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1906.

## ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.\*

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR H. L. GEARY, K.C.B., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following elections were announced :—

ASSOCIATES :— Colonel G. J. van Someren, Kensington ; Rev. J. Thompson Phipps, Wandsworth.

The following paper was then read by the author :—

*THE EARLY CELTIC CHURCHES OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND* (with illustration).† By Miss ELEANOR H. HULL, author of *Early Christian Ireland*, etc. With lantern illustrations.

IT seems not inappropriate on the morrow after St. Patrick's Day to turn our thoughts to the origins and history of the Church in which he played an important part; and out of the dimness of whose traditions his figure stands out in such prominence that the first name that occurs to our minds when we turn them toward that, to most of us, "dark backward and abysm of time," is that of "The Apostle of Ireland." The, to my mind, even greater names of St. Columba, St. Finnian, St. Gildas, St. David, St. Cadoc, St. Kentigern, St. Asaph, St. Cuthbert, St. Aidan, St. Chad, St. Columbanus, have slipped almost from out our memories, but for some reason, that of St. Patrick, however ignorant we may be of his actual life and work, abides there still. It is partly with the desire of tracing and explaining this curious circumstance that I propose to take up the subject of the origin and development of the Celtic Church to-day.

It is usual to date the introduction of Christianity into Britain from the landing of St. Augustine, the Roman bishop sent by Gregory bishop of Rome to the Anglo-Saxons in A.D. 597. I would like to point out at the beginning of my paper that all

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\* Monday, March 19th, 1906.

† Frontispiece.

we have here to say of Christianity in Britain occurred (with the exception of part of the foreign missions) before that date. You will, I think, agree with me that Augustine came to no heathen country, but to one that had been not only long Christianised itself, but which was making efforts to Christianise the neighbouring peoples. The mission of Augustine was strictly to the Saxons and Angles, who were pagan, but there lay behind the settlements of these newcomers in the east and south a large native population which was, at the period of his advent, almost wholly Christian.

There is nothing more difficult, nothing that requires more virile intellectual energy and resolution, than to look straight in the face any historical question which effects, or seems to effect, our own personal position and views. There could be no better example of this than the very curious and suggestive divergence of opinion regarding the character and connections of the Celtic Church. Presbyterian writers, looking chiefly to the fact that St. Columba was not a bishop but a presbyter-abbot, have held firmly to the belief that the Presbyterian form of Church government was that which held good in the Churches of Scotland and Ireland in the sixth and seventh centuries; the Protestant Church of Ireland, fixing its eyes chiefly upon the undoubted reverence for and spread of the Scriptures (we should be more correct to say of the Gospels, for no copy of the Bible has come down to us from early Ireland, and only one copy of the whole New Testament) in the Columban Monasteries, has held itself to be the lineal descendant and true representative of the ancient Church. Roman Catholic writers, ignoring the peculiar organisation of the native communities, and minimising the growth and development in Church doctrine and in the position of the Bishops of Rome, have pointed triumphantly to the Church of St. Patrick as a true Roman Church in all the modern sense of that term. All three alike, in order to defend their special positions, have read backwards into the age of the fall of the Roman Empire ideas and antipathies that had no existence at that early period, but belong to times much nearer to our own.

Still, the very existence of such an extraordinary diversity of opinion is interesting, and it is calculated to send us back to the original documents and to the general history of the Western Church to try and find out what are the exact data on which we have to build. We shall find, I think, that each party has possessed itself of a certain share of truth, but has held to it by the rigorous exclusion of other considerations

equally important in forming a just conclusion. The materials bearing upon the history of the British Church are alas! not so copious as we could wish; the devastations of the Saxons swept away alike a great part of the written memorials of the times before their advent as well as of the churches and monasteries themselves over a large part of England. But in Ireland, and in the Irish monasteries abroad, a mass of ecclesiastical manuscripts remain, and though the majority of these are of a later age, written or altered after the formal union of the Celtic with the Roman Church at the close of the seventh and beginning of the eighth centuries, there is sufficient unaltered matter to enable us to discern pretty clearly the thoughts and observances of an earlier time.

I think I ought to say in starting that the outline that I wish to put before you to-day is not entirely in accordance with any of the views enumerated above; it is my own opinion, and I do not want to do more than to suggest it for your consideration; but it has pleased me to find that such impartial and original thinkers as Professor Bury, in his recent *Life of St. Patrick*, and Mr. Hugh Williams, in his studies on the Welsh Church and especially on the works of Gildas, have, in their own special departments of the study, arrived at something the same conclusions as those to which I have myself come.

Omitting through lack of space the interesting and beautiful Native, Roman and Biblical traditions which connect the earliest converts with Joseph of Arimathæa and Glastonbury, with St. Paul, with the father of Caractacus and other personages, we pass at once to the better defined and more reliable ground of historic fact.

The earliest authentic notice which comes to us is from the pen of Tertullian, writing about 208 A.D. He says: "In all parts of Spain, among the various nations of Gaul, in districts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans but subdued to Christ, in all these the kingdom and name of Christ are venerated." (*Adv. Jud.* vii.) At the moment that Tertullian was penning these words the Britons and Caledonians were revolting from the Emperor Severus in that district of Northern Britain which he had endeavoured to protect and preserve to Rome by the erection of a rampart across the island, and it is not unnatural to suppose that in speaking of those districts of Britain "inaccessible to the Roman arms" he was thinking not of the southern and more settled portions of the country which, according to this supposition, were already Christian, but of those wild districts which we now call the Highlands and Wales, which the Roman armies

had never subdued. As far north as York, where Severus died, the country had Roman cities and organisation, and we may suppose some knowledge of Christianity.

A hundred years later came Diocletian's persecution\*(303 A.D.). St. Alban, the proto-martyr of Britain, who was one of the few who seems to have suffered in these islands, was a native of the Roman city of Caerleon-on-Usk, and died at the place now known by his name. If the story of his death is a true one and not invented to give honour to an almost martyrless Christian community, a thing regarded in early days as being a stain upon their faith, he and his companions, Julius and Aaron, were evidently not native Britons but Roman citizens. This is sufficiently evident from their names.

Under the mild rule of Constantius and his son Constantine it is hardly likely that any serious persecution extended itself to Britain. Indeed a story is told both by Sozomen and Eusebius to the effect that Constantius, when the decree of persecution was ordered, called before him his officers and bade them consider whether they would abandon Christianity and retain his favour, or keep their faith and be banished from his presence. Those who, after reflection, decided to sacrifice to the pagan deities were, however, the men dismissed by him, for he declared that those who had been worthy servants of their God would also be faithful to their Emperor. (Quoted by Bishop Brown, *The Church before Augustine*, p. 56.) The interest of this story lies in the fact that the larger number of Constantius' officers appear to have been, nominally at least, Christians; and, though he himself never embraced the Christian faith, his son, Constantine (Emperor 302-337), is universally admitted to have received his Christianity in Britain, though he was not, as we know, baptized until immediately before his death (Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.*, ii, ch. 34; Socrates, i, ch. 39).

But we can go a step further.

By the date of the Council of Arles in 314, we find existing an organised Christian British Church with regularly appointed bishops presiding over it. Three bishops from Britain were present at this Council and signed the decrees along with the thirty other bishops gathered from Italy, Africa and Gaul. They were respectively Bishops of York, London, and what is understood to be Caerleon-on-Usk.

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\* The persecution of Diocletian hardly extended itself to Britain, which was cut off from the Roman empire by the usurpation of Carausius and Allectus, and came later under the mild rule of Constantius.

That there were bishops from Britain at Nicæa in 325 cannot be tested by actual observation on account of the incoherent condition of the records of that important Council; but at the Council of Sardica in 347 we have the testimony of St. Athanasius that they were present and joined him against the Arians. Thirty-three bishops from the Galliæ (*i.e.*, the Roman province of Gaul and Britain) were present.

At the Council of Rimini (359), one of those numerous Councils at which the Nicæan Creed underwent alteration after its acceptance at Nicæa, it is stated that four hundred Bishops of the Western Church were assembled. The Emperor, in courteous consideration of the immense journeys which many of these Bishops had been forced to take to attend the Council, and of the great expenses entailed in taking these frequent official flights across Europe, ordered that all should be entertained at his own expense. There is a pleasant sense of independence in the reply of the Bishops from Aquitania, Gaul and Britain. They said that they "deemed it unbecoming to be entertained out of the Imperial bounty and preferred to live at their own expense"; three only, through special circumstances of poverty, accepting the offer of the Emperor.

