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ART. III.—WAS THE ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH INDEPENDENT OF ROME?

THE present attitude of the Church of Rome towards Wales cannot fail to revive our interest in this question. Not that, even if history answered it unequivocally in the negative, we should therefore necessarily deem ourselves under obligation to submit to the authority, or recognise the claim of the present Church of Rome to jurisdiction over us. Far from it. The changes which that Church has undergone since the beginning of the seventh century, both in doctrine and ritual, are such as almost to have obliterated its identity. If, however, the question be decided in the affirmative, if the British Church was ignorant of any claims to supremacy on the part of the Roman Church till the mission of Augustine, and if the British Bishops of that time refused to recognise the rights of that missionary monk to rule over them, it is not likely or reasonable that we should submit to such absolute and enlarged claims as those that are preferred by his present successors of the Italian mission.

When, however, a special effort is being made by the Roman Church to set forth its claims before the Welsh people, and to advance its interests among them, it is both respectful to those who make such claims, and safe for ourselves, to examine as carefully as we can the historical grounds upon which they are advanced.

A Vicar Apostolic for Wales was consecrated in Birkenhead on September 14 of last year, and the occasion was naturally and very properly used for setting forth the nature and the necessity of the Apostolic Vicariate. We have no reason to complain of this manifestation of the Pope's solicitude for Wales; it was natural, if not inevitable, since we are told[1] by Dr. Hedley, Bishop of Newport and Menevia, that "the Catholic Church in England persists in claiming to be the one true Church, outside of which, unless there is the excuse of pardonable deficiency of information, there is no salvation. It is in this light that we offer ourselves to the English and Welsh people. . . . It cannot be denied that this attitude on the part of the Catholic Church does imply a severe judgment on the Christianity of the English and Welsh people. It implies that she considers their Christianity defective and inadequate." This being the deliberate opinion of the authorities of the Church of Rome, we cannot complain of their efforts in doing what they can to enlighten our ignorance, and to supply our "deficiency of information," whether it be pardonable or not; nor must we complain of the tardiness of the

[1] *Catholic Times* and *Catholic Opinion*, September 20, 1895.

Bishop of Rome in sending us a Vicar Apostolic for these vital purposes. All these tokens and assurances of goodwill, however, will not restrain us from using the right of private judgment, assisted and guided by whatever means we possess, in order to arrive at historical truth, and to form just conclusions of both our own position and the pretensions of the Papal representatives.

Bishop Hedley[1] tells us that "there are two great features of Scriptural and historic Christianity which are virtually non-existent in English and Welsh Protestantism." The first of these is "the principle of authority in doctrine and government," and the second is "the Sacramental system." We might observe in passing that, if we were to go in search of a better "Sacramental system" than the one we possess, we should probably look elsewhere than to a Church which offers its faithful a mutilated Sacrament, and thereby daringly contravenes the explicit words of our Saviour. The Bishop asks pathetically: "Is it a dream to think that these missing elements in their Christianity can be restored to the Welsh people? And are we who pray and labour for this object mere benighted missionaries who feed our fancy upon visions of the past? We do not think so." Although a subsequent orator, Father Sykes, is reported to have said that the "Welsh people looked upon the appointment of the Vicar Apostolic as a compliment to them, and recognised that it was not for purposes of aggression or proselytism that he came among them, but to guard and advance the spiritual interests of his own flock," it is yet hoped that the day is not far distant "when they would behold the spectacle of a great and noble nation gathered together again into one fold and under one shepherd." If the Roman Church is meant by the "one fold," it is difficult to see how such an end is to be accomplished without "aggression" or "proselytism."

On the same day as the consecration at Birkenhead, the Vicar Apostolic issued his first Pastoral letter, dated from Wrexham, in which he refers to the relation which he assumes to have existed between the Welsh people and the Roman Church in old times. And here we notice with interest that both Bishop Mostyn and Father Sykes are at some pains to inform us that the Pope recognises the distinct nationality of Wales, while they refer in barely complimentary terms to the relation that existed in times past between the Welsh and the English people and the English Church. Bishop Mostyn says that the Pope has recognised Wales as a community by itself, and "that the Church of England, although established by law in their midst, had never succeeded in gaining the affections of

[1] *Catholic Times* and *Catholic Opinion*, September 20, 1895

the Welsh people." Father Sykes says that the "Pope had wisely recognised the signs and the needs of the times, and therefore had sent among the Welsh people a Welshman to study the spiritual necessities of Wales"; and he adds that "he was perfectly sure that even those who did not believe in Episcopacy would yet, if they were to have Bishops among them, prefer one who had no doubtful claims."

