

subjects, among others, as to the course to be adopted by him in his intercourse with the bishops of Gaul and Britain. He was informed by Gregory that all of the British bishops were committed to him—the ignorant for instruction, the weak for persuasive confirmation, and the perverse for authority. It will be seen, therefore, that even in that early day the Pope claimed a sort of lordship over the native bishops. But while we must admit the Pope made the claim, it is also well to see how the native British bishops regarded it. There is, fortunately, an anecdote preserved in the pages of the Venerable Bede which sheds no little light on the point, especially when it is remembered that Bede, who records the story, was himself a devoted adherent of the Pope. The story is this: Some time after his arrival in England, Augustine, being desirous of consolidating and extending his authority, repaired to the confines of Wales and sought an interview with the native British bishops. The place of meeting was afterwards known as "Augustine's Oak." The influence of Ethelbert was used in bringing the parties together, and Augustine declared his principal object to be no other than to secure the co-operation of the British bishops in the great work of converting the Saxons: but he qualified