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THE LIFE AND LEGENDS
OF
ST. DAVID

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ST. TEILO'S CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WALES

The Society was established at Cardiff in 1899 with the general object of "promoting the defence and advancement of the Catholic Church in Wales by the publication of Literature in both Welsh and English and the delivery of controversial and explanatory Lectures addressed to the natives of the Principality".

By 1899 the Newport Diocese claimed 56 churches, chapels and Mass-centres - served by 75 priests; a huge increase since the 1840s. Understandably such expansion was seen as a threat to traditional Welsh Protestantism whose hostility was returned with hostility with war imagery frequently being used.

The main public platform was this Society founded by John Hobson Matthews and Fr. John Hayde. It began life as a genuine historical society but soon the "historical" element of its title was dropped. It became The Welsh Catholic Truth Society dedicated to publishing Catholic books and pamphlets for both Catholic and Protestants.

By 1894 free lectures in public halls were being advertised as "announcing a plan for carrying the polemical war into the enemy's camp". Such clearly military imagery was dropped in 1898 when Fr. Hayde confessed that no-one should take offence at its work and the intention was not to convert Wales but rather to explain the Catholic Faith to our separated brethren.

This book on St. David dates from the Society's early days. Written and researched by James Ambrose Story, Headmaster of St. Joseph's High School, Cardiff and Vice President of the Society, this scholarly work is presented as an example of the movement, a hundred years ago, to demonstrate to the people of Wales that St. David, our patron, was a Catholic in communion with Rome.

THE LIFE AND LEGENDS

OF

ST. DAVID

THE PATRON SAINT OF WALES

BY

JAMES AMBROSE STORY, B.A.,

*HEAD MASTER OF ST. JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL, CARDIFF, V.P. OF
ST. TEILO'S CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY.*

THE LIFE AND LEGENDS OF ST. DAVID.

CHAPTER I.

BRITAIN IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.

TO all who take an interest in the history of Wales, and to his own countryman especially, the story of St. David's life must needs be one of great interest. No other figure stands out so prominently and so majestically through the whole history of this land; none other has been the object of such love and reverence, not only in his own lifetime, but during all succeeding ages. Even in these latter years, when the minds of his countrymen have turned, with something like aversion, from the creed St. David professed, they still cling to his memory with patriotic respect; and every succeeding year sees his feast the occasion of the expression of their effusive admiration.

The epoch in which this Saint lived is one of striking importance, succeeding, as it does, the period of Roman domination, and immediately preceding that of Saxon rule. It is an epoch, however, involved in great obscurity, - an obscurity even greater in this part of Britain than in the more Eastern parts of the island.

During the four centuries of Roman rule and influence the people of this island south of the Firths of Forth and Clyde had become, there can be no doubt, to a great extent civilised, having adopted the manners and customs and culture of their conquerors; they had been also, to a great extent Christianized. These two facts are, I think, evident to all students of history. Druidism, however, although destroyed as a power in the country, had still many votaries, open or secret, who clung with traditional respect to the ancient faith; it had also left, even among the Christian population, many pagan customs, as well as many superstitious beliefs and practices. These superstitions would, doubtless, be much more rife in the remote country districts, than in and around the towns, which had sprung up during the Roman occupation, bound together and with the great centres of Roman rule, by the admirable system of military roads, which traversed the country. In these towns, there can be no doubt, civilisation and Christi-

anity had made very considerable progress. Previous to the Roman occupation the Britons had been divided into many tribes, each ruled by its own chieftains. These chieftains had been left by the conquerors in possession of their sovereign dignity; the Roman policy seeking to rule more easily and more securely by leaving to the subject states a semblance of independence and autonomy.

On the departure of the Romans these chiefs recovered that reality of power, which their ancestors had possessed. That want of union among themselves, however, which had enabled the Romans to vanquish the British States one by one, still existed; and this source of weakness was now increased by an unwarlike spirit, which was the natural result of long years of dependence, and by the fact that the country had been drained of its youth to fill the Roman armies.

For some years before the departure of the Romans, their rule in Britain had been gradually growing more feeble and less determined; and this fact had encouraged many attacks upon the Britons by their traditional foes, the Picts and the Scots. The Scots, as the inhabitants of Ireland were then called, had already made considerable settlements in the north of this island, to which they afterwards gave their name. They had also made many attempts to establish themselves in Wales, with a large part of whose population they were identical in race and speech; and it is very probable that they had succeeded in making themselves masters of the Isle of Anglesey. During the latter half of the fourth century the attacks of the Scots on the coasts of Wales and of the Picts and Scots, often joined by the Saxons, in North Britain, had been a very persistent.

After the final departure of the Romans, which event took place in the year A.D. 409, these attacks became more determined still, and led to more or less permanent settlements in the country on the part of the invaders. The western parts of Wales, we have reason to believe, were to a great extent reduced under the sway of Scottish chieftains; the invasion of the Northern parts of Britain, on the other hand, by the united forces of Picts and Scots and Saxons, led to a very curious and important result with regard to Wales; for these invaders, obtaining at length possession of the district line between the Firth's of Forth and Clyde on the North, and the Solway and the Tweed on the South, some of the British chiefs of that country withdrew with many of their followers into Wales, and there, after assisting their countrymen to drive out those Scots who had occupied Welsh territory, succeeded to the rule of the districts thus recovered.

