

# ALCUIN OF YORK

LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE CATHEDRAL  
CHURCH OF BRISTOL IN 1907 AND 1908

BY THE

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

No attempt has been made to correct the various forms of many of the proper names so as to make the spelling uniform. It is true to the period to leave the curious variations as Alcuin and others wrote them. In the case of Pope Hadrian, the name has been written Hadrian and Adrian indiscriminately in the text.

While Alcuin's style is lucid, his habit of dictating letters hurriedly, and sending them off without revision if he had a headache, has left its mark on the letters as we have them. It has seemed better to leave the difficulties in the English as he left them in the Latin.

The edition used, and the numbering of the Epistles adopted, is that of Wattenbach and Dümmler, *Monumenta Alcuiniana*, Berlin 1873, being the sixth volume of the *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum*.

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# ALCUIN OF YORK.

## CHAPTER I

The authorship of the anonymous *Life of Alcuin*.—Alcuin's *Life* of his relative Willibrord.—Willibrord at Ripon.—Alchfrith and Wilfrith.—Alcuin's conversion.—His studies under Egbert and Albert at the Cathedral School of York.—Egbert's method of teaching.—Alcuin becomes assistant master of the School.—Is ordained deacon.—Becomes head master.—Joins Karl.

THE only *Life* of Alcuin which we possess, coming from early times, was written by a monk who does not give his name, at the command of an abbat whose name, as also that of his abbey, is not mentioned by the writer. We have, however, this clue, that the writer learned his facts from a favourite disciple and priest of Alcuin himself, by name Sigulf. Sigulf received from Alcuin the pet name of *Vetulus*, "little old fellow," in accordance with the custom of the literary and friendly circle of which Alcuin was the centre. Alcuin himself was *Flaccus*; Karl the King of the Franks, and afterwards Emperor, was *David*; and so on. We learn further that the abbat who assigned to the anonymous monk the task of writing the *Life* was himself a disciple of Sigulf. Sigulf succeeded Alcuin as Abbat of *Ferrières*; and when he retired on account of old age, he was in turn succeeded by two of his pupils



whom he had brought up as his sons, Adalbert and Aldric. The Life was written after the death of Benedict of Aniane, that is, after the year 823. Adalbert had before that date been succeeded by Aldric, and Aldric became Archbishop of Sens in the end of 829. The Life was probably written between 823 and 829 by a monk of Ferrières, by order of Aldric. Alcuin had died in 804. The writer of the Life had never even seen Alcuin; he was in all probability not a monk of Tours.

That is the view of the German editor Wattenbach as to the authorship and dedication of the Life. That learned man appears to have given inadequate weight to the writer's manner of citing Aldric as a witness to the truth of a quaint story told in the Life. This is the story, as nearly as possible in the monk's words:—

“The man of the Lord [Alcuin himself] had read in his youth the books of the ancient philosophers and the romances<sup>1</sup> of Vergil,<sup>2</sup> but he would not in his old age have them read to him or allow others to read them. The divine poets, he was wont to say, were sufficient for them, they did not need to be polluted with the luxurious flow of Vergil's verse. Against this precept the little old fellow Sigulf tried to act secretly, and for this he was put to the blush publicly. Calling to him two youths whom he was bringing up as sons, Adalbert and Aldric, he bade them read Vergil with him in complete secrecy, ordering them by no means to let any one know, lest it come to the ears of Father Albinus [Alcuin]. But Albinus called him in an ordinary way to come to him,

<sup>1</sup> *Mendacia*.

<sup>2</sup> See the story of his conversion, p. 11.

and then said: 'Where do you come from, you Vergilian? Why have you planned, contrary to my wish and advice, to read Vergil?' Sigulf threw himself at his feet, confessed that he had acted most foolishly, and declared himself penitent. The pious father administered a scolding to him, and then accepted the amends he made, warning him never to do such a thing again. Abbat Aldric, a man worthy of God, who still survives, testifies that neither he nor Adalbert had told any one about it; they had been absolutely silent, as Sigulf had enjoined."

