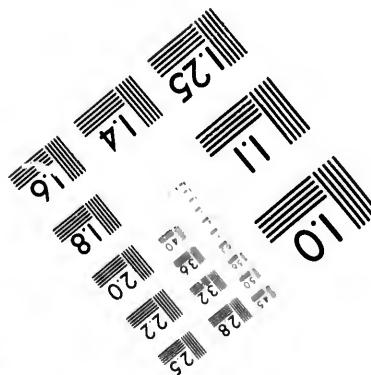
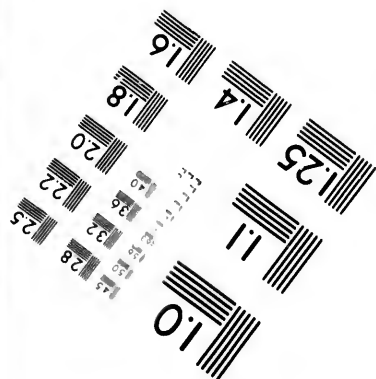
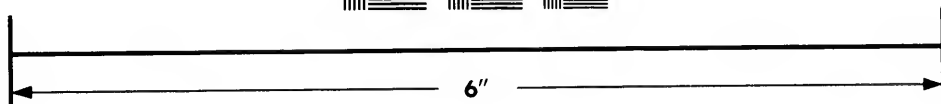
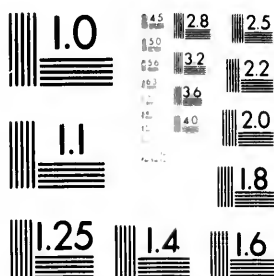


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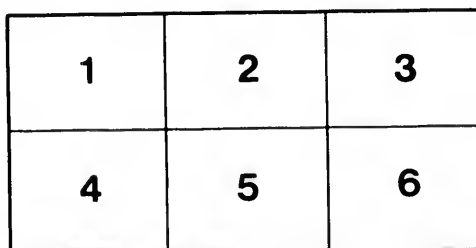
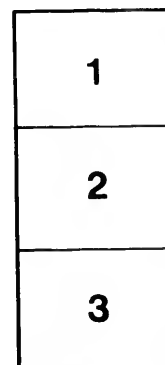
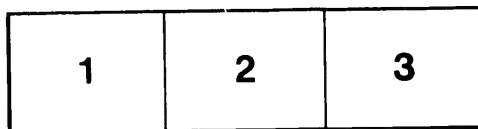
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The Early English Church.

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## The Early English Church.

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In studying the history of the Church of England we go back until we reach the great work of Beda, who is our first authority. But in reading his pages we become aware of the fact that before the Church of England existed there was another Church in Britain and still another in Ireland. By the time of the arrival of the Teutonic invaders, Christianity had extended itself all over the British islands, with the exception of Caledonia. The Angles and Saxons came, and war followed. The Christian Britons were everywhere defeated, and driven out or enslaved. In Gaul, Spain, and Italy the heathen invaders had been christianized by the conquered natives. In Britain it was different. The victors were more savage, the defeated more sullen and implacable. The conquered Britons regarded their enemies with inexorable hate. Between the two there lay a deep gulf which even Christianity could not bridge over. So far from thinking of christianizing his conqueror, the British Christian actually regarded his heathen condition with a feeling of complacency, since it assured him of a

revenge in the future more ample than any which he could take in the present—a new application of the text—"vengeance is mine, I will repay." Till the last the British Christian did nothing toward converting the Anglo Saxons.

This was reserved for the sister, or rather daughter, Church of Ireland, and Mother Church of Rome. In 560 the former sent S. Columba to Caledonia; and in 597 the latter sent S. Augustine to Kent, and out of the labors of these and their successors arose the Church of England.

### **The Ancient British Church.**

That Ancient British Church which appears dimly before us through the mists of our early history, has left but scanty memorials of itself. Legends make mention of the preaching of St. Paul, and of Joseph of Arimathea. Gildas says that Christianity was introduced at the end of the reign of Tiberius. Beda, the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, Nennius, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, say that Pope Eleutherius sent missionaries there at the request of the British King Lucius. Tertullian says that in his time the Gospel had penetrated to Caledonia. It seems likely that Christianity was introduced during the second century. After the battle of the Grampians the Island remained in the undisputed possession of Rome. With Roman civilization it also received that new religion which was extending so rapidly. At the close of the third century



Christians seem to be numerous. Helena, the mother of Constantine, according to good authority, was a Christian of the British Church, and, if so, it was to her that the great Emperor owed that predilection for Christianity which enabled him to revolutionize the world. With him Christianity became the State religion. But before this the British Church had passed through the fires of persecution, and had furnished its martyrs, the chief of whom is St. Alban. Immediately after the peace of the Church delegates were sent from Britain to the first Western Councils. In the beginning of the fifth century a British Christian, Pelagius, disturbed the world with doctrines esteemed heretical; and St. Germanus was sent over from Gaul to preach against them, (430).

