

the forests of central and southern Gaul. The population, terror-stricken at the sight, and fleeing from destruction, halted for a moment in a beautiful valley. A Druid priest met them and ordered them, if they valued this safety, to offer a sacrifice. The victims were burned on a sacred stone and the conflagration ceased. Paray (*par*, fire and *cid*, stone) was the very place where this marvellous event took place. Modern writers see in it a presage of the future destiny of the spot, whence a sacred fire bursting from the Heart of Jesus should quench the universal conflagration of impiety and sensualism.

It was not till the tenth century that documents begin to give precise data of Paray, although it is certain that it was prominent long before that time, for when Lambert de Chalon founded the Benedictine monastery there in 973, the hamlet had already a civic organization. The Virgin Mother of God was even then the recognized Patroness of the place: Our Lady of Romay having been the object of special veneration there from the first centuries of Christianity.

The establishment of the monks of Cluny was the beginning of a new era for Paray-le-Monial, (as it began to be named) and for the world; for the Burgundian Abbey harbored within its walls, and formed for the Church, men who have left their mark on the history of the world. The names of the Hildebrand, Gregory VII., Urban II., Pascal II., and a multitude of other saints and scholars, justify the claim of the Burgundian abbey to the title, shared by so many other monasteries at the time, of cradle of modern civilization.

The basilica of the Sacred Heart attached to the abbey is one of the noblest specimens of monastic churches which dot that portion of France. It was there that the holy monks adored God in their favorite devotion to the Blessed Eucharist, and chanted their psalms, during the long centuries down to 1789, when the Revolution savagely drove them from their beloved cells and closed their home to them forever.