Prominent among these chieftains of North Britain was a prince whose history is of special importance to us, in as much as he was the paternal ancestor of St. David. Cunedda, who bore the title of "Gwledig," which is thought to have been the British equivalent for the Roman "Imperator," had probably been in command of forces, whose duty it was to guard the wall, which had been built by the Romans to ward off the attacks of the Picts and Scots. Retiring, after his final defeat, into Wales, he and his sons are said to have expelled the Scots from

parts of North and West Wales, and have become the acknowledged rulers of a considerable part of the country. One of his sons, Keredig, gave his name to Cardiganshire, of which county, with the surrounding districts, he became the sovereign. Among the sons of Keredig was one who bore the name of Sant, or Sandde; and this Sandde was the father of the future St. David.

In the western part of Pembrokeshire, the county immediately south of Cardiganshire, was situated at that time the Roman town of Menapia or Menevia. This town now buried beneath a stretch of sandy burrows was afterwards called "Old Menapia" to distinguish it from the new Menapia, which arose immediately south of it, now the famous St. David's.

In Menapia there dwelt a chieftain of some note, called Gynyr of Caer Gawch. He, it is said, had married Anna, a daughter of Vortimer, that son of Vortigern who made so noble a stand against the Saxons. To Gynyr and Anna was born a daughter called Non. Sandde, when on a visit in that district, met Non as she was walking in the meadows near the town, and was attracted by her beauty. The drama of the Wolf and the Lamb, so often enacted in the history of the children of Adam, was here also enacted; and Non became the mother of the future St. David.

CHAPTER II.

ST. PATRICK IN MENAPIA.

THIRTY years before the meeting of Sandde and Non, St. Patrick, who had been consecrated a bishop with the express object of devoting his life to missionary work among the Irish, had chosen a spot near the city of Menapia as the starting point of his work. Palladius, his predecessor on the Irish mission, had, after spending a short time in Ireland, left that country and gone to labour among those of its people who had made a settlement in North Britain, or Scotland. The parents of St. Patrick, Calphurnius and Concha, the former, it is said, a Roman of patrician rank, the latter a relative of St. Martin of Tours, are generally supposed to have lived, at the time of Patrick's birth, near the wall which the Romans had built, connecting the Firths of Forth and Clyde, as the northern limit of their dominion, and as a barrier against the incessant incursions of the Picts and Scots, Calphurnius holding there some official position. Bearing in mind the events already related which led to the withdrawal of Cunedda Gwledig and his forces from this district into Wales, we can easily understand that Calphurnius with his family may have made a like retreat; and in corroboration of this supposition, there is a tradition to the effect that Calphurnius and Concha

lived for some time at Menapia. We cannot be surprised, therefore, at Patrick's intention of making Menapia the centre of his mission, probably with the idea of beginning his work among the Scots who, as we have seen, had settled in Wales in considerable numbers, just as Palladius had chosen to work among those who had settled in Scotland. However this may be, St. Patrick is said to have already begun to lay his plans for his future monastery, nay, there are very persistent traditions which represent him as having completed it, and as having occupied it for some time, when an angel of God appeared to him one night in his sleep and told him that that land was not his destined sphere, but that another, not yet born, and who should not be born for thirty years, was intended by God to be its spiritual ruler and its patron saint for all future ages.

St. Patrick, on hearing this, says the legend, was grieved at heart. "Have I served my God Lord so ill, that another, not yet born, is preferred before me?" he thought. Then the angel, reading his thoughts, said to him: "Behold, O Patrick." And lo! there lay before his eyes the land, where, for six long years, a captive boy, he had tended the kine of Milcho. "Thither," continued the angel, "shalt thou go; there shalt thou teach and rule for Christ; and in that land, for ages untold, shall thy name be held in honour."

And St. Patrick, we are told, was consoled; and in the morning he arose, descended to the neighbouring harbour, took ship with his followers, and thence passed to Ireland.

CHAPTER III.

NON AND THE PREACHER.

NON, it is said, before becoming the victim of Sandde's tyrannic violence, had made a vow of chastity, and, undeterred by the conduct of Sandde, still persisted in her resolution.

She also began now, if she had not begun before, a life of the greatest self-denial. Bread and water, with a few herbs, became her diet for the rest of her life, as they were afterwards the diet of her saintly son; moreover, when she found that she was to become a mother, she, like the mother of Samuel of old, dedicated her child also to the special service of God.

It happened one day that Gildas, an eloquent preacher, was preaching to a large congregation in a neighbouring chapel, when Non entered to pray. Modest and timid, Non stepped quietly into the church, and concealing herself behind the half-open door, prepared to listen to the preacher. Gildas, it is said, was preaching with his usual eloquence before the arrival of Non, but at the moment

of her entrance he became suddenly speechless.

The people, amazed, said to him, "Why, O Gildas, are you silent, we listening with such pleasure to your words?" Gildas replied, "I can speak to you in converse, but preach I can not. But do you all leave the church, and I will try if I can preach when alone."

The people, therefore, all arose from their seats and left the church; and then Gildas again attempted to preach, but in vain.

"Is anyone still in the church?" he asked aloud.

Non, who still remained behind the door, no longer daring to conceal herself, answered, "Lo, I am here, between the door and the wall."

"Go you also without, and bid the people enter, you remaining until I bid you return."

Non, therefore, went out of the church and gave the preacher's message to the people.

The congregation having re-entered, and resume their seats, once more Gildas attempted to preach; and, wondrous to relate, his voice rang loud and clear through the church.

The people, amazed, again addressed the saint, and asked for an explanation of the marvel.

