, he said: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' And she was troubled at his saying, and the angel said to her: 'Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God, and thou shalt bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.' It is for this reason that the name Jesus is interpreted as meaning saviour. And she was troubled and said: 'How shall this be done to me, because I know not man?' Again the angel spoke to her: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which

St. John of Damascus

shall be born to thee shall be called the Son of God.’ Then she said to him: ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word.’

And so, after the holy Virgin had given her assent, the Holy Ghost came upon her according to the Lord’s word, which the angel had spoken, and purified her and gave her the power both to receive the divinity of the Word and to beget. Then the subsistent Wisdom and Power of the Most High, the Son of God, the Consubstantial with the Father, overshadowed her like a divine seed and from her most chaste and pure blood compacted for Himself a body animated by a rational and intellectual soul as first-fruits of our clay. This was not by seed, but by creation through the Holy Ghost, with the form not being put together bit by bit, but being completed all at once with the Word of God Himself serving as the person to the flesh. For the divine Word was not united to an already self-subsistent flesh, but, without being circumscribed, came in His own person to dwell in the womb of the holy Virgin and from the chaste blood of the ever-virgin made flesh subsist animated by a rational and intellectual soul. Taking to Himself the first-fruits of the human clay, the very Word became person to the body. Thus, there was a body which was at once the body of God the Word and an animate, rational, intellectual body. Therefore, we do not say that man became God, but that God became man. For, while He was by nature perfect God, the same became by nature perfect man. He did not change His nature and neither did He just appear to become man. On the contrary, without confusion or alteration or division. He became hypostatically united to the rationally and intellectually animated flesh which He had from the holy Virgin and which had its existence in Him. He did not transform the nature of his divinity into the substance of His flesh, nor the substance of His flesh into the nature of His divinity, and neither did He effect one compound nature out of His divine nature and the human nature which He had assumed.

Chapter 3

The natures were united to each other without change and without alteration. The divine nature did not give up its proper simplicity, and the human nature was certainly not changed into the nature of the divinity, nor did it become non-existent. Neither was there one compound nature made from the two natures. For the compounded nature can in no wise be consubstantial

The Fount of Knowledge

with either one of the natures from which it has been compounded, since from diverse natures it has been made into something else. For example, the body, which is made up of the four elements, is not said to be consubstantial with fire, nor is it called fire, nor is it called water or earth or air either, nor is it consubstantial with any one of these. Accordingly, if Christ had one compound nature after the union, I having changed from one simple nature to a compound one, as the heretics say, then He is neither consubstantial with His Father, who has a simple nature, nor with His Mother, because she was not composed of divinity and humanity. Nor, indeed, will He belong to divinity or humanity, nor can He be called God or man, but just Christ alone, and, according to them, 'Christ' will not be the name of the person but the name of the one nature. We, however, declare that Christ has a compound nature, not in the sense of something new made from different things, as man is made up of body and soul or as the body is composed of the four elements, but in the sense of being made up of different things which remain the same. For we confess that from divinity and humanity there is the same perfect God and that He both is and is said to be of two natures and in two natures. We say that the term 'Christ' is the name of the person and that it is not used in a restricted sense, but as signifying what is of the two natures. Thus, He anointed Himself as God, anointing His body with His divinity, but as man, being anointed, because He is both the one and the other. Moreover, the anointing of the humanity is the divinity. Now, if Christ, who is consubstantial with the Father, has one compounded nature, then the Father, too, will certainly be compounded and consequently consubstantial with the flesh, which is absurd and redolent of every blasphemy.

What is more, how can one nature comprise different substances that are contradictory? How is it possible for the same nature to be at once created and uncreated, mortal and immortal, circumscribed and uncircumscribed?

Now, were they to say that Christ had one nature and that this was simple, then either they would be confessing Him to be pure God and would be introducing a mere appearance that would not be incarnation, or they would be confessing Him to be mere man after the manner of Nestorius. Then, where is the perfection in divinity and the perfection in humanity? How can they ever say that Christ has two natures, while they are asserting that after the union He has one compound nature? For it is obvious to anyone that, before

St. John of Damascus

the union, Christ had one nature.

However, the reason for the heretics' error is their saying that nature and hypostasis are the same thing. Now, when we say that men have one nature, it must be understood that we do not say this with the body and soul in mind, because it is impossible to say that the soul and the body as compared to each other have one nature. Nevertheless, when we take a number of human hypostases, all of these are found to admit of the same basis of their nature. All are made up of a soul and a body, all share the nature of the soul and possess the substance of the body, and all have a common species. Thus, we say that several different persons have one nature, because each person has two natures and is complete in these two natures, that is to say, the natures of the soul and of the body.

In the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, however, it is impossible to have a common species, for there never was, nor is, nor ever will be another Christ of divinity and humanity, in divinity and humanity, the same being perfect God and perfect man. Hence, in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, one cannot speak of one nature made up of divinity and humanity as one can in the case of the individual made up of soul and body. In this last case we have an individual, but Christ is not an individual, because He does not have a predicated species of Christness. It is precisely for this reason that we say that it was of two perfect natures, the divine and the human, that the union was made. It was not made by mixing, or mingling, or blending, or compounding as was asserted by the fatal Dioscorus, by Eutyches, too, and Severus, and their accursed associates; neither was it apparent (*προσωπικη*) nor relative, nor by dignity or harmony of will or equality in honor or identity of name or complaisance as was asserted by that enemy of God, Nestorius, and by Diodorus, too, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and their hellish band. Rather, it was by composition hypostatically, that is to say without change or mingling or alteration or division or separation. And we confess one Person of the Son of God incarnate in two natures that remain perfect, and we declare that the Person of His divinity and of His humanity is the same and confess that the two natures are preserved intact in Him after the union. We do not set each nature apart by itself, but hold them to be united to each other in one composite Person. For we say that the union is substantial; that is to say, true and not imaginary. We do not, however, define the substantial union as meaning

The Fount of Knowledge

that the two natures go to make up one compound nature, but as meaning that they are truly united to each other into one composite Person of the Son of God, each with its essential difference maintained intact. Thus, that which was created remained created, and that which was uncreated, uncreated; the mortal remained mortal and the immortal immortal; the circumscribed remained circumscribed and the uncircumscribed, uncircumscribed; the visible remained visible and the invisible, invisible. 'The one glows with miracles, while the other has succumbed to insults.'