In the struggle with the Anglo Saxons the Britons were driven to the West, filling those regions whose names still testify to their occupation—Cornwall, Cambria, or Wales, Cumberland, &c. Many fled to Armorica, now Brittany, in Gaul, which was inhabited by a kindred race; many others to Ireland, which had been Christian for generations. All these Celtic countries exercised a reciprocal influence over each other. All were distinguished by the same qualities, manners, and customs. In them all we see the same enthusiastic attachment to Christianity, the same passionate love of music and poetry, the same devotion to the monastic life, and the same zeal in missionary enterprise.

From amidst the sea of Celtic legend a few names stand forth prominent, as ornaments of the ancient British Church, which deserve a brief mention here, to show what was done by these missionary monks.

First of these is St. Patrick, who was born about 390, in the West of Britain. In early youth he was captured by pirates, and carried as a slave to Ireland, where he remained some years. On his return home he was seized with a consuming desire to preach the gospel to the Irish heathen, and, accordingly, he went back to the land of bondage, where he labored as a missionary with such success that he has ever since been known as the Apostle of Ireland.

Contemporary with St. Patrick was Ninias, the son of a Briton chief, who had studied at Rome. At the end of the 4th century he set forth to preach the Gospel to the Caledonians, a fierce people who were already preparing to burst into Britain. He labored among them for more than thirty years.

There is also Iltud, who lived at the end of the 5th century. He is famous as the founder of Bangor, which became a great centre of Caledonian labor, and of political resistance to the Saxons. His contemporary, St. David, is better known. Like Iltud, he devoted himself to religion and politics, inspired his countrymen to resistance against the Saxons, and founded twelve monasteries.

A little later lived Cadoc, who founded

Llangarvon, the burying place of kings and nobles, and the great monastic school of Cambria. A great many proverbs and aphorisms which are still preserved are attributed to him. His friend Gildas is better known from his Epistle on the destruction of Britain. In this he mentions briefly the conquests of the Saxons, and attributes the defeats of the Britons to their sins. Finally, let mention be made of Kentigern, who lived at the close of the 6th century. He went north to the kingdom of Strath Clyde, which was peopled by mingled Britons and Caledonian Scots, established a centre of missionary labor on the spot where now is Glasgow, and built a church on the place where the Glasgow Cathedral now stands. He was called by the Scots "St. Mungo." While laboring here he received a visit from St. Columba, between whom and himself there was the most cordial friendship and esteem.

The conversion of the English, or Anglo Saxon, is due in part to Ireland and in part to Rome. Of these let us first consider Ireland.

### **The Irish Church and its Missions.**

When St. Patrick went to Ireland he was accompanied by a number of British Monks, and on the conversion of the Irish the British Monks became Bishops of 30 Dioceses. Under the influence of these Cambrian Monks the system of monachism had a great development. Ireland soon became one of the principal centres of

Christianity in the world. In no country were monks so numerous. Whole clans were converted at once, and in many instances all embraced the monastic life. The first great monasteries of Ireland were clans re-organized under the monastic system. At Banghor they numbered 3,000, and at Clonard nearly as many.

In these monasteries there was a vast and continuous development of literary and religious effort. Latin and Greek were studied and spoken. Manuscripts were copied and circulated through Europe. One body of Irish Christians was called Culdees. Some regard these as monks, others as secular orders associated with monks. The extent to which the Irish carried on their mission operations throughout Europe may be estimated from the number of monasteries founded by them :—Scotland, 13, England, 12, France, 36, Germany, 31. Of all these missionary monks the most famous was St. Columba, and it is to this man and his disciples that the Church of England owes the largest debt for its origin.

Columba was born 521, of royal lineage, being descended from King Niall of the nine hostages. He was educated in a monastic school, and while there he determined to devote himself to the religious life. Before the age of 25 he had laboured so vigorously that he had erected no less than 37 monasteries.

