

Augustin's death, or that immediately preceding, that Mellitus and Justus, members of the legation which had brought Gregory's scheme to England, received consecration at the Archbishop's hands to the sees of London and Rochester respectively. Of these, Rochester was in the kingdom of Kent, and London immediately under Kentish influence, being at that time ruled by Sabert, Ethelbert's nephew. These were the only two Bishops consecrated by Augustin, with the exception of Laurentius, whom he fixed upon as his own successor, and consecrated with that view probably some years earlier, lest the Church should be for a moment deprived by his death of its proper guardianship. The reasons for his deviating so completely and at once from the plan proposed; were, firstly, that King Ethelbert, by whose sanction the English Church had been established, would not, under any circumstances, have suffered the primacy to be removed from his own capital; for this would have been to deprive the mother see of Canterbury of its leading position. Nor, in the next place, would it have been safe to do so; for Christianity had a very weak hold upon the affections of the people of London, and seems to have been rather imposed upon them by Ethelbert's authority than voluntarily embraced. For at the death of Sabert, we find the kingdom of the East Saxons, under his sons, lapsing at once into paganism, and the bishop ejected from his see. The spirit of disaffection extended also to Rochester and Canterbury after Augustin's death, for Justus accompanied Mellitus on his flight into Gaul; and Laurentius intended to have followed them, but was deterred by the timely conversion of the lapsed Eadbald, Ethelbert's successor in Kent. To this event the salvation of the English Church at this time may, humanly speaking, be attributed. He recalled Mellitus and Justus, and restored the latter to his see; but the people of London successfully resisted the reinstatement of Mellitus, the new King's influence not being, like Ethelbert's, sufficiently powerful to impose a Christian bishop on a mainly pagan population. About the time of Augustin's death occurred the persecution, if such it may be called, which Bede notices as fulfilling the primate's denunciation on the contumacious British Church for rejecting his proposals. There is no reason to suppose either that Augustin was in any way concerned in the massacre of British priests said to have taken place at this time, or that the event can properly be regarded as a fulfilment of his prediction. For Augustin's words contained merely a general denunciation of God's vengeance on what the Archbishop regarded as an impious refusal to join the mission in preaching to the Angles; whilst the monks of Bangor were slain in a moment of irritation for having appeared on the battle-field to aid their countrymen by their prayers, or, as the enemy interpreted the