Moreover, the Word makes human things His own, because what is proper to His sacred flesh belongs to Him; and the things which are His own He communicates to His flesh. This is after the manner of exchange on account of the mutual immanence of the parts and the hypostatic union and because He who 'with each form co-operating with the other performed both divine and human acts was one and the same. Wherefore, the Lord of Glory is even said to have been crucified, although His divine nature did not suffer; and the Son of Man is confessed to have been in heaven before His passion, as the Lord Himself has said. For one and the same was the Lord of Glory and He who was naturally and truly Son of Man, that is, He who became man. And we recognize both the miracles and the sufferings as His, even though it was in one nature that He worked miracles and in another that He endured suffering. For we know that His one Person thus preserves for itself the essential difference of the natures. How, indeed, would the difference be preserved, were not those things preserved in which they differ from each other? For difference is that by which things that are different differ. Therefore, we say that Christ is joined to the extremes by the fact of His natures differing from each other, that is, by the fact of His essence. On the one hand, He is joined to the Father and the Spirit by His divinity, while on the other He is joined by His humanity to His Mother and to all men. However, because of the fact that His natures are united, we say that He differs both from the Father and the Spirit and from His Mother and other men. For His natures are united in His Person and have one composite Person and in this He differs both from the Father and the Spirit and from His Mother and us.

St. John of Damascus

Chapter 4

We have repeatedly said that substance is one thing and person another, and that substance means the common species including the persons that belong to the same species - as, for example, God, man - while person indicates an individual, as Father, Son, Holy Ghost, Peter, Paul. One must furthermore know that the terms divinity and humanity are indicative of the substances or natures, but that the terms God and man are used in reference to the nature, as when we say: 'God is an incomprehensible substance' and 'God is one.' But these are also taken as referring to the persons, with the more particular receiving the name of the more general, as when Scripture says: 'Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee,' for in this case it means the Father and the Son. And again, when it says: 'There was a man in the land of Hus,' for it means Job only.

Since, then, in our Lord Jesus Christ we recognize two natures and one composite Person for both, when we are considering the natures, we call them divinity and humanity.

But, when we consider the composite Person of the two natures, we sometimes call Christ both God and Man and God incarnate, naming Him from both; and sometimes we name Him from one of the two and call Him just God and Son of God, or just Man and Son of Man. And also, we sometimes name Him from just the sublime attributes and sometimes from just the more humble ones. For He is one who is alike both the one and the other - the one existing uncaused and eternally from the Father; the other come into being at a later time because of love for men.

Therefore, when we speak of the divinity, we do not attribute the properties of the humanity to it. Thus, we never speak of a passible or created divinity. Neither do we predicate the divine properties of the flesh, for we never speak of uncreated flesh or humanity. In the case of the person however, whether we name it from both of the parts or from one of them, we attribute the properties of both the natures to it. And thus, Christ which name covers both together is called both God and man, created and uncreated, passible and impassible. And whenever He is named Son of God and God from one of the parts, He receives the properties of the co-existent nature, of the flesh, that is to say, and can be called passible God and crucified Lord of Glory - not

The Fount of Knowledge

as being God, but in so far as the same one is also man. When, again, He is named Man and the Son of Man, He is given the properties and splendors of the divine nature. He is called Child before the Ages and Man without beginning, not as a child or a man, but as God, who is before the ages and became a child in latter times. Such, then, is the manner of this exchange by which each nature communicates its own properties to the other through the identity of their person and their mutual immanence. This is how we can say of Christ: ‘This is our God, who was seen upon earth and conversed with men,’ and: ‘This man is uncreated, impassible, and uncircumscribed.’

Chapter 5

In the Divinity we confess one nature, while we hold three really existing Persons. And we hold everything belonging to the nature and the essence to be simple, while we recognize the difference of the Persons as residing only in the three properties of being uncaused and Father, of being caused and Son, and of being caused and proceeding. And we understand them to be inseparable and without interval between them, and united to one another and mutually immanent without confusion. And we understand them, while being separated without interval, to be united without confusion, for they are three, even though they are united. For, although each is subsistent in itself, that is to say, is a perfect Person and has its own property or distinct manner of existence, they are united in their essence and natural properties and by their not being separated or removed from the Person of the Father, and they are one God and are so called. In the same way, when it comes to that divine and ineffable Incarnation of one of the Holy Trinity, God the Word and our Lord Jesus Christ, which surpasses all understanding and comprehension, while we confess two natures, a divine and a human, conjoined with each other and hypostatically united, we also confess one composite Person made of those natures. We furthermore hold that, even after the union, the two natures are preserved intact in the one composite person, that is to say, in the one Christ, and that they and their natural properties have real existence, being nevertheless united without confusion, differing without separation, and numbered. Now, just as the three Persons of the Holy Trinity are united without confusion and are distinct without separation and have number without the number causing division, or separation, or estrangement, or severance among them for we recognize that the Father and the Son and the Holy