This is somewhat ungrateful towards the Saxon and the English Church, when it is remembered that it was to their repeated and prolonged efforts, under the direction of the Pope, that the final submission of the British Church to the See of Rome was due. "In spite of being driven from their country," the Bishop says, "they [the Welsh] still preserved their ancient faith in Brittany even to the present day, and in Wales for many centuries after their defeat by the Saxons. It was long after the troublesome times of the sixteenth century, after many years of cruel persecution, that the Welsh, being deprived of priests, gave up the faith of their forefathers." The Vicar Apostolic apparently claims that the Welsh Church was in union with Rome from its alleged establishment in this country in the time of Lucius, about A.D. 177, till long after the Reformation. Let us examine this assumption in the light of history.

It goes without saying that the origin of British Christianity is involved in much obscurity. We have no authentic native documents which reach further back than the declamatory fragments of Gildas, who wrote about A.D. 550, and who says that he had no British sources of information to rely upon, "which (if there were any)," he adds, "have perished in the fires of the enemy or accompanied my exiled countrymen into distant countries."[1] Gildas further tells us that he would be guided by references which he found in foreign writers, "which, being broken up by frequent interruptions, are by no means clear." By these he doubtless means those references to the British Church found in the writings of Continental divines and historians of the first four centuries, which, however, afford us little assistance in arriving at a definite conclusion respecting the origin of that Church. They merely include Britain among other countries in illustration of the rapid progress of the Gospel among the nations of the earth. We may take as a fair specimen of these references the oft-quoted words of Tertullian, who wrote about A.D. 208. In his work against the Jews he uses the following words: "In whom, but in Christ Himself, who is already come, do all the nations believe? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc. . . .

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," etc., vol. i., p. 2.

nay, the different tribes of the Gætulians, and many territories of the Moors, all parts of Spain, the different peoples of Gaul, and parts of Britain, untraversed by the Romans, but subdued to Christ . . . in all these reigns the name of Christ, who has already come." Similar testimonies might be cited from the writings of Origen, who was a contemporary of Tertullian; of Eusebius, the Church historian, who wrote about A.D. 315, and whose words are adopted by Gildas in the well-known passage where he is supposed to assign the introduction of Christianity into Britain to the reign of Tiberius; of Sozomen, who wrote later in the same century, and of others. The allusions of these writers to Britain are, for the most part, general and rhetorical, and afford us but little aid in tracing the origin of British Christianity, though they establish the conclusion that the Gospel had found its way into this island before the end of the second century, and that it had then penetrated into places where there were no Roman settlements. Whence it came is a disputed point. Arthur West Haddan, who had made the history of Celtic Christianity his special study, inclines to the opinion that it was derived from Gaul, "most probably through Lyons." Mr. Warren enters into a careful argument on the subject, and concludes in favour of an Eastern origin—at least, in a modified form. His words are: "The most probable hypothesis is that Christianity reached the British Isles through Gaul, and that, whatever traces of Eastern influence may be found in the earliest Liturgy and Ritual of Great Britain and Ireland, they are not due to a direct introduction of Christianity from the East, but to the Eastern character and origin of that Church through which Christianity first reached these shores."[1] "There is strong circumstantial evidence in favour of the immediately Gallican origin of the British Church, and for fixing the date of its foundation between A.D. 176 and 208."[2] Neander says: "The peculiarity of the British Church is evidence against its origin from Rome, for in many ritual matters it departed from the usage of the Roman Church, and agreed much more nearly with the Church of Asia Minor."[3] Palmer writes: "I do not see that there is any proof or strong presumption that the British Bishops originally derived their orders from Rome. It is infinitely more probable that they were ordained in Gaul."[4] Professor Stokes writes: "British Christianity existed here for ages before Augustine, and must have been derived immediately from Gaul."[5] Again: "Gallic was immediately connected with Oriental Chris-

