

Original Poetry.

THE MARTYRDOM OF IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, A. D., 107.

I.

From Scythia and from Dacia
Behold Trajanus come!
And in the distance, swelling loud,
Hark the tumultuous hum!
The tramp of marching thousands,
Their eagles in the air,
The clarion sound of victory—
'Twas a scene superbly fair!

II.

For the fierce Nomads of the East
Beneath the conqu'ring hand
Of Roman Cæsar trembled,
And fled before his brand,
And now he comes in triumph,
And his heart is swell'd with pride,
As he views the thronging multitude—
The city's outpoured tide.

III.

For to-day the streets of Antioch
A moving mass are seen,—
In welcome rises their acclaim,
Gleams th' Imperial purple's sheen;
And anon high thanks are offered
To the martial gods of Rome,
That Trajan safe returneth
To a now more stable throne.

IV.

But yet he leaves not Asia
For Palatium's royal hall;
For foemen worthy of his steel
Still spurn the Roman thrall:
The Parthian bounds along his hills,
As unsubdued and free
As dashed at first the billows
When God poured out the sea.

V.

Ah, well knows ev'ry legion
That archer's glance of fire,
The lightning rush of his champing steed—
How swift he can retire;
And in the flight how heavily
Falls the well-aimed arrowy shower;
How fiercely glad, he the fray renews
With renovated power.

VI.

And need have the Paynim vassals
Their idols' shrines to throng,—
To ask that the Cæsar's arm
In battle may be strong.
On a thousand altars reeks
The blood of sacrifice;
The smokes of thousand censers
In grateful odours rise.

VII.

And hastes each eager patriot
To pile the incense high,—
His loyalty to manifest,
His faith to testify.
Oh, cruel faith, ensanguined,
By tumult maddened then,—
It glared with eyes of slaughter
On holy Christened men!

VIII.

Because they feared with holy fear
The High and Lofty One,
Nor durst they worship anything
Save His high name alone.

IX.

Then dragged to idol altars,
They are told to bend the knee,
To offer incense to the gods,
Or else—'tis misery:
To swear by Cæsar's fortune—
Thus the emperor adore (1);—
But the Cross they trace on the open brow,
And the faint are weak no more.

X.

Oh, pure and calm the scorn
With which they hear the words
Of flattery base, of servile praise,
To the pagans' many lords;
And He, the mocked and crucified—
They glory in His Cross,
And tell the wild and raving crew,
All else besides is dross.

XI.

Full well the saints of Antioch
Maintain the honoured NAME
First called on them (2), and still confessed,
Despite th' offence and shame.
But for a worthier, nobler prey,
Than these poor hunted Sheep—
Their old and holy Bishop—
The persecutors seek.

XII.

Thro' many a day of fury,
Thro' many a tyrant's reign (3),
In persecution often,
He 'scaped the fiery pain;
And well that church he rul'd
And wise, with prudent care,
Lest any for whom Christ had died
His faithlessness declare.

XIII.

And like a skilful pilot,
By helm of prayer and fast,
By truth divine and lab'ring love,
Through every raging blast,—
And thro' the foaming ocean
Of heathen fury dark,
He steered towards the haven bright,
His tossed and beaten Ark.

(1) That these were the customary trials to which those accused of Christianity were exposed, is plain, from the famous letter of Pliney to Trajan (Plus. Ep. x. 97). He adds: "It is said that those who are truly Christians cannot be forced to do any of these things."

(2) "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts xi. 26.

(3) Ignatius, we are told, was ordained on the death of Euodius as bishop of Antioch A.D. 70, and was martyred 107; and so lived in the reigns of Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan. Of these Domitian was as fierce a persecutor as Nero. But though his edicts against the Christians were rescinded by his successor, yet popular clamours, excited by what Moshim calls "a bloody priest-hood," were often nearly as destructive.

XIV.

For well knew good IGNATIUS
The price of human soul,—
Beyond the treasures scattered
"From Indus to the pole:"
That great was the mercy
Of Him who for us bled,
So direful fell His anger
On idol shepherd's (1) head.

XV.

And so, for sake of weakly lambs,
Ill-grounded in the faith,
And unendued with courage
To face the bitter death,—
He thanked the Lord of heaven,
Whenever peace he gave,
And joyed to see his children
Escape a gory grave.