"Bid the Maiden, who called you in, to enter," said Gildas.

They did so, and the maiden entered.

Then Gildas said, "Lo, this maiden shall become the mother of one greater than I, higher in God's grace, of nobler gifts; and he is destined to be the teacher and ruler of this land."

And after this Gildas is said to have left Britain, and to have retired to Brittany, where he spent the rest of his days; but this, I think, is an error, which has arisen from his being confounded with the latter Gildas, the celebrated historian.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF ST. DAVID.

IN those days there lived in that country a chieftain who still adhered to the old Druid superstitions.

To him it had been revealed, by magic arts, that, in a certain spot, on a certain day and hour, a child should be born, who should rule over all that land. Fearing for his own power, this man determined to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy by setting some of his emissaries to watch at the given place and hour, with instructions to slay any person who should, in any way, seem likely to become the mother of such a child. But, when the appointed time approached, so dread-

ful a tempest arose, with thunder and lightning so fierce, that none dared face it, and even the tyrant's hirelings were obliged to seek shelter from its fury.

Meanwhile Non, chancing to be at some distance from home, sought shelter from the storm beneath the thick shelter of a grove of trees. Here her babe was born, and here the pair were found by their friends, when the storm had passed away. A stone which lay there bore, it was said, the impress of the mother's fingers, and was preserved long after in the altar of a chapel which was there created in her honour. A clear light too, like that of the noon-day sun, the mother said, had brightened her place of refuge, while all around was darkened by the tempest; and loving hearts were glad to believe that angel visitants had supported her in her hour of sorrow.

When the child was brought for baptism, tradition says, that not only did a well spring spontaneously from the ground for the sacred rite, but a blind man, who held the child, had his sight restored by means of some of the water which was sprinkled accidentally upon his eyes.

Persevering in her resolution to devote her child to the service of God, Non placed David, when old enough, at a school in Menapia, in a place called Hen Llwyn, or "The Old Bush." After studying here for some years and making sufficient progress in his studies, the boy was removed to another and more celebrated school.

CHAPTER V.

ST. GERMANUS IN BRITAIN.

THE early part of the fifth century, in addition to all the other evils brought about in Britain by its abandonment by the Romans, and by the incessant invasions of the Scots, Picts, and Saxons, was signalized also by a wide spread of the Pelagian heresy. Periods of civil tumult are especially favourable to the dissemination of false teaching, not only on account of the general relaxation of moral restraints inevitable in such periods, but also by reason of the disorganisation of the schools in which religion is taught.

Pelagius taught that man is not born in sin, and that he can live a virtuous life and merit heaven without the aid of divine grace. When accused of these errors it was his custom to answer in an evasive manner, so as to avoid excommunication. A monk of Bangor, in North Wales, he left his monastery and appears to have spent a considerable part of his life in various parts of Europe and Asia, going from monastery to monastery, and disputing on these subjects with the learned

at every opportunity.

The errors in question he is supposed to have learned from one Rufinus, a Syrian; and his pupil Celestine, a Scotchman, would seem to have been more active than himself, or, at least, more daring, in their propagation. These doctrines were confuted by St. Augustine of Hippo in several learned works, and they were condemned also in several councils.

The spread of these heresies in Britain is attributed chiefly to Agricola, who is described as being the son of a Pelagian bishop. The doctrines spread rapidly, and were of a nature to increase that moral perversion, whose existence in the country was, perhaps, the chief cause of their general acceptance.

The British bishops, feeling their own inability to withstand the spread of this heretical teaching, sent to the bishops of Gaul asking for assistance; and, in the year A.D. 429, Germanus bishop of Auxerre, was sent by Pope Celestine, as his vicar, to Britain. Along with Germanus came Lupus, bishop of Troyes. The two bishops are said to have preached against the heretics with great success, to have confuted them in a public disputation at Verulam, and to have confirmed the Catholic doctrine by a miracle.

Some time after the departure of the two bishops, however, the evil began again to spread, and this led to a second visit from Germanus in the year A.D. 446, accompanied this time by Severus, bishop of Triers. In this visit, - which would seem from tradition to have been a lengthened one, - Germanus is said to have done much to organise and establish the church in Wales.

In consequence of this, the period succeeding the second visit of Germanus is distinguished by a great spread of education in this country, especially in South Wales. Monastic schools at Caerleon, Mochross, and Henllan are said to have been established by Dubricius; St. Illtyd presided over one at Llanilltyd Mawr, or Llantwit Major; another at Llancarvan was founded by the celebrated Cattwg or Cadoc; another flourished at Bangor Iscoed, in Flintshire, and, on the bank of the Taf, in Carmarthenshire, the saintly Paulinus, or Pawl Hên, established still another, which bore the name of Ty Gwyn ar Daf, or "The White House on the Taf," - in after years superseded by Whitland Abbey, where Hywel Dda compiled his celebrated code of laws.

CHAPTER VI.

DAVID AND PAWL HEN.

TO Ty Gwyn ar Daf it was that David proceeded on leaving the school at Hen Llwyn, and here he spent ten years, studying the scriptures, and acquiring all those other branches of discipline and of knowledge which were to fit him for his future career. His pure and gentle character, his devotion to prayer and to

study, his docile obedience, so won the hearts of his superiors and of his fellow students, but they looked upon him as one specially favoured by God; in sign of which some saw, or fondly imagined they saw, a beautiful white dove, with golden beak, often flitting around him, or perching upon his shoulder, as he sat at study or knelt in prayer.