I will not further multiply proofs of the widespread and firm hold of Christianity in Britain in the fourth and fifth centuries. Origen, Chrysostom and Jerome attest it and the Councils of Gaul, at nearly all of which Bishops from Britain were present, prove it. The baptism of Maximus in 381, before his assault upon the Empire, show that to be a Christian was accounted in Britain, and in the Roman army, a mark of distinction and an omen of success; the rise and spread of Pelagianism in this country early in the fifth century shows an advanced condition of theological speculation. Neither in their interest in the Arian controversy, nor in the originating of controversies among themselves, does this section of the Church show itself behind the general course of ecclesiastical thought. To them, as well as, or more than others, does Hilary of Poitiers appeal when an attempt has to be made afresh to still the persistency of the Arian adherents in the middle of the fourth century. They responded to the appeal; for the orthodoxy of the Church in Britain up to the time of Pelagius was not only unquestioned, but was commented upon with special favour by a series of the chief Fathers of the Church.

Now the point to which I wish to direct attention is that during all these three or more centuries of Church development, native Britain, so far as we know, has in it little or no part. The

names of the leaders, where we can casually discern them, are Roman names, the episcopal cities are Roman cities, the questions that move the Church are not the principles of discipline or life of a native community, they are the questions that were being fought out in the East, in Italy, in Africa, or in Roman Gaul. Welsh tradition knows nothing of these martyrs, these bishops, and these Synods. They did not touch her life or win her adherence. When Origen says, that among the Britons "very many have not as yet heard the word of the Gospel," he may well have been including almost the entire native population.

The Welsh genealogies of the native saints do not go back further than about the beginning of the sixth century, and up to that time no native Church on native lines and appealing to the general mass of the population seems to have come into existence.

That there were converts, perhaps numerous converts, among the native population, I do not for a moment deny; the British quarter of the town lay beside or just beyond the Roman quarter, as a rule; the people intermingled in the army, in commerce, by intermarriage, and in the daily intercourse of life. Many of the people must have adopted the religion of their conquerors. Pelagius himself was probably a Briton who hid his native name of Morgan under the more lofty-sounding Romanised form that it might sound better in the ears of his superiors, as many a good Gaelic or Brythonic name has been turned into an Anglicised or Biblical form since his day to avoid the satire of the Englishman.

But these individual adhesions do not prove any sort of national tendency. The Latin language, in which all ecclesiastical worship was conducted and all religion taught, would in itself have formed a boundary which the mass of the population would have found it almost impossible to pass, except in cities where the Gael and Brython mixed constantly with the Roman settlers.

The more I consider this question, the more convinced I feel that the birth of the Celtic Church was not as yet; that the Church of these fourth-century Bishops and Councils can in no real sense be looked upon as the British Church, but only as the Roman Church in Britain, using here the word Roman in its political and geographical sense as the Church of a people rather than in its later and special sense as the Church of a creed.

As the Roman cities of Arles, Lyons, and Trèves sent their bishops to the various Church Councils to represent, not the



native inhabitants of Gaul or Germany but the Roman adherents of Christianity in these cities, so Roman Britain took a dignified share in the general life of the Church.

But by all this the people were untouched; it lay apart from their whole system of ideas, their life and thought: the Church organization, with its recognised sees, its external ties, its foreign language, and its system of thought and ritual based, as we can hardly doubt, upon the Roman model, had no appeal for the native Celtic population, and we cannot imagine that the extension of its borders passed much beyond the towns. If there was ever to be a native Church in Britain it must be a Church based upon some other system of development and more in accordance with the habits and tendencies of native life.

That such a Church, in fact, arose from the very bosom of the people themselves I hope to show you, but the distinction between the system of the one and the system of the other was clearly marked.

Of the personalities who actually moved and moulded and impressed their spirit upon this early Brito-Roman Church we do not know so much as we should wish; yet four names isolate themselves from the mass of obscurer personalities, and of three out of the four we are able to judge of their character and ideas from their own writings, while of the fourth all we know is from a single phrase in Bede. The names are St. Ninian or Ninias, Fastidius, Pelagius, and Patrick. Let me say a couple of words about these four men. Of the first, the Venerable Bede tells us in introducing St. Columba to his readers, that

“the Southern Picts, who dwell on the southern side of the mountains (*i.e.*, the Grampians) had long before St. Columba’s time, as was reported, forsaken the errors of idolatry and embraced the truth by the preaching of Ninias, a most reverend bishop and holy man of the British nation, who had been regularly instructed in Rome in the faith and mysteries of the truth, and whose episcopal see, named after St. Martin the bishop and famous for a stately church, is still in existence.”—(*Eccle. Hist.*, Book III, ch. 4.)

This is absolutely all that we know from English sources about St. Ninian; there are many later lives of him, but they are merely ingenious expansions after the approved fashion in vogue with the mediæval hagiologist of these words of Bede. But the Irish hold fast to the tradition that Ninian was half an Irishman; that he was born of an Irish mother and that part of his education was gained in Ireland. There he is called in the loving Celtic fashion *Mo-nenn* or “my Ninian,” as the name of

St. Laissen, the founder of Devenish Abbey on L. Erne, is changed to Molaissi, or St. Aedh or Aedan to Modoc, or the Welsh St. Cadoc to Docus, or in Scotland St. Kentigern's name, the patron Saint of Glasgow, was changed to St. Mungo, meaning "my dear friend." This tradition is interesting as bearing on the question of the existence of Christians in Ireland before St. Patrick, and we shall see that another out of the four persons of whose origin and life we have some details is also said, and this time not by the Irish themselves, to have been an Irishman.

The second name is that of Fastidius.

Now it is astonishing to me that the name of Fastidius is, even among persons interested in such matters, so utterly unknown. For from Fastidius we get the first living voice of the Christian Church in Britain; the first writings which give us an insight into the thoughts and life of a Christian teacher living in this country in the fourth or early fifth century. And apart from all this, one out of the two tracts preserved to us by Fastidius is in itself a piece of writing of the inspiration of which any Church might be proud. We know little of Fastidius except that Gennadius of Marseilles, who about 480 A.D. made a sort of biographical dictionary of the lives of well-known Christian persons, living or dead, tells us that he was a British bishop and that he had written one book entitled *De Vita Christiana*.\* This tract Fastidius wrote to a Christian widow lady named Fatalis, whom he calls "dilectissima soror." He compares his tract to "country-bread, better for the hungry than that of fine flour." We feel that it is so indeed. The learned have sought for traces of Pelagianism beneath its simple words; but to most of us the strange attraction of this tract will lie in the fact that while the Church without was spending its strength and weakening its powers of affection on subtle questions about Free-will and Predestination, which still as we look back catch and hold our gaze as though the very existence of Christianity depended on their solution, here on our own soil a simple bishop, otherwise unknown to us, was pouring out his mind on the actual details of the true life of a Christian. It is not a small thing that at the opening of its course the Church of this country should be found to lay stress not on dogmas of the mind or even on discipline of the body-corporate, but on the spirit of the Christian life.

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\* Gennadius, *De Illustribus Viris*, ch. 56. The Corbey copy of Gennadius reads only "Fastidius Britto," but all other MSS. read "Episcopus."

Let me read you a couple of extracts from this tract, the heading of whose chapters "On the Christian Life," "On its Dignity and Meaning," "On Sin and the Love of God," "On Almsgiving," "On the True Christian," etc., give an idea of its substance.

"How can you say that you are a Christian, in whom no act of a Christian is seen? For the Christian is he who is upright, good, just, wise, patient, humble, benevolent and innocent; how then will you justify and claim for yourself that title in whom out of so many things not even a few exist? The Christian is he who is such not only in name, but in deed, he who imitates Christ in all things and follows Him, he who is holy, innocent and perfect, in whose breast evil hath no place, in whom piety alone exists with goodness, who knows not how to hurt or injure any man, but brings help to all. A Christian is he who by the example of Christ does not know how to hate his enemies, but rather how to do good to those who oppose him and how to pray for his persecutors and foes. For whosoever prepares himself to hurt or injure his neighbour, he denies that he is a Christian. The Christian is the man who can say with truth, 'No man have I injured; I have lived justly with all men.'"—(From chap. vi.)