It seems practically impossible to suppose that the monk would have put it in this way, if Aldric had been the abbat to whom he dedicated the *Life*, or indeed the abbat of his own monastery. It is clear that the *Life* was written while Aldric was still an abbat, that is between 823 and 829; and it seems most probable that it was written by a monk of some other monastery for his own abbat. Nothing of importance, however, turns upon this discussion. It is a rather curious fact, considering the severity of Alcuin's objection to Vergil being read in his monastery, that the beautiful copy of Vergil at Berne, of very early ninth-century date, belonged to St. Martin of Tours from Carolingian times, and was written there.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following inscription is found in this book:—"Hunc Vergilii codicem obtulit Berno gregis beati Martini levita devota mente Deo et eidem beato Martino perpetualiter habendum ea quidem ratione ut perlegat ipsum Albertus consobrinus ipsius et diebus vitae suae sub pretextu sancti Martini habeat et post suum obitum iterum sancto reddatur Martino."

Not unnaturally, the Life, written in and for a French monastery, does not give details of the Northumbrian origin of Alcuin. It makes only the statement usual in such biographies, that he sprang from a noble Anglian family. Curiously enough, we get such further details as we have from a Life of St. Willibrord written by Alcuin himself at the request of Archbishop Beornrad of Sens, who was Abbat of Epternach, a monastery of Willibrord's, from 777 to 797.

"There was," he writes, "in the province of Northumbria, a father of a family, by race Saxon, by name Wilgils, who lived a religious life with his wife and all his house. He had given up the secular life and entered upon the life of a monk; and when spiritual fervour increased in him he lived solitary on the promontory which is girt by the ocean and the river Humber (Spurn Point)<sup>1</sup>. Here he lived long in fasting and prayer in a little oratory dedicated to St. Andrew<sup>2</sup> the Apostle; he worked miracles; his name became celebrated. Crowds of people consulted him; he comforted them with the most sweet admonitions of the

<sup>1</sup> It appears to be impossible to identify the site of the cell of Wilgils. The local idea is that Kilnsea may be the place. But then the local idea is that Kilnsea means "the cell by the sea".

<sup>2</sup> The church of St. Andrew in Rome was the first church which Wilfrith in his youth visited on his first appearance in that city. It was on the altar of that church that he first saw a magnificent copy of the Gospels, which so fired his enthusiasm that he had a similar copy made, written in letters of gold on purple parchment and adorned with gems, for his church at Ripon. His great church at Hexham, the finest church north of the Alps, he dedicated to St. Andrew, and the dedication thus became a favourite one in Northumbria. See my *Theodore and Wilfrith*, p. 17.

Word of God. His fame became known to the king and great men of the realm, and they conferred upon him some small neighbouring properties, so that he might build a church. There he collected a congregation of servants of God, moderate in size, but honourable. There, after long labours, he received his crown from God; and there his body lies buried. His descendants to this day hold the property by the title of his sanctity. Of them I am the least in merit and the last in order. I, who write this book of the history of the most holy father and greatest teacher Willibrord, succeeded to the government of that small cell by legitimate degrees of descent."

Inasmuch as the book is dedicated to Beornrad by the humble Levite (that is, deacon) Alcuin, we learn the very interesting fact that Alcuin, born in 735, came by hereditary right into possession of the property got together by Wilgils, whose son Willibrord was born in 657. The dates make it practically almost certain that Wilgils was born a pagan. Alcuin informs us that he only entered upon marriage because it was fated that he should be the father of one who should be for the profit of many peoples. If Willibrord was, as Alcuin's words mean, the only child of Wilgils, we must suppose that Alcuin was the great-great-great-nephew of Wilgils, allowing twenty-five years for a generation in those short-lived times.