Ghost are one God so in the same way the natures of Christ, although united, are united without confusion, and, although mutually immanent, do not suffer any change or transformation of one into the other. For each one keeps its own distinctiveness unchanged. Thus, too, they are numbered, yet the number does not introduce division. For Christ is one and He is perfect both in divinity and humanity. And number is not by nature a cause of division or union, but is, rather, a sign of the quantity of the things numbered, whether they be united or divided. Thus, as an example of things that are united, this wall contains fifty stones; or, as an example of things that are divided, there are fifty stones lying in this field. Or again, as an example of things that are united, there are two natures in a coal that of fire, I mean, and that of wood; or these may be divided, because the nature of fire is one thing and that of wood another. And these are not united or divided by their number but in some other manner. And so, just as it is impossible to say that the three Persons are one Person, even though they are united, without bringing about confusion or suppression of the difference, so it is impossible to say that the two hypostatically united natures of Christ are one nature without our bringing about suppression, confusion, or annihilation of their difference.

Chapter 6

Things that are common and universal are predicated of particulars subordinate to them. Now, the substance as a species is a common thing, while the person is a particular.

A thing is a particular not in that it possesses a part of the nature, because it does not have such a part, but in that it is particular in number, as an individual. Thus, persons are said to differ in number but not in nature. The substance, moreover, is predicated of the person, because the substance is complete in each of the persons of the same species. For that reason, persons do not differ from one another in substance, but rather in the accidents, which are their characteristic properties characteristic, however, of the person and not of the nature. And this is because the person is defined as a substance plus accidents. Thus, the person has that which is common plus that which is individuating, and, besides this, existence in itself. Substance does not subsist in itself, but is to be found in persons. Accordingly, when one of the persons suffers, then, since the whole nature in which the person has suffered is af-

The Fount of Knowledge

fected, this whole nature is said to have suffered in one of its persons. This, however, does not necessitate all the persons of the same species suffering together with the one that does suffer.

Thus, then, we confess that the nature of the divinity is entirely and completely in each one of its Persons all in the Father, all in the Son, all in the Holy Ghost. For this reason, the Father is perfect God, the Son is perfect God, and the Holy Ghost is perfect God. In the same way, we say that in the Incarnation of one of the Holy Trinity, the Word of God, the entire and complete nature of the divinity was united in one of its Persons to the entire human nature, and not a part of one to a part of the other. And so the divine Apostle says that 'in Him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead corporeally,' that is to say, in His flesh. And his inspired disciple Dionysius, who was most learned in matters divine, says that the Divinity in its entirety has community with us in one of its Persons. But, certainly, let us not be constrained to say that all the Persons of the sacred Godhead, the Three, that is, were hypostatically united to all the persons of humanity. For in no wise did the Father and the Holy Ghost participate in the incarnation of the Word of God except by Their good pleasure and will. We do say that the entire substance of the Divinity was united to the entire human nature, because God the Word lacked none of those things which He implanted in our nature when He formed us in the beginning; He assumed them all a body and a rational, intellectual soul, together with the properties of both, for the animal which lacks one of these is not a man. He in His entirety assumed me in my entirety and was wholly united to the whole, so that He might bestow the grace of salvation upon the whole. For that which has not been assumed cannot be healed.

And so, the Word of God is united to the flesh by the intermediary of mind which stands midway between the purity of God and the grossness of the flesh. Now, the mind has authority over both soul and body, but, whereas mind is the purest part of the soul, God is the purest part of mind. And when the mind of Christ is permitted by the stronger, then it displays its own authority. However, it is under the control of the stronger and follows it, doing those things which the divine will desires.

Moreover, the mind became the seat of the Divinity which had been hypostatically united to it, just as, of course, the flesh did - but not an associate,

St. John of Damascus

as the accursed opinion of the heretics falsely teaches, when, judging immaterial things in a material way, they say that one measure will not hold two. But, how shall Christ have been said to be perfect God and perfect man and consubstantial both with the Father and with us, if a part of the divine nature is united in Him to a part of the human nature?

Furthermore, when we say that our nature rose from the dead and ascended and sat at the right hand of the Father, we do not imply that all human persons arose and sat at the right hand of the Father, but that our entire nature did so in the Person of Christ. Certainly, the divine Apostle says: 'He hath raised us up together and hath made us sit together in Christ.'

And we also say this: that the union was made of common substances. For every substance is common to the persons included under it. And it is not possible to find a partial and individuating nature of substance, since it would then be necessary to say that the same persons were of the same substance and of different substances, and that the Holy Trinity was in its divinity both of the same substance and of different substances. Consequently, the same nature is found in each one of the Persons. And when, following the blessed Athanasius and Cyril, we say that the nature of the Word became incarnate, we are declaring that the Divinity was united to the flesh. For this reason, we may by no means say: 'The nature of the Word suffered' because the Divinity did not suffer in Him. But we do say that human nature suffered in Christ without any implication that all human persons did; confessing that Christ suffered in His human nature. Thus, when we say 'the nature of the Word,' we mean the Word Himself. And the Word possesses the community of substance and the individuality of person.

On the Orthodox Faith, Book IV

Chapter 11

'The word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God.' For 'the spiritual man judgeth all things, but the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit.' For they are foolishness to such as do not receive them in faith and conclude to the goodness and omnipotence of God, but by human

The Fount of Knowledge

and natural reasoning inquire into divine things. For all the things of God are above the natural order and beyond speech and understanding. And should one consider how and why God brought all things from nothing into being and should he try to arrive at this by natural reasoning, he will not succeed. For such knowledge is sensual and devilish. If, however, one is guided by faith and concludes to the goodness, omnipotence, truth, wisdom, and justice of the Godhead, then he will find all things to be smooth and even and the road straight. Without faith it is impossible to be saved, since by faith all things endure, both human and spiritual. For a farmer does not plow a furrow in the earth without faith, nor a merchant entrust his life to a bit of wood on the raging high seas. Neither are marriages contracted nor anything else in life done without faith. By faith we understand that all things have been brought from nothing into being by the power of God, and by faith we prosper in all things, both human and divine. Faith is, moreover, an assent devoid of all curiosity.