XVI.

But what brought joy to others,
To him was not relief—
For, oh, he loved the blessed CHRIST
Beyond our poor belief!
He longed (2) a holy holo-caust
In flames of love to glow;
For ever joined to his Lord,
Estranged from all below.

XVII.

The true disciple's station
He thirsted to attain,
That naught of earthly passion
In him there might remain.
Nor may we greatly wonder;
For John, the man of love,
Inflamed with sacred ardours
By th' celestial Dove,—

XVIII.

Was this great scholar's master, (3)
Had formed his youthful heart,
And taught it well—the richest lore!
Of heavenly love the art.
And after was he strengthened,
Set higher on the Rock,
When blessed Paul (4) ordained him
To see of Antioch.

(To be continued.)

Reviews.

THE LONDON QUARTERLY REVIEW for April, 1852. Leard, Scott & Co. T. Maclear, Agent, Toronto.

We have received this treasure of intellect which contains many items of great general interest, but must postpone their more special consideration to a period of greater leisure.

THE TRUB CATHOLIC, REFORMED PROTESTANT AND FREE. Joseph Robinson, Baltimore.

This ever-welcome periodical is rich in stores of a valuable description to the Churchman. We purpose to draw largely from one of the articles for our pages. It is styled "Epicureanism" and is certainly a masterly exposition of prevailing obstacles to the welfare of the Church, at the present time particularly.

ORIGIN AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE BRITISH CHURCH.

The precise period of the first introduction of Christianity into these islands cannot now be exactly ascertained. It is highly probable, however, if not absolutely certain, from the concurring testimonies of several writers, that Britain was enlightened by a knowledge of the true faith, about the middle, or before the end of the first century.* The foundation of the British Church has indeed been attributed to the apostles themselves; and Bishops Stillington, Burgess, and others, have collected many ancient and unquestionable authorities, to prove that the Gospel was preached in Britain by St. Paul, who is supposed to have passed over here between the year 58, after his imprisonment at Rome, and the year 61, when Boadicea was defeated by the Romans. This opinion is strengthened by the testimony of Gildas the Wise,† who informs us that Christianity was introduced into Britain previous to the latter event. For, having

(1) *Shepherd or Pastor*, in the primitive Church, indicated the highest order of the Ministry, though it is now more loosely applied. "Among whom [the ancients] you shall scarce find the word pastor used, but when they speak of bishops; which form of speech St. Peter taught them (1 Pet. ii. 25), when he joined pastor and bishop in our Saviour.—*Bishop Andrew's De Monumentis on Episcopacy*, in Wordsworth's *Christ. Inst.* vol. 3, p. 234. "Where, I pray, in all the ancient fathers, do you find pastor applied to any but a bishop?"—*Land's Letter to Stratford*, quoted in Wordsworth, *ib.* Bp. J. Taylor proves this at large in his *Treat. on Episcopacy*, sect. 25.

(2) In his *Epis. to the Romans* there are most passionate appeals to this effect. We give a few specimens: "I am willing to die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech you that yet show not an unseasonable good will toward me. Suffer me to be the food of wild beasts, by which I may attain unto God. Then shall I truly be a disciple of Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body."—*ib.* "May I enjoy the wild beasts which are prepared for me, and pray that they may be found ready for me. . . . Now I begin to be a disciple. Let nothing of things either visible or invisible, deprive me of attaching unto Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross, and the compasses of wild beasts, let tearings and rendings, let breakings of bones, and the cutting off of limbs, let the shattering of the whole body, and all the evil torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain unto Jesus Christ."—*ib.* "If this ardent and almost impatient spirit strongly contrasts with Saint Paul's dignified calmness (Philippians i. 23, 24); it must be remembered that Ignatius lived at a period when the blood of the martyrs was appointed to be the seed of the Church; and that if his notions of martyrdom appear to have been exaggerated, he expresses the most perfect resignation, the deepest humility and self-abasement, in speaking of himself. And we cannot but admire the high courage of this worthy successor of the apostles, which, as he passed from Antioch to Rome, as a condemned and degraded criminal, converted his tedious journey into a triumphal procession."—*Chevalier*, *Introd.* to *Clem., Ignat., &c.*

(3) It is commonly said that Ignatius was the disciple of Polycarp, as Polycarp was of St. John. Yet this does not contradict a statement in "The Martyrdom of Ignatius" sect. 3:—"Polycarp, Bp. of Smyrna, who had been his fellow-disciple: for both of them had been instructed by St. John the apostle."

