

the ancient paganism in the North, both of Ireland and Scotland, long before Augustine arrived on the southern coast of England with the peculiar dogmas of the Church of Rome. It was no blind enthusiasm, but transcendent genius, that built in the far North the institutions of Iona and Bangor, the latter of which had at one time between one and two thousand students, attracted from every part of Europe, and who were sent back to be the planters of a new order of affairs in France, Germany and Switzerland. The England of to-day, independent in its faith, owes much more than ordinary historians admit to the sagacity of the early British Christians, whose hearts felt the prophetic touch of that wisdom which has made Protestant Christendom the dominant type of the world's civilization.

Augustine's mission to Kent is credited with being one of the masterpieces of statecraft in its era. Gregory, who inaugurated it, had, before he was made pope, attained such repute for diplomatic ability that he was chosen to be the arbiter between emperors in the strife of their subtle ambition.

The English Winfred, afterward Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, a worthy compeer of Charles Martel. The latter might hammer the Northern nations to pieces, but it needed the genius and enterprise of the former to remold them, to organize society after the new model, and thus conserve the conquests of the sword. It required amazing executive ability to organize and give permanent operation to the monasteries which sprang up at every advantageous point amid the forests of Germany. Well does Maclear say: "The Sees of Salzburg and Freisingen, of Regensburg and Passau, testified to his care of the Church of Bavaria; the See of Erfurt told of labors in Thuringia, that of Buraburg in Hessa, that of Wurzburg in Franconia; while his metropolitan See at Mentz, having jurisdiction over Worms and Spire, Tongres, Cologne and Utrecht, was a sign that, even before his death, the German Church had already advanced beyond its first missionary stage."

Of the abuses of the monastic system we are well aware. Many of the inmates of monasteries would have developed a healthier piety in private homes, and been more useful in the ordinary circles of social life. Too often the exclusive duties and narrow studies of the monks generated fanaticism; while their herding together, and consciousness of power through organization, led them to courses which were disgraceful to themselves and hurtful to society. This is true, however, chiefly of monasteries when not sanctified by the missionary spirit, but where men were led to seek seclusion for its own sake, in city cells or caves in the desert. On the other hand, the institution, when used as an agency for the dissemination of Christian truth among pagans, was one of consummate wisdom. Instead of leaving solitary heralds of the Cross to make their way with only the proclamation of gospel doctrines, the monasteries brought the practical exhibition of the superiority of Christian civilization to those who had been ignorant of it. In the midst of pagan hordes, living in semi-barbarism, rose the walls of a commodious, often stately, pile, planned by the best architectural skill of the age. The members of the brotherhood were not, as a rule, the aged, the weak, the timid, but the young and energetic. Hundreds of monks—at Fulda, under the great-hearted Sturm, over four thousand—were gathered into the new community. Forests were cleared, waste lands drained, useful arts practiced and taught to the pagan natives, the fine arts cultivated, and learning pursued in all branches then open to inquiry; while, most prominently, religion was exalted as the promoter of all this thrift and beneficence. Montalembert does not throw a false color into his picture when he says of these monks, that simplicity, benignity, and joy transformed their exile from the world