Every action of Christ and all His working of miracles were truly very great and divine and wonderful, but of all things the most wonderful is His honorable cross. For by nothing else except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has death been brought low, the sin of our first parent destroyed, hell plundered, resurrection bestowed, the power given us to despise the things of this world and even death itself, the road back to the former blessedness made smooth, the gates of paradise opened, our nature seated at the right hand of God, and we made children and heirs of God. By the cross all things have been set aright. 'For all we who are baptized in Christ,' says the Apostle, 'are baptized in his death' and 'as many of us as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ'; moreover, 'Christ is the power and wisdom of God.' See how the death of Christ, the cross, that is to say, has clothed us with the subsistent wisdom and power of God! And the word of the Cross is the power of God, whether because by it God's might, His victory over death, that is, was manifested to us, or because, just as the four arms of the cross are made solid and bound together by their central part, so are the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, that is to say, all creation both visible and invisible, held together by the power of God.

This we have been given as a sign on our forehead, just as Israel was given the circumcision, for by it we faithful are set apart from the infidels and recog-

St. John of Damascus

nized. It is a shield and armor and a trophy against the Devil. It is a seal that the Destroyer may not strike us, as Scripture says. It is a raising up for those who lie fallen, a support for those who stand, a staff for the infirm, a crook for the shepherded, a guide for the wandering, a perfecting of the advanced, salvation for soul and body, an averter of all evils, a cause of all good things, a destruction of sin, a plant of resurrection, and a tree of eternal life.

So, then, that honorable and most truly venerable tree upon which Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for us is itself to be adored, because it has been sanctified by contact with the sacred body and blood. So also are the nails, the lance, the garments, and such sacred resting places of His as the manger, the cave, saving Golgotha, the life-giving tomb, Zion the citadel of the churches, and others. Thus, David the forefather of God says: 'We will go into his tabernacle: we will adore in the place where his feet stood,' and that he means the cross is evident from what follows: Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place for the resurrection follows after the cross. Now, if the house, the bed, and the clothing of our loved ones are dear to us, then how much more the things of our God and Saviour by which we also have been saved!

And we also adore the likeness of the honorable and lifegiving cross, even though it be made of another material, not that we honor the material - God forbid! - but the likeness as a symbol of Christ. Thus, when He explained to His disciples saying: 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven,' He meant the cross. For this reason, also, the angel of the resurrection said to the women: 'You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. Likewise, the Apostle: 'But we preach Christ crucified.' Now, there are many Christs and Jesuses, but only one Crucified, and he did not say 'pierced by a lance' but 'crucified.' Therefore, the sign of Christ is to be adored, for, wherever the sign may be, there He, too, will be. If, however, the form should happen to be destroyed, the material of which the likeness of the cross was composed is not to be adored, even though it be gold or precious stones. Thus, we adore everything that has reference to God, although it is to Him that we direct the worship.

The tree of life which was planted by God in paradise pre-figured this honorable Cross, for, since death came by a tree, it was necessary for life and the resurrection to be bestowed by a tree. It was Jacob who first prefigured

The Fount of Knowledge

the cross, when he adored the top of the rod of Joseph. And when he blessed Joseph's sons with his hands crossed, he most clearly described the sign of the cross. Then there were the rod of Moses which smote the sea with the form of a cross and saved Israel while causing Pharaoh to be swallowed up; his hands stretched out in the form of a cross and putting Amalec to flight; the bitter water being made sweet by a tree, and the rock being struck and gushing forth streams of water; the rod of Aaron miraculously confirming the dignity of the priesthood; a serpent raised in triumph upon a tree, as if dead, with the tree preserving those who with faith beheld the dead enemy, even as Christ was nailed up in flesh of sin but which had not known sin; great Moses calling out: 'You will see your life hanging before your eyes on a tree'; and Isaiah: I have spread forth my hands all day to an unbelieving and contradictory people.' May we who adore this attain to the portion of Christ the crucified. Amen.

Chapter 12

It is not without any reason or by chance that we worship toward the east. On the contrary, since we are composed of a visible and an invisible nature, of an intellectual nature and a sensitive one, that is, we also offer a twofold worship to the Creator. It is just as we also sing both with our mind and with our bodily lips, and as we are baptized both in water and in the Spirit, and as we are united to the Lord in two ways when we receive the sacrament and the grace of the Spirit.

And so, since God is spiritual light and Christ in sacred Scripture is called 'Sun of Justice' and 'Orient,' the East should be dedicated to His worship. For everything beautiful should be dedicated to God from whom everything that is good receives its goodness. Also, the divine David says: 'Sing to God, ye kingdoms of the earth: sing ye to the Lord; who mounteth above the heaven of heavens, to the east.' And still again, Scripture says: 'And the Lord had planted a paradise in Eden to the east; wherein he placed man whom he had formed,' and whom He cast out, when He had transgressed, 'and made him to live over against the paradise of pleasure,' or in the west. Thus it is that, when we worship God, we long for our ancient fatherland and gaze toward it. The tabernacle of Moses had the veil and the propitiatory to the east; and the tribe of Juda, as being the more honorable, pitched their tents on the

St. John of Damascus

east; and in the celebrated temple of Solomon the gate of the Lord was set to the east. As a matter of fact, when the Lord was crucified, He looked toward the west, and so we worship gazing towards Him. And when he was taken up, He ascended to the east and thus the Apostles worshiped Him and thus He shall come in the same way as they had seen Him going into heaven, as the Lord Himself said: As lightning cometh out of the east and appeareth even into the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. And so, while we are awaiting Him, we worship toward the east. This is, moreover, the unwritten tradition of the Apostles, for they have handed many things down to us unwritten.