"Be innocent, if you wish to live with God; be simple, if you wish to reign with Christ. Of what service to thee is evil, which drags thee down to death; of what gain is wickedness, which hinders thee from reigning with Christ?"—(From chap. x.)

In dealing with the question of Almsgiving, this fifth-century preacher is confronted with a difficulty ever present with us and pressing upon us in modern life, the question of the morality of receiving as a charitable gift, money unlawfully gained or earned only by the misery and degradation of other human beings. The opinion of Fastidius is given without hesitation. Let us hear what he says:—

"Some think they will be justified because they of their substance give a niggard alms to the poor, and of that which they have taken from many they give a very small part to one. One man is fed off that which hath made many hungry, and from the spoils of many, scarce a few are clothed. This sort of almsgiving God asketh not; He desireth not that pity should be shown to one out of the cruelty of another . . . That almsgiving doth God approve which is ministered of lawful toil. For He abhorreth and rejecteth that almsgiving which is offered from other men's tears. For what doth it boot thee, if one man bless thee and many men curse thee? Or what doth almsgiving bring thee which is offered of the substance of another man? Is it verily to be feared that God hath not where-

with to feed His poor, unless thou, to aid Him, plunderest another man's goods?"—(Chap. xii), Migne, *Pat. Lat. t. 50*.

Of Pelagius and his heresy we need not say much here. "The production of a heretic," says Professor George Stokes cynically, "gave the most vigorous and satisfactory of proofs of the interest of the British Church (read 'Church in Britain') in theological questions." (*Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 12.)

The wide spread and the attractiveness of this teaching of Pelagius is proved by the two visits of St. Germanus and his companions from Gaul to try and eradicate it. Had Pelagius remained in Britain and written his books in retirement there, perhaps we should have heard little of him or his writings. But Pelagius did not address himself to the Britons; he was a great traveller: we find him in Rome, in Sicily, and in Palestine. It was from Rome, where he lived quietly for many years, that he wrote his works, *On the Trinity*, *On Testimonies*, and *On St. Paul's Epistles*. Had he not prudently retired from Rome during the descent of Alaric and the Goths in 409–410 he would with his own eyes have witnessed the sack of Rome. Pelagius was a student by nature and habit, a thinker who in the quiet of the study worked out theories on the abstruse questions of original sin, of free-will, and of baptism; his teaching was, in the beginning at least, but the over-emphatic reassertion of a forgotten truth, the grave truth of the freedom and responsibility of the human will. Later, when driven into fresh and more explicit statements, his theories took a more controversial form, and he impugned doctrines held to be fundamental in the Church. Two circumstances forced the teaching of Pelagius into a prominence which it would probably have otherwise escaped. The first was his friendship with Cœlestius, an Irishman living in Rome (I would ask you to note the fact of a notable Christian Irishman living in Rome fifty years before the mission of St. Patrick), who with all the ardour of the Celtic temperament, embraced the doctrines of Pelagius and spent his life in their dissemination throughout the Christian world; the second was the fact that in Africa at that very moment the sombre and subtle mind of Augustine of Hippo was formulating these doctrines of predestination and election, to which the teaching of Pelagius was fundamentally opposed. Augustine pursued Pelagius with unrelenting animosity. He sent a friend of his own, Orosius, to watch Pelagius and report his doings to him. When two Synods in Palestine fully acquitted Pelagius, he secured his condemnation in two African Councils at Carthage; when Pope Zosimus was won over by

the representations of Cœlestius, Augustine called in the aid of the civil power and secured an imperial edict from the Emperors Theodosius and Honorius banishing Pelagius from Rome. The heresy of Pelagius, thus curiously tossed about, approved by one Pope, condemned by another—commended by two Synods and reproved by two others, comes down to us at the present day in our Church Prayer-books as the only heresy against which we are warned by name in the Thirty-nine Articles. Against the personal character of the British teacher his worst enemies found themselves unable to cast a stone; the simplicity and purity of his life is attested by his bitterest foes; and he passed the remainder of his days in a seclusion which, we may well believe, was grateful to him after the prominence of theological disputation into which he had been unwillingly forced.

The last of our group of four names is that of St. Patrick. The life of St. Patrick has been torn by controversies, but we possess in his own undoubted writings a record of his life and work which might have settled many of them or at least have provided a firm ground for building upon. In his confession we have, not a life-history, but an outpouring of his spirit as an aged man whose time was nearly over, in defence of the work that he had felt himself called upon to do.

After the sketch we have now given of the condition of affairs in Britain it will not surprise you to learn that St. Patrick was brought up from childhood in the tenets of the Christian religion. His father was a deacon carrying on his ministry, as was generally supposed, somewhere near Dumbarton, but as is now beginning to be thought, in the quite different region of the neighbourhood of the Bristol Channel. His father was a wealthy man, and owned, besides his town house, a farm in the country, to which the young Patrick was no doubt frequently sent for change of air.\*

Besides his clerical duties Calpornus held the position of "decurio," or, as we should say, borough councillor under the Roman governor of his province. It was his duty to collect the

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\* "My father was Calpornus, a deacon, son of Politus, a presbyter, who belonged to the village of Bannarem Taberniæ. Now he had a small farm hard by, where I was taken captive."—*Confessio*, ch. i.

"I was free born, according to the flesh. I am born of a father who was a decurion, but I sold my noble rank, I blush not to state it, nor am I sorry, for the profit of others."—*Epis. to Coroticus*, ch. x. See Dr. Newport White's "Critical Edition of the Writings of St. Patrick."—*Proc. R. I. Acad.*, vol. xxv, No. 7, 1905.

dues and taxes and forward them to headquarters and generally to attend to the municipal affairs of his district. Such a combination of civil and religious offices appears strange to us to-day, but we learn from the Church history of the time that even bishops were not exempt from such civil duties. We find that at the Synod of Constantinople (A.D. 343) there were a number of bishops present "who were liable to be called upon to occupy various official departments connected both with the city magistracy and in subordination to the presidents and governors of provinces," and that the Emperor, angry at their refusal to sign the creed of the Acacians, used his authority to force them to return to their civil duties from which, under such circumstances, they had exemption.\*

I mention this here because it enforces my contention as to the almost purely Roman origin and connection of the Church at this time established in Britain, and it was undoubtedly this same form of Church thought and government that St. Patrick brought to Ireland. He was, as you know, taken captive by Irish marauders while at his father's farm (probably by the great Irish prince, Niall of the Nine Hostages, who was carrying on foreign and home wars at this time), and he was enslaved for many years in the north of Ireland, acting as herd to a heathen master on the mountains of Slemish, co. Antrim. Here he gained one acquirement which proved of inestimable service to him in later days, a knowledge of the Irish or Gaelic tongue, and it is largely to his command of the native language that I ascribe the success of St. Patrick in after times, where his predecessor Palladius, sent shortly before by Pope Celestine to preach to the Irish, failed. It is usually supposed that Patrick was the first Apostle of Ireland and that he came to an entirely heathen country. We have already had proofs that this was not the case. The presence of Cœlestius at Rome, if not the birth of Ninian and Pelagius, prove that this is an exaggerated estimate of the condition of things, even if we had not the express pronouncement that Palladius was sent by the Bishop of Rome as first bishop to the "Scots believing in Christ." Now it was not usual to consecrate a bishop to any Church not yet established and with some recognised organisation. Augustine of Canterbury was not consecrated until he had established his mission and gained converts. The sending of a bishop already consecrated shows the existence of a Church of some growth and organisation, and this we

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\* Socrates' *Eccl. Hist.*, Bk. II, ch. 41. See also as to the employment of clergy as judges and lawyers, *ibid.*, Bk. VII, ch. 37.

may believe to have been the case. St. Patrick's own words attest it. He had been, he said, "into remote parts of Ireland where the Word had never before been preached," proving that in most parts it had already been known and accepted. The legends of the saints also go to prove the establishment of some churches and communities at a very early date.

