BOOK IV Contents

I. Deusdedit, archbishop of Canterbury, dying, Wighard was sent to Rome to succeed him in that dignity; but he dying there, Theodore - was ordained archbishop, and sent into Britain with the Abbot Hadrian. [A.D. 664]

II. Theodore visits all places; the churches of the English begin to be instructed in holy literature, and in the Catholic truth; Putta is made bishop of the church of Rochester in the room of Damianus. [A.D. 669]

III. How Chad, above-mentioned, was made bishop of the Mercians. Of his life, death, and burial. [A. D. 669]

IV. Bishop Colman, having left Britain, built two monasteries in Scotland; the one for the Scots, the other for the English he had taken along with him. [A.D. 667]

V. Of the death of the kings Oswy and Egbert, and of the synod held at Hertford, in which Archbishop Theodore presided. [A.D. 670]

VI. Winfrid being deposed, Sexwulf was put into his see, and Earconwald made bishop of the East Saxons. [A.D. 674]

VII. How it was indicated by a heavenly light where the bodies of the nuns should be buried in the monastery of Barking. [A.D. 676]

VIII. A little boy, dying in the same monastery, called upon a virgin that was to follow him; another at the point of leaving her body, saw some small part of the future glory. [A.D. 676]

IX. Of the signs which were shown from heaven when the mother of that congregation departed this life. [A.D. 676]
X. A blind woman, praying in the burial place of that monastery, was restored to her sight. [A.D. 676]

XI. Sebbi, king of the same province, ends his life in a monastery. [A.D. 694]

XII. Hedda succeeds Eleutherius in the bishopric of the West Saxons; Cuichelm succeeds Putta in that of Rochester, and is himself succeeded by Gebmund; and who were then bishops of the Northumbrians. [A.D. 673]

XIII. Bishop Wilfrid converts the province of the South Saxons to Christ. [A.D. 681]

XIV. How a pestilential mortality ceased through the intercession of King Oswald. [A.D. 681]

XV. King C'dwalla, having slain Ethelwalch, king of the West Saxons, wasted that province with rapine and slaughter. [A.D. 685]

XVI. How the Isle of Wight received Christian inhabitants, and two royal youths of that island were killed immediately after baptism. [A.D. 686]

XVII. Of the synod held in the plain of Heathfield, where Archbishop Theodore presided. [A.D. 680]

XVIII. Of John, the singer of the apostolic See, who came into Britain to teach. [A.D. 680]

XIX. How Queen Etheldrida always preserved her virginity, and her body suffered no corruption in the grave. [A.D. 660]

XX. A hymn on the aforesaid holy virgin. [A.D. 660]

XXI. Bishop Theodore made peace between the kings Egfrid and Ethelred. [A.D. 679]

XXII. How a certain captive's chains fell off when masses were sung for him. [A.D. 679]

XXIII. Of the life and death of the Abbess Hilda. [A.D. 680]

XXIV. There was in the same monastery a brother, on whom the gift of writing verses was bestowed by Heaven. [A.D. 680]

XXV. Of the vision that appeared to a certain man of God before the monastery of the city Coludi was burned down. [A.D. 679]

XXVI. Of the death of the kings Egfrid and Lothere. [A.D. 684]

XXVII. Cuthbert, a man of God, is made Bishop; and how he lived and taught whilst still
in a monastic life. [A.D. 685]

XXVIII. The same St. Cuthbert, being an anchorite, by his prayers obtained a spring in a dry soil, and had a crop from seed sown by himself out of season. [A.D. 664]

XXIX. St. Cuthbert foretold to the anchorite, Herebert, that his death was at hand. [A.D. 687]

XXX. St. Cuthbert's body was found altogether uncorrupted after it had been buried eleven years; his successor in the bishopric departed this world not long after. [A.D. 698]

XXXI. Of one that was cured of a palsy at the tomb of St. Cuthbert. [A.D. 698]

XXXII. Of one who was cured of a distemper in his eye at the relics of St. Cuthbert. [A.D. 698]

CHAPTER I:

DEUSDEDIT, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, DYING, WIGHARD WAS SENT TO ROME TO SUCCEED HIM IN THAT DIGNITY; BUT HE DYING THEREX THEODORE WAS ORDAINED ARCHBISHOP, AND SENT INTO BRITAIN WITH THE ABBOT HADRIAN. [A-D- 664-]

In the above-mentioned year of the aforesaid eclipse, which was presently followed by the pestilence, in which also Bishop Colman, being overcome by the unanimous consent of the Catholics, returned home, Deusdedit, the sixth bishop of the church of Canterbury, died on the 14th of July. Erconbert, also, king of Kent, departed this life the same month and day; leaving his kingdom to his son Egbert, which he held nine years. The see then became vacant for some considerable time, until the priest Wighard, a man skilled in ecclesiastical discipline, of the English race, was sent to Rome by the said King Ezbert, and Oswy, king of the Northumbrians, as was briefly mentioned in the foregoing book, with a request that he might be ordained bishop of the church of England; sending at the same time presents to the apostolic pope, and many vessels of gold and silver. Arriving at Rome, where Vitalian presided at that time over the Apostolic See, and having made known to the aforesaid pope the occasion of his journey, he was not long after snatched away, with almost all his companions that went with him, by a pestilence which happened at that time.

But the apostolic pope having consulted about that affair, made diligent inquiry for some one to send to be archbishop of the English churches. There was then in the Niridian monastery, which is not far from the city of Naples in Campania, an abbot, called Hadrian, by nation an African, well versed in holy writ, experienced in monastical
and ecclesiastical discipline, and excellently skilled both in the Greek and Latin tongues. The pope, sending for him, commanded him to accept of the bishopric, and repair into Britain; he answered, that he was unworthy of so great a dignity, but said he could name another, whose learning and age were fitter for the episcopal office. And having proposed to the pope a certain monk, belonging to a neighbouring monastery of virgins, whose name was Andrew, he was by all that knew him judged worthy of a bishopric; but bodily infirmity prevented his being advanced to the episcopal station. Then again Hadrian was pressed to accept of the bishopric; but he desired a respite for a time, to see whether he could find another fit to be ordained bishop.

There was at that time in Rome, a monk, called Theodore, well known to Hadrian, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, a man well instructed in worldly and Divine literature, as also in Greek and Latin; of known probity of life, and venerable for age, being sixty-six years old. Hadrian offered him to the pope to be ordained bishop, and prevailed; but upon these conditions, that he should conduct him into Britain, because he had already travelled through France twice upon several occasions, and was, therefore, better acquainted with the way, and was, moreover, sufficiently provided with men of his own; as also that being his fellow labourer in doctrine, he might take special care that Theodore should not, according to the custom of the Greeks, introduce anything contrary to the true faith into the church where he presided. Hadrian, being ordained sub-deacon, waited four months for his hair to grow, that it might be shorn into the shape of a crown; for he had before the tonsure of St. Paul, the apostle, after the manner of the eastern people. He was ordained by Pope Vitalian, in the year of our Lord 668, on Sunday, the 26th of March, and on the 27th of May was sent with Hadrian into Britain.

They proceeded by sea to Marseilles, and thence by land to Arles, and having there delivered to John, archbishop of that city, Pope Vitalian's letters of recommendation were by him detained till Ebrin, the king's mayor of the palace, sent them a pass to go where they pleased. Having received the same, Theodore repaired to Agilbert, bishop of Paris, of whom we have spoken above, and was by him kindly received, and long entertained. But Hadrian went first to Emme, and then to Faro, bishops of Sens and Meaux, and lived with them a considerable time; for the hard vinter had obliged them to rest wherever they could. King Egbert, being informed by messengers that the bishop they had asked of the Roman prelate was in the kingdom of France, sent thither his praefect, Redfrid, to conduct him; who, being arrived there, with Ebrin's leave, conveyed him to the port of Quentinavic; where, being indisposed, he made some stay, and as soon as he began to recover, sailed over into Britain. But Ebrin detained Hadrian, suspecting that he went on some message from the emperor to the kings of Britain, to the prejudice of his kingdom, of which he at that time took especial care; however, when he found that he really had no such commission, he discharged him, and permitted him to follow Theodore. As soon as he came, he received from him the monastery of St. Peter the apostle, where the archbishops of Canterbury are usually
buried, as I have said before; for at his departure, the apostolic lord had ordered that he should provide for him in his diocese, and give him a suitable place to live in with his followers.

CHAPTER II

THEODORE VISITS ALL PLACES; THE CHURCHES OF THE ENGLISH BEGIN TO BE INSTRUCTED IN HOLY LITERATURE, AND IN THE CATHOLIC TRUTH; PUTTA IS MADE BISHOP OF THE CHURCH OF ROCHESTER IN THE ROOM OF DAMIANUS.

[A. D. 669]

THEODORE arrived at his church the second year after his consecration, on Sunday, the 27th of May, and held the same twenty-one years, three months, and twenty-six days. Soon after, he visited all the island, wherever the tribes of the Angles inhabited, for he was willingly entertained and heard by all persons; and everywhere attended and assisted by Hadrian, he taught the right rule of life, and the canonical custom of celebrating Easter. It was the first archbishop whom all the English church obeyed. And forasmuch as both of them were, as has been said before, well read both in sacred and in secular literature, they gathered a crowd of disciples, and there daily flowed from them rivers of knowledge to water the hearts of their hearers; and, together with the books of holy writ, they also taught them the arts of ecclesiastical poetry, astronomy, and arithmetic. A testimony of which is, that there are still living at this day some of their scholars, who are as well versed in the Greek and Latin tongues as in their own, in which they were born. Nor were there ever happier times since the English came into Britain; for their kings, being brave men and good Christians, they were a terror to all barbarous nations, and the minds of all men were bent upon the joys of the heavenly kingdom of which they had just heard; and all who desired to be instructed in sacred reading had masters at hand to teach them.

From that time also they began in all the churches of the English to learn sacred music, which till then had been only known in Kent. And, excepting James above-mentioned, the first singing-master in the churches of the Northumbrians was Eddi, surnamed Stephen, invited from Kent by the most reverend Wilfrid, who was the first of the bishops of the English nation that taught the churches of the English the Catholic mode of life.

Theodore, visiting all parts, ordained bishops in proper places, and with their assistance corrected such things as he found faulty. Among the rest, when he upbraided Bishop Chad that he had not been duly consecrated, he, with great humility, answered, "If you know I have not duly received episcopal ordination, I willingly resign the office, for I never thought myself worthy of it; but, though unworthy, in obedience submitted to undertake it." Theodore, hearing his humble answer, said that he should not resign the bishopric, and he himself completed his ordination after the Catholic manner. But at the
time when Deusdedit died, and a bishop for the church of Canterbury was by request ordained and sent, Wilfrid was also sent out of Britain into France to be ordained; and because he returned before Theodore, he ordained priests and deacons in Kent till the archbishop should come to his see. Being arrived in the city of Rochester, where the see had been long vacant by the death of Damianus, he ordained a person better skilled in ecclesiastical discipline, and more addicted to simplicity of life than active in worldly affairs. His name was Putta, and he was extraordinarily skilful in the Roman style of church music, which he had learned from the disciples of the holy Pope Gregory.

CHAPTER III

HOW CHAD, ABOVE-MENTIONED, WAS MADE BISHOP OF THE MERCIANS. OF HIS LIFE, DEATH, AND BURIAL.

[A D. 669]

AT that time, the Mercians were governed by King Wulfhere, who, on the death of Jaruman, desired of Theodore to supply him and his people with a bishop; but Theodore would not obtain a new one for them, but requested of king Oswy that Chad might be their bishop. He then lived retired at his monastery, which is at Lestingau, Wilfrid filling the bishopric of York, and of all the Northumbrians, and likewise of the Picts, as far as the dominions of King Oswy extended. And, seeing that it was the custom of that most reverend prelate to go about the work of the Gospel to several places rather on foot than on horseback, Theodore commanded him to ride whenever he had a long journey to undertake; and finding him very unwilling to omit his former pious labour, he himself, with his hands, lifted him on the horse; for he thought him a holy man, and therefore obliged him to ride wherever he had need to go. Chad having received the bishopric of the Mercians and Lindisfarne, took care to administer the same with great rectitude of life, according to the example of the ancients. King Wulfhere also gave him land of fifty families, to build a monastery, at the place called Ad Barve, or "At the Wood," in the province of Lindsey, wherein marks of the regular life instituted by him continue to this day.

He had his episcopal see in the place called Lichfield, in which he also died, and was buried, and where the see of the succeeding bishops of that province still continues. He had built himself a habitation not far from the church, wherein he was wont to pray and read with seven or eight of the brethren, as often as he had any spare time from the labour and ministry of the word. When he had most gloriously governed the church in that province two years and a half, the Divine Providence so ordaining, there came round a season like that of which Ecclesiastes says, "That there is a time to cast stones, and a time to gather them; " for there happened a mortality sent from heaven, which, by means of the death of the flesh, translated the stones of the church from their earthly places to the heavenly building. And when, after many of the church of that
most reverend prelate had been taken out of the flesh, his hour also drew near wherein he was to pass out of this world to our Lord, it happened one day that he was in the aforesaid dwelling, with only one brother, called Owini, his other companions being upon some reasonable occasion returned to the church. Now Owini was a monk of great merit, having forsaken the world with the pure intention of obtaining the heavenly reward; worthy in all respects to have the secrets of our Lord revealed to him, and worthy to have credit given by his hearers to what he said, for he came with Queen Etheldreda from the province of the East Angles, and was her prime minister, and governor of her family. As the fervour of his faith increased, resolving to renounce the world, he did not go about it slothfully, but so fully forsook the things of this world, that, quitting all he had, clad in a plain garment, and carrying an axe and hatchet in his hand, he came to the monastery of that most reverend prelate, called Lestingau; denoting that he did not go to the monastery to live idle, as some do, but to labour, which he also confirmed by practice; for as he was less capable of meditating on the Holy Scriptures, he the more earnestly applied himself to the labour of his hands. In short, he was received by the bishop into the house aforesaid, and there entertained with the brethren, and whilst they were engaged within in reading, he was without, doing such things as were necessary.