Chapter 13

Because of the exceedingly great wealth of His goodness, the good, all-good, and exceedingly good God, who is all goodness, did not rest content that the Good, or His nature, should just be and not be shared by anything. For this reason, He first made the spiritual and heavenly powers, and then the visible and sensible world, and then, finally, man of the spiritual and the sensible. Hence, all things He has made participate in His goodness by the fact that they have being. For He is being to them all, since 'in him are all things,' not only because He has brought them from nothing into being, but because it is by His operation that all things He made are kept in existence and held together. Living things, however, participate more abundantly, because they participate in the good both by their being and by their living. But rational beings, while they participate in the good in the aforementioned ways, do so still more by their very rationality. For they are in a way more akin to Him, even though He is, of course, immeasurably superior.

Since man was made both rational and free, he received the power to be unceasingly united to God by his own choice, provided, of course, that he persevere in the good, that is to say, in obedience to his Creator. Then, when man became disobedient to the commandment of Him who had made him and thus became subject to death and corruption, the Maker and Creator of our kind, through the bowels of His mercy, likened Himself to us and became man in all things except sin and was united to our nature. Thus, because we did not keep what He had imparted to us, His own image and His own spirit, He now participates in our poor weak nature so that He may

The Fount of Knowledge

render us pure and incorrupt and make us once more participators in His divinity.

It was moreover, necessary not only for the first fruits of our nature, but also for every man who so wished. And it was necessary that every such man should be born with a second birth and nourished with a new food fit for the new birth, and thus attain to the measure of perfection. Hence, by His own birth, or incarnation, and by His baptism and passion and resurrection, He freed our nature from the sin of our first parent, from death and corruption. And He became the first-fruit of the resurrection and set Himself to be a way, a model, and an example, so that we, too, might follow in His footsteps and become by adoption, as He is by nature, sons and heirs of God and joint heirs together with Him. Thus, He gave us, as I have said, a second birth, so that, as we had been born of Adam and had been likened to him and had become heir to his curse and corruption, we might by being born anew of Him be likened to Him and become heir to His incorruption and blessing and glory.

Now, since this Adam is spiritual, it was necessary that there be a spiritual birth and also a spiritual food. But, since we are individuals of a twofold nature and compounded, it is necessary that the birth also be of a twofold nature and that the food likewise be compounded. Hence, the birth was given us by water and the Spirit, by holy baptism, I mean, while the food was the Bread of Life itself, our Lord Jesus Christ who had come down from heaven. For, when He was about to suffer death freely for our sake, on the night in which He delivered Himself up, He made a new testament for His holy disciples and Apostles and, through them, for all that believe in Him. So, when He had eaten the old Pasch with His disciples in the upper chamber on holy and glorious Mount Sion and had fulfilled the old testament, He washed the feet of His disciples and thus showed a symbol of holy baptism. Then, after He had broken bread, He gave it to them saying: 'Take ye and eat. This is my body, which is broken for you unto remission of sins.' And in like manner He took also the chalice of wine and water and gave it to them, saying: 'Drink ye all of this. This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you unto remission of sins. This do in commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Son of man and confess his resurrection, until he come.'

St. John of Damascus

If, then, ‘the word of the Lord is living and effectual,’ and if ‘whatsoever the Lord pleased he hath done; if He said: Be light made, and it was made. Be a firmament made, and it was made’; if by the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth’; if heaven and earth, water and fire, and air and the whole universe of these were made perfect by the word of the Lord, and this much famed living being, too, which is man; if by His will God the Word Himself became man and without seed caused the pure and undefiled blood of the blessed Ever-Virgin to form a body for Himself; if all this, then can He not make the bread His body and the wine and water His blood? In the beginning He said: ‘Let the earth bring forth the green herb,’ and even until now, when the rain falls, the earth brings forth its own shoots under the influence and power of the divine command. God said: ‘This is my body,’ and, ‘This is my blood’ and, ‘This do in commemoration of me,’ and by His almighty command it is done, until He shall come, for what He said was ‘until he come.’ And through the invocation the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost becomes a rainfall for this new cultivation. For, just as all things whatsoever God made He made by the operation of the Holy Ghost, so also it is by the operation of the Spirit that these things are done which surpass nature and cannot be discerned except by faith alone. ‘How shall this be done to me,’ asked the blessed Virgin, ‘because I know not man?’ The archangel Gabriel answered, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.’ And now you ask how the bread becomes the body of Christ and the wine and water the blood of Christ, And I tell you that the Holy Ghost comes down and works these things which are beyond description and understanding.

Now, bread and wine are used because God knows human weakness and how most things that are not constantly and habitually used cannot be put up with and are shunned. With His usual condescension, therefore, He does through the ordinary things of nature those which surpass the natural order. And just as in the case of baptism, because it is the custom of men to wash themselves with water and anoint themselves with oil He joined the grace of the Spirit to oil and water and made it a laver of regeneration, so, because it is men’s custom to eat bread and drink water and wine He joined His divinity to these and made them His body and blood, so that by the ordinary natural things we might be raised to those which surpass the order of nature.

