

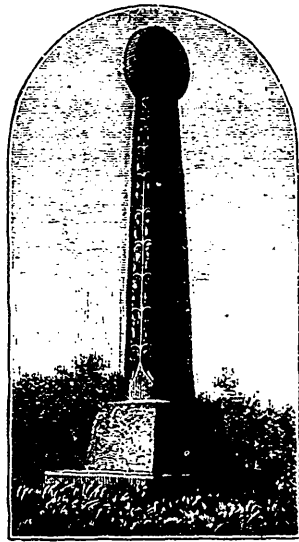
Richborough Castle on the mainland is in full view, so that strange arrivals would be safe from surprise. If the Saxon chiefs brought the race which was to rule England and conquer half the world, the Italian monk brought learning, civilisation, and Christianity, the forces that were to strengthen the wild iron of the Saxon invaders, and to turn it into the polished steel of the modern world.

The story of St. Gregory and the English slave-boys, "not Angles, but angels," is known to every one, but it was not till ten years after that scene in the Roman slave-market, that the way was opened for St. Augustine's coming, and even then he shrank from the dangerous journey and from the wild warriors of England, and twice implored Gregory to let him return. But Gregory stood firm, and bade Augustine go forward trusting in God, and win the new country to the Church.

Richborough had been the Roman fort and garrison town, and was probably still the usual landing-place, as it protected the Roman road to Canterbury; but Augustine preferred a safe position on the Island of Thanet, until he knew how the Kentish king would receive him. But the king was willing to give the monks their opportunity. Ethelbert had married a French Christian princess, who had probably smoothed the way for the missionaries; and though he feared to meet Augustine under a roof, lest enchantments should trouble him, he was willing enough to have an interview with him in the open air. According to Dean Stanley, the meeting between Augustine and Ethelbert took place in Thanet, possibly near Ebbsfleet, though more probably under an oak which grew in the centre of the island. Here the monk, speaking through an interpreter, explained his mission to the king, who gave him permission to teach and preach, and make converts if he could. It is likely that it was Queen Bertha's influence which made her husband so ready to listen to Christianity, and after that interview the way was clear for the missionaries. They were allowed to go to Canterbury, where lodgings were provided for them, and where the tiny church of St. Martin outside the walls served them for a place of worship. Before very long the king was converted

and baptized, and before the year was out, his example was followed by some ten thousand of his warriors.

Ebbsfleet was only a halting-place, and the story soon moves on to more populous places; but the rock on which St. Augustine first set foot was long preserved and venerated. But while Canterbury was the seat of the archbishopric, and while the two great monasteries of Christ Church, and St. Peter and St. Paul, generally known as St. Augustine's, were growing grander and better every year, the land-



CROSS AT EBBSFLEET, ERECTED TO COMMEMORATE THE LANDING OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

ing-place was so nearly forgotten that the rock was called St. Mildred's Rock, after a popular royal saint. A little chapel was built over it, and it became a place for pilgrimage, and retained its later name till the end of last century. By that time the chapel had disappeared, and the place was marked by a very old tree; but it remained for our generation to raise a lasting monument on the spot, which must be of deep interest to every English Churchman.

A tall Iona cross, with figures in relief, was erected in 1884. On the side facing the sea are medallions of the Virgin and Child standing on a curiously twisted serpent, of the Cruci-