One day when he was thus employed abroad, and his companions were gone to the church, as I began to state, the bishop was alone reading or praying in the oratory of that place, when on a sudden, as he afterwards said, he beard the voice of persons singing most sweetly and rejoicing, and appearing to descend from heaven. Which voice he said he first heard coming from the south-east, and that afterwards it drew near him, till it came to the roof of the oratory where the bishop was, and entering therein, filled the same and all about it. He listened attentively to what he heard, and after about half an hour, perceived the same song of joy to ascend from the roof of the said oratory, and to return to heaven the same way it came, with inexpressible sweetness. When he had stood some time astonished, and seriously revolving in his mind what it might be, the bishop opened the window of the oratory, and making a noise with his hand, as he was often wont to do, ordered him to come in to him. He accordingly went hastily in, and the bishop said to him, "Make haste to the church, and cause the seven brothers to come hither, and do you come with them." When they were come, he first admonished them to preserve the virtue of peace among themselves, and towards all others; and indefatigably to practise the rules of regular discipline, which they had either been taught by him, or seen him observe or had noticed in the words or actions of the former fathers. Then he added, that the day of his death was at hand; for, said he, "that amiable guest, who was wont to visit our brethren, has vouchsafed also to come to me this day, and to call me out of this world. Return, therefore, to the church, and speak to the brethren, that they in their prayers recommend my passage to our Lord, and that they be careful to provide for their own, the hour whereof is uncertain, by watching, prayer, and good works."
When he had spoken thus much and more, and they, having received his blessing, had gone away in sorrow, he who had heard the heavenly song returned alone, and prostrating himself on the ground, said, "I beseech you, father, may I be permitted to ask a question? "-"Ask what you will," answered the bishop. Then he added, "I entreat you to tell me what song of joy was that which I heard coming upon this oratory, and after some time returning to heaven? " The bishop answered, "If you heard the singing, and know of the coming of the heavenly company, I command you, in the name of our Lord, that you do not tell the same to any before my death. They were angelic spirits, who came to call me to my heavenly reward, which I have always longed after, and they promised they would return seven days hence, and take me away with them." Which was accordingly fulfilled, as had been said to him; for being presently seized with a languishing distemper, and the same daily increasing, on the seventh day, as had been promised to him, when he had prepared for death by receiving the body and blood of our Lord, his soul being delivered from the prison of the body, the angels, as may justly be believed, attending him, he departed to the joys of heaven.

It is no wonder that he joyfully beheld the day of his death, or rather the day of our Lord, which he had always carefully expected till it came; for notwithstanding his many merits of continence, humility, teaching, prayer, voluntary poverty, and other virtues, he was so full of the fear of God, so mindful of his last end in all his actions, that, as I was informed by one of the brothers who instructed me in Divinity, and who had been bred in his monastery, and under his direction, whose name was Trumhere, if it happened that there blew a strong gust of wind when he was reading or doing any other thing, he immediately called upon God for mercy, and begged it might be extended to all mankind. If the wind grew stronger, he closed his book, and prostrating himself on the ground, prayed still more earnestly. But, if it proved a violent storm of wind or rain, or else that the earth and air were filled with thunder and lightning, he would repair to the church, and devote himself to prayers and repeating of psalms till the weather became calm. Being asked by his followers why he did so, he answered, "Have not you read-" The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave forth his voice. Yea, he sent out his arrows and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.' For the Lord moves the air, raises the winds, darts lightning, and thunders from heaven, to excite the inhabitants of the earth to fear Him; to put them in mind of the future judgment; to dispel their pride, and vanquish their boldness, by bringing into their thoughts that dreadful time, when the heavens and the earth being in a flame, He will come in the clouds, with great power and majesty, to judge the quick and the dead. Wherefore," said he, "it behoves us to answer his heavenly admonition with due fear and love; that, as often as He lifts his hand through the trembling sky, as it were to strike, but does not yet let it fall, we may immediately implore his mercy; and searching the recesses of our hearts, and cleansing the filth of our vices, we may carefully behave ourselves so as never to be struck."
With this revelation and account of the aforesaid brother, concerning the death of this prelate, agrees the discourse of the most reverend Father Egbert, above spoken of, who long led a monastic life with the same Chad, when both were youths, in Ireland, praying, observing continency, and meditating on the Holy Scriptures. But when he afterwards returned into his own country, the other continued in a strange country for our Lord's sake till the end of his life. A long time after, Hygbald, a most holy and continent man, who was an abbot in the province of Lindsey, came out of Britain to visit him, and whilst these holy men were discoursing of the life of the former fathers, and rejoicing to imitate the same, mention was made of the most reverend prelate, Chad, whereupon Egbert said, "I know a man in this island, still in the flesh, who, when that prelate passed out of this world, saw the soul of his brother Cedd, with a company of angels, descending from heaven, who, having taken his soul along with them, returned thither again." Whether he said this of himself, or some other, we do not certainly know; but the same being said by so great a man, there can be no doubt of the truth thereof.

Chad died on the 2nd of March, and was first buried by St. Mary's Church, but afterwards, when the church of the most holy prince of the apostles, Peter, was built, his bones were translated into it. In both which places, as a testimony of his virtue, frequent miraculous cures are wont to be wrought. And of late, a certain distracted person, who had been wandering about everywhere, arrived there in the evening, unknown or unregarded by the keepers of the place, and having rested there all the night, went out in his perfect senses the next morning, to the surprise and delight of all; thus showing that a cure had been performed on him through the goodness of God. The place of the sepulchre is a wooden monument, made like a little house, covered, having a hole in the wall, through which those that go thither for devotion usually put in their hand and take out some of the dust, which they put into water and give to sick cattle or men to drink, upon which they are presently eased of their infirmity, and restored to health. In his place, Theodore ordained Winfrid, a good and modest man, to preside, as his predecessors had done, over the bishoprics of the Mercians, the Midland Angles, and the Lindisfarnes, of all which, Wulfhere, who was still living, was king. Winfrid was one of the clergy of the prelate he had succeeded, and had for a considerable time filled the office of deacon under him.

CHAPTER IV

BISHOP COLMAN, HAVING LEFT BRITAIN, BUILT TWO MONASTERIES IN SCOTLAND; THE OXE FOR THE SCOTS, THE OTHER FOR THE ENGLISH HE HAD TAKEN ALONG WITH HIM.

[A.D. 667]

In the meantime, Colman, the Scottish bishop, departing from Britain, took along with him all the Scots he had assembled in the isle of Lindisfarne, and also about thirty of
the English nation, who had been all instructed in the monastic life; and leaving some
brothers in his church, he repaired first to the isle of Hii (Iona), whence he had been
sent to preach the word of God to the English nation.

Afterwards he retired to a small island, which is to the west of Ireland, and at some
distance from its coast, called in the language of the Scots, Inisbofinde, the Island of
the White Heifer. Arriving there, he built a monastery, and placed in it the monks he
had brought of both nations; who not agreeing among themselves, by reason that the
Scots in the summer season, when the harvest was to be brought in, leaving the
monastery, wandered about through places with which they were acquainted; but
returned again the next winter, and would have what the English had provided to be in
common; Colman sought to put an end to this dissension, and travelling about far and
near, he found a place in the island of Ireland fit to build a monastery, which, in the
language of the Scots, is called Mageo, and brought a small part of it of the earl to
whom it belonged, to build his monastery thereon; upon condition, that the monks
residing there should pray to our Lord for him who had let them have the place. Then
building a monastery, with the assistance of the earl and all the neighbours, he placed
the English there, leaving the Scots in the aforesaid island. This monastery is to this day
possessed by English inhabitants; being the same that, grown up from a small
beginning to be very large, is generally called Mageo; and as all things have long since
been brought under a better method, it contains an exemplary society of monks, who
are gathered there from the province of the English, and live by the labour of their
hands, after the example of the venerable fathers, under a rule and a canonical abbot,
in much continency and singleness of life.

CHAPTER V

OF THE DEATH OF THE KINGS OSWY AND EGBERT, AND OF THE SYNOD HELD AT
HERTFORD, IN WHICH ARCHBISHOP THEODORE PRESIDED.

[A.D. 670]

In the year of the incarnation of our Lord 670, being the second year after Theodore
arrived in England, Oswy, king of the Northumbrians, fell sick, and died, in the fifty-
eighth year of his age. He at that time bore so great affection to the Roman apostolical
institution, that had he recovered of his sickness, he had designed to go to Rome, and
there to end his days at the Holy Places, having entreated Bishop Wilfrid, by the
promise of a considerable donation in money, to conduct him on his journey. He died
on the 15th of February, leaving his son Egfrid his successor in the kingdom. In the
third year of his reign, Theodore assembled a synod of bishops, and many other
teachers of the church, who loved and were acquainted with the canonical statutes of
the fathers. When they were met together, he began, as became a prelate, to enjoin
the observance of such things as were agreeable to the unity and the peace of the
church. The purport of which synodical proceedings is as follows-
"In the name of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who reigns for ever and for ever, and governs his church, it was thought meet that we should assemble, according to the custom of the venerable canons, to treat about the necessary affairs of the church. We met on the 24th day of September, the first indiction, at a place called Hertford, myself, Theodore, the unworthy bishop of the see of Canterbury, appointed by the Apostolic See, our fellow priest and most reverend brother, Bisi, bishop of the East Angles; also by his proxies, our brother and fellow priest, Wilfrid bishop of the nation of the Northumbrians, as also our brothers and fellow priests, Putta, bishop of the Kentish castle, called Rochester; Eleutherius, bishop of the West Saxons, and Winfrid, bishop of the province of the Mercians. When we were all met together, and were sat down in order, I said, 'I beseech you, most dear brothers, for the love and fear of our Redeemer, that we may all treat in common for our faith; to the end that whatsoever has been decreed and defined by the holy and reverend fathers, may be inviolably observed by all. ' This and much more I spoke tending to the preservation of the charity and unity of the church; and when I had ended my discourse, I asked every one of them in order, whether they consented to observe the things that had been formerly canonically decreed by the fathers? To which all our fellow priests answered, 'It so pleases us, and we will all most willingly observe with a cheerful mind whatever is laid down in the canons of the holy fathers. ' I then produced the said book of canons, and publicly showed them ten chapters in the same, which I had marked in several places, because I knew them to be of the most importance to us, and entreated that they might be most particularly received by them all.

"Chapter I. That we all in common keep the holy day of Easter on the Sunday after the fourteenth moon of the first month.

"II. That no bishop intrude into the diocese of another, but be satisfied with the government of the people committed to him.

"III. That it shall not be lawful for any bishop to trouble monasteries dedicated to God, nor to take anything forcibly from them.

"IV. That monks do not remove from one place to another, that is, from monastery to monastery, unless with the consent of their own abbot; but that they continue in the obedience which they promised at the time of their conversion.

"V. That no clergyman, forsaking his own bishop, shall wander about, or be anywhere entertained without letters of recommendation from his own prelate. But if he shall be once received, and will not return when invited, both the receiver, and the person received, be under excommunication.

"VI. That bishops and clergymen, when travelling, shall be content with the hospitality that is afforded them; and that it be not lawful for them to exercise any priestly function without leave of the bishop in whose diocese they are.
"VII. That a synod be assembled twice a year; but in regard that several causes obstruct the same, it was approved by all. that we should meet on the 1st of August once a year, at the place called Clofeshoch.

"VIII. That no bishop, through ambition, shall set himself before another; but that they shall all observe the time and order of their consecration.

"IX. It was generally set forth, that more bishops should be made, as the number of believers increased; but this matter for the present was passed over.

"X. Of marriages; that nothing be allowed but lawful wedlock; that none commit incest; no man quit his true wife, unless, as the gospel teaches, on account of fornication. And if any man shall put away his own wife, lawfully joined to him in matrimony, that he take no other, if he wishes to be a good Christian, but continue as he is, or else be reconciled to his own wife.

" These chapters being thus treated of and defined by all, to the end. that for the future, no scandal of contention might arise from any of us, or that things be falsely set forth, it was thought fit that every one of us should, by subscribing his hand, confirm all the particulars so laid down. Which definitive judgment of ours, I dictated to be written by Titillus our notary. Done in the month and indiction aforesaid. Whosoever, therefore, shall presume in any way to oppose or infringe this decision, confirmed by our consent, and by the subscription of our hands, according to the decree of the canons, must take notice, that he is excluded from all sacerdotal functions, and from our society. May the Divine Grace preserve us in safety, living in the unity of his holy church."