To follow his work or examine his teaching is not our business here. St. Patrick, like the teachers of whom we have already spoken, belonged, in our view, not to the native Celtic Church, but to the Roman Church in these islands. It is not without a purpose that so much attention has been concentrated upon his work and mission, and that the later teachers, St. Columba, St. Finnian, and "the hosts of the Saints of Ireland" and Wales have been half-forgotten by their countrymen. Yet to my mind it was they and not St. Patrick who most truly may be said to have established the native Celtic Church.

The establishment by the Apostle of Ireland of fixed episcopal sees at Arnagh and elsewhere was the carrying out in Ireland of the system of organisation to which he had been accustomed in Britain; it was totally unlike the native Church system, and it appears to have become extinct on his removal, to be revived, later on, under different circumstances, when a formal reunion with the Roman Church took place in the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century.\* The distinctive feature of the Celtic Church, its monastic organisation, is not in its native form heard of in his time, and the monks and nuns, "so many past his counting," of whom he speaks, seem not to have been attached to particular centres, but to have been companions of his travels. We hear nothing of abbots, but much of bishops; later, the bishop sinks into a secondary position and the abbot is the centre of the Christian community and the pivot on whom the ecclesiastical organisation revolves. The system from outside that St. Patrick endeavoured to impose upon Ireland was not suited to the then prevailing social and political conditions, and it fell off as an ill-fitting cloak immediately after his withdrawal.

There is, indeed, an ancient Irish Catalogue of Saints which exactly expresses, in a few brief sentences, what I believe to have actually happened.

Dividing the stages of Christian development into three, it tells us that the special feature of the first stage was the

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\* See Prof. Bury's *Life of St. Patrick*. Appendix on Episcopal Succession in Ireland.

great number of its bishops; the second, the number of its presbyters in comparison of its bishops; the third, the number of its anchorite or hermit monks. The first stage was distinguished also by the unity of its liturgical forms, a natural feature in a Church into which these were adopted from without. The second, by the variety of these forms, which were, it appears, at first derived from the teaching of three Welsh saints, Gildas, Cadoc and David, but which did, as we know, vary in the various monastic foundations, as the rules of each monastery differed from one another; indeed, one special feature of the liturgical forms of Gaul and Ireland consists in the variety of their collects and a certain freedom of detail.\*

The extraordinary passion for the anchorite life in its extremest austerity, here spoken of as the third stage, was a feature that impressed upon the native Christianity of these islands an almost Oriental complexion. It did not, so far as we know, come into general favour in the first period, though it was a usual and persistent condition of life throughout the entire course of Irish Celtic Christianity from the sixth century up to the ninth century. Indeed, Irish hermits have survived in isolated spots into quite modern times.

We will now, bearing in mind these general distinctions, inquire what were the special features which we find impressed upon the actual native Church.

Its first and obvious characteristic was the rapid and extraordinary growth of monasteries all over the country. At the

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\* "First, in the time of Patrick, all were bishops, famous and holy and full of the Holy Ghost; 350 in number, founders of churches. They had one head, Christ; and one chief, Patrick. They observed one mass, one celebration, one tonsure from ear to ear, they rejected not the services and society of women.

"Secondly, Catholic presbyters. In this order were few bishops and many priests (or presbyters), in number 300. They had one head, our Lord; they celebrated different masses and had different rules; one Easter, on the fourteenth morn after the vernal equinox, one tonsure from ear to ear; they refused the services of women, separating them from the monasteries. They received a mass from Bishop David and Docus (i.e., Cadoc) and Gildas, the Britons. . . .

"In the third order of saints were holy presbyters, and a few bishops, 100 in number, who dwelt in desert places and lived on herbs and water and on alms; they shunned private property, despising all earthly things. They had different rules and masses and different tonsures, and different times for observing the Pascal Festival."—Quoted by Ussher, *Works*, vol. vi, p. 477.



date of St. Patrick's death, about A.D. 461, we hear little of native Welsh and Irish foundations either by way of churches or of monasteries, though here and there, generally in the extreme west of Ireland, some anchorite settlers seem to have begun to build themselves huts and to gather a few pupils around them. But less than a century later, the whole country is absolutely covered with ecclesiastical establishments of more or less size and importance, according to the reputation of their founders for sanctity or learning, and we can hardly put our finger on any spot on the map of Wales, Scotland and Ireland or of Devon and Cornwall (the humble relics of Celtic days have, alas! all been swept away from the eastern and central portions of England), without still finding some tiny cell or church, some mouldering wall of an ancient oratory, some solitary cave or place of retreat, or some shaft or crown of a Celtic cross which carries down to this day either by its own name or by that of the farmland upon which it stands, the memory of the early saint who built the cell or taught and worked in the neighbourhood. The extension of the monastic system at this moment was something utterly abnormal, and it cannot be understood unless we have formed in our mind a clear idea of what a Celtic monastic foundation was like.

A monastery in Celtic times was a very different place to a similar institution in our own days. We must put out of our minds altogether the idea of a stone-built establishment capable of holding a large number of persons. For an Irish or British foundation of the sixth or the seventh century there was no need to collect funds or hire stone-masons to lay foundations and draw architectural plans. Nearly all the famous monasteries began in groups of stone or wattled huts in every way similar to those in which the people ordinarily dwelt, each student building his own little cell with his own hands when he had fixed upon the monastic school in which he had determined to pursue his studies. In Wales the usual method was for a saint (and every professed Christian might easily earn for himself a title that was willingly bestowed, without need of Canonical sanction, on any Christian person of distinction) to seek a spot where in solitude he might pursue his religious devotions or perfect himself in piety. He would retire to a sequestered place, and after a fortnight of fasting and prayer would proceed to erect his wattled hut and his primitive oratory, which henceforth became called by his name. In Ireland we do not hear of the previous fixed period of preparation, but the process was otherwise the same. But gradually the belief in the sanctity

of the holy man would spread or he would become known as a teacher or a scribe. His solitude was broken in upon by students who would begin to gather round him. Each student as he came would establish his cell around the central green, or along the sides of the stream or valley in which the anchorite had fixed his home, and gradually immense religious settlements, half educational, half agricultural, and wholly religious, would spring up. They came by degrees to include the entire Christian population, for each central monastery as it grew unwieldy in size sent away offshoots which owed obedience to the chief saint and carried out the same rule of life. Each monastic establishment was self-contained, having its own fields for growing corn and vegetables, its own mills, kitchens, store-houses, and barns. The students and monks did the entire work of the place, sowing, reaping, carrying burdens to the mill, grinding corn and generally performing the duties of the settlement. Even bishops are found ploughing the fields, grinding corn and performing other menial offices. The extreme simplicity of life in these early monasteries must be carefully borne in mind. Part of each day was set apart for the instruction of students, another part for active duties, while the offices of the Church were regularly and minutely attended to. I cannot imagine a system of any kind more suited to the needs and more calculated to elevate a primitive and unlettered people. These institutions set before the entire population a new ideal of simple, industrial life sanctified by religion and enlarged by study.

In Ireland we find the most honoured saints and heads of monasteries, even such men as St. Columba and St. Ciaran, ploughing, reaping, cooking, and even grinding corn at the quern, which was the office of women-slaves. St. Brigit, even after the founding of Kildare, is found milking the cows, herding sheep, churning butter, baking bread, and doing all the ordinary work of a peasant-woman. When St. Columba goes for consecration to Bishop Ethen, he finds him ploughing in the fields; when in his old age he returns to visit Clonmacnois the monks gather hastily from the little grange farms on which they have been working to receive him with honour. Nor did they look on such labours as derogatory; they felt them to be ennobling and elevating; they felt (as it is told of St. Nathalan), "that in the lowly work of cultivating the earth he approached nearest to the Divine contemplation; therefore, though he was of noble blood, he practised with his own hands the lowly art of cultivating the fields." Besides the manual labour and the

ordinary work of a large establishment all time that could be spared from the offices of the Church was given to instruction, reading and writing, and to the making of book-satchels, the covers of books, and ecclesiastical bells and crosses. The industry of some of the great teachers in copying books, chiefly copies of the Psalms and the Gospels, was extraordinary. St. Columba is said to have written 300 books with his own hand, and his life is sown with instances of his industry in this particular. St. Finnian of Clonard is stated to have given a copy of the Gospels to every church he founded.