A beautiful legend, illustrating, in a touching manner, the simplicity and piety of both master and pupil, belongs to this period of David's life. Pawl Hên, it is said, now advanced in years, had so far lost the use of his eyes, that he could no longer celebrate the sacred mysteries of the altar. In his distress on this account, thinking that he might recover his sight in answer to the prayers of his pupils, he asked them one by one to bless his eyes; but his hopes were vain; until at last he came to David.

"David," he said, "look at my eyes; for they pain me grievously." But David answered, "My master, bid me not look at thine eyes; ten years have I been with thee, but never yet have I beheld thy face."

Pawl Hên, marvelling at his pupil's modesty and humility, said, "Place, then, thy hand upon my eyes, and bless them." And St. David did so; and his master's eyes were so far strengthened, that he was able to resume his ministrations at the altar.

At length, we are told, Pawl Hên received an intimation that David must leave him, and begin his work as a preacher of the Gospel. Accompanied by Teilo, Ismael, and some other of his fellow-students, therefore, David now began his missionary career.

CHAPTER VII.

MISSION WORK.

THE city of Glastonbury was, in ancient times, regarded as the holy place of British Christianity. Here, it was said and believed, lay the body of St. Joseph of Arimathea, who, sent hither from Gaul by Philip the Apostle, had first preached the Christian Faith in this land; and the church of wattles, which he built, was, according to some, the first Christian edifice erected in the country. Hence we find that Glastonbury became a place of great resort among the religious of those days. Here St. Patrick had made a pilgrimage; and he it was who replaced the old wattle-built chapel by an edifice of stone. Hither also came David, with his companions from Ty Gwyn ar Daf, making this the starting point, so to speak, of his mission. Tradition says that he stayed here for a considerable time, and enlarged the edifice built by St. Patrick by the addition of a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

From Glastonbury David proceeded to Bath, famous even in those days for its hot springs. These springs had, from some cause or other, become, or were thought to have become, unwholesome; and David is said to have blessed them, and so restored their healing virtues. The explanation of this is, no doubt, that a spell had been cast, or was thought to have been cast, upon the waters by the magicians of those days; and that, on this account, the Christians were afraid to make use of the wells until this spell had been removed by David's blessing.

Proceeding again on his mission, David is said to have founded, in different places, no fewer than twelve churches, which would appear to have been generally of a monastic character.

The last of these foundations was the monastery of Llangyfelach in Gower. Here, in all probability, David resided for some time, probably for several years; and it was from this place that he must have made his celebrated pilgrimage to Rome.

This visit to the Holy City David made, accompanied by his bosom friends and kinsmen, Teilo and Padarn, probably with the express purpose of receiving episcopal consecration. The bells of the city churches, it is said, rang to welcome the British strangers; they were received by the Pope with distinguished honour, and after preaching to the people, at the pontiff's invitation, with great success, received from him each a characteristic gift. To David, because of the great devotion with which he offered the Holy Sacrifice, was given a double altar of some unknown but precious material; to Padarn was given a pastoral staff, and also a precentor's cappa, as a token of the pontiff's approval of his attainments in the study of sacred music; while Teilo received a miraculous and sweet-sounding bell. The altar, we are told, was placed by David in the chapel which he had erected at Glastonbury.

In the above account I have followed two poems, both to be found in the Iolo M.S.S., the one in honour of St. Teilo, by Ieuan Llwyd ap Gwilym, and the other in honour of St. David, by Ieuan Rydderch ap Ieuan Llwyd; feeling convinced that these poems in the details which they give concerning the two saints, follow earlier and more trustworthy authorities than the existing biographies.

There can be little doubt, however, that, either immediately after leaving Rome, the three saints proceeded directly to Jerusalem, or that, at a later period, they made together a distinct pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Indeed Ieuan Rydderch's poem expressly mentions such a pilgrimage, and states that it also was made from Llangyfelach.

CHAPTER VIII.

DAVID'S RETURN TO MENAPIA.

AT length, we are told, David turned his steps homewards, and came once more to Menapia. Here there dwelt at this time an aged bishop of the name of Goeslan. Goeslan was, indeed, according to some traditions, the brother of Non, and therefore David's uncle; and if such was the case, he probably lived with Non in the home of their father Gynyr, David's grandfather.

We can easily picture in our minds the joy of Non on embracing her son after his long absence. Doubtless she had often heard of him during these slow-passing years; perhaps, also at times she had seen him. The report of his saintly character and of the wonderful success of his mission cannot but have reached her ears, and the ears of all those who knew and loved him in Menapia; and it needs no very vivid imagination to enable us to realise the scenes of congratulation and of holy rejoicing which his return among them produced.

The saints of God of the olden days were blessed with a faith which is now, alas, not very common. The world of spirits was to them no distant region in some remote part of God's creation. It was with them and around them; and God's holy spirits were very real sharers in all the events of their lives. We have already, in this sketch of the life of St David, seen several instances of this realistic faith, if I may so call it; and we shall meet with many more, as we follow him through the rest of his career; and one of these I must now relate.

Conversing one day with the aged Goeslan, his brawd-ffydd, or kinsman in the faith, as one of the Saint's biographers calls him, David related two remarkable visions which had been revealed to him. When about to begin his missionary labours in a certain place, an angel had appeared to him and had told him that his work in that district should be so unsuccessful, that scarcely one in a hundred from that place would be saved; whereas in another place he had received a revelation to the effect that so fruitful should be his mission there, that of those who in that district should embrace the faith, not one should be lost, and moreover that of those who should be buried in the cemetery there, not one single soul should fail in obtaining the grace of final perseverance.