This synod was held in the year from the incarnation of our Lord 673. In which year, Egbert, king of Kent, died I in the month of July; his brother Lothere succeeded him on the throne, which he had held eleven years and seven months. Bisi, the bishop of the East Angles, who is said to have been in the aforesaid synod, was successor to Boniface, before spoken of, a man of much sanctity and religion; for when Boniface died, after having been bishop seventeen years, he was by Theodore substituted in his place. Whilst he was still alive, but hindered by much sickness from administering his episcopal functions, two bishops, Ecci and Badwin, were elected and consecrated in his place; from which time to the present, that province has had two bishops.

CHAPTER VI

WINFRID BEING DEPOSED, SEXWULF WAS PUT INTO HIS SEE, AND EARCONWALD MADE BISHOP OF THE EAST SAXONS.

[A.D. 664] I

NOT long after, Theodore, the archbishop, taking offence at some disobedience of
Winfrid, bishop of the Mercians, deposed him from his bishopric when he had been possessed of it but a few years, and in his place made Sexwulf bishop, who was founder and abbot of the monastery of Medeshamstead, in the country of the Girvii. Winfrid, thus deposed, returned to his monastery of Ad Barve, and there ended his life in holy conversation.

He then also appointed Earconwald bishop of the East Saxons, in the city of London, over whom at that time presided Sebbi and Sighere, of whom mention has been made above. This Earconwald's life and conversation, as well when he was bishop as before his advancement to that dignity is reported to have been most holy, as is even at this time testified by heavenly miracles; for to this day his horse-litter, in which he was wont to be carried when sick, is kept by his disciples, and continues to cure many of agues and other distempers; and not only sick persons who are laid in that litter, or close by it, are cured; but the very chips of it, when carried to the sick, are wont immediately to restore them to health.

This man, before he was made bishop, had built two famous monasteries, the one for himself, and the other for his sister Ethelberga, and established them both in regular discipline of the best kind. That for himself was in the bounty of Surrey, by the river Thames, at a place called Ceortesei, that is, the Island of Ceorot; that for his sister in the province of the East Saxons, at the place called Bercingum, wherein she might be a mother and nurse of devout women. Being put into the government of that monastery, she behaved herself in all respects as became the sister of such a brother, living herself regularly, and piously, and orderly, providing for those under her, as was also manifested by heavenly miracles.

CHAPTER VII

HOW IT WAS INDICATED BY A HEAVENLY LIGHT WHERE THE BODIES OF THE NUNS SHOULD BE BURIED IN THE MONASTERY OF BARKING.

[A.D. 676]

IN this monastery many miracles were wrought, which have been committed to writing by many, from those who knew them, that their memory might be preserved, and following generations edified; some whereof we have also taken care to insert in our Ecclesiastical History. When the mortality, which we have already so often mentioned, ravaging all around, had also seized on that part of this monastery where the men resided, and they were daily hurried away to meet their God, the careful mother of the society began often to inquire in the convent, of the sisters, where they would have their bodies buried, and where a church-yard should be made when the same pestilence should fall upon that part of the monastery in which God's female servants were divided from the men, and they should be snatched away out of this world by the same destruction. Receiving no certain answer, though she often put the question to
the sisters, she and all of them received a most certain answer from heaven. For one night, when the morning psalm was ended, and those servants of Christ were gone out of their oratory to the tombs of the brothers who had departed this life before them, and were singing the usual praises to our Lord, on a sudden a light from heaven, like a great sheet, came down upon them all, and struck them with so much terror, that they, in consternation, left off singing. But that resplendent light, which seemed to exceed the sun at noonday, soon after rising from that place, removed to the south side of the monastery, that is, to the westward of the oratory, and having continued there some time, and covered those parts in the sight of them all, withdrew itself up again to heaven, leaving conviction in the minds of all, that the same light, which was to lead or to receive the souls of those servants of God into heaven, was intended to show the place in which their bodies were to rest, and await the day of the resurrection. This light was so great, that one of the eldest of the brothers, who at the same time was in their oratory with another younger than himself, related in the morning, that the rays of light which came in at the crannies of the doors and windows, seemed to exceed the utmost brightness of daylight itself.

CHAPTER VIII

A LITTLE BOY, DYING IN THE SAME MONASTERY, CALLED UPON A VIRGIN THAT WAS TO FOLLOW HIM; ANOTHER AT THE POINT OF LEAVING HER BODY, SAW SOME SMALL PART OF THE FUTURE GLORY.

[A.D. 676]

THERE was, in the same monastery, a boy, not above three years old, called Esica; who, by reason of his infant age, was bred up among the virgins dedicated to God, and there to pursue his studies. This child being seized by the aforesaid pestilence, when he was at the last gasp, called three times upon one of the virgins consecrated to God, directing his words to her by her own name, as if she had been present, Eadgith! Eadgith! Eadgith! and thus ending his temporal life, entered into that which is eternal. The virgin, whom he called, was immediately seized, where she was, with the same distemper, and departing this life the same day on which she had been called, followed him that called her into the heavenly country.

Likewise, one of those same servants of God, being ill of the same disease, and reduced to extremity, began on a sudden, about midnight, to cry out to them that attended her, desiring they would put out the candle that was lighted there; which, when she had often repeated, and yet no one did it, at last she said, "I know you think I speak this in a raving fit, but let me inform you it is not so; for I tell you, that I see this house filled with so much light, that your candle there seems to me to be dark." And when still no one regarded what she said, or returned any answer, she added, "Let that candle burn as long as you will; but take notice, that it is not my light, for my light will come to me at the dawn of the day." Then she began to tell, that a certain man of God, who had
died that same year, had appeared to her, telling her that at the break of day she should depart to the heavenly light. The truth of which vision was made out by the virgin's dying as soon as the day appeared.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE SIGNS WHICH WERE SHOWN FROM HEAVEN WHEN THE MOTHER OF THAT CONGREGATION DEPARTED THIS LIFE.

[A.D. 676]

WHEN Ethelberga, the pious mother of that holy congregation, was about to be taken out of this world, a wonderful vision appeared to one of the sisters, called Tortgith; who, having lived many years in that monastery, always endeavoured, in all humility and sincerity, to serve God, and took care to assist the same mother in keeping up regular discipline, by instructing and reproving the younger ones. Now, in order that her virtue might be perfected in affliction, according to the apostle, she was suddenly seized with a most grievous distemper, under which, through the good providence of our Redeemer, she suffered very much for the space of nine years; to the end, that whatever stain of vice remained amidst her virtues, either through ignorance or neglect, might all be eradicated by the fire of long tribulation. This person, going out of her chamber one night, just at the first dawn of the day, plainly saw as it were a human body, which was brighter than the sun, wrapped up in a sheet, and lifted up on high, being taken out of the house in which the sisters used to reside. Then looking earnestly to see what it was that drew up the glorious body which she beheld, she perceived it was drawn up as it were by cords brighter than gold, until, entering into the open heavens, it could no longer be seen by her. Reflecting on this vision, she made no doubt that some one of the society would soon die, and her soul be lifted up to heaven by her good works as it were by golden cords, which accordingly happened; for a few days after, the beloved of God, Ethelberga, mother of that society, was delivered out of the prison of the flesh; and her life is known to have been such that no person who knew her ought to question but that the heavenly kingdom was open to her, when she departed from this world.

There was also, in the same monastery, a certain nun, of noble worldly origin, and much nobler in the love of the world to come; who had, for many years, been so disabled in all her body, that she could not move a single limb. Being informed that the venerable abbess's body was carried into the church, till it could be buried, she desired to be carried thither, and to be bowed down towards it, after the manner of one praying; which being done, she spoke to her as if she had been living, and entreated her that she would obtain of the mercy of our compassionate Creator, that she might be delivered from such great and lasting pains; nor was it long before her prayer was heard: for being taken out of the flesh twelve days after she exchanged her temporal afflictions for an eternal reward. Three years after the death of this lady, the
above-mentioned servant of Christ, Tortgith, was so far spent with the distemper before mentioned, that her bones would scarcely hang together; and, at last, when the time of her dissolution was at hand, she not only lost the use of her other limbs, but also of her tongue; which having continued three days and as many nights, she was, on a sudden, relieved by a spiritual vision, opened her mouth and eyes, and looking up to heaven, began thus to direct her discourse to the vision which she saw: " Your coming is very acceptable to me, and you are welcome! " Having so said, she was silent awhile, as it were, waiting for the answer of the person she saw and spoke to; then, as if displeased, she said, "I am not pleased with this; " then pausing awhile, she said again, " If it cannot be today, I beg the delay may not be long; " and again holding her peace for a short while, she concluded thus: " If it is positively so decreed, and the resolution cannot be altered, I beg that it may be no longer deferred than this next night." Having so said, and being asked by those about her to whom she talked, she said, "With my most dear mother, Ethelberga; " by which they understood, that she was come to acquaint her that the time of her departure was at hand; for, as she had desired, after one day and night, she was delivered from the bonds and infirmity of the flesh, and entered the joys of eternal salvation.

CHAPTER X

A BLIND WOMAN, PRAYING IN THE BURIAL-PLACE OF THAT MONASTERY, WAS RESIORED TO HER SIGHT.

[A.D. 676]

HILDELITH, a devout servant of God, succeeded Ethelberga in the office of abbess, and presided over that monastery many years, till she was of an extreme old age, with exemplary conduct, in the observance of regular discipline, and in the care of providing all things for the public use. The narrowness of the place where the monastery is built led her to think that the bones of the male and female servants of Christ, which had been there buried, should be taken up, and translated into the church of the blessed mother of God, and interred in one place; whoever wishes to read it, may find in the book from which we have gathered these things, how often a brightness of heavenly light was seen there, and a fragrancy of wonderful odour smelled, and what other miracles were wrought.

However, I think it by no means fit to pass over the miraculous cure, which the same book informs us was wrought in the church-yard of the said religious house. There lived in that neighbourhood a certain earl, whose i wife was seized with a dimness in her eyes, which at length became so bad, that she could not see the least glimpse of light: having continued some time in total darkness, on a sudden she bethought herself that she might recover her lost sight, if she were carried to the monastery of the nuns, and there pray for the same, at the relics of the saints. Nor did she lose any time in performing what she had thought of: for being conducted by her maids to the

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monastery, which was very near, and professing that she had perfect faith that she should be there healed, she was led into the burial-place, and having long prayed there on her knees, she did not fail to be heard, for as she rose from prayer, before she went out of the place, she received the gift of sight which she had desired; and whereas she had been led thither by her servants, she now returned home joyfully without help: as if she had lost her sight to no other end than that she might make it appear how great light the saints enjoyed in heaven, and how great was the power of their virtue.

CHAPTER XI

SEBBI, KING OF THE SAME PROVINCE, ENDS HIS LIFE IN A MONASTERY

[A.D. 694]

AT that time, as the same little book informs us, Sebbi, a devout man, of whom mention has been made above, governed the kingdom of the East Saxons. He was much addicted to religious actions, almsgiving, and frequent prayer; preferring a private and monastic life to all the wealth and honours of his kingdom, which sort of life he would also long before have undertaken, had not his wife positively refused to be divorced from him; for which reason many were of opinion, and often said so, that a person of such a disposition ought rather to have been a bishop than a king. When he had been thirty years a king, and a soldier of the heavenly kingdom, he fell into a violent sickness, of which he died, and admonished his wife, that they should then at least jointly devote themselves to the service of God, since they could no longer enjoy, or rather serve, the world. Having with much difficulty obtained this of her, he repaired to Waldhere, bishop of London, who had succeeded Earconwald, and With his blessing received the religious habit, which he had long desired. He also carried to him a considerable sum of money, to be given to the poor, reserving nothing to himself, but rather coveting to remain poor in spirit for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

When the aforesaid distemper increased upon him, and he perceived the day of his death to be drawing near, being a man of a royal disposition, he began to apprehend lest, when under pain, and at the approach of death, he might be guilty of anything unworthy of his person, either in words, or any motion of his limbs. Wherefore, calling to him the aforesaid bishop of London, in which city he then was, he entreated him that none might be present at his death, besides the bishop himself, and two of his attendants. The bishop having promised that he would most willingly perform the same, not long after the man of God composed himself to sleep, and saw a comforting vision, which took from him all anxiety for the aforesaid uneasiness; and, moreover, showed him on what day he was to depart this life. For, as he afterwards related, he saw three men in bright garments come to him; one of whom sat down before his bed, whilst his companions stood and inquired about the state of the sick man they came to see: he who was sitting in front of the bed said, that his soul should depart his body without any pain, and with a great splendour of light; and declared that he should die the third
day after; both which particulars happened, as he had been informed by the vision; for on the third day after, he suddenly fell, as it were, into a slumber, and breathed out his soul without any sense or pain.

A stone coffin having been provided for burying his body, when they came to lay it in the same, they found his body a span longer than the coffin. Hereupon they hewed away the stone, and made the coffin about two fingers longer; but neither would it then contain the body. Under this difficulty of entombing him, they had thoughts either to get another coffin, or else to shorten the body, by bending it at the knees, if they could. But a wonderful event, caused by Providence, prevented the execution of either of those designs - for on a sudden, in the presence of the bishop, and Sighard, the son of the king who had turned monk, and who reigned after him jointly with his brother Suefred, and of a considerable number of men, that same coffin was found to answer the length of the body, insomuch that a pillow might also be put in at the head; and at the feet the coffin was four fingers longer than the body. He was buried in the church of the blessed Apostle of the Gentiles, by whose instructions he had learned to hope for heavenly things.