In the earliest period few, if any, of these copies were illuminated; they were written solely with a view to supplying the needs of the churches and religious foundations all over the country, but two at least of the most beautiful and valuable specimens of Irish manuscript illumination, the Book of Durrow, and the yet more famous Book of Kells, now in T.C.D. Library, come to us from the seventh and eighth centuries, and prove beyond a doubt that the art of illumination had at that early period reached its fullest development. They are, in both cases, copies of the Gospels, belonging respectively to the Columban monasteries of Durrow (Queen's co.) and Kells (co. Meath).

In a country entirely without towns or stone buildings of any kind except what are known as the primitive "bee-hive" huts or cells inhabited alike by primitive pagan and early anchorite on the desolate coasts and islands of the west of Ireland, the monastic settlement, which was surrounded by a wall or "cashel," came to be looked upon as a "city," the name by which it is usually known. When the Northmen came to Ireland the only points of attack that offered themselves, besides a few scattered villages of huts, were the monastic settlements, and it is no doubt to this fact that we owe the repeated destructions of the monasteries so often spoken of during the Norse invasions. There was, in fact, nothing else for them to destroy. A sharp attack, with a few lighted brands flung upon the thatched roof of the oratory, would soon spread to the cells, and the group of tiny huts would quickly be destroyed. The Northmen, securing what booty they could in the way of Church vessels, reliquaries and book-covers, would pass on to another place, leaving the flaming or charred fragments of the monastery behind them. On their return half a year or a year hence they would find the place built up again, the oratories reconstructed and the life going on as before. It is only in this way that we can account for the fact that the Annals relate the destruction of a monastic establishment sometimes

twice, thrice even, in one year. Not a single year passed during the eighth and ninth centuries but that three or four famous foundations and a host of lesser monasteries were burned to the ground; yet we find them, apparently within a few weeks or months, recovered from their fall, and their "families" of monks quietly pursuing their wonted way. When in the ninth or tenth centuries there first dawned upon the mind of some Irish architect of true genius the conception of the Irish Round Tower, which, raising its graceful and impregnable summit beside the tiny church or group of oratories and cells which it was its duty to protect, offered to them in moments of danger not only a refuge for the sacred books and vessels of the Church, but a place of safety to the entire community, the unfortunate monks could watch with comparative freedom from anxiety the course of the depredations proceeding below; could issue out unharmed when all was over, to clear away and re-erect their demolished dwellings and to re-thatch the tiny church or group of churches which lay beneath the shadow of the belfry-tower. "Scattered all over the country these ancient towers stand to-day as they stood in times of foreign incursion, calm, dignified, and picturesque, symbols of safety in the midst of confusion, of peace and confidence in the midst of terror. The little churches at their feet are wasted by the hand of time, the graveyards over-grown; but the Round Tower still holds erect its head, casting over the ancient settlement the same feeling of protective care, the same sense of patient watchfulness that made it, in days gone by, the guardian of the village, the one spot of repose and security." (*Early Christian Ireland*, p. 215.)

A clear grasp of the social conditions which modified and moulded the monastic life of the sixth and seventh centuries seems to me to enable us without any difficulty to understand the peculiarities of Celtic Church organisation. Where there were no towns except the monasteries, no parishes and no regular dioceses, the diocesan system which had been adopted in Britain in Roman times and which St. Patrick naturally desired to pass on to Ireland, fell to pieces of itself; it was wholly unsuited to the needs of the people and to the conditions of the time. Its revival was, so far as I am able to see, part of the general re-organisation of the Church system under Roman supervision in the eighth and ninth centuries. Bishops there were in plenty, but they occupied a different position. They necessarily sank into a subordinate position to the all-powerful Abbot who ruled each large establishment. They became rather adjuncts

to the monastery, for which they performed certain offices, those of ordination and confession or "soul-friendship," as this office was beautifully called in Ireland.

They were not organised under metropolitans, of whose existence we hear first only at a slightly later period, they were attached to monasteries, and out of this rather subordinate position most of the peculiarities attaching to their office and position arose. They followed, like their brethren, the monastic rule of life. This system, which was carried out in all the Celtic monasteries, excited the surprise of Bede, who was accustomed to the division between monks and secular clergy. Speaking of the system in vogue at Lindisfarne, a Northumbrian monastery founded according to the Columban Rule by monks of Iona and Old Melrose and keeping up the method usually preserved among them, Bede says:

"Let no one wonder that though the island of Lindisfarne is small, we have made mention of a bishop, and not of an abbot and monks; for the case is really so. For the same island, inhabited by servants of the Lord, contains both, and all are monks. For Aidan, first bishop of that place, was a monk, and with all his followers lived according to the monastic rule. Wherefore all the principals of that place, from him to the present time, exercise the episcopal office, so that while the monastery is governed by an abbot, whom they, with the consent of the brethren, have elected, all the priests, deacons, singers, readers and other ecclesiastical officers of different ranks observe the monastic rule in every respect as well as the bishop himself." (Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert*, Chap. xvi, and *Eccles. Hist.*, Bk. III, ch. 4).

Such a system, developed naturally out of the conditions of life in Ireland, Celtic Britain and Scotland, might well seem strange to clergy accustomed to the Roman system.

One of the most interesting points in the history of the Church development of this period is the friendly interaction and activity that existed between the Welsh (or British), Scottish (or "Alban") and Irish ("or Scottish")\* branches of the Church. There was no sense of disunion between them, either as regards diversity of teaching or feeling of national division. If Gildas, David and Cadoc gave a new Liturgy or Mass to the Irish Church, the Irish Monasteries on the other hand welcomed the

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\* In this paper I have used the modern names, but it is to be remembered that Ireland was called "Scotia" and her people "Scots" up to the tenth century; Scotland was Caledonia, and later Alba; and there was no division between Wales and Britain.

“boat-loads” of students who poured over into Ireland to receive, without payment, even for books or sustenance, the teaching that Ireland was able to impart.

“Why,” exclaimed Aldhelm towards the close of the seventh century, “does Ireland pride herself on a sort of priority, in that such numbers of students flock there from England, as if here upon this fruitful soil there were not an abundance of Argive and Roman masters to be found, fully capable of solving the deepest problems of religion and satisfying the most ambitious students?”

Among those who came were the Frankish King Dagobert II., in the seventh century, and an exiled prince of Northumbria.

Let me tell you a couple of incidents out of the saints' lives which will illustrate these friendly relations between the countries. Both Gildas the Historian and St. Cadoc, his almost equally famous contemporary, spent a great deal of time travelling from place to place in Ireland. Like numerous other friendly saints of foreign extraction their names are commemorated in the martyrologies and litanies of Ireland. St. Cadoc, first principal or Abbot of Llancarvan, founded several churches in Brecknockshire, Glamorgan and Monmouth. He was baptized and instructed by an Irish hermit named Tathai, who had settled in Wales and founded the school of Caerwent, and who taught him grammar, literature and the liberal arts for twelve years. He must have instilled the love of his native country into his young pupil, for shortly after leaving him Cadoc, afterwards named “the Wise,” gave expression to a strong desire to sail to Ireland and add to his knowledge the learning that was at that time only to be acquired in Irish schools. Having built himself “a strong boat besmeared with pitch,” in other words, one of those fragile currachs in which in those times men ventured forth on the most perilous coasting voyages, he set sail from the south of Wales and made a “seasonable and prosperous voyage” to Waterford. At the great monastery of Lismore he was graciously received by the principal and remained with him for three years, “until he succeeded in perfecting himself in all the learning of the West.” He returned, accompanied by a large number of Irish and British clergy; but having acquired land in Ireland, he left a steward to collect his rents and manage his property—an early example of the evils of absentee landlordism. On his return to Wales he planned to build a new church, and Irish church architecture being apparently of a more attractive kind in the sixth century than it can boast of being in the twentieth, he sent to Ireland for an architect to build it for him.

That architect came to a bad end. The Welsh builders were so jealous of his superior skill that one dark night they beheaded him, and tying a stone round his body sank it in a pond. St. Cadoc is said to have all his life continued to wear the "thick Irish mantle, rough and hairy," which he had been accustomed to wear at Lismore, and one of the two treasures that he prized most dearly was a small bell of peculiar sweetness which St. Gildas had brought back with him out of Ireland, intending to make a present of it to the Pope. On the way he showed it to St. Cadoc, who was so much delighted with it that he implored Gildas to sell it to him instead. This Gildas would not do, but, fortunately for Cadoc, the Pope on hearing of his desire, for it, determined to send it back to him. He said "that he had heard much of the incredulity and rebellious perverseness of the British nation, but on receiving this bell that he had blessed, he trusted that they would cordially agree and make peace" among themselves (*Lives of the Cambro-British Saints*, ed. W. J. Rees, 1853).