CHAPTER IX.

DAVID AND BOYA.

THE district around Menapia, called, in after times, Pebidiog, or Dewisland, is swept by the Atlantic gales with such violence that trees are scarce. There are, however, two valleys cutting the plane, each watered by a stream, the one by the river Solva, the other, farther westwards, by the Alan or Alun; and in these

valleys the trees, sheltered from the violence of the winds, grow in some abundance: in ancient times, doubtless, both valleys were densely wooded. The valley of the Alun, called at that time Glyn Rhosyn, or the "Valley of the Rose," St. David chose as the site of his proposed monastic settlement; the very spot, it is said, chosen by St. Patrick long years before; and here, we are told "David first kindled fire in the open air."

Among the ancient Druids the lighting of a fire in the open air appears to have possessed some mystic import. We read that St. Patrick by lighting up such a fire excited the wrath of King Laeghaire and his Druids so much that they determined to slay him and his company:-

"The King is wroth with a greater wrath
Than the wrath of Nial or the wrath of Coun,"

sings Aubrey de Vere in his "Legends of St. Patrick," and further on:-

"The Druids rose, and their garments tore;
The strangers to us and our gods are foes."

Overlooking the valley of the Alun there is an elevation of the ground, which, to this day, bears the remains of two ancient fortifications, one of circular form, surrounded by a second which is quadrilateral in shape. The name given to this height is "Glegyr Foya," or "Boya's Cliff." Now Boya was a pagan Scottish chieftain, who, some time before the period at which we have arrived in the life of St David, had crossed over from Ireland with a band of freebooters, seized this stronghold, and from it dominated over the whole surrounding country.

From his fortress, we are told, Boya beheld the smoke of David's fire arising in dense clouds and covering the whole country, and thence floating westwards to Ireland. The sight filled his heart with anger, and he retired moodily to a lofty crag which overlooked the whole district and there sat gazing from early morn till evening, and took neither food nor drink.

At length his wife approached him, and asked the reason for his annoyance.

"Seest thou not yonder fire," said Boya, "the smoke from which covers all the land? Well do I know that it betokens loss to me, but, to him who kindled it, power and prosperity."

Then his wife said: - "Oh, fool and fool! Why sittest thou here? Take thy men and slay these intruders, who thus dare to kindle fire on thy land, leave of thee unasked."

Boya obeyed his wife. He was not the first nor the last who followed an unreasoning wife's advice, and had reason to regret his folly.

As he and his followers approached Glyn Rhosyn with such murderous intent their limbs so quaked and trembled that they were utterly powerless to do any ill to the peaceful monks, except to rail at and insult them, and this they did to their heart's content; then turned again homewards. But, on their way, Boya beheld his wife coming to meet him with consternation in her looks. "The herdsmen and the shepherds say," she cried, as soon as she was near enough to be heard,

“that all the horses and cattle and sheep are lying stone dead with their eyes wide open.”

Boya uttered a loud cry of mingled fury and distress at the news; but, after a short consultation, they all determined to return to Glyn Rhosyn, and endeavour to make peace with the saint, to whose indignation on account of the insults they had heaped upon him they ascribed the calamity.

To Glyn Rhosyn, then, they returned, and sought David's forgiveness; and Boya, we are told, made to David a grant of the land on which he desired to build. Then he and his wife and his followers bent their steps homewards once more, with downcast hearts and eyes, as do those who have met with defeat where they expected victory; but on their arrival they found the cattle all well.

The heart of an evil minded woman, crossed in her purposes, is never appeased. The wife of Boya slept not all that night thinking over the events of the day. “These men are chaste,” she said to herself, “hence are they beloved of the gods. Were they to become as we, their gods would abandon them.”

And, in the morning, she called her maids, and bade them to go to Glyn Rhosyn, and behave in an unseemly manner in the sight of the strangers, and so tempt them to sin. And the maidens went, and, with wicked deeds and wanton wiles, sought to allure the monks to sin. These after enduring the maiden's evil conduct for some time, went at length to St. David, and said: “Let us depart, for the maidens behave wickedly before our eyes.” But David replied “Not we, but they shall depart. Be patient, and trust in God.” And the monks obeyed, and toiled and prayed till eve, and then the wantons went and told their mistress of their unsuccess.

And she, full of wrath, it is said, and especially enraged because her step-child Dunod, a modest and pious girl, had refused to go with the rest, arose next morning, and calling Dunod, said: “The nuts are ripe in Glyn Rhosyn; let us go and gather some.”

They went, therefore; and, when they arrived, the woman said: “Let us rest awhile, for I am tired;” and she sat down upon the ground. And again, after a little while, she said to Dunod: “Lay thy head upon my lap, and I will arrange thy locks.” But, instead of arranging the maiden's hair, she drew a sharp knife from her garment and cut off her step-child's head; then she fled, and was never more seen.

But, where fell the maiden's blood, sprang up, it is said, a spring of clear, sweet water, possessed of healing virtues, and called, for ages after, Dunod's Well.

As for the wicked maidens, some say that madness fell upon them; but others, that they repented of their deeds, and became good Christians.

But Boya, angry because of the loss of his wife, and attributing it to the monks, was again planning their destruction, when one night his enemy, a free-booter called Leschis, fell upon him unawares and slew him in his bed, and burned his castle to the ground.