[1] "The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church," p. 57.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] "Church History," i. 117.
[4] "Origines Liturgicæ," vol. i., p. 180.
[5] "Ireland and the Celtic Church," p. 4.

tianity." These eminent authorities seem to be unanimous in the conclusion that British Christianity was originally derived from Gaul in the latter half of the second century. Who the agents were we have now no means of ascertaining. The Vicar Apostolic of Wales, however, in his Pastoral, attributes its introduction to missionaries sent by Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome, at the request of a British King named Lucius, somewhere about A.D. 177. He accepts the testimony of Bede apparently without hesitation. Of King Lucius Haddan says that, "forced by the stern canons of evidence, we pronounce him a mere Roman invention of the fourth or fifth century, first dressed up into shape in Wales in the eighth or ninth."[1] And even the Roman Catholic historian Lingard acknowledges that "the story itself is liable to suspicion, for we know not from what source Beda, at the distance of five centuries, derived his information."[2]

The fact that the Bishops and clergy of the British Church took part in the Councils of the fourth century is a proof that it was recognised as a portion of Catholic Christendom.[3] There are also references to British Christianity in the writings of St. Athanasius, St. Chrysostom, and other eminent Christian apologists of the same period, which testify to the important fact that the representatives of the British Church at the Councils and otherwise gave their influence and suffrages in favour of the orthodox party. These facts, however, have been adduced by Romish controversialists as evidence in favour of the Pope's supremacy over the British Church of that date. "From the presence of British Bishops in foreign synods, and from the occasional remarks of foreign writers, we may conclude that the British Church, as long as the island remained under the dominion of Rome, was in Catholic communion with the other Western Churches."[4] It need hardly be said that "Catholic communion," in the mouth of a Roman Catholic of the nineteenth century, means "submission to the Pope's supremacy." This involves the wider question, namely, Was an acknowledgment of the Pope's universal supremacy an essential condition of communion with Rome, or of Catholicity, in the fourth century? We can only touch in passing on a few salient points in this controversy. Those who wish to see

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[1] "Remains," 227; *vide* also Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," etc., vol. i., pp. 25, 26.

[2] "Anglo-Saxon Church," vol. i., p. 3.

[3] British Bishops were present at the Council of Arles, A.D. 314, and Ariminum, A.D. 359, and possibly also at the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, and of Sardica, A.D. 347 (Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," etc., i., p. 8).

[4] Lingard, "Anglo-Saxon Church," i. 11. See especially Note E, p. 338.

it treated exhaustively, and by a masterly hand, may consult the work of Dr. Salmon on the "Infallibility of the Church."[1]

That the See of Rome, situated as it was in the capital of the Empire, was held in special honour by the Early Church is doubtless true; but that its occupants held universal supremacy over the Bishops and Churches of Christendom is a widely different thing. The claims of the Bishop of Rome as we know them to-day are the growth of centuries. A primacy of honour, sometimes acknowledged by the Early Church, gradually developed into a claim for supremacy of jurisdiction over Christendom, and eventually into the dogma of Infallibility. It was by an evolutionary process that this was brought about, as is virtually acknowledged by the late Cardinal Newman. The Church of the third and fourth centuries knew nothing of the Pope's universal supremacy or his infallibility. The sixth canon of the Council of Nice laid down this rule: "Let the ancient customs prevail; with regard to Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, that the Bishop of Alexandria should have authority over all these, since this is also customary for the Bishop in Rome; and likewise in Antioch and the other provinces, that the prerogatives of the Churches be preserved; so if any be made Bishop without the consent of the Metropolitan, the Council adjudges him to be no Bishop." It was enacted in the ninth canon of the Council of Chalcedon, which was convoked by the Emperor Marcion A.D. 451, that, "if any Bishop or cleric has a controversy against the Metropolitan of the province itself, let him have recourse either to the Exarch of the 'diocese,' or to the throne of the imperial city of Constantinople, and there let the cause be decided." It is of importance to remember that these canons were passed, not by provincial synods, but by General Councils. "The decrees of the ancient Councils on questions of faith had full power, and were everywhere accepted without a confirmation of them by the Pope being considered necessary, and even before such a confirmation had ensued. Of a Papal confirmation of the Nicæan Decrees nothing is known—as, indeed, no appeal at all was made to the judgment of the Romish see during the whole Arian controversy."[2] Gregory the Great, in his vigorous protest against the appropriation by John the Faster, Bishop of Constantinople, of the title of "Ecumenical Bishop," says that even St. Peter, with all his prerogatives, was not called Universal Bishop, and "brands the Faster's assumption as blasphemy, which detracts honour from the whole priesthood

