

once a trait of national character and a proof that the exploits of Alfred are not mythical. By the treaty of Wedmore, the north-eastern part of England became the portion of the Dane, where he was to dwell in peace with the Saxon people, and in allegiance to their king, but under his own laws—an arrangement which had nothing strange in it when law was only the custom of the tribe. As a part of the compact, Guthorm led over his Northmen from the allegiance of Odin to that of Christ, and was himself baptized by the Christian name of Athelstan. Where religions were national, or rather tribal, conversions were tribal, too.

The Northmen of East Anglia had not so far put off their heathen propensities or their savage perfidy as to remain perfectly true to their covenant: but, on the whole, Alfred's policy of compromise and assimilation was successful. A new section of heathen Teutonism was incorporated into Christendom, and England absorbed a large Norse population, whose dwelling-place is still marked by the names of places and perhaps in some measure by the features and character of the people. In the fishermen of Whitby, for example, a town with a Danish name, there is a peculiarity which is probably Scandinavian.

Alfred had rescued the country. But the country which he had rescued was a wreck. The Church, the great organ of civilization as well as of spiritual life, was ruined. The monasteries were in ashes. The monks of St. Cuthbert were wandering from place to place, with the relics of the great northern Saint. The worship of Woden seemed on the point of returning. The clergy had exchanged the missal and censer for the battle-axe, and had become secularized and brutalized by the conflict. The learning of the order was dead. The Latin language, the tongue of

the Church, of literature, of education, was almost extinct. Alfred himself says that he could not recollect a priest, south of the Thames, who understood the Latin service or could translate a document from the Latin when he became king. Political institutions were in an equal state of disorganization. Spiritual, intellectual, civil life—everything was to be restored: and Alfred undertook to restore everything.

No man in these days stands alone, or towers in unapproachable superiority above his fellows. Nor can any man now play a' l the parts. A division of labour has taken place in all spheres. The time when the missionaries at once converted and civilized the forefathers of European Christendom, when Charlemagne or Alfred was the master spirit in everything, has passed away, and with it the day of hero-worship, of rational hero-worship, has departed, at least for the European nations. The more backward nations may still need, and have reason to venerate, a Peter the Great.

Alfred had to do everything almost with his own hands. He was himself the inventor of the candle-clock which measured his time, so unspeakably precious, and of the lantern of transparent horn which protected the candle-clock against the wind in the tent, or the lodging scarcely more impervious to the weather than a tent, which in those times sheltered the head of wandering royalty. Far and wide he sought for men, like a bee in quest of honey, to condense a somewhat prolix trope of his biographer. An embassy of bishops, priests, and religious laymen, with great gifts, was sent to the Archbishop of Rheims, within whose diocese the famous Grimbold resided, to persuade him to allow Grimbold to come to England, and with difficulty the ambassadors prevailed. Alfred