CHAPTER X.

THE BUILDING OF THE MONASTERY.

THUS wonderfully freed from his foes, David was able to pursue his work in peace, and the Monastery of Glyn Rhosyn, called then and for ages after “Ty Dewi” or “The House of David,” began to grow apace; the land which, tradition says, really belonged to David's grandfather, Gynyt, and not to the usurper Boya, having been freely made over to him.

The plan of the monastery was simple, and its construction comparatively easy. The ground selected was first enclosed by a wall or mound of earth, or of mingled earth and stones, the latter being, in all probability, surrounded by a moat or trench. Within this enclosure were built a number of booths or huts of wattles, each inmate of the monastery occupying his own booth. The mode of constructing these was probably as follows. The plan of the building to be erected having been traced on the ground, a number of stout poles were fixed firmly in the ground at suitable distances; the intervals between these were then filled up with wattles of withes of willow or other suitable tree, interlaced or intertwisted just as is done in the making of baskets. Within the framework thus formed, a similar one was made at the distance of about a foot, the space between these two being filled up with earth. The roof was, most probably of thatch. A large edifice, built in a similar manner, served for a refectory, another was the hospitium, for the reception of strangers, and a third, more elaborately constructed, became the monastic chapel. The last, as soon as could conveniently be done, would be replaced, we may be sure, by an edifice of stone. A kitchen and sheds for the cattle completed the list of buildings.

Such was the general plan of those Celtic monastic institutions which, in the fifth and sixth centuries, were so numerous in France, in Britain, and in Ireland.

The monks were clad in the simplest garments, generally made of the skins of animals. They spent the greater part of the day in the toils of agriculture or other necessary labours; these being finished, study and the divine offices filled the rest. One meal a day, and that in the evening, would appear to have been all that was, in general, allowed by the rule in these institutions. Bread and vegetables were their ordinary diet, with milk and water for their drink; but the sick, the aged, and those wearied by long travelling, were allowed more delicate and more abundant fare. Fish was permitted to all as an occasional luxury.

An institution such as this became not only a centre of learning and of religion, but a refuge to all in distress; and the widows and orphans, and the poor in general, were the objects of the monks' tenderest care.

Such then was the life led by St. David and his companions in Glyn Rhosyn; varied only by missionary labours in the surrounding districts. Such also was the life led by St. Martin of Tours on the bank of the Loire, such the life of St.

Columba and his Scottish monks on the island of Iona, and such the life in many similar institutions founded by St. Patrick in Ireland.

In course of time Glyn Rhosyn and its saintly abbot became famous throughout Britain and Ireland, and numbers, many even of princely rank, flocked to join the community either for a time as students, or in order to embrace permanently the monastic life. From it went forth also those who became the founders of similar communities. Thus Aidan passed over to Ireland and founded a monastery in that island; Teilo did the like when called upon to occupy the see at Llandaff; and it was from Ty Dewi that Kentigern went forth to establish the great monastic school of Llan Elwy or St. Asaph.

In such peaceful labours as these years passed by with St. David of which no record is left. The same daily round of toil and prayer and study, followed by the simple meal and short repose; the same people to teach, to succour, and to console, the like oft-repeated feuds to compose, the like bitter foes to reconcile, - such was his life month by month and year by year. And yet, even amid such scenes as these the hated enemy of human peace and human virtue will find a way; even in such abodes it will be often found true, that a man's foes are those of his own household.

CHAPTER XI.

DOMESTIC TREASON.

ST. AIDAN, in his distant home in Ireland, was one day engaged in prayer, when suddenly an angel of God stood before him and said: "Know, O Aidan, that the life of thy master David is in danger; for some of his people have plotted together to kill him; and tomorrow, at dinner, they will give him poisoned bread to eat."

Aidan on hearing this, began to weep; but the Angel continued: "Send thou, therefore, someone to warn thy master, in order that he may escape the danger."

"But," said Aidan, "how shall I send in time, the distance being so great, and I having no boat?"

Then the angel replied: "Send thy servant Scuthyn to the shore, and the means of passage shall be found."

So Scuthyn went down to the shore, and boldly entered the water; and there a beast of the sea, it is said, awaited him, and bore him rapidly across the sea. So says the legend, but it appears to me more probable that this story, like many others, has been changed by tradition; and that someone who had been told that Scuthyn crossed the sea in the "Morvil" or Sea Monster, meaning a boat so called, not understanding rightly, in repeating the story to others, said that he was

borne over on the back of a monster of the deep. Scuthyn landed, the legend continues, just as the monks were leaving the chapel after High Mass, for it was Easter Sunday; and they were on their way to the refectory to the dinner which was allowed them in honour of this great festival.

When David met Scuthyn, he embraced him with great affection, and inquired after the welfare of Aidan and the rest; and when Scuthyn had replied to all the questions of David, he drew the latter apart from the rest and told him of the plot against his life.

Full of grief on hearing Scuthyn's story, David walked on to the refectory in silence. Their grace was said, and all the community took their seats, when a deacon, whose duty it was to serve the abbot, arose, and approached him, with a loaf of bread in his hand. But Scuthyn took the bread from the Deacon, saying, "Today, I will serve my master David;" and the deacon sat down discomfited; for it was he who, in league with the steward and the cook, had planned to poison David.