[1] The question is also lucidly and powerfully handled by Bishop Moorhouse in his two pamphlets on the Roman claim. Heywood, Manchester.

[2] Döllinger "On the Vatican Decrees," p. 8.

in being madly arrogated by an individual."[1] As we have already intimated, even Dr. Newman, whose intellectual subtlety was equal to the task of reconciling the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England with the doctrines of the Roman Church, was content, nevertheless, to follow Barrow on this question "without reluctance, except in his imputation of motives,"[2] and to explain the dogma of Papal supremacy on the development hypothesis, which he elaborated on a basis broad enough to include within its scope the rankest rationalism or the wildest fanaticism, as Professor Archer Butler showed in his masterly work on Newman's "Theory of Development"—a work which the late Bishop Thirlwall said "ought to be in the library of every student of divinity." To Dr. Döllinger "it was clear and certain that the whole edifice of Papal omnipotence and infallibility rested on cunning and deceit, on compulsion and violence in manifold forms, and that the building-stones with which this edifice has been raised were taken from a series of forgeries and fictions, with the conclusions and consequences founded on them—a series which stretches through all the centuries since the fifth."[3]

So much for the general question of the Pope's supremacy. Let us now revert to our immediate subject. As a proof of the Pope's supremacy over the British Church, the mission of the Gallic Bishops Germanus and Lupus in A.D. 429 has been adduced, which is asserted by Prosper Aquitaine to have been undertaken by the authority of Pope Celestine at the request of British Bishops, in order to confute Pelagianism, which had then begun to rear its head in Britain. But Prosper Aquitaine was a secretary probably of Celestine, certainly of Pope Leo afterwards, and was given to exaggerate the temporary power of the Pope, and his assertion respecting this mission of Germanus to Britain may well be taken as evidence of his anxiety to magnify his spiritual power over the British Church. Constantius, a presbyter of Lyons, on the other hand, in his Life of Germanus, with whom he was a contemporary in the Church of Gaul for many years, writing about A.D. 473, expressly tells us that a mission was sent to the Gallican Bishops direct from the Britons, soliciting their aid in suppressing the Pelagian heresy. This is also the account given by Bede, a vigorous partisan of Rome and an opponent of the independence of the British Church.

When we come to the mission of Augustine in the beginning of the seventh century, the evidence for the independence of the British Church becomes indisputable. The case between

[1] Soames, "Saxon Church," p. 48.
[2] "Development of Christian Doctrine," second edition, pp. 164-170.
[3] "Vatican Decrees," p. 147.