His devotion to literature was intense, and was the immediate cause of a complete change in all his life. On one occasion, having been refused

a manuscript which he wished to borrow, he contrived to obtain a copy of it by stealth. The owner brought him before the king, who decided that the copy must be restored. Columba protested against this strange law of copyright, and full of indignation at what he considered an injustice, he raised a civil war which resulted in the defeat of the king. But Columba also suffered in his turn, being punished by excommunication for having caused the death of so many Christians. In his distress he went for consolation to a hermit, who directed him, by way of expiation for his sins, to devote his life to missionary labors, telling him that he must become an exile from his country, and must convert as many souls of the heathen as had been killed through his agency.

In looking about for a sphere of labor Columba chose Caledonia. About A. D. 500 the Irish had landed on the west coast and established themselves here. Among these Columba landed 563, and established himself at Iona. Here disciples followed him. They erected rude huts, and began their missionary labors, carrying the Gospel throughout all Caledonia. Among the Irish Scots, or Dalriadians, as they were called, their labors were comparatively easy in one respect, since they understood the language ; but when they ventured among the people who inhabited the eastern half, the Picts, they found a language which was entirely unknown to them. These people had something like the

Druidical religion, the priests were utterly hostile, but they succeeded in converting the king, and after that their labors were easier.

In 574 King Aidan began to reign over the Dalriadians. He was crowned by Columba. The stone on which he sat was afterwards carried to Seone, and is now at Westminster Abbey, where it is used at the coronation of British Sovereigns.

The work of Columba was immense. Ancient traditions attribute to him the foundation of 300 monasteries, modern learning and research has discovered and registered the existence of 90 churches whose origin goes back to him. Traces of 53 of these yet remain, of which 32 are in the west, and 21 in the land of the Picts.

Columba made no rule like S. Benedict, but his disciples inherited his spirit sufficiently to bind themselves in an order for several centuries. It was called the "Fair Company and Family of Columb Kill." The influence of Iona was strong in Ireland, and a great order arose then subject to the Lex Columbeilli.

### **Roman Missions to the English.**

While the Church of Ireland thus sent forth her missionaries to North Britain, the Church of Rome sent others to South Britain.

Every one is familiar with the beautiful story of Pope Gregory, who when a monk had seen the fair-haired Angles at Rome, and resolved to go as a missionary to their countrymen. His

elevation to the Papacy prevented him from carrying out this design in person, but did not alter it in other respects, and the result was the departure of St. Augustine and his 50 companions in 579. They landed in Kent where they were kindly received by King Ethelbert whose wife was a Christian. The king was soon converted and baptized, and many of his people followed his example. Gregory felt great joy at the glad tidings; other missionaries were sent, and Augustine was made the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

Augustine was now anxious to gain the adherence of the Christian Britons. We have seen how the intense hatred felt by these against the Saxons had prevented them from making any effort for their conversion. It is impossible to find a single effort made by any Briton to preach the faith to the Saxons. Beda states that the British had come to an agreement never to reveal the truths of religion to their enemies, and even when they did become Christians to treat them as heathens. Gregory the Great makes the same charge. "They refuse," he says, "to respond to any desire which the people might have to be converted to the faith of Christ."

A conference was now agreed upon between Augustine and the British clergy to take place on the banks of the Severn. At the first conference Augustine presented his claims, which were :--1. To acknowledge the supremacy of Augustine. 2. To accept the Roman calculation

for Easter. 3. To complete the sacrament of baptism according to the Roman mode. 4. To preach the Word of God to the English along with the Roman missionaries.

Before the second conference it is said that the British clergy went to consult a hermit as to their decision. "If the stranger," said the hermit, "is meek and lowly in heart it is probable that he carries the yoke of Jesus Christ, and that it is His yoke he offers you, but if he is hard and proud he comes not from God." On coming to the conference they found Augustine seated. This they regarded as an indignity to them, and they refused to yield to his claims.

But there was more at stake than that which was involved in the words of Augustine. It was not a question about the tonsure or observance of Easter. The question is to be found in Augustine's claim for supremacy. The British Christians were not acquainted with the system of subordination, law, and order which had been developed by Rome. The real point of difference was Celtic freedom and Roman organization.

But the British hate of the Saxon also influenced them. "No," said the Abbot of Bangor, "we will not preach the faith to this cruel race of strangers who have treacherously driven our ancestors from their country, and robbed their posterity of their privileges."