Let me tell one story on the other side. Both the famous Irish saints of the name of Finnian came across the Channel to complete their education. St. Finnian of Moville was brought up at the monastery of St. Ninian at Withern in Galloway, and St. Finnian of Clonard studied in South Wales. He was so much esteemed in Wales that it is said that it was through his choice that the Welsh people got their patron saint. While he was there, a great meeting was held to decide whether Gildas the Historian or David the famous preacher should have the "Priority and Headship" of the Churches of Wales. Between two such men they found it impossible to decide, and they referred the question to St. Cadoc, a man who was himself of hardly less eminence than the two selected. He was in an awkward position, as both Gildas and David were his personal friends, and it would have been both unpleasant and unwise to make enemies either of themselves or their followers. Chancing to notice young Finnian in the crowd, he declared that he, not being a Welshman, was more likely to be uninfluenced by personal considerations, and that he therefore should decide. St. David appears to have been very much surprised at this, but he said that if Finnian could give his decision in good Welsh, he would be willing to submit to it. Whereupon St. Finnian is said to have awarded priority to David in such good Welsh "that it might have been his mother-tongue." (*Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore*, ed. Whitley Stokes, p. 223.)

I might continue these tales for hours, but they are, after all,

scarcely necessary. Anyone who has travelled through the West of England and Scotland has come in the most out-of-the-way places upon dedications to Irish saints. St. Brigit is as well known to the peasants of Western Scotland as to those of Kildare; St. Finnbarr of Cork has also his hermitages and place-names in Tarbet in Argyleshire, and elsewhere; St. Cannice of Kilkenny is St. Kenneth of St. Andrews; St. Bega, the foundress of St. Bee's monastery, was Irish; St. Brendan, the voyaging saint, has left his name in "Brandon" Hill near Bristol, and crosses of St. Columb are to be found in parishes in Cornwall. Everywhere the disciples of these famous teachers penetrated, leaving on their settlements the revered name of the abbot under whose teaching and guidance they had grown up, and at whose instigation they had left their native land in order to found settlements elsewhere.

But more than this. Let us, before we close, take a glance at the map of Europe and trace the footsteps of the Irish monks there.

Eighteen monasteries in Germany and Switzerland, over thirty in France and many in Italy and the Netherlands (to give to these countries their modern names) carried on into the Middle Ages the memory of their Irish founders. The Welsh or British missionaries confined their work chiefly to Armorica or Brittany, a district largely peopled from South and West Britain; but from the chilly wastes of Iceland down to the vine-clothed Apennines we find the cells, the tradition and the manuscripts of Irish saints. The Canton of St. Gall was named after the companion of St. Columbanus, whose monastery was one of the great central houses of call in the Middle Ages for pilgrims passing from the North into Italy; in Seckingham on L. Constance the bishopric dates back to Virgilius, otherwise Fergal, the Irish Abbot who left his monastery of Aghaboe in Queen's County to settle in the forests of Southern Switzerland; over the Canton of Glarus still waves the figure of St. Fridolin, the Irish saint. St. Cataldus, Patron of Toronto in Southern Italy, St. Colman, patron saint of Lower Austria, were Irishmen. When you enter Florence by the western gate you pass under the portals of St. Frediano, Irish preacher in Florence and Bishop of Lucca; as you climb the sweet slopes of Fiesole you rest beside the little chapel of St. Donatus, an Irish hermit who settled there and built his hut.

Outside the city of Paris is still to be visited the holy well of St. Fiacre, an Irishman whose shrine was so much frequented in the Middle Ages that it gave a special name to the carriages



that bore pilgrims thither, and we still in Paris call a cab "fiacre." Our first knowledge of the lonely Faroe Islands comes from the report of Irish anchorites who settled there in the eighth century, and when the Norsemen first visited Iceland about 870 they found there before them the relics of "Christian men, whom it is held must have come over the sea from the West, for they had left there behind them Irish books, bells and croziers." (*Landnamabok*, Prologue.)

In the eighth century twenty-nine chief monasteries and numerous hospitalia obeyed the Columban Rule; among them the famous foundations of Cologne, Strasburg, Würzburg, Reichenau, Seckingham, Fontaines, Peronne, Liège, St. Gall and Bobbio. "It was," says Mr. Hadden, "a mere turn of the scale that prevented the establishment in the seventh century of an aggregate of churches looking for their centre to Ireland and entirely independent of southern influences." (Hadden, *Essays*, p. 215.) It was in part the severity of the Columban rule that prevented this.

When in 723 the Saxon Winifred, or Boniface, to give him his Romanised name, was sent to the Franks as Papal Legate, not one of the German or Bavarian tribes to whom he went could be considered pagans.

The manuscripts from the large libraries of St. Gall and Bobbio have furnished some of their most treasured possessions to the great collections in the libraries of Turin, Milan, the Vatican and Vienna. These include both classical and theological works. Among them are copies of several previously lost orations of Cicero and the palimpsest from which Cardinal Mai published Cicero's *De Republica*. A famous palimpsest of Virgil, and copies of Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Terence, Demosthenes and Aristotle attest the broad education of the eighth and ninth century monks and their acquaintance with the classics. Greek paradigms and lists of words and Græco-Latin copies of portions of the New Testament, of which the most important is the manuscript of St. Paul's epistles known as *Codex Bærnierianus*, now in the Royal Library of Dresden, prove their study of the Greek language.

Among ecclesiastical documents, I will only mention two. One is the *Antiphony of Bangor*, taken out to Bobbio from the Irish monastery of Bangor, co. Down, in the north of Ireland, one of the earliest and most interesting service-books of Western Europe. Among its hymns is the beautiful "Sancti venite, Christi corpus sumete," still sung in the services of the Roman Church, and of which Dr. Neale's fine translation,

“Draw near and take the body of the Lord,” has found its way into *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. Thus to-day we sing an ancient Irish hymn used in the Irish monasteries and ascribed by tradition to the age of St. Patrick.

The second is the famous *Muratorian Fragment* (so called because it was discovered by Muratori and published by him in 1740), known among Biblical scholars as containing the earliest existing list of the canonical books of the New Testament as they were recognised in the second century. The MS. is in Latin and of the eighth century, but it is believed to be a translation of a Greek original dating from A.D. 170-180. It omits the Epistle to the Hebrews, and mentions the Apocalypse of St. Peter, which points to an Eastern origin.\*

Let us sum up. There existed in the sixth and seventh centuries in these islands a widely-extended and homogeneous Church in close inter-communication as to organisation and origin. It was of native growth and formed along native lines, adopting into church matters the system of the secular tribal organisation. A certain freedom as to ritual and monastic rule existed in the different communities, which, to a limited extent, followed the special idiosyncrasies of the individual founder; but both at home and abroad the ritual and liturgies of the Irish monasteries were of the same general stamp as those of Gaul and Spain, with which countries Britain and Ireland were thrown into closer connection on the irruption of the Goths of the north into Italy and Gaul in the fifth century and the break-up of the Roman Empire. In doctrine, Ireland, of which portion of the Church alone we have sufficient ecclesiastical memorials to form an opinion on the subject, seems to have followed the general Western trend of doctrinal development. When Augustine came to England in the year 597, the very year in which St. Columba died, he could discern no other difference in doctrine between himself and the Celtic bishops save some unexplained irregularities in the administration of baptism; yet he neither recognises the bishops of the Celtic Church nor will they hold communion with him. The Roman system, which was but slowly received by the Anglo-Saxons, was resisted for nearly a hundred and fifty years (as Bede calculates) by the independent Celtic Church. Slowly, and after fierce struggles, the weaker party gave way before the stronger, backed by the authority of Rome, and the Celtic Church adopted those changes

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\* See Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers and Des Muratorische Fragment*, publ. by Deighton, Bell and Co.

in tonsure, in the date of Easter, etc., which seem now to us matters of little importance, but which were to them the symbol of their origin and organisation, and with which their history and traditions, the affections of the people and the independence of the Church were bound up.