that date and the middle of the fifth century is described by Haddan: "Meanwhile, the really instructive portion of Celtic Church history—that which follows the Saxon invasion—and the real body of evidence which that portion of it affords, not, indeed, to an opposition to Papal supremacy — such an anachronism in controversy would defeat itself by implying the existence of the claim to which an opposition was necessary —but to a simple unconsciousness of it."[1] In the time of Augustine and his successors, however, the claim was made and resisted. We find British Churchmen stoutly refusing to recognise their authority on the one hand, and on the other we find the Archbishops and Bishops of the "new Church," as Bede calls the Church of Augustine, doubting and denying the validity of the orders of the British clergy, and practically declaring them outside the pale of the Church. The history of the controversies carried on between the two Churches in those early days, as related by Bede, is highly instructive in the light of the present attitude of the Church of Rome towards the English Church. The Italian mission of the seventh and eighth centuries behaved towards the Celtic Churches in pretty much the same spirit, and almost in identical terms with those in which the Italian mission of the nineteenth century deals with the Church of England. In Gregory's instructions to Augustine, as given by Bede, he makes no mention of his own or his predecessors' supremacy over the British Church; and though we are expressly told[2] that the Bishop of Arles had received the pall from Rome in ancient times, this is not said of the British Bishops—an omission altogether unaccountable had that been the fact. The Pope commits all the Bishops of the Britons to the care of Augustine, "that the ignorant may be instructed, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the refractory corrected by authority." Augustine, in A.D. 603, with the aid of King Ethelbert, drew together to a conference the Bishops of the next province of Britain, and by brotherly admonition sought to persuade them to Catholic unity, to observe the customs of Rome in the celebration of Easter, and to join with him and his associates in preaching the Gospel to the Saxons. But the Britons held stubbornly to their own customs and independence. A second conference only served to confirm the British Bishops in their determination, and drew forth a threatening answer from Augustine.[3] Laurentius succeeded Augustine in A.D. 604. He not only attended to the care of the "new Church," but regarded with paternal solicitude the

[1] Haddan's "Remains," p. 215.
[2] Bede, i. 27.
[3] Bede, ii., c. 2.

old natives of Britain, as well as the Scots of Ireland. These "Scots," as the Irish were called in those days, no less than their British kinsmen, differed from the Roman order, especially in their time of observing the solemnities of Easter. And not only so, but Bishop Dagan refused to eat with Laurentius and his companions, and even to take his repast in the same house. More than two hundred years after this we find that the Council of Celchyth (A.D. 816), under Archbishop Wulfred, passed a resolution questioning the ordination of certain Irish clergy and the efficacy of their Sacraments.[1] Laurentius, having failed to persuade the British Bishops to acknowledge his authority, had recourse to the plan of trying to induce some of the priests of the Britons, in disregard of the authority of their Bishops, "to conform to Catholic unity," "with what success the present times still declare," Bede querulously adds, writing nearly one hundred and thirty years subsequently.

About thirty years after this attempt of Laurentius we find Pope Honorius, and after him Pope John, making other similar attempts at bringing the "Scots" into ecclesiastical unity, but apparently with no better results. The Synod of Whitby was held in A.D. 664, when the Celtic Bishop Colman defended his Church against the charges of Wilfrid, when King Oswy, the murderer of Oswini, decided in favour of the latter. This Wilfrid went to France to be consecrated to his Northumbrian see, refusing consecration at the hands of those not in communion with Rome. Pope Vitalian wrote to Oswy promising to send him an Archbishop who would weed out the tares, meaning by this expression the Celtic clergy. This Archbishop was Theodore, who refused to acknowledge the validity of Celtic orders, and therefore consecrated St. Chad anew after the Catholic manner, because that prelate had received his consecration at the hands of Wini, assisted by two British Bishops, and further in his Penitential treated the Britons as schismatics, and regarded their orders, and even their baptism, as of doubtful validity. "It is certainly strange, in view of facts such as the above, the curse pronounced on the Britons by St. Augustine, their treatment as schismatics by St. Cuthbert, the denial of their orders and of the validity of their baptism, and the refusal to them of chrism and the Eucharist by Archbishop Theodore, their denunciation as tares by Pope Vitalian, and their classification as heathen and heretics by Pope Gregory III., that some controversialists attempt to minimize the dispute between Wales and Rome, and even have the audacity to claim the Welsh saints as orthodox Roman Catholics.

[1] Haddan and Stubbs, iii., p. 581.

Those who so argue go perilously near to incurring the charge of heresy themselves, for they cannot be sincere believers of Papal Infallibility, seeing that they give the lie to their own Popes, Vitalian and Gregory III. Cardinal Baronius, in a former age, did not venture upon so unhistorical a paradox, but classed the Britons and the Irish alike as guilty of schism for their breach of unity with Rome."[1]