Augustine made a threatening prophecy,—  
"Since you will not have peace with brethren you will have war with enemies ; since you will



not show to the English the way of life you will receive from them the punishment of death."

It is supposed by some that Augustine was aware of the preparations which were making by Ethelfrid of Northumbria to invade the British country. In 613 that monarch led his army there, and Augustine's words were fulfilled. He saw the British clergy on their knees, praying, as their warrior brethren were preparing for battle. "Who are these, and what are they doing?" asked Ethelfrid. On being informed he declared that they were as much enemies as if they were armed warriors, and directed the attack to be made upon them. The British did not, or could not help, and the monks, 1200 in number, were all slain.

About this time Essex, which was subordinate to Kent, received Christianity, Mellitus was made first Bishop of London, and Westminster Abbey was founded.

Not long after Ethelbert died. Then came a great reaction. His successor was a heathen. Many of the missionaries fled, and at length nothing was left but a little spot of land at Canterbury and a handful of Christians. From this state of depression, however, the cause of Christianity revived for a time in another quarter—Northumbria. The king of Northumbria, Edwin, had made himself the most powerful monarch in the island. He had married Ethelburga, the daughter of the king of Kent, and as freedom of religion had been granted her, she

took with her from her home Paullinus, one of the companions of Augustine. (625.) For some years the labors of Paullinus met with no result, but at length King Edwin embraced Christianity, and called a Council in order to debate concerning the new religion. It was one of the most memorable Councils in English history. The high priest, Coifi, declared that the old religion had never benefitted him, and that if the new one were more efficacious they should hasten to adopt it. One of the great chiefs made a speech full of religious elevation and poetic melancholy, in which he likened the life of man in his progress through the unknown past to the unknown future to the flight of a sparrow through the lighted Council chamber, out of the darkness of night, and back again into that darkness. And if, he concluded, the new doctrine can teach us something certain, it deserves to be followed. After further debate the assembly unanimously resolved to embrace Christianity, the high priest Coifi called upon all to begin at once, and seizing an axe he led the way to the temple, where he desecrated the altar and overthrew the idols. The whole Northumbrian nobility and many of the people were baptized with the king, who for the rest of his life aided Paullinus in his efforts to Christianize the nation.

But all this drew to a close in 633 through a war with Mercia, in which Edwin was defeated and slain. The Mercians, a heathen people,

under their King Penda, ravaged Northumbria with fire and sword, and in this he was assisted by the British King Cadwallon, who, though a Christian, rivalled the heathen Penda in cruelty. Christianity was obliterated, and thus, after 36 years of continual efforts, the Roman missions had everywhere failed except in the little district of Canterbury. At length a new class of missionaries appeared, who took up the work where the Romans had left it. These were the monks of Iona.

### **The Work of the Missionaries from Iona.**

The next King of Northumbria was Oswald, the son of Ethelfrid, who had fled to the land of the Scots, and had there been converted to Christianity. He raised an army, defeated and slew the fierce Cadwallon, and established himself firmly on the throne. He devoted himself at once to the work of Christianizing the people. He did not send to Rome, and did not seem to think of Canterbury, but turned rather to those generous friends who had received him in exile, and had made known to him the truth. The monks of Iona responded with the utmost zeal.

The first who came was Corman, but he, not being successful, was shortly succeeded by Aidan. This great man had to begin from the foundations, for the work of the Roman missionaries had utterly perished. He brought with him a number of companions from Iona, and Celtic monks

came continually to his help. He chose a new centre of operations in Lindisfarne, and from this carried on his holy work. King Oswald assisted to the utmost of his power, not only by such kingly acts as gifts of lands and money, but also by acting himself as interpreter to Aidan on many occasions. After a time Oswald married the daughter of the King of Wessex, and assisted the Christian Missionaries in that kingdom. These labors were interrupted by wars with Penda of Mercia, (642), by whom Oswald was defeated and slain. Then followed a period of disaster, terminated by the defeat and death of Penda. Oswy was now King of Northumbria. Aidan had passed away, and was succeeded as Bishop first by Finan, and then by Colman, 661, a monk of Iona, sent forth to govern the Northumbrian Church and to evangelize the Anglo Saxons. The work was now resumed and carried on with great ardor. New monasteries rose, fresh bands of missionaries came from Scotland and from Ireland, and crowds of Anglo Saxons entered the monasteries. Nothing could surpass the self denial and zeal of the missionaries of Iona. Beda bears testimony to this. "They lived," he says, "the simplest and most abstemious lives, and were always preaching the Gospel." Great opposition, however, was offered both by Kings and nobles, who were fickle and changeable, and by the people, who always at the pressure of any unforeseen calamity were ready to relapse into Paganism.

