

at feasts, the harp was passed from one to another that they might sing in turn, as he saw it coming towards him, he would go away from the table.

One night when he had done this, he went out to the stable where his cattle were, and when he had cared for them he went to sleep. In his sleep he saw One standing by him, who said, "Caedmon, sing me something." Caedmon answered, "I cannot sing, and that is why I left the feast and came out here, because I could not sing." Then He who spoke to him said: "Nevertheless, you shall sing songs to Me." "What must I sing?" asked Caedmon. "Sing about the beginning of creation," replied the other.

Then Caedmon began to sing, in his sleep, and the words that he sang were something like these: "Now we must praise the Maker of the heavenly Kingdom, the power and wisdom of the Creator, and the deeds of the Father of Glory. He it was, the Eternal God, who was the author of all wonderful works. He is the Almighty Guardian of all men, and He made first the heavens to be the covering of their dwelling places, and next the earth."

When Caedmon woke, he remembered the words which he had sung in his dream, and he went on making more verses like them, in words worthy to sing the praise of God. In the morning he went to his master and told him of the new power that had been given to him. He was taken before the abbess, and he told his dream and repeated his verses to her and to the learned men who were with her. When they heard him, they all said that God had given him the gift of song; and they read and explained to him a passage from the Bible, telling him to turn it into verse, if he could. The next day he brought the passage they had given him turned into excellent English verse.

Then the Abbess was very glad, and she ordered Caedmon to leave his cattle, and to come into the monastery and be one of the brothers. And there he learned all the sacred history, and studying it and meditating over it, made such beautiful verses about it, and sang them so sweetly, that his teachers in their turn learned from him. He sang about the creation of the world, and of man; all the history in the book of Genesis; the coming out of Egypt of the children of Israel and their entrance into the promised land, and many other stories from the Old Testament. Also, he sang about the birth of Our Saviour, and His Death and Resurrection; of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the Apostles. He made other songs, too, about God's

mercy and justice, about heaven and hell, and the judgment day. All these songs he made in English so that the unlearned people could understand them. And in everything that he sang he tried to persuade men to turn away from sin, to love what was holy, and to try to lead good lives. And many men learned by his songs to hate evil, and desire goodness. He is the first English poet who sang of holy things.

Others of the English nation after him, says an old history writer, tried to compose religious poems, but none could equal him, for he learned not the art of poetry from man, but by God's grace he received the free gift of song.

Caedmon died about the year 680. "He made a fair ending of his life," says the old historian. He was ill for a fortnight, but went about all the time, so that no one thought he was going to die. But one evening he asked to have a bed ready for him in the house where people were taken when they were dying. After he lay down, he talked happily with his friends; after midnight he asked to be given the Holy Communion. Then he asked everyone present if they were in charity with him. They said that they were, and asked him the same question. He answered, "I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God." Then he wanted to know how near the time was when the brothers should wake to sing praises to God. They said: "It is not far off." He said: "It is well, let us wait for that hour". And with holy words on his lips, he fell into a quiet sleep, from which he never woke.

Thus it came to pass, we read in the story of his life, that as he had served the Lord with a simple and pure mind, and quiet devotion, so he now departed to behold His presence, leaving the world by a quiet death; and that tongue, which had uttered so many wholesome words in praise of the Creator, spoke its last words also in His praise.

Thanksgiving Day this year will be on Monday, November 9th, King Edward's Birthday. Every teacher ought, as Thanksgiving day approaches, to draw some special attention to it. Tell the pupils stories of the day and how it was observed in the past. Teach the ninety-fifth Psalm. Have short reading from poems and prose on the *thought* of thanksgiving. Show how dependent we are on the summer's abundance for a supply for winter. Display, and have short talks upon, the principal fruits and vegetables of autumn. Have small bunches of grasses, wheat, oats, and other grains, neatly tied and hung about the room.