About A.D. 705 we have another instance of the double proof we have already given of the independence of the British Church. The Abbot Aldhelm, who was afterwards Bishop of Sherborne, was authorized by a General Synod of the Saxon Church to write a treatise against the Paschal cycle and the form of tonsure in vogue among the Britons. He wrote an epistle to Gerontius, King of Damnonia, which is still extant, and affords conclusive evidence of an entire separation of communion between the two Churches. It also proves the orthodoxy of the British Church of that date on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. In Aldhelm's letter a British Church disputant is made to say, in defence of his own position, that he venerates the Old and New Testament; that he confesses the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity; that he sets forth the Incarnation, the Passion, and the Resurrection of our Lord; that he diligently proclaims the Last Judgment; and that, by virtue of this faith, he is numbered among the company of Catholic Christians without doubt or hindrance. Aldhelm's reply is that, though all this be true, it avails the poor Briton nothing as long as he holds aloof from the unity of the Roman Church. There is a striking similarity between the form and substance of Aldhelm's argument in the eighth century and of Cardinal Vaughan's in the nineteenth. The latter said in his address at Preston that "the kernel of the question of reunion of Christendom consisted in the admission of the Roman claim that the Pope had received by Divine right authority to teach and govern the whole Church, as defined, for instance, in the Councils of Florence, Trent, and Vatican." As to validity of orders, Cardinal Vaughan says that it has "really nothing to do with reunion." Here, then, we have the highest authority of the Roman Church in this country assuming, at the close of the nineteenth century, an attitude towards the English Church which is virtually identical with that of a Roman Abbot towards the British Church in the beginning of the eighth century. If the English Church is independent of the Roman to-day, so was the British Church in A.D. 705. Apparently not even the slavish imitation of

[1] "A History of the Welsh Church," by Rev. E. J. Newell, p. 125.

Romanism in usages and doctrines by a section of the English clergy can serve to bring them any nearer to the pale of the Church, except in so far as it tends to break down the "insular prejudices" of the English people, and habituate their minds to Roman ritual and teaching, and so prepare the way for a full surrender of the Church of England to the supremacy of the Pope, as a preliminary to its inclusion within the Catholic Church, which will be finally completed by the wholesale reconstruction of our Christianity, involving the rebaptism of our Bishops, priests, and deacons, as well as of our laity, the abandonment of our time-honoured Liturgy and our beautiful version of Holy Scriptures, and the lustration of all our cathedrals, churches, and chapels. Cardinal Vaughan, however, to do him justice, is too shrewd a man to base his hope for corporate reunion on this method; he relies on the other alternative suggested, namely, the individual "conversion" of the English people by the present Italian mission. The success of this method in the past among the clergy and the laity of the higher classes may not unnaturally inspire him with some confidence as to the future. There are some among us, it seems, so eager to be at one with Rome as to assert their rights of communion with the Roman Church abroad. This is evidently a little premature. Cardinal Vaughan has administered a severe rebuke to these ardent souls for "daring to go so far as communicate in Catholic churches on the Continent, and even attempt to say Mass at our altars in Catholic countries." Even Roman divines can be sometimes ungrateful. They go perilously near to flattering the Welsh people at the expense of the Saxons, though these latter were instrumental in bringing the ancient British Church into at least partial submission to that of Rome, and they openly censure their Anglican admirers of to-day, who, according to Cardinal Vaughan himself, have succeeded in making "the greatest conversions to the Catholic Church—for instance, of Cardinals Manning and Newman, and thousands of others." But all are spurious Catholics, mere imitators, until they acknowledge the Pope's supremacy, "the keystone of the arch," "the one great grace they need." "Aut Cæsar aut nullus." It is somewhat rough on Lord Halifax, who longs so ardently[1] to make his "confessions and communions" in the Roman churches abroad, to be virtually told by Cardinal Vaughan that his lordship's Catholicism is every whit as spurious and fictitious in the eyes of the Roman Cardinal as is that of Bishop Cabrera in the eyes of the President of the English Church Union.

[1] *Guardian*, February 20, 1895, p. 295.