(4) So said in *Apost. Constit.* Book vii. c. 45.

mentioned this defeat, he adds, "In the mean time, Christ, the true Sun, afforded his rays, that is, the knowledge of his precepts, to this island, benumbed with extreme cold, having been at a great distance from the sun; I do not mean the sun in the firmament, but the eternal Sun in heaven." There is also a well founded tradition,‡ which states that Bran the Blessed (father of Caractacus,) having been taken captive to Rome with his son in the year 51, remained there seven years, during which time he embraced Christianity, and on his return to his native land, is said to have imparted this knowledge to his fellow-countrymen. It appears that St. Paul was his contemporary prisoner at Rome, and that they were both released at the same time: it is therefore not unlikely that St. Paul was the very person through whom the British captive became a convert to Christianity, and who probably afterwards induced the apostle to visit his country. But the interesting supposition (if not positive fact,) that the glad tidings of the Gospel were preached in these islands by the great apostle of the Gentiles, is placed almost beyond a doubt by the following united testimonies of St. Jerome, and Clement of Rome.

The former, speaking of St. Paul, mentions, that having been in Spain, "he sailed from one ocean to another; that he imitated the course of the Sun of Righteousness," of whom we read that "His going forth is from one end of heaven to the other, and that the progress of his preaching reached as far as the extremity of the earth." And in another place he states, *even more particularly*, that St. Paul, "after his imprisonment, preached the Gospel in the western parts;" by which expression it is universally admitted the British islands were then understood. Clement of Rome also affirms that St. Paul preached righteousness through the whole world, and for that end travelled to the "utmost bounds of the west," in which undoubtedly the British islands were included, as they were frequently thus designated by the writers of that period. But whether the British Church was planted by one of the apostles, or by one of their immediate successors, it is certain, from the writings of the ancient fathers, Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius, and others, that there were Christian Churches existing in Britain so early as the second century, that is to say, within about a century of the death of the last of the apostles.

The violent persecution which afterwards took place in the reign of Diocletian, about the year of our Lord 303,* rather checked for a time the progress of Christianity, both here and in other parts of the world: for although Constantius Chlorus, who favoured the Christians, had the government of Britain at this time, yet, being no more than Cæsar, he was under the jurisdiction of Diocletian and Maximilian, and obliged to execute their orders. But when the two latter resigned the empire (305.) and Constantius was declared Augustus, the persecution ceased in Britain and other places of the West, where, Eusebius affirms, it did not last two years, though it continued ten in the East. This persecution was the only one that extended to this island; and St. Alban, the first British martyr, was among the number of those who then perished, but whose names have not been handed down to us; for,

"Persecution even here
Sought out and slew them: writ in heaven
Their names unread in human story,
Shine like the morning stars in glory;
In robes of whiteness, freely given,
Palms in their hands, the victor-band
Before the Lamb, their Saviour stand,"

LORD LINDSAY.

Diocletian, thinking by these cruelties to have attained his object of exterminating the Christian religion, caused a monument to be erected, as a memorial of the destruction of Christianity; but within ten years only of this impious act, He who had declared that the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church, and who laughs to scorn the kings of the earth, and the rulers who take counsel against his word, caused Christianity to become, under the protection of Constantine, the acknowledged religion of the Roman Empire! The British Church also then flourished beyond all former times, and such was the importance she had attained in the early part of the fourth century, that her bishops were called upon to assist in the direction of the spiritual affairs of other nations. Three British prelates, the bishops of London, York, and Lincoln, were present at the Council of Arles, in 314.