In considering the conversion of the English to Christianity, we come to the following conclusion. Of the eight Anglo Saxon Kingdoms, one only, *Kent*, was converted exclusively by the Roman missionaries. Four—*Bernicia*, *Deira*, *East Anglia*, and *Mercia*, were converted by the monks of Iona alone. Two,—*Wessex*, and *Essex*, by combined action of the Celtic monks and the Bishops sent from Rome; while *Sussex*, the last to receive the Gospel, owed that blessing to a monk who had been trained in the school of the Celtic missionaries. Thus to this little island of Iona, and to the Irish Church, we are to look for the chief agency in the conversion of the English. In affectionate recognition of the debt owed by England to this little island, Dr. Johnson exclaims in a well-known passage, "That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warm among the ruins of Iona."

### **The Organization of the English Church.**

We have in the next place to consider the 'Advance of the English Church to organization.'

In the English Church at its origin there were two different developments of Christianity—the Celtic and the Roman. Celtic Christianity was without much law or order. It was disorganized, with a vast number of isolated and independent centres of action. The Roman Church, on the other hand, had grown to be a colossal hierar-

chical system, all subordinated in many successive graduations, terminating in the Bishop of Rome. A bitter struggle soon arose between these two—the Celtic and the Roman forms of Christianity, by which the Church of England was for a time convulsed. The man to whom it is chiefly owing that the Roman system was successfully introduced, was Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. Theodore was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 667. He was a learned Greek, with administrative genius of high order, full of calm sagacity and earnest piety. A few years before his arrival the Celtic party had been defeated, and at the great Witenagemot, or National Parliament at Whithy, 664, the Roman supremacy was formally admitted, and the Roman customs acknowledged as authoritative. On the arrival of Theodore he was acknowledged by all the English people, being the first Archbishop who was recognized by all. Theodore took advantage of the state of things to complete the unity of the Church; he visited the whole country, divided it into dioceses, and organized the parochial system. The nation was divided into dioceses—Kingdom by Kingdom, and thus while still divided politically, it was blended together in one ecclesiastical union. The work of Theodore was afterwards modified from time to time, but it continued permanent, and remains to the present day. In addition to this Theodore directed his attention towards the elevation of the clergy by promoting their education and

moral and religious advancement. These efforts were so successful that "in a single century England became known as a land of learned men, devout and unwearied missionaries, of strong, rich, and pious Kings."

One great feature of the Early English Church was the prevalence of the monastic system. This was due first to the fact that it was the creation of monks, and secondly to the prevalence of monachism over all Western Europe. Wherever monasteries were planted civilization followed. The work effected by the monks in England was fourfold—1. The conversion of the heathen English to Christianity ; 2. Their instruction in agriculture and the useful arts ; 3. Their education ; 4. The formation of a feeling of national union. In the first three of these monachism did no more in England than in Germany, but in the last the work of English monachism is unique. All monasteries were under one government, all belonged to the Universal Church, all monks felt as brethren, provincial feeling could not exist in the monastery. The monks travelled freely from one place to another and were treated as brethren by their fellow monks. A Mercian or West Saxon might be Archbishop of Canterbury ; the Bishop of East Anglia might be a Kentishman, and a South Saxon might rule at Rochester.

Of course abuses existed in these institutions, for they were only human and were liable to human frailties. Beda denounced their luxury. Dunstan tried to reform the evils that had crept

in. Yet for one or two centuries all that was most lofty and venerable in English Christianity was the production of the monasteries.

### **Representative Men of the English Church.**

The English Church, like the English nation, entered at once upon a rich and varied life, and in her annals there are records of a host of great men who gave dignity to English history. From these may be selected for a brief survey a few who may be considered as representative men.