The foregoing imperfect sketch shows that, when the British and Roman Churches came in contact in the seventh century, there were differences between them in customs and observances; that the Celtic Churches tenaciously clung to their own usages, and refused to recognise the jurisdiction of the Papal emissaries and nominees; that the Roman authorities considered such an attitude as involving the guilt of schism—a breach of Catholic unity; and that they deemed the Orders and Sacraments of the Celtic Church of at least doubtful validity. It was then as now. As Cardinals Manning and Newman had to be rebaptized and re-ordained before they could be admitted to the Roman Catholic Church and Priesthood in the nineteenth century, so had St. Chad in the seventh. The submission of the British Church to Rome began in the eighth century; but it was not completed till the twelfth, and was brought about by means of the Saxon Church, as will be seen from some of the following quotations, which deal with both the general question of the Pope's supremacy and the independence of the British Church.

Palmer says: "The customs and canons of the Church gave the Bishop of Rome, who, like other Bishops, was a successor of Peter and the Apostles, a primacy of *honour*, and a patriarchal jurisdiction over the suburbicarian provinces in Italy and Spain. His jurisdiction did not extend to any part of the Eastern Church, nor to Africa, Gaul, Spain, Britain, and Ireland, as Du Pin and others have admitted and proved. Britain and Ireland were independent of Roman jurisdiction when the Council of Nice was held, A.D. 325, as we are informed by Barnes."[1] The late Dr. Döllinger wrote: "There are many national Churches which were never under Rome, and never even had any intercourse by letter with Rome, without this being considered a defect, or causing any difficulty about Church communion. Such an autonomous Church, always independent of Rome, was the most ancient of those founded beyond the limits of the Empire, the Armenian, wherein the primatial dignity descended for a long time in the family of the national Apostle, Gregory the Illuminator. The great Syro-Persian Church in Mesopotamia, and the western part of the kingdom of the Sassanidae, with its thousands of martyrs, was from the first, and always remained, equally free from any influence of Rome. In its records and its rich literature we find no trace of the arm of Rome having reached there. The same holds good of the Ethiopian or Abyssinian Church, which was, indeed, united to the See of Alexandria, but wherein nothing, except perhaps a distant

[1] "Origines Liturgicæ," ii. 26.

echo, was heard of the claims of Rome. In the West the Irish and the ancient British Church remained for centuries autonomous, and under no sort of influence of Rome."[1] Thierry wrote: "The ministers and envoys of the Pontifical Court, thanks to the religious dependence in which they held the powerful Anglo-Saxon kings, gradually, by means of terror, subdued the free spirit of the British Churches. In the eighth century a Bishop of North Cambria celebrated the festival of Easter on the day prescribed by the Catholic Councils; the other Bishops arose against this change, and on the rumour of this dispute the Anglo-Saxons made an irruption into the southern provinces where the opposition was manifested. To obviate foreign war and the desolation of his country, a Welsh chief attempted to sanction by his civil authority the alteration of the ancient religious customs; the public mind was so irritated at this that the chieftain was killed in a revolt. However, the national pride soon declined, and weariness of a struggle constantly renewing brought a large portion of the Welsh clergy to the centre of Catholicism. The religious subjection of the country was thus gradually effected; but it was never so complete as that of England."[2] "The ancient British Church," says Blackstone, "by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the Bishop of Rome and all his pretended authorities."[3] "The Britons told Augustine," writes Bacon in his "Government of England," "they would not be subject to him, nor let him pervert the ancient laws of their Church. This was their resolution, and they were as good as their word, for they maintained the liberty of their Church five hundred years after his time, and were the last of all the Churches of Europe that gave up their power to the Roman Beast, and in the person of Henry VIII., that came of their blood by Owen Tudor, the first that took that power away again."

In her repudiation of the Pope's supremacy, as well as in other points, the *Ecclesia Anglicana* of to-day is the descendant, not of the Church of Augustine and his Roman mission, but of the British Church of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries. The Church of England at the Reformation utterly repudiated the claims of the Pope of Rome, and allowed him no vestige of right, whether ecclesiastical or Divine, over the Christianity of this country, and in this she reverted to the position held by the Bishops and priests of the ancient British Church. The present Anglican Church in its expansive power, with its numerous branches and offshoots, its missionary spirit and enterprise, as well as its autonomy, represents the wonderful vitality and self-reliance of the Celtic Church of the

[1] "Janus," 84. [2] "Norman Conquest," i. 48, Bohn.
[3] "Comm.," iv. 105; ed. 1795.