CHAPTER XII

HEDDA SUCCEEDS ELEUTHERIUS IN THE BISHOPRIC OF THE WEST SAXONS; CUICHELM SUCCEEDS PUTTA IN THAT OF ROCHESTER, AND IS HIMSELF SUCCEEDED BY GERMUND; AND WHO WERE THEN BISHOPS OF THE NORTHUMBRIANS.

[A. D. 673]

ELEUTHERIUS was the fourth bishop of the West Saxons; for Birinus was the first, Agilbert the second, and Wini the third. When Kenwalk, in whose reign the said Eleutherius was made bishop, died, his under-rulers took upon them the kingdom of the people, and dividing it among themselves, held it ten years; and during their rule he died, and Hedda succeeded him in the bishopric, having been consecrated by Theodore, in the city of London; during whose prelacy, Cadwalla, having subdued and removed those rulers, took upon him the government. l~ hen he had reigned two years, and whilst the same bishop still governed the church, he quitted his sovereignty for the love of the heavenly kingdom, and, going away to Rome, ended his days there, as shall be said more fully hereafter.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 676, when Ethelred, king of the Mercians, ravaged Kent with a powerful army, and profaned churches and monasteries, without regard to religion, or the fear of God, he among the rest destroyed the city of Rochester; Putta, who was bishop, was absent at that time, but when he understood that his church was ravaged, and all things taken away, he went to Sexwulfs bishop of the Mercians, and having received of him a certain church, and a small spot of land, ended his days there in peace; in no way endeavouring to restore his bishoprics because (as has been said
above) he was more industrious in spiritual than in worldly affairs; serving God only in that church, and going wherever he was desired, to teach church music. Theodore consecrated Cuichelm bishop of Rochester in his stead; but he, not long after, departing from his bishopric for want of necessaries, and withdrawing to other parts, Gebmund was substituted in his place.

In the year of our Lord's incarnation, 678, which is the eighth of the reign of Egfrid, in the month of August, appeared a star, called a comet, which continued for three months, rising in the morning, and darting out, as it were, a pillar of radiant flame. The same year a dissension broke out between King Egfrid and the most reverend prelate, Wilfrid, who was driven from his see, and two bishops substituted in his stead, to preside over the nation of the Northumbrians, namely, Bosa, to preside over the nation of the Deiri; and Eata over that of the Bernicians, the former having his see in the city of York, the latter in the church of Hagulstad, or else Lindisfarne; both of them promoted to the episcopal dignity from a society of monks. With them also was Edhed ordained bishop in the province of Lindsey, which King Egfrid had but newly subdued, having overcome and vanquished Wulfhere; and this was the first bishop of its own which that province had; the second was Ethelwin; the third Edgar; the fourth Cynebert, who is there at present. Before Edhed, Sexwulf was bishop as well of that province as of the Mercians and Midland Angles; so that, when expelled from Lindsey, he continued in the government of those provinces. Edhed, Bosa, and Eata, were ordained at York by Archbishop Theodore; who also, three years after the departure of Wilfrid, added two bishops to their number; Tumbert, in the church of Hagulstad, Eata still continuing in that of Lindisfarne; and Trumwine in the province of the Picts which at that time was subject to the English. Edhed returning from Lindsey, because Ethelred had recovered that province, was placed by him over the church of Ripon.

CHAPTER XIII

BISHOP WILFRID CONVERTS THE PROVINCE OF THE SOUTH SAXONS TO CHRIST.

[A.D. 681]

BEING expelled from his bishopric, and having travelled in several parts, Wilfrid went to Rome. He afterwards returned to Britain; and though he could not, by reason of the enmity of the aforesaid king, be received into his own country or diocese, yet he could not be restrained from Preaching the Gospel; for, taking his way into the province of the South Saxons, which extends from Kent on the west and south, as far as the West Saxons, and contains land of 7000 families, who at that time were still pagans, he administered to them the word of faith, and the baptism of salvation. Ethelwalch, king of that nation, had been, not long before, baptized in the province of the Mercians, by the persuasion of King Wulfhere, who was present, and was also his godfather, and as such gave him two provinces, viz., the Isle of Wight, and the province of Meanwara, in the nation of the West Saxons. The bishop, therefore, with the king's consent, or rather
to his great satisfaction, baptized the principal generals and soldiers of that country; and the priests, Eappa, and Padda, and Burghelm, and Eadda, either then, or afterwards, baptized the rest of the people. The queen, whose name was Ebba, had been christened in her own island, the province of the Wiccii. She was the daughter of Eanfrid, the brother of Eanher, who were both Christians, as were their people; but all the province of the South Saxons were strangers to the name and faith of God. There was among them a certain monk of the Scottish nation, whose name was Dicul, who had a very small monastery, at the place called Bosanham, encompassed with the sea and woods, and in it five or six brothers, who served our Lord in poverty and humility; but none of the natives cared either to follow their course of life, or hear their preaching.

But Bishop Wilfrid, by preaching to them, not only delivered them from the misery of perpetual damnation, but also from an inexhaustible calamity of temporal death, for no rain had fallen in that province in three years before his arrival, whereupon a dreadful famine ensued, which cruelly destroyed the people. In short, it is reported, that very often, forty or fifty men, being spent with want, would go together to some precipice, or to the sea-shore, and there, hand in hand, perish by the fall, or be swallowed up by the waves. But on the very day on which the nation received the baptism of faith, there fell a soft but plentiful rain; the earth revived again, and the verdure being restored to the fields, the season was pleasant and fruitful. Thus the former superstition being rejected, and idolatry exploded, the hearts and flesh of all rejoiced in the living God, and became convinced that He who is the true God had, through his heavenly grace, enriched them with wealth, both temporal and spiritual. For the bishop, when he came into the province, and found so great misery from famine, taught them to get their food by fishing; for their sea and rivers abounded in fish, but the people had no skill to take them, except eels alone. The bishop's men having gathered eel-nets everywhere, cast them into the sea, and by the blessing of God took three hundred fishes of several sorts, which, being divided into three parts, they gave a hundred to the poor, a hundred to those of whom they had the nets, and kept a hundred for their own use. By this benefit the bishop gained the affections of them all, and they began more readily at his preaching to hope for heavenly goods, seeing that by his help they had received those which are temporal.

At this time, King Ethelwalch gave to the most reverend prelate, Wilfrid, land of eighty-seven families, to maintain his company who were in banishment, which place is called Selsey, that is, the Island of the Sea-Calf. That place is encompassed by the sea on all sides, except the west, where is an entrance about the cast of a sling in width; which sort of place is by the Latins called a peninsula, by the Greeks, a Chersonesus. Bishop Wilfrid, having this place given him, founded therein a monastery, which his successors possess to this day, and established a regular course of life, chiefly of the brethren he had brought with him; for he both in word and action performed the duties of a bishop in those parts during the space of five years, until the death of King Egfrid.
And forasmuch as the aforesaid king, together with the said place, gave him all the goods that were therein, with the lands and men, he instructed them in the faith of Christ, and baptized them all. Among whom were two hundred and fifty men and women slaves, all of whom he, by baptism, not only rescued from the servitude of the Devil, but gave them their bodily liberty also, and exempted them from the yoke of human servitude.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW A PESTILENTIAL MORTALITY CEASED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF KING OSWALD.

[A.D. 681]

IN this monastery, at that time, certain manifestations of the heavenly grace are said to have been shown forth; for the tyranny of the Devil having been recently exploded, the faith of Christ began to prevail therein. Of which number I have thought it proper to perpetuate the memory of one which the most reverend Bishop Acca was wont to relate to me, affirming it had been told him by most creditable brothers of the same monastery. About the same time the this province of the South Saxons embraced the faith of Christ, a grievous mortality ran through many provinces of Britain; which, also, by the Divine dispensation, reached to the aforesaid monastery, then governed by the most reverend and religious priest of Christ, Eappa; and many as well of those that had come thither with the bishop, as of those that had been called to the faith of the same province of the South Saxons, were snatched away out of this world. The brethren, in consequence, thought fit to keep a fast of three days, and to implore the Divine goodness, that it would vouchsafe to extend mercy to them either by delivering those that were in danger by the distemper from death, or by delivering those who departed this life from eternal damnation.

There was at that time in the monastery, a little boy, of the Saxon nation, lately called to the faith, who had been seized with the same distemper, and had long kept his bed. On the second day of the fasting and praying, it happened that the said boy was, about the second hour of the day, left alone in the place where he lay sick, and through the Divine disposition, the most blessed princes of the apostle vouchsafed to appear to him; for he was a lad of an extraordinarily mild and innocent disposition, and, with sincere devotion observed the mysteries of the faith which he had received. The apostles therefore, saluting him in a most affectionate manner, said, "My child, do not fear death, about which you are so uneasy; for we will this day conduct you to the heavenly kingdom; but you are first to stay till the masses are said, that having received the body and blood of our Lord, to support you on your journey, and being so discharged through sickness and death, you may be carried up to the everlasting joys in heaven.

" Call therefore to you the priest, Eappa, and tell him, that the Lord has heard your
prayers and devotion, and has favourably accepted of your fast, and not one more shall
die of this plague, either in the monastery or its adjacent possessions; but all your
people who anywhere labour under this distemper, shall be eased of their pain, and
restored to their former health, except you alone, who are this day to be delivered by
death, and to be carried into heaven, to behold our Lord Christ, whom you have
faithfully served: this favour the Divine mercy has vouchsafed to grant you, through
the intercession of the godly and dear servant of God, King Oswald, who formerly ruled
over the nation of the Northumbrians, with the authority of a temporal king, and such
devotion of Christian piety as leads to the heavenly kingdom; for this very day that king
was killed in war by the infidels, and taken up to the everlasting joys of souls in heaven,
and associated among the number of the elect. Let them look in their books, wherein
the departure of the dead is set down, and they will find that he was, this day, as we
have said, taken out of this world. Let them, therefore, celebrate masses in all the
oratories of this monastery, either in thanksgiving for their prayers being heard, or else
in memory of the aforesaid King Oswald, who once governed their nation; and
therefore he humbly offered up his prayers to our Lord for them, as for strangers of his
nation; and let all the brethren assembling in the church, communicate in the heavenly'sacrifices, and so let them cease to fast, and refresh themselves with food."

The boy called the priest, and repeated all these words to him; the priest particularly
inquired after the habit and form of the men that had appeared to him. He answered,
"Their habit was noble, and their countenances most pleasant and beautiful, such as I
had never seen before, nor did I think there could be any men so graceful and comely.
One of them indeed was shorn like a clerk, the other had a long beard; and they said
that one of them was called Peter, the other Paul; and both of them the servants of our
Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, sent by Him from heaven to protect our monastery." The
priest believed what the boy said, and going thence immediately, looked in his
chronicle, and found that King Oswald had been killed on that very day. He then called
the brethren, ordered dinner to be provided, masses to be said, and all of them to
communicate as usual; causing also part of the Lord's oblation of the same sacrifice to
be carried to the sick boy.

Soon after this, the boy died, on that same day; and by his death proved that what he
had heard from the apostles of God was true. A further testimony of the truth of his
words was, that no person besides himself, belonging to the same monastery, died at
that time. By which vision, many that heard of it were wonderfully excited to implore
the Divine mercy in adversity, and to adopt the wholesome remedy of fasting. From
that time, the day of the nativity of that king and soldier of Christ began to be yearly
honoured with the celebration of masses, not only in that monastery, but in many other
places.

CHAPTER XV

KING CAEDWALLA, HAVING SLAIN ETHELWALCH, KING OF THE WEST SAXONS,
WASTED THAT PROVINCE WITH RAPINE AND SLAUGHTER.

[A.D. 685]

IN the meantime, Caedwalla, a daring young man, of the royal race of the Gewissae, who had been banished his country, came with an army, slew Ethelwalch, and wasted that country with much slaughter and plundering; but he was soon expelled by Berthun and Andhun, the king's commanders, who afterwards held the government of that province. The first of them was afterwards killed by the same Czedwalla, when he was king of the Gewissae, and the province was more entirely subdued: Ina, likewise, who reigned after Caedwalla, kept that country under the like servitude for several years; for which reason, during all that time, they had no bishop of their own; but their first bishop, Wilfrid, having been recalled home, they were subject to the bishop of the Gewissae, i.e. the West Saxons, in the city of Winchester.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW THE ISLE OF WIGHT RECEIVED CHRISTIAN INHABITANTS, AND TWO ROYAL YOUTHS OF THAT ISLAND WERE KILLED IMMEDIATELY AFTER BAPTISM.

[A.D. 686]

AFTER Coedwalla had possessed himself of the kingdom of the Gewissae, he also took the Isle of Wight, which till then was entirely given over to idolatry, and by cruel slaughter endeavoured to destroy all the inhabitants thereof, and to place in their stead people from his own province; having bound himself by a vow, though he was not yet, as is reported, regenerated in Christ, to give the fourth part of the land, and of the booty, to our Lord, if he took the island, which he performed by giving the same for our Lord to the use of Bishop Wilfred, who happened at the time to have accidentally come thither out of his own nation. The measure of that island, according to the computation of the English, is of twelve hundred families, and accordingly the bishop had given him land of three hundred families. The part which he received, he committed to one of his clerks called Bernwin, who was his sister's son, assigning him a priest, whose name was Hiddila, who might administer the word and baptism of salvation to all that would be saved.