"We are not, however, to infer that there were no more than three bishops in Britain, because they did not exceed that number at this council: on the contrary, we may rather conclude our prelates were more numerous, since it was the custom to send but one or two out of a province that was best furnished. Indeed, we have no reason to question the succession of bishops here from the first planting of Christianity: for why should we suppose the Church under any particular regulations in this island, and which were nowhere else to be met with? For in the primitive Church, and, indeed, within a few ages of our own (that is to say, for the first fifteen hundred years,) there was no part of the Catholic Church without a succession of bishops which run up to the apostles; for wherever the apostles formed any Churches, they likewise appointed bishops to govern them. Neither was their suc-

cession in the least disputed, their authority questioned, or their subscriptions refused, by the fathers at Arles; which is a clear argument that their character was well vouched, and that they could make out their title from the apostles, as well as the rest of their brethren."||

We have also a striking proof of the independence of the British Church at this period, in the following fact relating to the Council of Arles, the decrees of which it appears, were sent by these prelates to the bishop of Rome, *not to be confirmed*, by him, but that *he might publish them throughout all his diocese*; and in their letter they simply call him "dear brother" and address him by no other title than that of bishop of Rome. They also inform him that they were convened by command of the emperor, and that the sentence they had pronounced was warranted by the "divine commission and the authority of the Church." And then they merely express a wish *that he had been there*, as they *should have been glad of his vote and company*; language which clearly proves that they did not consider him as their supreme head, or that he had any paramount jurisdiction to *confirm or nullify* the acts of the council.

The Councils of Sardica in 347, and of Ariminum in 359, were likewise attended by British prelates; and from this and various other circumstances, it may be fairly presumed they were also present at the famous Council of Nice, which was convened by Constantine about eleven years after the synod of Arles.

The foregoing facts are sufficient to prove that the British Church was founded, if not by one of the apostles, at least within a very short period of the apostolic times; that it was flourishing in the second, third, and fourth centuries; that in the latter her bishops were called upon to assist at different councils, and that they were wholly independent of the bishop of Rome. Indeed *they could not have been otherwise*; as we can show from the writings of the early Fathers (an authority which, to be consistent, the Romanist ought hardly to dispute,) that during the first four centuries all the Churches possessed an equal share of authority, and that there was *then* no attempt on the part of the Roman bishops "to lord it over God's heritage," by pretending to the right of universal supremacy. For instance, in the second century, Tertullian assures us, that by whatever name the bishops of Rome, or elsewhere, chose to be designated, *all the apostolic Churches of his time were independent of each other, and equal in rank and authority*. In the third century, Cyprian also maintains the perfect equality of all bishops, and expresses himself as follows: "Neither hath any one of our bishops constituted himself *episcopus episcoporum*, nor driven his colleagues to the necessity of obedience through servile fear." And in the fourth century, Jerome, declared the Churches of Rome and Britain to be of the "same condition and merit, and pastoral authority, *ejusdem meriti et sacerdotii*." Besides which (as we shall afterward show,) these several rights and privileges were for ever confirmed to each respective diocese by the great council of the whole Christian world, assembled at Ephesus A.D. 431.

It is true, that Rome being in those days, the seat of civil government, the bishops of that see had always, on that account, a certain deference paid them, and were allowed the chief seats in the councils; but they had *no sort of authority or supremacy* over the others, nor the least right to enact laws for them. On the contrary, nothing is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among the primitive Churches.

The history of the British Church is rather obscure during the period which elapsed between the death of Constantine in 337, and the removal of the Roman legions from Britain in 448. But the dreadful ravages of the Picts and Scots which then took place, and the subsequent invasion of the Saxons, compelled the poor natives to devote their attention chiefly to the art of war; and unfortunately, during the struggle which ensued, a spirit of lukewarmness or indifference in matters of religion seems generally to have pervaded the whole nation.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE SAXON INVASION TO THE PERIOD OF THEIR CONVERSION.

The Saxons were heathens and worshipped idols, and the names of some of their gods are still found in our days of the week. These warlike savages having been called over to assist the Britons in repelling the attacks of the Picts and Scots, turned their arms against their employers, and finally made themselves masters of their country. In the mean time misery and desolation were spread on every side. Many of the Christian churches were destroyed, and most of the worshippers driven to the lonely mountains of Wales, or to the coasts of Cornwall. These remote portions of our island thus became the chief asylum of the British Church; and in 587 (about ten years previous to the arrival of Augustine,) Theodosius archbishop of London, and Thaddæus archbishop of York, retired there also with other bishops; and "by their labours so plentifully propagated the Gospel, that they made those parts especially above all others glorious by the multitude of their holy saints and learned teachers." Thus we find Christianity flourished