Alcuin three times insists on the lawful hereditary descent of the ownership and government of a monastery. A second case is in his preface to this Life of Willibrord. The body of the saint, he says, "rests in a certain small maritime cell,

over which I, though unworthy, preside by God's gift in lawful succession." A third case occurs also in this Life. "There is," he says, "in the city of Trèves a monastery<sup>1</sup> of nuns, which in the times of the blessed Willibrord was visited by a very severe plague. Many of the handmaids of the Lord were dying of it; others were lying on their beds enfeebled by a long attack; the rest were in a state of terror, as fearing the presence of death. Now there is near that same city the monastery of that holy man, which is called Aefternac,<sup>2</sup> in which up to this day the saint rests in the body, while his descendants are known to hold the monastery by legitimate paternal descent, and by the piety of most pious kings. When the women of the above-named monastery heard that he was coming to this monastery of his, they sent messengers begging him to hasten to them." He went, as the blessed Peter went to raise Tabitha; celebrated a mass for the sick; blessed water, and had the houses sprinkled with it; and sent it to the sick sisters to drink. Needless to say, they all recovered.

In two of these cases, the two in which Alcuin speaks of his own property, he uses the word succession, "by legitimate succession" in the one case, *legitima successione*, "through legitimate successions" in the other case, *per legitimas successiones*, the former no doubt referring to the succession from his immediate predecessor, the latter referring to the four, or five, steps in the descent from Wilgils to Alcuin. In the case of the monastery

<sup>1</sup> Horreense, the Germans think; now Oeren.

<sup>2</sup> Epternach,

of Epternach he defines it from the other end, "from the legitimate handing-down," *traditione ex legitima*, the piety of the most pious kings being called in to confirm the handing-down.

It is remarkable that Alcuin should thus go out of his way to insist upon the lawfulness of the hereditary descent of monasteries, when he knew well that his venerated predecessor Bede, following the positive principle of the founder of Anglian monasticism in Northumbria, Benedict Biscop, attributed great evils to such hereditary succession to the property and governance of monasteries. We shall see something of this when we come to the consideration of Bede's famous letter to Egbert, written in or about the year of Alcuin's birth.

It is probably not necessary to suppose that Alcuin intends to draw a distinction between the constitutional practice in Northumbria and that in the lands ruled by Karl, though it is a marked fact that he mentions the intervention of kings in the latter case and twice does not mention it in the former. Bede says so much about the bribes—or fees—paid to Northumbrian kings and bishops for ratification of first grants by their signatures, that we can hardly suppose there were no fees to pay on succession. We cannot press such a point as this in Alcuin's Life of Willibrord, for he tells Beornrad in his Preface that he has been busy with other things all day long, and has only been able to dictate this book in the retirement of the night; and he urges that the work should be mercifully judged because he has not had leisure to polish it. The grammar of this dictated work needs a certain

amount of correction; Alcuin did not always remember with what construction he had begun a sentence. In these days of dictated letters he has the sympathy of many in this respect.

Alcuin's young relative Willibrord was sent away to Ripon, as soon as he was weaned, to the charge of the brethren there. Alchfrith, the sub-King of Deira under his father Oswy, had driven out the Irish monks whom he had at one time patronised at Ripon, and had given their possessions to Wilfrith. Under the influence of that remarkable man the little child came, still, in Alcuin's phrase, only an *infantulus*. His father's purpose in sending him to Ripon was twofold. He was to be educated in religious study and sacred letters, in a place where his tender age might be strengthened by vigorous discipline, where he would see nothing that was not honourable, hear nothing that was not holy. At Ripon he remained till he was twenty years of age, and then he passed across to Ireland, to complete his studies under Egbert, the great creator of missionaries. With Egbert he spent twelve years.