Here I think it ought not to be omitted that the first fruits of the natives of that island who, by believing, secured their salvation, were two royal youths, brothers to Atwald, king of the island, who were honoured by the particular grace of God. For when the enemy approached, they made their escape out of the island, and passed over into the neighbouring province of the Jutes; where, being conducted to the place called At the Stone, as they thought to, be concealed from the victorious king, they were betrayed and ordered to be killed. This being made known to a certain abbot and priest, whose name was Cynebert, who had a monastery not far from thence, at a place called
Reodford, that is, the Ford of Reeds, he came to the king, who then lay privately in those parts, to be cured of the wounds which he had received whilst he was fighting in the Isle of Wight, and begged of him that if the lads must inevitably be killed, he might be allowed first to instruct them in the mysteries of the faith. The king consented, and the bishop having taught them the word of truth, and cleansed their souls by baptism, made the entrance into the kingdom of heaven sure to them. Then the executioner being at hand, they joyfully underwent the temporal death, through which they did not doubt they were to pass to the life of the soul, which is everlasting. Thus, after all the provinces of the island of Britain had embraced the faith of Christ, the Isle of Wight also received the same; yet being under the affliction of foreign subjection, no man there received the ministry, or rank of a bishop, before Daniel, who is now bishop of the West Saxons.

The island is situated opposite the division between the South Saxons and the Gewissae, being separated from it by a sea, three miles over, which is called Solente. In this narrow sea, the two tides of the ocean, which flow around Britain from the immense northern ocean, daily meet and oppose one another beyond the mouth of the river Homelea, which runs into that narrow sea, from the lands of the Jutes, which belong to the country of the Gewissae; after this meeting and struggling together of the two seas, they return into the ocean from whence they come.

CHAPTER XVII

OF THE SYNOD HELD IN THE PLAIN OF HEATHFIELD, WHERE ARCHBISHOP THEODORE PRESIDED.

[A.D. 680]

ABOUT this time, Theodore being informed that the faith of the church at Constantinople was much perplexed by the heresy of Eutyches, and desiring to preserve the churches of the English, over which he presided, from that infection, an assembly of many venerable priests and doctors was convened, at which he diligently inquired into their doctrines, and found they all unanimously agreed in the Catholic faith. This he took care to have committed to writing by the authority of the synod, as a memorial, and for the instruction of succeeding generations; the beginning of which instrument is as follows

" In the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the tenth year of the reign of our most pious lord, Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, the seventeenth of September, the eighth indiction; and in the sixth year of the reign of Ethelfrid, king of the Mercians, in the seventeenth year of the reign of Aldhulf, of the East Angles, in the seventh year of the reign of Lothair, king of Kent; Theodore, by the grace of God, archbishop of the island of Britain, and of the city of Canterbury, being president, and the other venerable bishops of the island of Britain sitting with him, the holy Gospels being laid before them,
at the place which, in the Saxon tongue, is called Heathfield, we conferred together, and expounded the true and orthodox faith, as our Lord Jesus in the flesh delivered the same to his disciples, who saw Him present, and heard his words, and as it is delivered in the creed of the holy fathers, and by all holy and universal synods in general, and by the consent of all approved doctors of the Catholic church; we, therefore, following them jointly and orthodoxly, and professing accordance to their divinely inspired doctrine, do believe, and do, according to the holy fathers, firmly confess, properly and truly, the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, a trinity consubstantial in unity, and unity in trinity, that is, one God subsisting in three consubstantial persons, of equal honour and glory.

And after much more of this sort, appertaining to the confession of the true faith, this holy synod added to its instrument, "We have received the five holy and general councils of the blessed fathers acceptable to God; that is, Of 318 bishops, who were assembled at Nice, against the most impious Arius and his tenets; and at Constantinople, Of 150, against the madness of Macedonius and Eudoxius, and their tenets; and at Ephesus, first of 200, against the most wicked Nestorius and his tenets; and at Chalcedon, Of 360, against Eutyches and Nestorius, and their tenets, and again at Constantinople. In a fifth council, in the reign of Justinian the younger, against Theodorus and Theodoret, and the epistles of Iba, and their tenets, against Cyril;" and again a little lower, "the synod held in the city of Rome, in the time of the blessed Pope Martin, in the eighth indiction, and in the ninth year of the most pious Emperor Constantine, we receive: and we glorify our Lord Jesus Christ, as they glorified Him, neither adding nor diminishing anything; anathematizing those with our hearts and mouths whom they anathematized, and receiving those whom they received, glorifying God the Father, who is without beginning, and his only-begotten Son generated from eternity, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son in an ineffable manner, as those holy apostles, prophets, and doctors, whom we have above-mentioned, did declare. And all we, who, with Archbishop Theodore, have thus expounded the Catholic faith, have also subscribed thereto."

CHAPTER XVIII

OF JOHN, THE SINGER OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, WHO CAME INTO BRITAIN TO TEACH.

[A.D. 680]

AMONG those who were present at this synod, was the venerable John, archchanter of the church of the holy Apostle Peter, and abbot of the monastery of St. Martin, who came lately from Rome, by order of Pope Agatho, together with the most reverend Abbot Biscop, surnamed Benedict, of whom mention has been made above, and this John, with the rest, signed the declaration of the Catholic faith. For the said Benedict, having built a monastery in Britain, in honour of the most blessed prince of the
apostles, at the mouth of the river Were, went to Rome with Ceolfrid, his companion and fellow-labourer in that work, who was after him abbot of the same monastery; he had been several, times before at Rome, and was now honourably received by Pope Agatho of blessed memory; from whom he also obtained the confirmation of the immunities of this monastery, being a bull of privilege signed by apostolical authority, pursuant to what he knew to be the will and grant of King Egfrid, by whose consent and gift of land he had built that monastery.

He then received the aforesaid Abbot John to be conducted into Britain, that he might teach in his monastery the method of singing throughout the year, as it was practised at St. Peter's at Rome. The Abbot John did as he had been commanded by the pope, teaching the singers of the said monastery the order and manner of singing and reading aloud, and committing to writing all that was requisite throughout the whole course of the year for the celebration of festivals; all which are still observed in that monastery, and have been copied by many others elsewhere. The said John not Only taught the brothers of that monastery; but such as had skill in singing resorted from almost all the monasteries of the same province to hear him; and many invited him to teach in other places.

Besides singing and reading, he had also been directed by the pope carefully to inform himself concerning the faith of the English church, and to give an account thereof at his return to Rome. For he also brought with him the decision of the synod of the blessed Pope Martin and 105 bishops, held not long before at Rome, principally against those who taught but one will and operation in Christ, and gave it to be transcribed in the aforesaid monastery of the most religious Abbot Benedict. The men who followed such opinion, much perplexed the faith of the church of Constantinople at that time; but by the help of God they were then discovered and subdued. Wherefore, Pope Agatho, being desirous to be informed concerning the state of the church in Britain, as well as in other provinces, and to what extent it was clear from the contagion of heretics, gave this affair in charge to the most reverend Abbot John, then appointed to go to Britain. The synod we have spoken of having been called for this purpose in Britain, the Catholic faith was found untainted in them all, and a copy of the same given him to carry to Rome.

But in his return to his own country, soon after crossing the sea, he fell sick and died and his body, for the sake of St. Martin, in whose monastery he presided, was by his friends carried to Tours and: honourably buried; for he had been kindly entertained there when he went into, Britain, and earnestly entreated by the brethren., that in his return to Rome he would take that road,, and give them a visit. In short, he was, there supplied with some to conduct him on his way, and assist him in the work enjoined him. Though he died by the way, yet the testimony of the faith of the English nation was carried to Rome, and most agreeably received by the apostolic pope, and all those that heard or read it.
CHAPTER XIX:

HOW QUEEN ETHELDRIDA ALWAYS PRESERVED HER VIRGINITY, AND HER BODY SUFFERED NO CORRUPTION IN THE GRAVE.

[A.D. 660]

KING EGFRID took to wife, Etheldrida, the daughter of Anna, king of the East Angles, of whom mention has been often made; a man very religious, and in all respects renowned for his inward disposition and actions. She had before been given in marriage to another, viz. to Tonbert, chief of the Southern Girvii; but he died soon after he had received 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 of her virginity, forasmuch as Egfrid promised he would give many lands and much money, if he could persuade the queen to consent to pay the marriage duty, for he knew the queen loved no man so much as himself; and it is not to be doubted that the same might in one instance take place in our age, which true histories tell us happened several times in former ages, through the assistance of the same Lord who has promised to continue with us unto the end of the world; for the miraculous circumstance that her flesh, being buried, could not suffer corruption, is a token that she had not been defiled by familiarity with man.

She had long requested the king that he would permit her to lay aside worldly cares, and to serve only the true King, Christ, in a monastery; and having at length with difficulty prevailed, she went as a nun into the monastery of the Abbess Ebba, who was aunt to King Egfrid, at the place called the city Coludi, having taken the veil from the hands of the aforesaid Bishop Wilfrid; but a year after she was herself made abbess in the country called Ely, where, having built a monastery, she began, by works and examples of a heavenly life, to be the virgin mother of very many virgins dedicated to God. It is reported of her, that from the time of her entering into the monastery, she never wore any linen but only woollen garments, and would rarely wash in a hot bath, unless just before any of the great festivals, as Easter, Whitsuntide, and the Epiphany, and then she did it last of all, after having, with the assistance of those about her, first washed the other servants of God there present; besides, she seldom did eat above once a day, excepting on the great solemnities, or some other urgent occasion, unless some considerable distemper obliged her. From the time of matins she continued in the church at prayer till it was day; some also say, that by the spirit of prophecy, she, in the presence of all, not only foretold the pestilence of which she was to die, but also the number of those that should be then snatched away out of her monastery. She was taken to our 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 such a manner as she had died, in a wooden coffin.
She was succeeded in the office of abbess by her sister Sexberga, who had been wife to Erconbert, king of Kent; who, when her sister had been buried sixteen years, thought fit to take up her bones, and, putting them into a new coffin, to translate them into the church. Accordingly she ordered some of the brothers to provide a stone to make a coffin of; they accordingly went on board ship, because the country of Ely is on every side encompassed with the sea or marshes, and has no large stones, and came to a small abandoned city, not far from thence, which, in the language of the English, is called Grantchester, and presently, near the city walls, they found a white marble coffin, most beautifully wrought, and neatly covered with a lid of the same sort of stone. Concluding therefore that God had prospered their journey, they returned thanks to Him, and carried it to the monastery.

The body of the holy virgin and spouse of Christ, when her grave was opened, being brought into sight, 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, can testify. But the physician, Cynefrid, who was present at her death, and when she was taken up out of the grave, was wont of more certain knowledge to relate, that in her sickness she had a very great swelling under her jaw. "And I was ordered," said he, "to lay open that swelling, 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 distemper; but the third day the former pains returning, she was soon snatched out of the world, and exchanged all pain and death for everlasting life and health. And when so many years after her bones were to be taken out of the grave, a pavilion being spread over it, all the congregation of brothers were on the one side, and of sisters on the other, standing about it singing, and the abbess, with a few, being gone to take up and wash the bones, on a sudden we heard the abbess within loudly cry out, 'Glory be to the name of the Lord.' Not long after they called me in, opening the door of the pavilion, where I found the body of the holy virgin taken out of the grave and laid on a bed, as if it had been asleep; then taking off the veil from the face, they also showed the incision which I had made, healed up; so that, to my great astonishment, instead of the open gaping wound with which she had been buried, there then appeared only an extraordinarily slender scar.

"Besides, all the linen cloths in which the body had been buried, appeared entire and as fresh as if they had been that very day wrapped about her chaste limbs." It is reported, that when she was much troubled with the aforesaid swelling and pain in her jaw, she was much pleased with that sort of distemper, and wont to say, "I know that I deservedly bear the weight of my sickness on my neck, for I remember, when I was very young, I bore there the needless weight of jewels; and therefore I believe the Divine goodness would have me endure the pain in my neck, that I may be absolved from the guilt of my needless levity, having now, instead of gold and precious stones, a red swelling and burning on my neck." It happened also that by the touch of that linen, devils were expelled from bodies possessed, and other distempers were sometimes
cured; and the coffin she was first buried in is reported to have cured some of distempers in the eyes, who, praying with their heads touching that coffin, presently were delivered from the pain or dimness in their eyes. They washed the virgin's body, and having clothed it in new garments, brought it into the church, and laid it in the coffin that had been brought, where it is held in great veneration to this day. The coffin was found in a wonderful manner, as fit for the virgin's body as if it had been made purposely for her, and the place for the head particularly cut, exactly fit for her head, and shaped to a nicety.

Ely is in the province of the East Angles, a country of about six hundred families, in the nature of an island, enclosed, as has been said, either with marshes or waters, and therefore it has its name from the great plenty of eels taken in those marches; there the aforesaid servant of Christ desired to have a monastery, because, as we have before observed, she was descended from that same province of the East Angles.

CHAPTER XX

A HYMN. ON THE AFORESAID HOLY VIRGIN.

[A.D. 660]

I THINK it proper to insert in this history a hymn of virginity, which I composed in elegiac verse several years ago, in praise and honour of the same queen and spouse of Christ; and therefore truly a queen, because the spouse of Christ; and to imitate the method of the Holy Scripture, in whose history many poetical pieces are inserted, which are known to be composed in metre.