#### **Wilfrid.**

He may be taken as representing the public life of the age. Wilfrid was educated at Lindisfarne. In his early youth he made a visit to Rome, where he became fascinated by the Roman system, and conceived a dislike to the Celtic usages. On his return he devoted all his life to the overthrow of the Celtic influence in England. That life was destined to be a stormy one, for the Celtic element was strong, and Wilfrid was resolute. At length he gained the victory, and the triumph of the Roman cause, which took place just before the arrival of Theodore, allowed him to bring about many reforms. But Wilfrid's hate of the Celtic system extended to the Celtic clergy, whom he insulted and persecuted. His violent measures drew down even the indignation of the Archbishop, and brought about a reaction. Wilfrid defied all opposition, contended with the Archbishop on



the one hand, and the Celtic clergy on the other ; fought with kings, nobles, and Witenagemots, endured deposition, exile, disgrace, and finally lived to see a general reconcilliation effected, and spent the rest of his days in peace. The career of Wilfrid is an important one. We see him the chief champion of Rome. He shows us the Roman hierarchical system in its law, order, and high organization in conflict with the free, unsystematic, careless, Celtic spirit. We see also the detestation of the Celt and Celtic ways which for ages has characterized the Saxon, and is still strong in his descendant.

The struggle was that of Roman supremacy against British independence, the rigid rule of the Roman hierarchy against the free personality of the School of Columba. The children of Columba, the sainted Aidan, the holy Colman and their followers had Christianized the English. They saw the arrogant monk endeavouring to appropriate their labours and bring them under his own control. This of itself was sufficient to lead them to resistance, but beside this there was something more, and that was the independent English spirit which animated king, noble, priest and people to resist the imposition of a foreign yoke.

On the other hand much may be said in favor of Wilfrid. In the words of Montelembert,—  
 “ He was the first Anglo Saxon who secured the attention of foreign nations, the first of whom a biography has been preserved ; he appears before

us a type of the qualities and singularities of his nation,—of the obstinacy, courage, laboriousness, and untiring energy, the dogged love of work and of conflict, their resolution to strive till death for their patrimony, honor and rights. *Dieu et mon droit*,—this proud English motto is written on every page of Wilfrid's history. All the passions and all the noble instincts of his people palpitated in him. That mind must be indeed besotted by hatred who does not recognize in him the eldest son of an invincible race, the first of the English nation."

### Cuthbert.

Our next name is that of Cuthbert, who may be said to represent the spiritual life of the age. He was the son of an Irish princess who had been reduced to slavery, was educated at Iona, then entered upon missionary labors and evangelized the country between the Solway and the Forth. After this he went into the monastery of Lindisfarne. Here he was made bishop, but during his episcopate he continued to be a monk and a missionary. He headed the Celtic party in the conflict with Wilfrid, but never ceased to be absorbed in his spiritual duties. "Beside Wilfrid," says Montelembert, "who is the saint of polemics, of publicity, of the struggle with kings, princes and prelates, Cuthbert appears as the saint of nature, of a life retired and humble, of popular preaching, solitude and prayer. The popularity of Cuthbert was immense and infinitely

more general and lasting than that of Wilfrid, or indeed of any other saint of his country or century, He died 687." His posthumous fame is attested by innumerable legends, some of which are alluded to in Scott's Marmion :

"From sea to sea, from or to shore,  
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore;  
They rested him in fair Melrose,  
Although alive he loved it well,  
Not there his relics might repose,  
For wondrous tale to tell!  
In his stone coffin forth he rides,  
A ponderous bark for river tides,  
Yet light as gossamer it glides  
Downward to Tilmouth cell;  
And after many wanderings past,  
He chose his lonely seat at last  
Where his cathedral huge and vast  
Looks down upon the Wear.  
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade  
His relics are in secret laid.

Who may his miracles declare?  
Even Scotland's dauntless king and heir  
Before his standard fled.  
'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,  
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane  
And turned the conqueror back again,  
When with his Norman bowyer band  
He came to waste Northumberland."

### Benedict Biscop.

The next name is Benedict Biscop, the representative in arts and literature. Born 658 of the highest nobility, at the age of 25 he embraced the religious life, went with Wilfrid to Rome,

and afterwards acted as guide and interpreter to Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. He devoted his life to study literature and art, made many journeys to Rome, and brought back rich stores of books. King Egfrid of Northumbria, who was much attached to him, founded for him a monastery at Wearmouth. After this Benedict Biscop went to France and brought back workmen to build sacred edifices; he also brought Roman priests who gave instruction in liturgical music to all the Northumbrian monasteries. King Egfrid afterwards assigned him another estate near Wearmouth, which was the cradle of the monastery of Yarrow, the name of which is inseparably linked with that of Beda. Although a contemporary of Wilfrid, Benedict Biscop took no part in the great Celto Roman controversy, but confined himself to his religious duties and to the cultivation of literature, learning, and art. He died 690.