Now when Scuthyn handed the loaf to David, the latter, we are told, broke it in three parts; one part he gave to a bitch which lay at the door, and the animal tasted the bread and fell down dead; the second was given, by his command, to a raven, which sat upon an ash tree, in front of the refectory window, and the bird, as soon as it tasted the bread, fell dead at the foot of the tree; the third portion the abbot blessed and ate himself, and remained unharmed. To the assembled community, who had been gazing in silent amazement upon the scene I have described, David now related the story of the plot against his life, and of the warning which Aidan had received and of which Scuthyn was the messenger; and the words which, according to David's biographers, the indignant monks made use of in regard to the culprits, I will not reproduce; but they were not words of blessing.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SYNOD OF LLANDDEWI BREFI.

BEFORE leaving Britain, on the occasion of his second visit, Germanus had consecrated several bishops, and among the rest, Dubricius, whom he had placed over the see of Llandaff, with archiepiscopal jurisdiction over the rest of Wales. After occupying this see for some years, Dubricius had removed to Caerleon, appointing Teilo, David's friend and kinsman, as his successor at Llandaff.

At length, having now attained to extreme old age, Dubricius had the grief of seeing the false doctrines of Pelagius again making havoc among his flock. This fact, we are told, and also the desire of finding a successor in the archiepiscopal office, determined him to call a council of the clergy and laity of Wales; and

Llanddewi Brefi, a small town in Cardiganshire, about eight miles north of Lampeter, was the place selected as being most suitable for such an assembly.

This Council took place in the year A.D. 519, and we are told that not only did the clergy gather together at Llanddewi in great numbers, but also that vast numbers of the laity came, both rich and poor; so that the valley appeared like the encampment of a great army, or rather like the sight of an immense fair.

The clergy are said to have shewn great diligence in preaching to the assembled multitudes, in order to controvert the false doctrines which had been spread among them, but with little or no success; and Dubricius with the other bishops and abbots felt greatly disappointed at this result. Pawl Hên, the aged abbot of Ty Gwyn ar Daf, then suggested that his old pupil David should be sent for, as one whose preaching was likely to prove more successful. "He is a man comely and eloquent," he said, "I know also that he is virtuous and chaste; that he loves God greatly, and that God also greatly loves him. He has been already consecrated a bishop at Rome; and," David's old master added, "I am convinced that, of all upon this island, he is the one most full of the grace of God."

The advice of Pawl Hên met with instant approval, and messengers were immediately sent to invite David to come to the synod and to preach to his assembled countrymen.

"I will not go with you," was David's reply to the messengers, "for I prefer to serve God in this place; and I no, moreover, that I am unable to do that which you desire of me."

The same reply he gave again to a second deputation.

At length Dubricius himself determined to go, accompanied by Daniel, Bishop of Bangor, and endeavour to persuade the abbot to go to the synod.

David, it is said, received a divine intimation of the approach of Dubricius and Daniel. He therefore bade his people to obtain fish for their repast, and to bring water from the monastery well. This was a well which had sprung up from the ground in answer to David's prayers; and its waters were so sweet, it was reported, as to taste like the most delicious of wines to those who drank therefrom.

"Eat, my brethren," said the abbot to his visitors on their arrival, "and refresh yourselves after your journey."

"Nay," replied Dubricius, "we will not eat, unless thou shalt first consent to go with us."

"Eat, therefore; for I will accompany you," was David's answer.

The following day the three started on their way to Llanddewi Brefi.

They had nearly reached the end of their journey, and were travelling along the bank of the River Teifi, when a loud wailing was heard.

It was the cry of a widowed mother weeping over the body of her dead son.

The heart of David was like that of his divine Master, always moved by human sorrow. "Go you forward," he said to his companions, "and I will follow; but first I must learn the cause of this woman's grief."

Dubricius and Daniel proceeded on their way, but they had hardly reached the place of the synod, when they were followed by David, accompanied by a boy, who bore his books of the gospels; and the report soon spread that this was the sorrowing mother's child, who had been restored to life in answer to David's prayers.

Pressed by the assembled clergy to preach to the people, David stood up before the multitude to do so, when, it is said, to the astonishment of all, the ground on which he was standing, arose under his feet, so as to raise him above his hearers; and the mound which arose remains to this day, the church, afterwards built in his honour, standing upon it.

Of course we can easily understand that the preacher stood upon a piece of ground, which was raised above the level of the plain, in order to be seen and heard by all; and that the miracle was an after explanation of the elevation of the site of the church above the surrounding land. Several elevations of the ground in the island of Malta are similarly accounted for by tradition, they having risen, it is said, under the feet of the apostle Paul when he was preaching to the inhabitants of that island.

The preaching of the saint is said to have been wonderfully efficacious. Tall, of a commanding presence, his voice as loud and clear as that of a trumpet, yet full of the persuasive power which springs from a sympathetic heart, the people crowded to hear him; they were entranced by his eloquence and convinced by his arguments; and from that day we hear no more of the errors of Pelagius in Britain.

But, as had been said, Dubricius had had another object at heart in summoning the council, namely to find a worthy successor to himself; and it is needless to say upon whom his choice fell. The people themselves confirmed the selection already made in his own heart. "As God gave Peter to Rome, and Martin to France, and Patrick to Ireland," they said among themselves, "so has he given David to Wales."

Dubricius then resigned his archiepiscopal office, and, with unanimous consent, David was appointed as his successor; only, after a short time, he obtained permission to change his seat from Caerleon to the peace and quietness of his old home at Glyn Rhosyn, which, during his life, and his life only, became the archiepiscopal see. His successor, Ishmael, was a suffragan of St. Teilo of Llandaff.