Hail, Triune Power, who rulest every age, Assist the numbers which my pen engage. Let Maro wars in loftier numbers sing, I sound the praises of our heavenly King. Chaste is my verse, nor Helen's rape I write; Light tales like these, but prove the mind as light. See I from on high the God descends, confined In Mary's womb, to rescue lost mankind. Behold I a spotless maid a God brings forth, A God is born, who gave e'en nature birth I The virgin-choir the mother-maid resound, And chaste themselves, her praises shout around. Her bright example numerous vot'ries raise, Tread spotless paths, and imitate her ways. The blessed Agatha and Eulalia trust Sooner to flames than far more dangerous lust. Tecula and chaste Euphemia overcame The fear of beasts to save a virgin name. Agnes and sweet Cecilia, joyful maids, Smile while the pointed sword their breasts invades. Triumphing joy attends the peaceful soul, Where heat, nor rain, nor wishes mean control. Thus Etheldrida, pure from sensual crime, Bright shining star I arose to bless our time. Born of a regal race, her sire a king, More noble honour to her lord shall bring. A queen her name, her hand a sceptre rears, But greater glories wait above the spheres. What man wouldst thou desire? See Christ is made Her spouse, her blessed Redeemer weds the maid. While you attend the heavenly Mother's train, Thou shalt be mother of a heavenly reign. The holy maid who twelve years sat a queen, A
cloister’d nun devote to God was seen. Noted for pious deeds, her spotless soul Left the vile world, and soar’d above the pole. Sixteen Novembers since was the blest maid Entomb’d, whose flesh no putrid damps invade. Thy grace, O Christ I for in the coffin's found No tainted vest wrapping the corpse around. The swelling dropsy, and dire atrophy, A pale disease from the blest vestments fly. Rage fires the fiend, who whilom Eve betray’d, While shouting angels hail the glorious maid. See I wedded to her God, what joy remains, In earth, or heaven, see ! with her God she reigns ! Behold I the spouse, the festal torches shine, He comes! behold I what joyful gifts are thine ! Thou a new song on the sweet harp shalt sing, A hymn of praise to thy celestial King. None from the flock of the throned Lamb shall move, Whom grateful passion bind, and heavenly love

CHAPTER XXI

BISHOP THEODORE MADE PEACE BETWEEN THE KINGS EGFRID AND ETHELRED.

[A.D. 679]

In the ninth year of the reign of King Egfrid, a great battle was fought between him and Ethelred, king of the Mercians, near the river Trent, and Elfwin, brother to King Egfrid, was slain, a youth about eighteen years of age, and much beloved by both provinces, for King Ethelred had married his sister Osthritha. There was now reason to expect a more bloody war, and more lasting enmity between those kings and their fierce nations; but Theodore the bishop, beloved of God, relying on the Divine assistance, by his wholesome admonitions extinguished the dangerous fire that was breaking out; so that the kings and their people on both sides being appeased, no man was put to death, but only the usual mulct paid to the king for his brother that had been killed; and this peace continued long after between those kings and their kingdoms.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW A CERTAIN CAPTIVE'S CHAINS FELL OFF WHEN MASSES WERE SUNG FOR HIM.

[A.D. 679]

In the aforesaid battle, wherein Elfwin, the king's brother, was killed, a memorable fact is known to have happened, which I think ought not to be passed by in silence - , for the relation of the same will conduce to the salvation of many. In that battle, one Imma, a youth belonging to the king, was left as dead, and having lain so all that day and the next night among the dead bodies, at length he came to himself, and sitting, bound up his wounds in the best way he could. Then having rested awhile, he stood up, and began to go off to seek some friends that might take care of him; but in so doing he was discovered and taken by some of the enemy's army, and carried before their lord, who was an earl belonging to King Ethelred. Being asked by him who he was, and
fearing to own himself a soldier, he answered, "He was a peasant, poor and married, and that he came to the army with others to bring Provisions to the soldiers." The earl entertained him, and ordered his wounds to be dressed; and when he began to recover, to prevent his escaping, he ordered him to be bound; but that could not be performed, for as soon as they that bound him were gone, his bonds were all loosened.

He had a brother called Tunna, who was a priest and abbot of a monastery in the city which from him is still called , Tunnacester. Hearing that his brother had been killed in the fight, he went to see whether he could find his body; and finding another very like him in all respects, Concluding it to be his, he carried the same to his monastery, and buried it honourably, and took care often to say masses for the absolution of his soul; the celebration Whereof occasioned what I have said, that none could bind him but he was presently loosed again. In the meantime, the earl that kept him was amazed, and began to inquire Why he could not be bound; whether he had any spells about him, as are spoken of in fabulous stories. He answered, "He knew nothing of those contrivances; but I have," said he, "a brother who is a priest in my country, and I know that he, supposing me to be killed, causes masses to be said for me; and if I were now in the other life, my soul there, through his intercession, would be delivered from pain."

Having continued with the earl some time, those who attentively observed him, by his countenance, mien, and discourse, took notice, that he was not of the meaner sort, as he had said, but of some quality. The earl then privately sending for him, pressed to know who he was, promising to do him no harm, if he would ingenuously confess his quality. Which when he had done, declaring that he had been the king's servant, the earl answered, "I perceived by your answers that you were no peasant. And now you deserve to die, because all my brothers and relations were killed in that fight; yet I will not put You to death, because it will be a breach of my promise."

As soon, therefore, as he was recovered, he sold him at London, to a Freson, but he could not be bound by him the whole way as he was led along; but though his enemies put several sorts of bonds on him, they were all loosed. The buyer, perceiving that he could in no way be bound, gave him leave to ransom himself if he could; now it was at the third hour (nine in the morning) when the masses were wont to be said, that his bonds were generally loosed. He, having taken an oath that he would either return, or send him the money for his ransom, went into Kent to King Lothaire, who was son to the sister of Queen Etheldrida, above spoken of, for he had once been her servant. From him he obtained the price of his ransom, and as he had promised, sent it to his master.

Returning afterwards into his own country, and coming to his brother, he gave him an exact account of all his fortunes, good and bad; and by his relation he understood, that his bonds had been generally loosed at those times when masses had been celebrated for him; and that other advantages which had accrued to him in his time of danger, had been conferred on him from Heaven, through the intercession of his brother, and the
oblation of his saving sacrifice. Many persons, on hearing this account from the aforesaid man, were stirred up in the faith and devotion of piety either to prayer, or to almsgiving, or to offer up to our Lord the sacrifice of the holy oblation, for the deliverance of their friends who had departed this world; for they understood and knew that such saving sacrifice was available for the eternal redemption bath of body and soul. This story was also told me by some of those who had heard it related by the person himself to whom it happened; therefore, I have thought fit to insert it in my Ecclesiastical History as I had it related to me.

CHAPTER XXIII

OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE ABBESS HILDA.

[A.D. 680]

In the year of the incarnation of our Lord 680, the most religious servant of Christ, Hilda, abbess of the monastery that is called Streaneshalch, as above-mentioned, after having performed many heavenly works on earth, passed from thence to receive the rewards of the heavenly life, on the 17th of November, at the age of sixty-six years; the first thirty-three of which she spent living most nobly in the secular habit; and more nobly dedicated the remaining half to our Lord in a monastic life. For she was nobly born, being the daughter of Hereric, nephew to King Edwin, with which king she also embraced the faith and mysteries of Christ, at the preaching of Paulinus, the first bishop of the Northumbrians, of blessed memory, and preserved the same undefiled till she attained to the sight of him in heaven.

Resolving 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; being desirous to pass over from thence into France, to forsake her native country and all she had, and so live a stranger for our Lord in the monastery of Cale, that she might with more case attain to the eternal kingdom in heaven; because her sister Heresuid, mother to Aldwulf, king of the East Angles, at that time living in the same monastery, under regular discipline, was waiting for her eternal reward. Being led by her example, she continued a whole year in the aforesaid province, with the design of going abroad; afterwards, Bishop Aidan being recalled home, he gave her the land of one family on the north side of the river Wear; where for a year she also 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 religious servant of Christ, Heiu, who is said to have been the first woman that in the province of the Northumbrians took upon her the habit and life of a nun, being consecrated by Bishop Aidan; but she, soon after she had founded that monastery, went away to the city of Calcacestir, and there fixed her dwelling. Hilda, the servant of Christ, being set over that monastery, began immediately to reduce all things to a regular system, according as she had been instructed by
learned men; for Bishop Aidan, and other religious men that knew her and loved her, frequently visited and diligently instructed her, because of her innate wisdom and inclination to the service of God.

When she had for some years governed this monastery, wholly intent upon establishing a regular life, it happened that she also undertook either to build or to arrange a monastery in the place called Streaneshalch [Whitby], which work she industriously performed; for she put this monastery under the same regular discipline as she had done 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 person was there rich, and none poor, all being in common to all, and none having any property. Her prudence was so great, that not only indifferent persons, but even kings and princes, as occasion offered, asked and received her advice; she obliged those who were under her direction to attend so much to reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of justice, that many might be there found fit for ecclesiastical duties, and to serve at the altar.

In short, we afterwards saw five bishops taken out Of that monastery, and all of them men of singular merit and sanctity, whose names were Bosa, Hedda, Oftfor, John, and Wilfrid. We have above taken notice, that the first of them was consecrated bishop at York; of the second, it is to be observed that he was appointed bishop of Dorchester. Of the two last we shall speak hereafter, as they were consecrated: the was bishop of Hagulstad, the second of the church of York; of the third, we will here take notice that, having applied himself to the reading and observation of the Scriptures in both the monasteries of Hilda, at length, being desirous to attain to greater perfection, he went into Kent, to Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory; where having spent some more time in sacred studies, he also resolved to go to Rome, which, in those days, was reckoned of great moment : returning thence into Britain, he took his way into the province of the Wiccii, where King Osric then ruled, and continued there a long time, preaching the word of faith, and making himself 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 perform the episcopal functions; for which reason, this Oftfor 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. Before the aforesaid man of God, Bosel, Tatfrid, a most learned and industrious man, and of excellent ability, had been chosen bishop there, from the same abbess's monastery, but had been snatched away by an untimely death, before he could be ordained.

Thus this servant of Christ, 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 fame was brought of her industry and virtue; for it was necessary that the dream which her mother, Bregusuit, had, during her infancy, should be fulfilled. At the time that her husband, Hereric, lived in banishment, under Cerdic, king of the Britons, where he was also poisoned, she fancied, in a dream, that she was seeking for him most carefully, and could find no sign of him anywhere; but, after having used all her industry to seek him, she found a most precious jewel under her garment, which, whilst she was looking on it very attentively, cast such a light as spread itself throughout all Britain; which dream was brought to pass in her daughter that we speak of, whose life was a bright example, not only to herself, but to all who desired to live well.

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 sickness, to the end that, according to the apostle's example, her virtue might be perfected in infirmity. Falling into a fever, she fell into a violent heat, and was afflicted with the same 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 by her own example she admonished all persons to serve God dutifully in perfect health, and always to return thanks to Him in adversity, or bodily infirmity. In the seventh year of her sickness, the distemper turning inwards, she approached her last day, and about cock-crowing, having received the holy communion to further her on her way, and called together the servants of Christ that were within the same monastery, she admonished them to preserve evangelical peace among themselves, and with all others; and as she was making her speech, she joyfully saw death approaching, or if I may speak in the words of our Lord, passed from death to 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 is called Hackness. There was in that monastery, a certain nun called Begu, who, having dedicated her virginity to God, had served Him upwards of thirty years in monastical conversation. This nun, being then in the dormitory of the sisters, on a sudden heard the well known sound of a bell in the air, 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 top of the house open, and a strong light pour in from above; looking earnestly upon that light, she saw the soul of the aforesaid servant of God in that same light, attended and conducted to heaven by angels. Then awaking, and seeing the other sisters lying round about her, she perceived that what she had seen was either in a dream or a vision; and rising immediately in a great fright, she ran to the virgin who then presided in the monastery instead of the abbess, and whose name was Frigyth, and, with many tears and sighs, told her that the Abbess Hilda, mother of them all, had departed this life, and had in her sight ascended to eternal bliss, and to the company of the inhabitants of heaven, with a great light, and with angels conducting her. Frigyth having heard it, awoke all the sisters, and calling them
to the church, admonished them to pray and sing psalms for her soul; which they did
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 how and when they had heard it, by which it appeared that her death
had been revealed to them in a vision the very same hour that the others said she had
died. Thus it was by Heaven happily ordained, that when some saw her departure out
of this world, the others should be acquainted with her admittance into the spiritual life
which is eternal. These monasteries are about thirteen miles distant from each other.

It is also reported, that her death was, in a vision, made known the same night to one
of the holy virgins who loved her most passionately, in the same monastery where the
said servant of God died. This nun saw her soul ascend to heaven in the company of
angels; and this she declared, the very same hour that it happened, to those servants
of Christ that were with her; and awakened them to pray for her soul, even before the
rest of the congregation had heard of her death. The truth of which was known to the
whole monastery in the morning. This same nun was at that time with some other
servants of Christ, in the remotest part of the monastery, where the women newly
converted were wont to be upon trial, till they were regularly instructed, and taken into
the society of the congregation.

CHAPTER XXIV

THERE WAS IN THE SAME MONASTERY A BROTHER, ON WHOM THE GIFT OF
WRITING VERSES WAS BESTOWED BY HEAVEN.