That there was any sense of antagonism to or any lack of respect for the Roman see I find no warrant whatever for supposing; to imagine this is to read back into the seventh century the antagonisms that belong to the sixteenth or the twentieth eras; but to conclude that they were under the domination of Rome is to misread the history of their slow and unwilling adhesion to the new system in Britain. From this time forward the Gallican peculiarities drop out of the Irish service-books, the most important of which, the *Stowe Missal*, shows signs, unfortunately, of having been largely erased and re-written in accordance with Roman ritual. Yet, even so, they retain many curious and interesting forms. But to tell the story of the later Celtic Church does not belong to our duty to-day.

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Lieut.-General Sir H. L. GEARY).—We are very much indebted to Miss Hull for this most interesting lecture on the Celtic Church, and for the pains she has been at to collect all this varied amount of information. One of the most interesting points that struck me was the undoubted fact that the early Christianity of Ireland—the Celtic Church—came direct from the East. We see it evidenced from their groups of seven churches in parts of the country, from the round towers, and from all the ornaments that have been found. I have seen a good many of these ornaments—in Dublin, at the Royal Irish Academy—and they nearly all—certainly all the oldest—are undoubtedly Oriental. I am very glad that Miss Hull has adopted the latest conclusion that St. Patrick came from Wales. I never for a moment held with the Dumbarton theory of his origin; and I think this opinion is borne out by the route the Saint took when he came back again for the purpose of converting the Irish: he came across from the Bristol Channel to

Arklow, and coasted along until he came to Strangforth Lough, near where he had been a slave boy, in county Antrim. Speaking as a patriotic Englishman, and acknowledging how much Ireland has suffered from time to time at our hands, I am glad that we also sent over to Ireland the greatest blessing that country ever received in St. Patrick. He was undoubtedly, from his name, a Roman citizen, and do not the Irish claim that the Romans never entered Ireland? Still, whether he was or was not of British lineage, at all events he came from their side of the water, and his name of Patricius (Celtic "Patrick"), as I have pointed out, shows that he was a Roman citizen.

There is another interesting point that Miss Hull has lightly touched upon, the position of the bishops in the early Irish Church. In a great many cases they were not only bishops, but they were chiefs of particular clans, and they were used to fight with one hand and pray with the other—I was going to say. I think it was St. Columba, when leaving Ireland to go on his mission work, who said he hoped to make amends for the number of people he had slaughtered by converting ten times that number to Christianity.

Mr. DAVID HOWARD, V.P.—I specially enjoyed this paper. I am prejudiced in favour of the Celtic Church. I have derived my name from Welsh ancestors; and, being an Essex man, I have a respect for the Celtic Church, because we had such a strong opinion about the diocese of London that we sent home what was left of the missionaries and remained heathen until St. Chad took us in hand from the North; and then we revenged ourselves by corrupting his name to the East Anglican pronunciation of Ceddes.

The fact that Essex owed its Christianity to the North is a proof of the wonderful vitality of the Northern Church. It is not wonderful that the Saxons absolutely declined to accept the religion of the conquered people; there was a feeling of such tremendous strength among the heathen that their God was the God of a particular people. If we realise the strength of this feeling we can hardly wonder that they endeavoured to stamp out the Church as they went on, so that the ground had to be re-won by Augustine and his fellow missionaries; and this fact has very much prevented our appreciating the vitality and grandeur of the Celtic Church.

There are two little details to keep in our minds: the first is the constant evidences of the Eastern origin of our Christianity in the

name "Church"; the only derivation we can find is from the Greek. And the other is that we have carefully orientated our churches; that in itself is an evidence of Eastern origin.

Such a paper as this, with its admirable illustrations of the subject, is very valuable to all of us.

Dr. W. WOODS SMYTH.—Mr. Chairman, I am charmed to have listened to this very interesting paper. Being an Irishman, I was specially interested, and also that fact places me in a difficult position—I have to differ a little from Miss Hull, and it is very hard for an Irishman to differ from a lady.

As it happens, I had to write a series of articles for a religious paper on "Religious Movements in Time Past"; and I had to spend a long time in the British Museum looking up manuscripts, and I could find no evidence of the Celtic Church being, at any time, other than Eastern. After the dispersion occurred from Palestine, people spread abroad preaching the Gospel, and without touching on Rome they swept over Europe, far and near.

It was most interesting to hear Miss Hull tell how the British missionaries spread over Europe. These men were the most energetic missionaries. The zeal of the missionaries of to-day is nothing to that of those Celtic missionaries. If a stranger arrived from Ireland they crowded round him and asked, "What is the name of your people?" "Where is your country?" They did not go out in two and two, as our missionaries are sent; every leading man took twelve others with him and went out to these countries—so that they evangelized France, Switzerland, Germany and the North of Italy—the whole of the Rhineland.

Another point. At the time of the Reformation, and afterwards in Elizabeth's time, when it was required of the Irish bishops that they should adopt the reformed faith and reformed practices, the Irish bishops, the successors of St. Patrick, did so, with the exception of two; one died soon after, and the other left the country, so that they left no successors, and therefore the Irish Episcopal Church of to-day is the representative of the church founded by St. Patrick.

Another point. Some of these Irish monks were married; they took no vow when they entered the monastery, and they could leave it when they wished—it was a life of perfect freedom.

Professor ORCHARD.—Our thanks are due to the author of the review of the Celtic Church, and for the views with which she has illustrated that review. We shall, I think, carry away two or three tolerably steadfast conclusions: one, that St. Patrick was not a Roman Catholic—he professed no allegiance to the Bishop of Rome; and also that he was not the founder of the Celtic Church. He appears to have been the Wesley of his times. I should have thought his extraordinary influence, so far excelling that of the other evangelists, may perhaps be explained by the fact that he was not only an evangelist but a missionary evangelist.\* He was undoubtedly a Welshman and also a Roman citizen. The early Celtic Church differed widely, we may say, from the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. Its monastic system had little if anything in common. Its clergy were very different indeed to the priests who claimed to be in some senses their successors. The agricultural life—the mingling with the people to some extent—was very different indeed from the system which now prevails in the Roman Church.

If Ireland is to find a remedy for her ills and misfortunes it will be by returning to that purer faith of that early Christianity of which St. Patrick was at once the missionary and the apostle.

A MEMBER (Rev. SIDNEY PIKE).—I am most thankful to have listened to this lecture. I was called upon to give lectures on Early Church History, and all this came under my notice then. I fully endorse what Miss Hull has said, that we are not indebted to Augustine for the introduction of Christianity into this island; and I would like to give to those who are present here the late Archbishop Benson's statement: "If," he says, "Augustine had landed in Cornwall instead of in Kent, he would have found a flourishing British Church." And I would also like to quote the words of Bishop Lightfoot, who said in referring to St. Aidan and St. Augustine (speaking of the two, and of course of the mission from the North), "Christianity came from the North downward; it sprang from the Celtic Church, it went from Ireland to Iona and from Iona to Lindisfarne, and then other missionaries came down to the Midlands."

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\* His extraordinary influence was largely due to his knowledge of the Celtic tongue, gained while he was herding the flocks of his master on the slopes of Slemish, in co. Antrim.—E. H.

He also says in reference to this, that "St. Augustine"—not *is*, but, very cautiously—"may have been the apostle of Kent; St. Aidan was the apostle of England."

I have often thought that St. Augustine's mission was what might be called a failure. This was not his fault at all. I do not want to depreciate the efforts made by him; but I think the circumstances of the time conspired to make it a failure. We have heard about the Eastern Counties. The mission went in that direction; and then in consequence of the King, who was Christian at the time when Augustine went on his tour, dying, his successor became a heathen, and back went the people to heathenism. That was no fault of St. Augustine's and his missionaries, but the fact remains we are indebted not to the Italian mission but to the Celtic Church for the Christianity which we have.

One thing in which I differ slightly from Miss Hull about St. Patrick. I gather from Bishop Brown, in his treatise on the Early Churches, that St. Patrick was not a Roman citizen; that there were two, Palladius and Patricius, who went to Ireland, and the first one was rejected by the Irish (probably, because he was ignorant of the language), and it was the second one who was our St. Patrick. He really was the father in the mission of introducing Christianity and strengthening the Church in that land.