A third, and very important work was done at the synod at Llanddewi Brefi. This was the drawing up of a code of canon law, which became the acknowledged canon law of the country, being recognised as such by the famous Hywel Dda in his celebrated code. These decrees, written in David's own handwriting, and ratified by the council which he shortly afterwards called together at Caerleon, afterwards known by the name of the Council of Victory, were confirmed by the Sovereign Pontiff. David's copy was long preserved among the archives

of his cathedral at St. David's, but was at length destroyed, along with other records, by Danish pirates.

Father Nedelec, however, the learned author of *Cambria Sacra*, considers that their general purport may be gathered from the *Liber Landavensis*. The chief matters treated of would doubtless be, he remarks, the independence of the church in ecclesiastical matters; the right of sanctuary, so needful in those disorderly times, and among a people so quarrelsome and passionate; the settlement of disputes without bloodshed, as far as possible; and the regulation of judicial administration.

Such was the celebrated council of Llanddewi Brefi; a council surpassed, in importance and in its results, by no other British council, either secular or ecclesiastical; inasmuch as it settled, for many centuries, the main lines of ecclesiastical law.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEATH OF ST. DAVID.

FEW details have reached us of David's career as Archbishop. From this fact alone we may conclude that the later years of the saint's life were years of comparative peace, at least in Western Britain.

Tradition says that David held the archiepiscopal dignity for sixty years. This is no doubt a mistake, arising from this period having been confounded with the whole period intervening between the time of his receiving episcopal consecration at Rome and his death. This confusion may also have led to the tradition that he attained the extraordinary age of 147 years.

That David attained a very great age may, however, be accepted, I think, as an undoubted fact; and the venerable patriarch is described by his biographers as the object of the reverential affection not only of all the people of his own country, but of the Irish also.

His death, which took place on a Wednesday, the 1st March (probably about the year A.D. 544) is said to have been preceded and accompanied by many marvellous circumstances. In the first place, on the preceding Wednesday, when the saint was in the church, engaged with his monastic children in the celebration of the divine office, a voice was heard thus addressing him: "The day which thou hast long desired has come at length, and after one week more thy Lord shall come to take thee to thy reward." And the monks, we are told, bent to the ground with awe, heard the archbishop reply: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word."

The report of this quickly spread, and great numbers of people from all parts of Wales, and even from Ireland, gathered together in Glyn Rhosyn to take their last look at their beloved pastor, to hear his last words, and to receive his bless-

The report of this quickly spread, and great numbers of people from all parts of Wales, and even from Ireland, gathered together in Glyn Rhosyn to take their last look at their beloved pastor, to hear his last words, and to receive his blessing once more.

During the whole of the week David spent almost all his time in the church, near the altar he loved so well. Sweet voices, too, as of angel visitants, were continually heard; harmonies as of celestial music, and odours of the most delicious fragrance filled the air; until, at length, the appointed day arrived, and David's holy soul passed away, borne, it was fondly believed, by his beloved Master Himself, and accompanied by choirs of the heavenly hosts. At the moment of his departure, it is said, St. Kentigern, in his distant home, beheld, while he knelt before the altar in prayer, a bright form, as of some happy spirit, passing heavenwards; and knew that his teacher and his friend had gone to his rest.

St. David, as we know, was not less honoured after his death than he had been during his life. His abode in the far West soon became the resort of many pilgrims, by whose gifts his shrine, and the beautiful temple which soon arose in his honour, were enriched. Monarchs and princes vied with each other in doing honour to his memory; and to the poor he was for ages a beloved father and advocate in heaven.

On each succeeding recurrence of his festival his story was told from a thousand pulpits; in those monasteries of the olden time, whose ivy-wreathed ruins still adorn the valleys and hill-sides of Wales, his monastic children heard the legend read day by day as they sat at the refectory table; and in the labourer's cot by the winter fireside the same beautiful story was told. And if the story has come down to us with some of those accretions, which are the inevitable consequence of traditional history, nevertheless there stands out from all, the picture of a life pure, holy, and Christ-like; and even those additions, which we must attribute to mistake or exaggeration, are but the natural result of the simple faith of a people, who, seeing the beauty and holiness of the saint's life and character, could not think that God would refuse anything to honour one who had loved and served Him so well.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF SOME OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT EVENTS
OF THE 5TH AND 6TH CENTURIES

- 387 Birth of St. Patrick
- 409 Final Departure of the Romans from Britain
- 409 - 432 Departure of the family of Cunedda Gwledig
from North Britain
- 410 - 432 St. Ninias in Galloway
- 429 First visit of Germanus to Britain
- 432 St. Patrick commences his Irish mission
- 444 Death of St. Martin of Tours
- 447 Second visit of Germanus
- 450 Arrival of Hengist and Horsa. St. Brigit born
- 455 Death of St. Germanus
- 462 Death of St. David (?)
- 493 Death of St. Patrick
- 494 Battle of Badon Hill
- 512 Teilo becomes Bishop of Llandaff
- 519 Synod of Llandewi Brefi
- 521 Birth of St. Columba
- 522 Death of Dubricius
- 537 Battle of Camlan. Death of Arthur
- 540 - 560 Kentigern's exile
- 544 Death of St. David (?)
- 565 Columba begins his Scottish mission
- 596 Arrival of St. Augustine