### **Winfrid.**

Winfrid, St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, the foreign missionary. No sooner had the English received the Gospel than they flung themselves with a noble ardor into the work of preaching the Gospel to the heathen round them, more especially to their Teutonic brethren on the continent. Of all these devoted men the most famous is Winfrid, or St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany. In 718 he went to Rome, when Gregory II. authorized him to preach the Gospel

to the Germans. He commenced his labors in Bavaria, passed three years in Friesland, and went thence to other parts of the country. In 732 Gregory III. made him Archbishop of all Germany. From the summit of this high eminence Boniface could contemplate the result of his life-long work—all Central Germany Christianized, divided into 9 bishoprics, dotted with churches and monasteries, with armies of monks and parish priests under his patriarchal rule. But this was not enough for the heroic Englishman. At the age of 73 he resigned all his honors, and then, with no weapons but his own stout heart and his indomitable faith, plunged once more as a missionary, into the midst of the fiercest barbarians in the world, and there he met, what perhaps he sought, the crown of martyrdom.

### **Caedmon.**

Our next name is that of Caedmon, the representative poet, the Anglo Saxon Milton. Beda says of him that he endeavoured by his poetry "to turn away all men from the love of vice and to excite in them the love of good actions and application to them. By his verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world and aspire to heaven. Others after him attempted in the English nation to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him." This strong commendation by Beda shows the character and aim of his writings, and also displays the immensity of the change which

had been wrought in the literature of the nation by Christianity.

Beda also relates his vocation to the office of poet. In Caedmon's youth he never was able to sing, and when the harp was passed round the hall for each to sing in turn he could not perform his part. He used to leave the room when he saw his turn coming so as to avoid the mortification of showing his ignorance and want of skill. One night after he had left the hall he lay down in the stable and fell asleep. Then he had a dream. He thought that a stranger came to him and asked him to sing him something. "I know nothing to sing," he replied, "I had to slip out of the hall." "Nay," said the stranger, "You have something to sing." "What must I sing," asked the other in wonder. "Sing the Creation," said the stranger. No sooner had he said this than Caedmon began to sing. Noble words flowed from his lips. This dream poem may be compared with the famous "Xanadu" of Coleridge, and the strains of the rough cowherd will not suffer in comparison. The following is a paraphrase :—

O come and let us sing  
 Praise to the heavenly King,  
 Sing the Creator's might,  
     Tell of His wisdom.  
 Lord of the sons of men,  
 Lord of eternity,  
 How He of wonders all  
     Formed the beginning,

He the most holy One,  
 First for the sons of men  
 Gave as a covering  
     Heaven o'er arching.  
 Then to the sons of men,  
 All this bright lower world  
     Gave for a dwelling.  
 Lord of humanity,  
 Lord of eternity,  
     Lord God Almighty !

In the midst of this Caedmon awoke and recalled the words that he had sung and all the events of the dream. He went on the following day to the monastery of Whitby and told his story. In order to test him they gave him a passage in the Bible to paraphrase. Caedmon performed the task and the result was perfectly successful. Thereupon he embraced the religious life and composed those sublime poems which are now regarded as the greatest production of Anglo Saxon literature.

One of the most characteristic passages of Beda's history is the account of the death of Caedmon. "When it was past midnight he asked them whether they had the Eucharist there." They answered, "What need of the Eucharist. You are not likely to die since you talk so pleasantly with us." Nevertheless," said he, "bring me the Eucharist." Having received the same into his hand, he asked whether they were all in charity with him, and without any enmity or rancor. They answered

that they were all in perfect charity and free from anger; and in their turn asked him whether he was in the same mind toward them. He answered, "I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God." Then strengthening himself with the heavenly viaticum, he prepared for the entrance into another life, and asked how near the time was when the brothers were to be awakened to sing the nocturnal praises of our Lord. They answered, "It is not far off." Then he said, "Well, let us wait that hour," and signing himself with the sign of the cross, he laid his head on the pillow, and falling into a slumber ended his life in silence. "And thus," continues the historian, "it came to pass that as he had served God with a simple and pure mind and undisturbed devotion, so he now departed to His presence, leaving the world by a quiet death; and that tongue which had composed so many holy words in praise of the Creator, uttered its last words whilst he was in the act of signing himself with the cross and recommending himself into His hands."

