

northern Picts by Columba; so that the chain of circumstances favourable to the establishment of a Saxon Church in Britain, or, as we may, at last, call it, the Church of England, continued unbroken, almost from the first landing of the German invaders on its shores. Between the marriage of Bertha to Ethelbert and the arrival of Augustin, a period of twenty-seven years, there was something like a regular Christian establishment in the kingdom of Kent: for a Gallic bishop and his suite had been allowed to accompany the new Queen to England, and an old Roman Church at Canterbury, then in a dilapidated state, was put into repair for her use, and affords, most probably, the earliest instance on record of church restoration. We are warranted by these facts, in supposing that some converts were made amongst her husband's subjects, through Bertha's influence; and thus a partial knowledge of the principles of Christianity would, probably, be imparted to the neighbouring kingdoms. In this way, a great obstacle to its subsequent acceptance by the Saxons, was removed. Christianity was no longer an unknown or baneful superstition, whose credentials had to be jealously examined before Augustin could be allowed to set foot upon our shores; not unknown, for it was, in a manner, the established religion of the court; not baneful, for it was professed by the Princess, whose virtue and piety were as conspicuous as her position nearest to the throne of Ethelbert. In fact, the true faith had begun to reassert its natural supremacy, before it was formally offered to the Saxons. In theology, no less than in the more exact sciences, wonder and enquiry, as a matter of course, precede, but, no less certainly, lead to acceptance of the truth. And this advantage must be taken into account in estimating Augustin's success. At the period now reached, immediately before his arrival, the Church in Britain may be roughly classified as consisting of:—1st, the native British Church, confined within comparatively narrow limits, but comprising nearly the whole of the modern Welsh counties, together with Cornwall, Somerset, and part of Devonshire; 2nd, the Scottish Church, an offshoot from the British, but not identical with it; and 3rd, the small congregation at Canterbury, a nucleus for the propagation of Christianity throughout the Saxon dominions.

*(To be continued.)*

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