

venience which they needed. Arriving at the place of their destination, they met with a more welcome reception, and greater success, than they expected. A royal female gave the missionaries every possible assistance. This was the excellent Bertha, who had been married to Ethelbert, now King of Kent, one of the most wise and powerful of the Saxon Princes. She was the only daughter of Caribert, King of Paris, a descendant of Clovis. On her marriage it was stipulated that she should be permitted to make free profession of Christianity, in which she had been educated. She brought over with her a French bishop to the Court of Durovernum, now Canterbury. Her principles were firm and sound; her conduct was worthy of the Christian name; and her influence over her husband was considerable. Her zealous piety aided the cause, and promoted that attention which had already begun to be drawn to the gospel before the arrival of the Romish missionaries.

Ethelbert assigned to Augustine a habitation in the Isle of Thanet. Proceeding to the King, they informed him that they were come to bring to him the best tidings in the world, eternal life to those who received them, with the living and true God. After some days Ethelbert paid them a visit, and at his desire they preached to him and his attendants the word of life; upon which the King remarked:—"They are fine words and promises which ye bring; but because they are new and uncertain, I cannot afford any assent to them, nor relinquish those religious practices which I myself, together with all the English nation, have for so long a time observed. But as ye are come hither from a great distance, and as I seem to discover that ye are willing to communicate to us those things which ye believe to be true and most excellent, we are not willing disturb

you, but rather to receive you in a friendly manner, and to afford you what may be necessary for your support; nor do we hinder you from uniting all, whom ye can persuade by preaching, to the faith of your religion."

Such a declaration was honourable to the Prince, and the spirit of it was favourable to the object of the missionaries and the cause of truth. He gave them a residence in the royal city of Canterbury. Ethelbert, a prudent and sensible ruler, though not yet convinced of the truth of Christianity, saw no suspicious mark in the language or conduct of the preachers; they spake with an earnestness which shewed their own conviction of the excellency of their doctrine, and the importance of their message. The knowledge of Christianity was widely diffused by this means to a great extent, and many, there is reason to believe, became real converts to the faith of the gospel, and adorned its doctrines by a holy life, while the King himself made an open profession of his belief in Christianity, and exerted himself to promote it. Although the church of Rome was not then so corrupt or so secular as it afterwards became, and although the godly sincerity of Gregory himself, as well as Augustine and his monks, cannot reasonably be doubted, yet the seed of evil had begun to work; and much that was merely nominal, and some things that were superstitious, mingled themselves with the progress of the truth. Many of the Romish ceremonials were introduced, and considerable pomp displayed, and undue power over the ancient British Christians was assumed. Pretences to miracles were soon put forward and allowed, and relics were sent over, which, in some instances, were regarded with foolish reverence and admiration. Still these missionaries brought with them the Christian doctrine of salva-