The Fount of Knowledge

This is the body which is truly united to the Godhead, the same which is from the blessed Virgin. This is not because that body which was taken up to heaven comes down from heaven, but because the very bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of God. However, should you inquire as to the manner in which this is done, let it suffice for you to hear that it is done through the Holy Ghost, just as it was through the Holy Ghost that the Lord made flesh subsist for Himself and in Himself from the blessed Mother of God. And more than this we do not know, except that the word of God is true and effective and omnipotent, but the manner in which it is so is impossible to find out. What is more, it is not amiss to say this, that just as bread by being eaten and wine and water by being drunk are naturally changed into the body of the person eating and drinking and yet do not become another body than that which the person had before, so in the same way are the bread of the offertory and the wine and water supernaturally changed into the body and blood of Christ by the invocation and coming down of the Holy Ghost, yet they are not two bodies, but one and the same.

Hence, it is unto remission of sins and eternal life and unto a safeguard for body and soul and for such as partake worthily thereof and with faith. But for such as receive unworthily and without faith it is unto chastisement and punishment. It is just as the Lord's death has become life and immortality for those who believe, whereas for those who do not and for those who killed the Lord it is unto chastisement and eternal punishment.

The bread and wine are not a figure of the body and blood of Christ God forbid! but the actual deified body of the Lord, because the Lord Himself said: 'This is my body'; not 'a figure of my body' but 'my body' and not 'a figure of my blood' but 'my blood.' Even before this He had said to the Jews: 'except you eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed.' And again: 'He that eateth me, shall live.'

Wherefore, in all fear and with a pure conscience and undoubting faith let us approach, and it will be to us altogether as we believe and do not doubt. And let us honor it with all purity of body and soul, for it is twofold. Let us approach it with burning desire, and with our hands folded in the form of a cross let us receive the body of the Crucified. With eyes, lips, and faces

St. John of Damascus

turned toward it let us receive the divine burning coal, so that the fire of the coal may be added to the desire within us to consume our sins and enlighten our hearts, and so that by this communion of the divine fire we may be set afire and deified. Isaias saw a live coal, and this coal was not plain wood but wood joined with fire. Thus also, the bread of communion is not a plain bread, but bread joined with the Godhead. And the body joined with the Godhead is not one nature. On the contrary, that of the body is one, whereas that of the Godhead joined with it is another so that both together are not one nature, but two.

It was with bread and wine that Melchisedech, the priest of the most high God, received Abraham, when he was returning from the slaughter of the alien tribes. That altar prefigured this mystical altar, even as that priest was a type and figure of the true Archpriest who is Christ. For 'thou,' He says, 'art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.' This bread was figured by the loaves of proposition. This is quite plainly the pure and unbloody sacrifice which the Lord, through the mouth of the Prophet, said was to be offered to Him from the rising of the sun even to its going down.

It is Christ's body and blood entering into the composition of our soul and body without being consumed, without being corrupted, without passing into the privy God forbid! but into our substance for our sustenance, a bulwark against every sort of harm and a purifier from all uncleanness as if He were to take adulterated gold and purify it by the discerning fire, so that in the life to come we shall not be condemned with the world. For He purifies by diseases and all sort of seizures, even as the divine Apostle says: 'But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.' And this is what he says: For he that partaketh unworthily of the Lord eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.' When we are purified by it, we become one with the body of the Lord and with His spirit, and we become the body of Christ.

This bread is the first-fruits of the bread to come, which is the supersubstantial bread. For supersubstantial either means that which is to come, that is, the bread of the world to come, or it means that which is taken for the sustenance of our substance. So, whether it be the one or the other, the term will

The Fount of Knowledge

be suitably applicable to the body of the Lord, because, since the flesh of the Lord was conceived of the life-giving Spirit, it is itself life-giving spirit for 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' I say this not to detract from the nature of the body, but because I wish to show its life-giving and divine character.

Moreover, although some may have called the bread and wine antitypes of the body and blood of the Lord, as did the inspired Basil, they did not say this as referring to after the consecration, but to before the consecration, and it was thus that they called the offertory bread itself.

It is called participation because through it we participate in the divinity of Jesus. It is also called communion, and truly is so, because of our having communion through it with Christ and partaking both of His flesh and His divinity, and because through it we have communion with and are united to one another. For, since we partake of one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood and members of one another and are accounted of the same body with Christ.

Let us then make every effort to guard against receiving communion from heretics or giving it to them. 'Give not that which is holy to dogs,' says the Lord, 'neither cast ye your pearls before swine,' lest we become sharers in their false teachings and their condemnation. If there really is such a union with Christ and with each other, then we really become united deliberately with all those with whom we communicate together, for this union comes from deliberate choice and not without the intervention of our judgment. For we are all one body, because we partake of one bread,' as the divine Apostle says.

They are called antitypes of the things to come, not because they are not really the body and blood of Christ, but because it is through them that we participate in the divinity of Christ now, while then it will be through the intellect and by vision alone.

Chapter 15

The saints must be honored as friends of Christ and children and heirs of God, as John the Theologian and Evangelist says: 'But as many as received him, he gave them the power to be made the sons of God. 'Therefore they

St. John of Damascus

are no longer servants, but sons: and if sons, heirs also, heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ. And again, in the holy Gospels the Lord says to the Apostles: 'You are my friends. . . I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth.' Furthermore, if the Creator and Lord of all is called both King of kings and Lord of lords and God of gods, then most certainly the saints, too, are both gods and lords and kings. God both is and is said to be their God and Lord and King. 'For I am,' He said to Moses, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' and God appointed Moses the God of Pharaoh. However, I say that they are gods, lords, and kings not by nature, but because they have ruled over and dominated sufferings, and because they have kept undebased the likeness of the divine image to which they were made for the image of the king is also called a king, and, finally, because they have freely been united to God and receiving Him as a dweller within themselves have through association with Him become by grace what He is by nature. How, then, should these not be honored who have been accounted servants, friends, and sons of God? For the honor shown the more sensible of one's fellow servants gives proof of one's love for the common Master.

