

the Roman invasion in being not a single concentrated effort of an Imperial power, but a succession of isolated attacks at different points and different times by warlike tribes, politically independent though akin in race. The disciplined legions of Rome achieved the subjugation of the island in 41 years; the English conquest occupied more than 150 years, and they were years of continuous warfare. It was only in 613 that by the great victory of Æthelfrith, of Northumbria, under the walls of Chester, the Britons were forced across the Dee; and it was fifty years more before the final settlement of the country by the invaders was effected. Indeed the Welsh claim that not until the death of Cadwalader in 681, did the crown of the kingdom pass from the Britons to the Saxons.

Throughout these troubled times, from the departure of Germanus in 449 to the landing of St. Augustine in 597, the information we have of the British Church is very scanty; but we can understand the state of violence and lawlessness which prevailed through the country outside the influence of the Church. The Teutonic invaders were merciless and savage, and they were heathen. As they carried their warfare through the land they ruthlessly destroyed the churches and monasteries and slaughtered or drove away the Christian priests and people. As the tide of conquest rolled on, the defenceless Britons were forced back before it, and step by step retired for safety into the mountainous district of Wales and the more inaccessible wilds of Cornwall.

THE BRITISH CHURCH IN WALES.

So that by the time which we have reached, the whole of England, except this last named county, had relapsed entirely into heathenism and the ancient Church of Britain, was shut up, in isolation, in Wales and Cornwall. Here it survived, maintained the Faith in incorruptness, consolidated its organization and founded the Welsh Dioceses as they exist to-day. But it does not come within the purview of our subject to follow its fortunes.

The question, however, naturally presents itself, Did the British Church take no steps, put forth no efforts, to win over their heathen conquerors to the Faith? They have been blamed for their inactivity in this respect. Their answer was, that the fierce hostility of these cruel foes made it impossible to attempt their conversion. As late as 550 to 560 Ida, "the flame bearer," was carrying fire and sword through the whole centre of the island. Any effort on the borders of Wales was out of the question. The ferocity of their implacable enemies kept the fugitives close prisoners within their sanctuary. Even in the eighth century, any attempt of the Welsh to cross Offa's dyke was punished with mutilation.

It must not be supposed from this that the British Church had lost her missionary spirit or failed to vindicate her missionary character. On the contrary, though compelled to inactivity in one direction, she struck out her energies in another;

restrained from attempting the conversion of England, she sent her missionaries into Ireland and Scotland, and laid the foundations of that great movement which finally accomplished what the Roman Mission failed to do.

To this Welsh origin of the Celtic Missions we shall have to recur in the proper place.

The length of time which it took for the Anglo-Saxons to effect the conquest of England, is evidence of the obstinate determination with which the Britons defended their homes and altars. It has been said that, in all the world-wide struggles between the Teuton and Latin races, no land was so stubbornly fought for or so hardly won as Britain. It was specially in defence of their churches that they fought to the death, rather than by flying, leave them to be desecrated, plundered and burnt, which was the certain fate they would receive at the hands of the Anglo-Saxons. The last to stand by their sees were Theon, Bishop of London, and Thadioc, Bishop of York: but when the country had wholly relapsed into paganism, and all was lost, they too were compelled to follow their fellow Christians into the retirement of the West.

ANGLO-SAXON PAGANISM.

The conversion of the new nation thus established in England being denied to the British Church, the blessing of attempting it was accorded to the Church of Rome, and the providence by which the door was opened for the entrance of religion is one of the remarkable compensations of history. The English, like all the Teutonic tribes, had fallen away from the religious beliefs and restraints of their ancestors and had sunk into the lowest type of brutal savagery and sensuality. While retaining the professed worship of their national deities, they had lost the old reverence for the spiritual world and debased their conceptions of the gods to the level of their own earthliness. Woden was a god to be propitiated with human sacrifices; Freya, the goddess of unhallowed love; Thor's symbol was the hammer with which to crush the heads of his enemies; and the Valhalla—the immortality of their nobles and warriors—was but the intensified continuance of the slaughter and debauchery which was their ideal of happiness in this world. This cruel and inhuman disposition displayed itself in the character of their traffic in slaves. They did not confine it to captives in war or serfs enslaved by law, but extended it to their own kin, selling their nearest and dearest when a pretext could be found, to be disposed of in the market places of Europe. It was this outrage on the very laws of nature which God chose to be the prime moving cause which eventuated in the liberation of the land into the freedom of Christ.

(To be continued.)

THERE are few mortals so insensible that their affection cannot be gained by mildness, their confidence by sincerity, their hatred by scorn or neglect.