[A. D. 680]

THERE was in this abbess's monastery a certain brother, particularly remarkable for the
grace of God, who was wont to make pious and religious verses, so that whatever was
interpreted to him out of Scripture, he soon after put the same into poetical expressions
of much sweetness and humility, in English, which was his native language. By his
verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world, and to aspire to
heaven. Others after him attempted, in the English nation, to compose religious poems,
but none could ever compare with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from men,
but from God; for which reason he never could compose any trivial or vain poem, but
only those which relate to religion suited his religious tongue; for having lived in a
secular habit till he was well advanced in years, he had never learned anything of
versifying; for which reason being sometimes at entertainments, when it was agreed for
the sake of mirth that all present should sing in their turns, when he saw the instrument
come towards him, he rose up from table and returned home.

Having done so at a certain time, and gone out of the house where the entertainment
was, to the stable, where he had to take care of the horses that night, he there
composed himself to rest at the proper time; a person appeared to him in his sleep, and
saluting him by his name, said, "Caedmon, sing some song to me." He answered, "I cannot sing; for that was the reason why I left the entertainment, and retired to this place because I could not sing." The other who talked to him, replied, "However, you shall sing." - "What shall I sing?" rejoined he. "Sing the beginning of created beings," said the other. Hereupon he presently began to sing verses to the praise of God, which he had never heard, the purport whereof was thus: We are now to 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 miracles, who first, as almighty preserver of the human race, created heaven for the sons of men as the roof of the house, and next the earth. This is the sense, but not the words in order 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 losing much of their beauty and loftiness. Awaking from his sleep, he remembered all that he had sung in his dream, and soon added much more to the same effect in verse worthy of the Deity.

In the morning he came to the steward, his superior, and having acquainted him with the gift he had received, was conducted to the abbess, by whom he was ordered, in the presence of many learned men, to tell his dream, and repeat the verses, that they might all give their judgment what it was, and whence his verse proceeded. They all concluded, that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord. They expounded to him a passage in holy writ, either historical, or doctrinal, ordering him, if he could, to put the same into verse. Having undertaken it, he went away, and returning the next morning, gave it to them composed in most excellent verse; whereupon the abbess, embracing the grace of God in the man, instructed him to quit the secular habit, and take upon him the monastic life; which being accordingly done, she associated him to the rest of the brethren in her monastery, and ordered that he should be taught the whole series of sacred history. Thus Caedmon keeping in mind all he heard, and as it were chewing the cud, converted the same into most harmonious verse; and sweetly repeating the same, made his masters in their turn his hearers. He sang the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the history of Genesis: and made many verses on the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their entering into the land of promise, with many other histories from holy writ; the incarnation, passion, resurrection of our Lord, and his ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the preaching of the apostles; also the terror of future judgment, the horror of the pains of hell, and the delights of heaven; besides many more about the Divine benefits and judgments, by which he endeavoured to turn away all men from the love of vice, and to excite in them the love of, and application to, good actions; for he was a very religious man, humbly submissive to regular discipline, but full of zeal against those who behaved themselves otherwise; for which reason he ended his life happily.

For when the time of his departure drew near, he laboured for the space of fourteen days under a bodily infirmity which seemed to prepare the way, yet so moderate that
he could talk and walk the whole time. In his neighbourhood was the house to which
those that were sick, and like shortly to die, were carried. He desired the person that
attended him, in the evening, as the night came on in which he was to depart this life,
to make ready a place there for him to take his rest. This person, wondering why he
should desire it, because there was as yet no sign of his dying soon, did what he had
ordered. He accordingly went there, and conversing pleasantly in a joyful manner with
the rest that were in the house before, when it was past midnight, he asked them,
whether they had the Eucharist there? They answered, "What need of the Eucharist?
for you are not likely to die, since you talk so merrily with us, as if you were in perfect
health." -" However," said he, "bring me the Eucharist." Having received the same into
his hand, he asked, whether they were all in charity with him, and without any enmity
or rancour? They answered, that they were all in perfect charity, and free from anger;
and in their turn asked him, whether he was in the same mind towards them? He
answered, "I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God." Then
strengthening himself with the heavenly viaticum, he prepared for the entrance into
another life, and asked, how near the time was when the brothers were to be
awakened to sing the nocturnal praises of our Lord? They answered, "It is not far off."
Then he said, "Well, let us wait that hour; " and signing himself with the sign of the
cross, he laid his head on the pillow, and falling into a slumber, ended his life so in
silence.

Thus it came to pass, that as he had served God with a simple and pure mind, and
undisturbed devotion, so he now departed to his presence, leaving the world by a quiet
death; and that tongue, which had composed so many holy words in praise of the
Creator, uttered its last words whilst he was in the act of signing himself with the cross,
and recommending himself into his hands, and by what has been here said, he seems
to have had foreknowledge of his death.

CHAPTER XXV

OF THE VISION THAT APPEARED TO A CERTAIN-MAN OF GOD BEFORE THE
MONASTERY OF THE CITY COLUDI WAS BURNED DOWN.

[A.D. 679]

AT this time, the monastery of virgins, called the city of Coludi, above-mentioned, was
burned down, through carelessness; and yet all that knew the same, might observe
that it happened through the malice of those who dwelt in it, and chiefly of those who
seemed to be the greatest. But there wanted not a warning of the approaching
punishment from the Divine goodness, by which they might have stood corrected, and
by fasting, prayers, and tears, like the Ninevites, have averted the anger of the just
judge.

There was in that monastery a man of the Scottish race, called Adamnan, leading a life
entirely devoted to God in continence and prayer, insomuch that he never took any food or drink, except only on Sundays and Thursdays; but often spent whole nights in prayer. This austerity of life he had first adopted from necessity to correct his evil propensities -, but in process of time the necessity became a Custom.

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

Having practised this carefully for a long time, it happened that he had gone on a certain day to a distance from the monastery, accompanied by one of the brothers; and as they were returning from this journey, when they drew near to the monastery, and beheld its lofty buildings, the man of God burst out into tears, and his countenance discovered the trouble of his heart. His companion, perceiving it, asked what was the reason, to which he answered: "The time is at hand, when a devouring fire shall consume all the structures which you here behold, both public and private." The other, hearing these words, as soon as they came into the monastery, told them to Ebba, the mother of the congregation. She, with good cause, being much concerned at that prediction, called the man to her, and narrowly inquired of him how he came to know it. He answered, "Being busy one night lately in watching and singing psalms, I on a
sudden saw a person unknown standing by me, and being startled at his presence, he bade me not to fear, and speaking to me in a familiar manner, "You do well," said he,' in that you spend this night-time of rest, not in giving yourself up to sleep, but in watching and prayer.' I answered, "I know I have great need of wholesome watching, and earnest praying to our Lord to pardon my transgressions," he replied, "You are in the right, for you and many more do need to redeem their sins by good works, and when they cease from labouring about temporal affairs, then to labour the more eagerly for the desire of heavenly goods; but this very few do; for I, having now visited all this monastery regularly, have looked into every one's chambers and beds, and found none of them except yourself busy about the care of his soul; but all of them, both men and women, either indulge themselves in slothful sleep, or are awake in order to commit sin; for even the cells that were built for praying or reading, are now converted into places of feasting, drinking, talking, and other delights; the very virgins dedicated to God, laying aside the respect due to their profession, wherentover they are at leisure, apply themselves to weaving fine garments, either to use in adorning themselves like brides, to the danger of their condition, or to gain the friendship of strange men; for which reason, a heavy judgment from heaven is deservedly ready to fall on this place and its inhabitants by devouring fire.' "The abbess said, "Why did you not sooner acquaint me with what you knew?" He answered, "I was afraid to do it, out of respect to you, lest you should be too much afflicted; yet you may have this comfort, that the calamity will not happen in your days." This vision being divulged abroad, the inhabitants of that place were for a few days in some little fear, and leaving off their sins, began to punish themselves; but after the abbess's death they returned to their former wickedness, nay, they became more wicked; and when they thought themselves in peace and security, they soon felt the effects of the aforesaid judgment.

That all this fell out thus, was told me by my most reverend fellow-priest, Edgils, 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 our Lord, how terrible He is in his counsels on the sons of men, lest we should at some lime or other indulge in the pleasures of flesh, and dreading the judgment of God too little, fall under his sudden wrath, and either be severely afflicted with temporal losses, or else being more severely tried, be snatched away to eternal perdition.

CHAPTER XXVI

OF THE DEATH OF THE KINGS EGFRID AND LOTHERE.

[A.D. 684]

IN the year of our Lord's incarnation 684, Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, sending Beort, his general, with an army, into Ireland, miserably wasted that harmless nation, which had always been most friendly to the English; insomuch that in their hostile rage
they spared not even the churches or monasteries. Those islanders, to the utmost of their power, repelled force with force, and imploring the assistance of the Divine mercy, prayed long and fervently for vengeance and though such as curse cannot possess the kingdom of God, it is believed, that those who were justly cursed on account of their impiety, did soon suffer the penalty of their guilt from the avenging hand of God; for the very next year, that same king, rashly leading his army to ravage the province of the Picts, much against the advice of his friends, and particularly of Cuthbert, of blessed memory, who had been lately ordained his op, the enemy made show as if they fled, and the king was drawn into the straits of inaccessible mountains, and slain with the greatest part of his forces, 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 he having the year before refused to listen to the most reverend father, Egbert, advising him not to attack the Scots, who did him no harm, it was laid upon him as a punishment for his sin, that he "should not now regard those who would have prevented his death.

From that time the hopes and strength of the English crown "began to waver and retrograde"; for the Picts recovered their own lands, which had been held by the English and the Scots that were in Britain, and some of the Britons 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 Abercurnig, seated in the country of the English, but close by the arm of the sea which parts the lands of the English and the Scots. Having recommended his followers, wheresoever he could, to his friends in the monasteries, he chose his own place of residence in the monastery, which we have so often mentioned, of men and women servants of God, at Streaneshalch; and there he, for several years, led a life in all monastical austerity, not only to his own, but to the benefit of many, with a few of his own people; and dying there, he was buried in the church of St. 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, this devout worrian found in him extraordinary assistance in governing, and comfort to herself. Alfrid succeeded Egfrid in the throne, being a Irian most learned in Scripture, said to be brother to the other, 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 Lothere, king of Kent, died on the sixth of February, 4en 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, the same Edric reigned a year and a half. On his death, kings of doubtful title, or foreigners, 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.

CHAPTER XXVII

CUTHBERT, A MAN OF GOD, IS MADE BISHOP; AND HOW HE LIVED AND TAUGHT
WHILST STILL IN A MONASTIC LIFE.

[A.D. 685]

THE same year that King Egfrid departed this life, he (as has been said) pr
omoted to
the bishopric of the church of Lindisfarne the holy and venerable Cuthbert, who had for
many years led a solitary life, in great continence of body and mind, in a very small
island, called Farne, distant almost nine miles from that same church, in the ocean.
From his very childhood he had always been inflamed with the desire of a religious life;
but he took upon him the habit and name of a monk when he was a young man: he
first entered into the monastery of Melrose, which is On the bank of the river Tweed,
and was then governed by the Abbot Eata, a meek and simple man, who was
afterwards made bishop of the church of Hagulstad or Lindisfarne, as has been said
above, over which monastery at that time was placed Boisil, a priest of great virtue and
of a prophetic spirit. Cuthbert, humbly submitting himself to this man's direction., from
him received both the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and example of good works.

After he had departed to our Lord, Cuthbert was placed over that monastery, where he
instructed many in regular life, both by the authority of a master, and the example of
his own behaviour. Nor did he afford admonitions and an example of a regular life to
his monastery alone, but endeavoured to convert the people round - about far and near
from the life of foolish custom, to the love of heavenly joys; for many profaned the faith
which they had received by their wicked actions; and some also, in the time of a
mortality, neglecting the sacraments of 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 enchantments, spells, or other secrets of the hellish art. In order to correct the
error of both sorts, he often went out of the monastery, sometimes on horseback, but
oftener on foot, and repaired to the neighbouring towns, where he preached the way of
truth to such as were gone astray; which had been also done by Boisil in his time. It
was then the custom of the English people that when a clerk or priest
came into the
town, hey all, at his command, flocked together to bear the word; willingly heard what
was said, and more willingly practised those things that they could hear or understand.
But Cuthbert was so skilful an orator so fond was he of enforcing his subject, and such
a brightness appeared in his angelic face, that no man present presumed to conceal
from him the most hidden secrets of his heart, but all openly confessed what they had
done; because they thought the same guilt could not be concealed from him, and wiped
off the guilt of what they had so confessed with worthy fruits of penance, as he
commanded. He was wont chiefly to resort to those places, and preach in such villages,
as being seated high up amid craggy uncouth mountains, were frightful to others to behold, and whose Poverty and barbarity rendered them inaccessible to other teachers; which nevertheless he, having entirely devoted himself to that pious labour, did so industriously apply himself to Polish with his doctrine, that when he departed Out of his monastery, he would often stay a week, sometimes two or three, and sometimes a whole month, before he returned home, continuing among the mountains to allure that rustic people by his preaching and example to heavenly employments.