These are become repositories and pure dwelling places of God, for 'I will dwell in them and walk among them,' says God, and I will be their God. So, indeed, sacred Scripture says that 'the souls of the just are in the hand of God: and death shall not touch them.' For the death of the saints is rather sleep than death, since 'they have labored unto eternity and shall live unto the end' and 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints,' What then is more precious than to be in the hand of God? For God is life and light, and they that are in the hand of God abide in life and light.

Moreover, because through their mind God has also dwelt in their bodies, the Apostle says: 'Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?'; 'Now the Lord is the Spirit'; and again: 'If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' How, then, should they not be honored, who are the living temples of God, the living tabernacles of God. These in life openly took their stand with God.

In the relics of the saints the Lord Christ has provided us with saving fountains which in many ways pour out benefactions and gush with fragrant

The Fount of Knowledge

ointment. And let no one disbelieve. For, if by the will of God water poured out of the precipitous living rock in the desert, and for the thirsty Sampson from the jawbone of an ass, is it unbelievable that fragrant ointment should flow from the relics of the martyrs? Certainly not, at least for such as know the power of God and the honor which the saints have from Him.

In the Law, anyone who touched a corpse was accounted unclean. But these of whom we speak are not dead. Because Life itself and the Author of life was reckoned amongst the dead, we do not call these dead who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection and in the faith in Him. For how can a dead body work miracles? How, then, through them are demons put to flight, diseases driven out, the sick cured, the blind restored to sight, lepers cleansed, temptation and trouble driven away; and how through them does 'every best gift come down from the Father of lights' to them who ask with undoubting faith? What would you not do to find a patron to present you to a mortal king and intercede with him in your behalf? Are not the patrons of the entire race to be honored who make petitions to God in our behalf? Yes, indeed; we must honor them by raising churches to God in their name, by making fruit-offerings, and by celebrating their anniversaries and taking spiritual joy in these, such as will be the very joy of our hosts, but taking care lest in endeavoring to do them honor we may give them annoyance instead. For by some things honor is given to God and they who serve Him rejoice in them, whereas by others He is offended and so, too, are His shield-bearers. 'In psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles,' in compunction, and in compassion for the needy let us faithful do honor to the saints, through whom most especially is honor rendered to God. Let us set up monuments to them, and visible images, and let us ourselves by the imitation of their virtues become their living monuments and images. Let us honor the Mother of God as really and truly God's Mother. Let us honor the Prophet John as precursor and baptist, apostle and martyr, for 'there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John, as the Lord said, and he was the first herald of the kingdom. Let us honor the Apostles as brethren of the Lord, as eye-witnesses and attendants to His sufferings, whom God the Father 'fore-knew and predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son,' 'first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly shepherds and teachers.' And let us honor the holy martyrs of the Lord who have been picked from every rank

St. John of Damascus

and whose corps commander is Christ's archdeacon, apostle, and protomartyr Stephen; let us honor them as soldiers of Christ who have drunk of His chalice and have then been baptized with the baptism of His life-giving death, and as participants in His sufferings and His glory. Let us also honor those sainted fathers of ours, the God-bearing ascetics who have struggled through the more drawn-out and laborious martyrdom of the conscience, 'who wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in want, distressed, afflicted: wandering in deserts, in mountains and in dens and in caves of the earth: of whom the world was not worthy.' Let us honor the Prophets who preceded the Grace, the patriarchs and just men who announced beforehand the advent of the Lord. Let us carefully observe the manner of life of all these and let us emulate their faith, charity, hope, zeal, life, patience under suffering, and perseverance unto death, so that we may also share their crowns of glory.

Chapter 16

Since there are certain people who find great fault with us for adoring and honoring both the image of the Saviour and that of our Lady, as well as those of the rest of the saints and servants of Christ, let them hear how from the beginning God made man to His own image. 1 For what reason, then, do we adore one another, except because we have been made to the image of God? As the inspired Basil, who is deeply learned in theology, says: 'the honor paid to the image redounds to the original and the original is the thing imaged from which the copy is made.' For what reason did the people of Moses adore from round about the tabernacle which bore an image and pattern of heavenly things, or rather, of all creation? Indeed, God had said to Moses: 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shewn thee on the mount.' And the Cherubim, too, that overshadowed the propitiatory, were they not the handiwork of men? And what was the celebrated temple in Jerusalem? Was it not built and furnished by human hands and skill?

Now, sacred Scripture condemns those who adore graven things, and also those who sacrifice to the demons. The Greeks used to sacrifice and the Jews also used to sacrifice; but the Greeks sacrifice to the demons, whereas the Jews sacrificed to God. And the sacrifice of the Greeks was rejected and condemned, while the sacrifice of the just was acceptable to God. Thus, Noe sacrificed 'and the Lord smelled a sweet savor of the good intention and ac-

The Fount of Knowledge

cepted the fragrance of the gift offered to Him.’ And thus the statues of the Greeks happen to be rejected and condemned, because they were representations of demons.