sixth and seventh centuries, which had then become "the Church, not only of the people and land of all the British Isles, including gradually within the sphere of their influence almost the whole of Saxon as well as Celtic England; but they are now the leading Churches of Northern Europe, the great centre of learning, the prolific hive of missions, and the focus of national feeling for all Christians north of the Alps, except where Italy still kept an opening for herself through the southern portion of France, and by the help of the Catholic Franks. They have assumed from the outward tonsure to the inward spirit a substantive and vigorous character of their own. It is dangerous to speculate upon the issues of contingencies that have not happened. Yet Church historians cannot be far wrong in saying that a mere turn of the scale, humanly speaking, prevented the establishment in the seventh century of an aggregate of Churches in North-Western Europe, looking for their centre to the Irish and British Churches, and as entirely independent of the Papacy as are the English-speaking Churches of to-day. The Celtic skull and the Celtic temperament, we are told by naturalistic ethnologists, are perforce Romanist. We commend the fact to notice that the largest and most powerful combination of European orthodox Churches not paying obedience to the Roman see at any period anterior to the Reformation consisted of the entire aggregate of the Celtic Churches existing at the time, with the addition of a body of Celtic missions among Teutonic tribes."[1] English Churchmen are often effusive in their gratitude to Gregory and Augustine for their zeal and success in the conversion of their Saxon ancestors to Christianity, but have seldom a word to say in acknowledgment of the service which Celtic missionaries rendered. And yet Augustine's mission narrowly escaped being a total failure, while the conversion of Saxon England was chiefly due to Celtic Christians. "The technical transmission of Apostolical Succession may be through Augustine. The living stream of Gospel truth mainly passed to us through British channels. Even the 10,000 converts of the report that reached Gregory seem to us to clash with any reasonable idea of the then probable population of Kent. But of one thing there can be no doubt—that had it not been for British missionaries and for the independent mission of Birinus, there would not have been one Christian Saxon fifty years after the mission was planted outside the boundaries of the Kentish kingdom. The Apostle of the English is as much entitled to his fame as Amerigo Vespucci is to the discovery of America."[2] We may be forgiven for valuing "the living stream

[1] Haddan's "Remains," 218. [2] *Ibid.*, 316.

of Gospel truth" above the "technical transmission of Apostolical Succession," and consequently for maintaining that the British Church conferred higher and greater blessings on this country and on the world than did the Church of Augustine.

DAVID JONES.

ART. IV.—MATTHEW ARNOLD IN HIS LETTERS.[1]

IT is perhaps a natural and pardonable instinct which prompts us, in the case of a man who has played some distinguished part in public life, to get for a moment behind the scenes, and scrutinize the appearance of this or that actor on the stage of contemporary history, when, his stage-trappings cast aside, he steps down at the close of the act into the circle of home-life. "There is a divinity that doth hedge," not the king only, but every acknowledged leader of thought or action in our midst; yet we wish to watch him as he lived and moved in the sphere where "divinity" hedged him not; we wonder what his familiar words in the everyday occurrences of life may be; how the current of ideas flows during the solitary hours, in the portions of his history that are screened from public notice; what the letters may be like which he indites to the members of his own fireside—after what fashion, in short, he reveals himself when the eyes of the busy world are withdrawn.

A more than usual interest will doubtless attach itself to the family letters of a public man, if he have chanced to be a great writer, whose published words have passed into current coin of the intellectual world, or have become woven into the fabric of men's thoughts. Such letters will be invested with a peculiar pathos, for they show us "the very pulse of the machine" throbbing and working; they can alone have power to unfold the hidden movement and being of those spiritual fires which burnt so brightly through the "winged utterance" unfolded in the printed page. If the writer happen to be a *poet*, then will our interest be all the keener; we have a passion to know something more of the common days and hours wherein the poet lived his round; what (we ask) was the source of that immense zest in life which he felt so supremely, of that ineffaceable love which all things noble and fair stirred within him, of his inalienable enthusiasm for humanity, of his profoundly subtle insight into the mysteries of time? His secret

[1] "Letters of M. Arnold, 1848-1888." Collected and arranged by G. W. E. RUSSELL. In two vols. London: Macmillan and Co., 1895.