This venerable servant of our Lord, having thus spent many years in the monastery of Melrose, and there become conspicuous by many miracles, his most reverend abbot, Eata, removed him to the isle of Lindisfarne, that he might there also, by the authority of a superior and his own example, instruct the brethren in the observance of regular discipline; for the same reverend father then governed that place also as abbot; for, from ancient times, the bishop was wont to reside there with his clergy, and the abbot with his monks, who were likewise under the 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, the most reverend Pope Gregory writing to him, as has been said above, to this effect:-- "But since, my brother, having been instructed in monastic rules, you must not live apart from your clergy in the church of the English, which has been lately, through the help of God I converted to the faith; you must, therefore, establish that course of life, which was among our ancestors in the primitive church, among whom, none called anything that he possessed his own; but all things were in common to them."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SAME ST. CUTHBERT, BEING AN ANCHORITE, BY HIS PRAYERS OBTAINED A SPRING IN A DRY SOIL, AND HAD A CROP FROM SEED SOWN BY HIMSELF OUT OF SEASON.

[A.D. 664]

AFTER this, Cuthbert, advancing in his meritorious and devout intentions, proceeded even to the adoption of a hermit's life of solitude, as we have mentioned. But forasmuch as we several years ago wrote enough of 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 repair to the island, he made this protestation to the brothers, saying, "If it shall please the Divine goodness to grant me, that I may live in that place by the labour of my hands, I will willingly reside there; but if not, I will, by God's permission, very, soon return to you. Is The place was quite destitute of water, corn, and trees; and being infested by evil spirits, very ill suited for human habitation; but it became in all respects habitable, at the desire of the man of God; for upon his arrival the wicked spirits withdrew. When he had there, after expelling the enemies, with the assistance of the
brethren, built himself a small dwelling, with a trench about it, and the necessary cells and an oratory, he ordered the brothers to dig a pit in the floor of the dwelling, although the ground was hard and stony, and no hopes appeared of any spring. Having done this upon the faith and at the request of the servant of God, the next day it appeared full of water and to this day affords plenty of its heavenly bounty to all that resort thither. He also desired that all instruments for husbandry might be brought him, and some wheat; and having sown the same at the proper season, neither stalk, nor so much as a leaf, sprouted from it by the next summer. Hereupon the brethren visiting him according to custom, he ordered barley to be brought him, in case it were either the nature of the soil, or the Divine will, that such grain should rather grow there. He sowed it in the same field just as it was brought him, after the proper time of sowing, and consequently without any likelihood of its coming to good; but a plentiful crop immediately came up, and afforded the man of God the means which he had so ardently desired of supporting himself by his own labour.

When he had here served God in solitude many years, the mound which encompassed his habitation being so high, that he could from thence see nothing but heaven, to which he so ardently aspired, it happened that a great Synod was assembled in the presence of King Egfrid, near the river Alne, at a place called Twyford, which signifies "the two fords," in which Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory, presided, Cuthbert was, by the unanimous consent of all, chosen bishop of the church of Lindisfarne. They could not, however, persuade him to leave his monastery, 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 great men, passed over into the island; many also of the brothers of the same isle of Lindisfarne assembled together for the same purpose: they all knelt, conjured him by our Lord, and with tears and entreaties, till they drew him, also in tears, from his retreat, and forced him to the synod. Being arrived there, after much opposition, he was overcome by the unanimous resolution of all present, and submitted to take upon himself the episcopal dignity; being chiefly prevailed upon by the mention that Boisil, the servant of God, when he had prophetically foretold all things that were to befall him, had also predicted that he should be a bishop. However, the consecration was not appointed immediately; but after the winter, which was then at hand, it was performed at Easter, in the city of York, and in the presence of the aforesaid King Egfrid; seven bishops meeting on the occasion, among whom, Theodore, of blessed memory, was primate. He was first elected bishop of the church of Hagulstad, in the place of Tumbert, who had been deposed from the episcopal dignity; but in regard that 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 Hagulstad, 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 apostles, he became an ornament to the episcopal dignity, by his virtuous actions; for he both protected the people committed to his charge, by
constant prayer, and excited them, by most wholesome admonitions, to heavenly practices; and, which is the greatest help in teachers, he first showed in his behaviour what he taught was to be performed by Others; for he was much inflamed with the fire of Divine charity, modest in the virtue of patience, most diligently intent on devout prayers, and affable to all that came to him for comfort. He thought it equivalent to praying, to afford the infirm brethren the help of his exhortations, well knowing that he who said " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God , said likewise, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. He was also remarkable for penitential abstinence, and always intent upon heavenly things, through the grace Of humility: lastly, when he offered up to God the sacrifice of the saving victim, he commended his prayer to God, not with a loud voice, but with tears drawn from the bottom of his heart.

Having spent two years in his bishopric, he returned to his island and monastery, being advertised by a Divine oracle, that the day of his death, or rather of his life, was drawing near; as he, at that time, with his usual simplicity, signified to some persons, though in terms which were somewhat obscure, but which were nevertheless afterwards plainly understood; while to others he declared the same openly.

CHAPTER XXIX

ST. CUTHBERT FORETOLD TO THE ANCHORITE, HEREBERT, THAT HIS DEATH WAS AT HAND.

[A.D. 687]

THERE was a certain priest, venerable for the probity of his life and manners, called Herebert, 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, was wont to visit him every year, and to receive from him spiritual advice. Hearing that Bishop Cuthbert was come to the city of Lugubalia, he repaired thither to him, according to custom, being desirous to be still more and more inflamed in heavenly desires through his wholesome admonitions. Whilst they alternately entertained one another with the delights of the celestial life, the bishop, among other things, said, "Brother Herebert, remember at this time to ask me all the questions you wish to have resolved, and say all you design; for we shall see one another no more in this world. For I am sure that the time of my dissolution is at hand, and I shall speedily Put off this tabernacle of the flesh." Hearing these words, he fell down at his feet, and shedding tears, with a sigh, said, "I beseech you, by our Lord, not to forsake me; but that you remember your most faithful companion, and entreat the Supreme Goodness that, as we served Him together upon earth, we may depart together to see his bliss in heaven. For you know that I have always endeavoured to live according to your directions, and whatsoever faults I have committed, either through ignorance or frailty, I have instantly submitted to correction according to 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, because the Heavenly Goodness has granted what we desired."

The event proved the truth of this promise and prophecy, for after their parting at that time, they no more saw one another in the flesh; but their souls quitting their bodies on the very same day, that is, on the 20th of March, they were immediately again united in spirit, and translated to the heavenly kingdom by the ministry of angels. But Herebert was first prepared by a tedious sickness, through the dispensation of the Divine Goodness, as may be believed, to the end that if he was anything inferior in merit to the blessed Cuthbert, the same might be made up by the chastising pain of a long sickness, that being thus made equal in grace to his intercessor, as he departed out of the body at the very same time with him, so he might be received into the same seat of eternal bliss.

The most reverend father died in the isle of Farne, earnestly entreating the brothers that he might also be buried in that same place, where he had served God a considerable time. However, 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 accordingly, the venerable Bishop Wilfrid held the episcopal see of that church one year, till such time as one was chosen to be ordained in that room of Cuthbert, Afterwards Edbert was consecrated, a man renowned for his knowledge in the Divine writings, as also for keeping the Divine precepts, and chiefly for almsgiving, so that, according to the law, he every year gave the tenth part, not only of four-footed beasts, but also of all corn and fruit, as also of garments, to the poor.

CHAPTER XXX

ST. CUTHBERT'S BODY WAS FOUND ALTOGETHER UNCORRUPTED AFTER IT HAD BEEN BURIED ELEVEN YEARSY SUCCESSOR IN THE BISHOPRIC DEPARTED THIS WORLD NOT LONG AFTER.

[A.D. 698]

IN order to show with how much glory the man of God, Cuthbert, lived after death, his holy life having been before his death signalled by frequent miracles; when he had been buried eleven years, Divine Providence put it into the minds of the brethren to take up his bones, expecting, as is usual with dead bodies, to find all the flesh consumed and reduced to ashes, and the rest dried up, and intending to put the same into a new coffin, and to lay them in the same place, but above the pavement, for the honour due to him. They acquainted Bishop Edbert with their design, and he consented to it, and ordered that the same should be done on the anniversary of his burial. They did so, and opening the grave, found all the body whole, as if it had been alive, and the joints pliable, more like one asleep than a dead person; besides, all the vestments the body had on were not only found, but wonderful for their freshness and gloss. The
brothers seeing this, with much amazement hastened to tell the bishop what they had found; he being then alone in a place remote from the church, and encompassed by the sea. There he always used to spend the time of Lent, and was wont to continue there with great devotion, forty days before the birth of our Lord, in abstinence, prayer, and tears. There also his venerable predecessor, Cuthbert, had some time served God in private, before he went to the isle of Farne.

They brought him also some part of the garments that had covered his holy body; which presents he thankfully accepted, and attentively listening to the miracles, he with wonderful affection kissed those garments, as if they had been still upon his father's body, and said, "Let the body be put into new garments in lieu of these you have brought, and so lay it into the coffin you have provided; for I am certain that the place will not long remain empty, having been sanctified with so many miracles of heavenly grace; and how happy is he to whom our Lord, the author and giver of all bliss, shall grant the privilege of lying in the same." The bishop having said this and much more, with many tears and great humility, the brothers did as he had commanded them, and when they had dressed the body in new garments, and laid it in a new coffin, they placed it on the pavement of the sanctuary. Soon after, God's beloved bishop, Edbert, fell grievously sick, and his distemper daily increasing, in a short time, that is, on the 6th of May, he also departed to our Lord, and they laid his body in the grave of the holy father Cuthbert, placing over it the coffin, with the uncorrupted remains of that father. The miracles sometimes wrought in that place testify the merits of the both; some of which we before preserved the memory of in the book of his life, and have thought fit to add some more in this History, which have lately come to our knowledge.

CHAPTER XXXI

OF ONE THAT WAS CURED OF A PALSY AT THE TOMB OF ST. CUTHBERT.

[A.D. 698]

THERE was in that same monastery a brother whose name was Bethwegen, who had for a considerable time waited upon 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 on a certain day washed the mantles or garments which he used in the hospital, in the sea, was returning home, when on a sudden, about half way, he was seized with a sudden distemper in his body, insomuch that he fell down, and having lain some time, he could scarcely rise again. When at last he got up, he felt one half of his body, from the head to the foot, struck with palsy, and with much difficulty got home by the help of a staff. The distemper increased by degrees, and as night approached, became still worse, so that when day returned, he could scarcely rise or go alone. In this weak condition, a good thought came into his mind, which was to go to the church, the best way he could, to the tomb of the reverend
father Cuthbert, and there, on his knees, to beg of the Divine Goodness either to be delivered from that disease, if it were for his good, or if the Divine Providence had ordained him longer to lie under the same for his punishment, that he might bear the pain with patience and a composed mind.

He did accordingly, and supporting his weak limbs with a staff, entered the church, and prostrating himself before the body of the man of God, he, with pious earnestness, prayed that, through his intercession, our Lord might be propitious to him. In the midst of his prayers, he fell as it were into a stupor, and, as he was afterwards wont to relate, felt a large and broad hand touch his head, where the pain lay, and by that touch, all the part of his body which had been affected with the distemper, was delivered from the weakness, and restored to health down to his feet. He then awoke, and rose up in perfect health, and returning thanks to God for his recovery, told the brothers what had happened to him; and to the joy of them all, returned the more zealously, as if chastened by his affliction, to the service which he was wont before so carefully to perform. The very garments which had been on Cuthbert's body, dedicated to God, either whilst living, or after he was dead, were not exempt from the virtue of performing cures, as may be seen in the book of his life and miracles, by such as shall read it.

CHAPTER XXXII

OF ONE WHO WAS CURED OF A DISTEMPER IN HIS EYE AT THE RELICS OF ST. CUTHBERT. [A.D. 698]

NOR is that cure to be passed over in silence, which was performed by his relics three years ago, and was told me 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 had a great swelling on it, which growing daily, threatened the loss of the eye. The surgeons applied their medicines to ripen it, but in vain. Some said it ought to be cut off; others opposed it, for fear of worse consequences. The brother having long laboured under this malady, and seeing no human means likely to save his eye, but that, on the contrary, it grew daily worse, was cured on a sudden, through the Divine Goodness, by the relics of the holy father, Cuthbert; for the brethren, finding his body uncorrupted, after having been many years buried, took some part of the hair, which they might, at the request of friends, give or show, in testimony of the miracle.

One of the priests of the monastery, named Thridred, who is now abbot there, had a small part of these relics by him at that time. One day in the church he opened the box of relics, to give some part to a friend that begged it, and it happened that the youth who had the distempered eye was then in the church; the priest, having given his friend as much as he thought fit, delivered the rest to the Youth to put it into its place.
Having received the hairs of the holy head by some fortunate impulse, he clapped them to the sore eyelid, and endeavoured for some time, by the application of them, to soften and abate the swelling. Having done this, he again laid the relics into the box, as he had been ordered, 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 it, about the second hour of the day; but he, being busy about other things that belonged to that day, about the sixth hour of the same, touching his eye on a sudden, found it as sound with the lid, as if there never had been any swelling or deformity on it.

Bibliography

A few suggestions of books for more research.

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Source:


Notes:

1. Page numbers have been removed for this etext: For citation purposes refer to the Book and Chapter of the History.

2. The Index was not scanned.

3. For the most part this is a very readable translation, but a few older or odd spellings have been altered: In what follows the first word is used in the edition, the second is version here.

abbat/abbot