Professor LOBLEY.—I have been deeply interested in the paper by Miss Hull, and especially so as I resided for a considerable time in the parish in which was one of those great crosses of Christianity, and that was a cross that Miss Hull mentioned, but she did not specify the locality of it. She mentioned it as Bangor. It was the Bangor Iscoed, on the river Dee, about twelve miles from the city of Chester. There were three thousand students gathered together and about seven hundred teachers or monks, and the Saxons from Northumberland came and entirely destroyed that settlement and massacred all the monks, and entirely razed the place to the ground, so that at the present time not a vestige remains. That is Bangor-on-Dee, twelve miles from the city of Chester.\*

Mr. ROUSE.—I imagined Bangor to be the other Bangor, and the capital of Caernarvon.

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\* See Miss Hull's remarks.

The Emperor Caracala early in the third century made all the subjects of the Roman Empire Roman citizens ; therefore there was no distinction in the early part of the third century between native Britons and Roman subjects ; but still no doubt many of the native Britons clung to their customs, and when Maximus endeavoured to assert his rival claim to the Empire at the time Miss Hull speaks of, he led over a large British army, which shows how Roman the British were by that time.

In keeping with this, Miss Hull mentions several missionaries who had Roman and British names. St. Patrick's name of Succat was British.

As the Chairman has gone, we are, I am sure, indebted—greatly indebted—to Miss Hull for the manner in which she has laid the subject before us. She has given us an immense deal of useful information, together with illustrations by means of beautiful views.

Miss HULL.—I have nothing very much to reply to. The questions are very large. The question of the Eastern origin of the Celtic Church is a very important one. There are Eastern peculiarities, but I think that until the Biblical Texts and the Western Liturgies have been thoroughly examined we cannot come to a definite conclusion about origins.

With regard to married monks, there were a large number of lay people living under some sort of general monastic rule, both married and single, but very few, if any, of the monks were married. They passed in as students, but did not all become professed monks or "regulars."

As to the question about St. Patrick being a Roman citizen, there is no doubt whatever of this ; he himself boasts of the fact. His father exercised a civil magistracy under the Roman Empire, and I think that would be a very strong reason for believing that the son was a Roman citizen.

The Bangor I spoke of—only once, I think—was neither of the two Bangors mentioned. It was a third Bangor, Bangor Mòr in County Down. It was from there that the service book, *The Antiphonary of Bangor*, went out to Bobbio.

I am obliged to you all for your kindness.



## ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.\*

LIEUT.-GEN. SIR H. L. GEARY, K.C.B., IN THE CHAIR.

William J. Horner, Esq., was elected Associate.

*THE BIBLE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCIENCE.*†

Abstract of a Lecture delivered by WILLIAM WOODS SMYTH, Esq., F. Med. Soc. Lon. (with lantern illustrations).

**T**HE interest of truth and the aims of the Victoria Institute will be best satisfied by presenting to you as concisely as possible the leading and essential facts revealed and recorded in our Bible; and side by side with these, the correlative facts which have been reached by modern scientific research.

In this *Excursus*, I have the support of the Bible itself, which forbids much of present-day theological disquisitions, and points us to the knowledge of Natural Science, as you may read in the Book of Job (ch. xxxviii, *et seq.*), as the true path to the knowledge of God.

To begin with the Book of Genesis, let us understand it. It does not teach a "special creation" doctrine. The Hebrew verbs tell of a stately flow of God's creative work such as you see around you to-day in the wide field of Nature. The "special creation theory" is a very late post-Reformation view. The Church in its best days held a doctrine of Evolution. St. Augustine, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Thomas Aquinas, held Evolutionary views. St. Augustine speaks of the animals being created by a process of growth,

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\* Monday, April 9th, 1906.

† This subject is fully treated of in the writer's work, *Divine Dual Government: a Key to the Bible and Evolution*. Horace Marshall and Son, London.

whose numbers the after-time brought forth. The Hebrew word *Bara*, to create, is nowhere used outside this chapter for a "special creation." Once it is used for a special act (Numbers xvi, 30), but this is signalized by using it twice in a verbal and in a nominal form. The word "day" in Genesis is used in three senses—as having limits in evening and morning; as without limits as the Sabbath of God's rest; as for all six days together. St. Augustine says it is impossible to understand what sort of days they were. The writer of the Hebrews calls them "ages" twice, and that settles the question.

We come now to the great stellar universe, which is a great circle, and we are situated, according to Sir Norman Lockyer and other astronomers, in the solar cluster in the centre. The geo-centric position which the Bible suggests for the earth is, therefore, correct. The nebular origin and course of events in the creation of the solar system, according to the Meteorolitic theory, is well established by the researches of Sir Norman Lockyer. Planet after planet of our system became formed and were for a time rotating round the uncondensed nebula which at a much later date became our sun.

The Bible is well supported in its record of the creation in placing the sun in the fourth day period. It does *not* say the sun was *created* then, but only *made* or formed. The writer was enabled to anticipate the present views of modern science as to the age of the earth by a calculation based on the first chapter of Genesis, as to the relative ages of the earth and sun.

The late Professor Huxley has given us an ideal vision of the whole course of Evolution, which is almost identical to the vision of Ezekiel, and to the strange guards placed at Paradise after the Fall. He says: "Just as the cloud of our breath condenses on a pane of glass on a frosty morning and forms itself into beautiful fern-like leaves, so the flora and fauna of the earth have come forth out of the great nebular cloud." (See Ezekiel's vision, chapter i). The additional points by the Prophet are accurate and interesting. His representation of the revolving nebula is perfect; that it came from the north, there is no doubt—the realm of spiral nebulae, and the colour (amber, golden, viz., yellow) mentioned is accurate as a prevailing colour of nebular stars.

Coming to our own world, the record in Genesis is faultless. The darkness with which that record begins at *the foundation* of the world (see Job xxxviii, 9) is admitted by leading geologists. The infusing of life in the primeval seas; the flora of the land and the fern forests in the dim nebular light, increasing to

sunlight at the close of the Carboniferous ages. The great "sea monsters," namely, *Ichthyosaurus* and *Plesiosaurus*, designating the secondary period, are in perfect place. The eduction of the fowls from the waters—such is the true rendering of the Hebrew—finds the Bible in harmony with one of the greatest triumphs of modern zoology. And, lastly, the mammalia and man close the sacred and the scientific records of creation. Not only is Genesis accurate in its time ratios of the age of the earth and sun, but also in all the time ratios for the several ages of geology given us by Dr. Dana, Professors Hull and Houghton and Professor Walcott.

We observe the Bible records a pre-Adamite man in the first chapter. The female of the first chapter could not be Eve, as she was never in the open field outside Paradise until after the Fall. The directions as to food are also entirely different. Adam was no doubt of this race (Genesis v, 1, 2), as the scripture relating to his formation is *weaker* than the scriptures relating to all men of whom it is said "It is God that hath made us."

At the Adamic age, man had reached the highest degree of mental and physical capacity the race has ever known. Their brain capacity was over four hundred cubic centimetres larger than the modern European. But man had reached a place where the factors of Natural Evolution could do no more for him. There were no resources in Nature to emancipate him from the struggle for existence, none to arrest decay and decrepitude, and none to abolish death. But the great massive stream of progressive Evolution could not be supposed to stop short here; it moves to the goal of balanced rest, to where the desires and aspirations of its highest race are to be fulfilled. These were being fulfilled in the past by living organisms adjusting themselves to the circumstances of their environment, and their death was ever owing to their failure to adjust aright. Accordingly, we perceive that man's high destiny for happiness and endless life turns upon his unflinching adjustment under all circumstances—a thing impossible to him, as it would take an Infinite Being to adjust to the infinite changes of existence. But the difficulty is solved for us by the Bible. It tells us of the Infinite Cause of all things, the living God, revealing Himself to man that He by His guidance and aid might enable him to preserve his life for ever.

Here, then, we have new factors superimposed upon the natural factors of Evolution. What are these new factors? They are the Breath, that is the Spirit of God, and the Word of God supported by miraculous acts as suitable credentials.

*Note.*—The paper went on to treat of the Fall, and to show in the light of modern science what a stupendous event we must regard it. That the ministry of animal sacrifice and of the Atonement are founded on the solid ground of Nature was also urged by the author.

A warm vote of thanks having been awarded to the Lecturer, the meeting terminated.