But, furthermore, who can make a copy of the invisible, incorporeal, un-circumscribed, and unportrayable God? It is, then, highly insane and impious to give a form to the Godhead. For this reason it was not the practice in the Old Testament to use images. However, through the bowels of His mercy God for our salvation was made man in truth, not in the appearance of man, as He was seen by Abraham or the Prophets, but really made man in substance. Then He abode on earth, conversed with men, worked miracles, suffered, was crucified, rose again, and was taken up; and all these things really happened and were seen by men and, indeed, written down to remind and instruct us, who were not present then, so that, although we have not seen, yet hearing and believing we may attain to the blessedness of the Lord. Since, however, not all know letters nor do all have leisure to read, the Fathers deemed it fit that these events should be depicted as a sort of memorial and terse reminder. It certainly happens frequently that at times when we do not have the Lord’s Passion in mind we may see the image of His crucifixion and, being thus reminded of His saving Passion, fall down and adore. But it is not the material which we adore, but that which is represented; just as we do not adore the material of the Gospel or that of the cross, but that which they typify. For what is the difference between a cross which does not typify the Lord and one which does? It is the same way with the Mother of God, too, for the honor paid her is referred to Him who was incarnate of her. And similarly, also, we are stirred up by the exploits of the holy men to manliness, zeal, imitation of their virtues, and the glory of God. For, as we have said, the honor shown the more sensible of one’s fellow servants gives proof of one’s love for the common Master, and the honor paid to the image redounds to the original. This is the written tradition, just as is worshiping toward the east, adoring the cross, and so many other similar things.

Furthermore, there is a story told about how, when Abgar was lord of the city of Edessenes, he sent an artist to make a portrait of the Lord, and how, when the artist was unable to do this because of the radiance of His face, the Lord Himself pressed a bit of cloth to His own sacred and life-giving face and left His own image on the cloth and so sent this to Abgar who had so

earnestly desired it.

And Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, writes that the Apostles handed down a great many things unwritten: 'Therefore, brethren, stand fast: and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle'; and to the Corinthians: 'Now I praise you, brethren, that in all things you are mindful of me and keep my ordinances as I have delivered them to you. '

Chapter 17

The God proclaimed by the Old Testament and the New is one He who is celebrated and glorified in Trinity, for the Lord said: 'I am not to come to destroy the law, but to fulfil.' For He worked our salvation, for the sake of which all Scripture and every mystery has been revealed. And again: 'Search the scriptures: for these give testimony of me.' And the Apostle too, says: 'God, who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son.' Through the Holy Ghost, then, both the Law and the Prophets, the evangelists, apostles, pastors, and teachers spoke.

Therefore, 'all scripture, inspired of God, is quite profitable,' so that to search the sacred Scripture is very good and most profitable for the soul. For, 'like a tree which is planted near the running waters,' so does the soul watered by sacred Scripture also grow fat and bear fruit in due season, which is the orthodox faith, and so is it adorned with its evergreen leaves, with actions pleasing to God, I mean. And thus we are disposed to virtuous action and untroubled contemplation by the sacred Scriptures. In them we find exhortation to every virtue and dissuasion from every vice. Therefore, if we are eager for knowledge, we shall also be rich in knowledge, for by diligence, toil, and the grace of God who grants it all things succeed. 'For he that asketh receiveth: and he that seeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.' So let us knock at the very beautiful paradise of the Scriptures, the fragrant, most sweet and lovely paradise which fills our ears with the varied songs of inspired spiritual birds, which touches our heart, comforting it when grieving, calming it when angry, and filling it with everlasting joy, and which lifts our mind onto the back of the sacred dove, gleaming with gold and most brilliant, who bears us with his most bright wings to the only-begotten Son and heir of the Husbandman of the spiritual vineyard and through Him on

The Fount of Knowledge

to the Father of lights. Let us not knock casually, but with eagerness and persistence, and let us not lose heart while knocking, for so it will be opened to us. Should we read once and then a second time and still not understand what we are reading, let us not be discouraged. Rather, let us persist, let us meditate and inquire, for it is written: 'Ask thy father, and he will declare to thee: thy elders and they will tell thee.' For not all have knowledge. From the fountain of paradise let us draw everflowing and most pure waters springing up into life everlasting. Let us revel in them, let us revel greedily in them to satiety, for they contain the grace which cannot be exhausted. Should we, however, be able to get some profit from other sources, this is not forbidden. Let us be proved bankers and amass the genuine and pure gold, while we reject the spurious. Let us accept the best sayings, but let us throw to the dogs the ridiculous gods and unhealthy fables, for from the former we should be able to draw very great strength against the latter.

One must know that there are twenty-two books of the Old Testament, corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, for the Hebrews have twenty-two letters, of which five are doubled so as to make twenty-seven. Thus, *kaph*, *mem*, *nun*, *pe*, and *sade* are double. For this reason the books, too, are numbered this way and are found to be twenty-seven, because five of them are doubled. Ruth is combined with Judges and counted as one book by the Hebrews. Kings 1 and 2 make one book; 3 and 4 Kings, one book; 1 and 2 Paralipomenon, one book; and 1 and 2 Esdras, one book. Thus, the books fall into four groups of five, as follows. There are five books of the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. This first group of five is also called the Law. Then, another group of five books called the Writings, or, by some, the Sacred Books, which are as follows: Josue, son of Nave; Judges, together with Ruth; 1 and 2 Kings making one book; 3 and 4 Kings making one book; and the two Paralipomenons making one book. This is the second group of five books. A third group of five is made up of the poetical books, namely: Job, the Psalter, the Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes of the same, and the Canticle of Canticles of the same. A fourth group of five books is the prophetic, which is made up of the twelve minor Prophets, making one book, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel, and then the two books of Esdras combined into one, and Esther. The All-Virtuous Wisdom, however, that is to say, the Wisdom of Solomon - and the Wisdom of Jesus,

St. John of Damascus

which the father of Sirach composed in Hebrew but which was translated into Greek by his grandson, Jesus son of Sirach - these are indeed admirable and full of virtue but they are not counted, nor were they placed in the Ark.

In the New Testament there are: four Gospels, those according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the holy Apostles by Luke the Evangelist; seven Catholic Epistles - one of James, two of Peter, three of John, and one of Jude; fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul; the Apocalypse of John the Evangelist; and the Canons of the Holy Apostles by Clement.

The End.