### **Beda.**

We have next to consider Beda, the representative student and scholar. The Venerable Bede, as he is called, was born in 672 and died in 735. In extent of attainments he surpassed all his contemporaries. He wrote thirty-eight works upon theology, science, and history. Most of these were commentaries upon the Bible, and in



these he exhibited a power not often found among commentators—a power of penetrating beneath the letter into the inner spirit of the Divine Word. His great work, however, and that upon which his fame rests, is his Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, a work the importance of which can hardly be overestimated. The style has all the freshness and artlessness which we admire in Herodotus or Mandeville. He reports every legend, fable and miracle that has ever been told to him, with unswerving faith, wherever it is connected with his beloved Church. Yet the record of facts is an accurate one, and there is very much in his work of the political history of the country which we learn from him alone. He alludes to the many natural resources of the country, its iron, lead, copper and other metals, of the excellence of the soil where grain can easily grow, and vines may be cultivated, of the excellent game with which the woods and waters abound, and of the fisheries along the coasts. According to him the common people wore woollen clothing, and the ecclesiastics sometimes dressed in silk. He speaks of London being the mart of many nations who resort to it by sea and land. He is said to have translated various books into the vernacular, among which are the Gospel of St. John, together with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The Venerable Bede is interesting from his own impressive character, standing out with such lustre in a dark age,

laboring for learning and true religion, and leaving behind him a name dear alike to high and low ; while to the student he is doubly venerable, since he is almost the only source of information concerning the early English period.

The account of Beda's death, which has been handed down by one of his disciples, is full of that pathos which may be found in his account of the death of the poet Caedmon. At that time he was engaged upon a translation of the Gospel of St. John into English (Anglo Saxon). "He passed the day joyfully till the evening, and his amanuensis said, 'dear master, there is one sentence not yet written.' He answered, 'write quickly.' Soon after the boy said, 'The sentence is now written.' He replied, 'It is well. You have said the truth. It is finished.' Then he added, 'Receive my head into your hands for it is a great satisfaction to me to sit facing my holy place where I was wont to pray, that I may also, while sitting here, call upon God my Father.' And thus, on the pavement of his little cell, singing, 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' when he had named the Holy Ghost he breathed his last, and so departed to the heavenly kingdom." His remains were afterwards transferred to Durham Cathedral, and there, though the ashes have been scattered to the winds, we may still see the inscription concluding with the Leonine rhyme :—

*Hæc sunt in fossa Bedæ venerabilis ossa.*

And what shall I say more, for time would fail me to tell of those worthies of the Early English Church whose memories have been preserved by Beda,—of the Saints Chad, and Cedd, and Guthlac, of the Christian Kings Oswald and Oswan, of the holy Ethelburga and the devoted Hilda, and of a thousand others like them, all of whom stand before us as ornaments of the Church of England, but still more as striking examples of the Divine power of Christianity, which could produce such examples of heroic self-sacrifice and virgin purity ; of the beauty of holiness and the fervor of religious zeal among the children of the bloodthirsty Jute, the pirate Saxon and the marauding Anglian.

Finally, What became of the Ancient British Church ? We have seen the British Church was irreconcilable, and held itself eternally aloof from the English heathen. These after their conversion were as odious as ever. The British, sullen, stubborn, and vengeful, fought on, and were slowly pressed back toward the West. Ages passed away. Century succeeded to century, and still the British and the English were at war, the latter victors, the former vanquished.

In those ages and in those struggles there was no annihilation or extermination of the British. They were conquered, reduced to slavery, and became intermingled with the lowest class of the Anglo Saxon serfs. They lost their own language, adopted that of the Conqueror, until at length the nation was made up of the

descendants of both races, who all spoke the English tongue.

The last stronghold of the British was Wales. Here among the mountains there was a long and bloody war, until at length long after the Norman Conquest, Wales was reduced to subjection. Then in progress of time it was appropriated by the Church of England, it was divided into new dioceses, whose Bishops were under the sway of the Canterbury, and had nothing to do with the Ancient British Church. Thus that Ancient British Church died. Between it and the Church of England there was no communion, no interchange of fellowship, no fraternity, no union, no transfer of orders. The Church of England was the creation of Iona and of Rome, and with the Ancient Church of Britain it is connected only indirectly through Iona and the Church of Ireland.

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