Now in the thirty-two years covered by that short narration, from 657 to 689, events of the utmost moment had occurred in Northumbria, and had mainly centered round Ripon. At the most critical juncture of these events Bede becomes suddenly silent. Alfred's Anglo-Saxon version of Bede goes further, and omits the bulk of what Bede does say. A few words from Alcuin would have been of priceless value, and he, writing in France to a Frank, could have no national or ecclesiastical reason for silence on points which Bede and Alfred let alone. The whole of the variance

between Oswy and his son and sub-King Alchfrith, on which Bede is determinedly silent, the only hint of which is preserved to us solely by the noble runes on the Bewcastle Cross, erected in 670 and still standing, which bid men pray for the "high sin" of Alchfrith's soul<sup>1</sup>; the whole secret of the variance between Oswy and Wilfrith; of Oswy's refusal to recognize Wilfrith's consecration at Paris—with unrivalled magnificence of pomp—to the episcopal See of York; all this, and more, is included in the first thirteen years of Willibrord's life at Ripon, and Ripon was the pivot of it all. Alcuin has no scintilla of a hint of anything unusual, not even when he mentions Ecgbert, the Northumbrian teacher, dwelling in Ireland, of whom we know from another source that he fled from Northumbria to safety in Ireland when Alchfrith and Wilfrith lost their power, and Alchfrith presumably lost his life. It is quite possible that if the head of the Bewcastle Cross were ever found<sup>2</sup> the runes on it might tell us just what we want to know. The illustration of this portion of the Cross given in Gough's edition of Camden's *Britannia*<sup>3</sup> was drawn in 1607, at which time English scholars could not read runic letters, and naturally could not copy them with perfect accuracy. Still, it is evident that the runes stand for RIKAES DRYHTNAES, apparently meaning 'of the kingdom's lord', the copyist having failed to notice the mark of modification in the rune for *u*, which turned it into *y*.

<sup>1</sup> See my *Conversion of the Heptarchy*, pp. 202-4.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Conversion of the Heptarchy*, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> iii. 20, plate xiii.



Turning now to Alcuin himself, a remarkable story is told in the Life, evidently and avowedly on his authority. When he was still a small boy, *parvulus*, he was regular in attendance at church at the canonical hours of the day, but very seldom appeared there at night. What the monastery was in which he passed his earliest years we are not told; but inasmuch as no break or change is mentioned between the story to which we now turn and the description of his more advanced studies, which certainly indicates the Archiepiscopal School of York, we must understand that York was the scene of this occurrence.

“When he was eleven years of age, it happened one night that he and a tonsured rustic, one of the menial monks, that is, were sleeping on separate pallets in one cell. The rustic did not like being alone in the night, and as none of the rustics could accommodate him, he had begged that one of the young students might be sent to sleep in the cell. The boy Albinus was sent, who was fonder of Vergil than of Psalms. At cock-crow the warden struck the bell for nocturns, and the brethren got up for the appointed service. This rustic, however, only turned round onto his other side, as careless of such matters, and went on snoring. At the moment when the invitatory psalm was as usual being sung, with the antiphon, the rustic’s cell was suddenly filled with horrid spirits, who surrounded his bed, and said to him, ‘You sleep well, brother.’ That roused him, and they asked, ‘Why are you snoring here by yourself, while the brethren are keeping watch in the church?’ He then received a useful flogging, so that by his amendment a warn-

ing might be given to all, and they might sing, 'I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most Highest,'<sup>1</sup> while their eyes prevented the night watches. During the flogging of the rustic, the noble boy trembled lest the same should happen to him; and, as he related afterwards, cried from the very bottom of his heart, 'O Lord Jesus, if Thou dost now deliver me from the cruel hands of these evil spirits, and I do not hereafter prove to be eager for the night watches of Thy Church and the ministry of praise, and if I any longer love Vergil more than the chanting of psalms, may I receive a flogging such as this. Only, I earnestly pray, deliver me, O Lord, now.' That the lesson might be the more deeply impressed upon his mind, as soon as by the Lord's command the flogging of the rustic ceased, the evil spirits cast their eyes about here and there, and saw the body and head of the boy most carefully wrapped up in the bedclothes, scarce taking breath. The leader of the spirits asked, 'Who is this other asleep in the cell?' 'It is the boy Albinus,' they told him, 'hid away in his bed.' When the boy found that he was discovered, he burst into showers of tears; and the more he had suppressed his cries before, the louder he cried now. They had all the will to deal unmercifully with him, but they had not the power. They discussed what they should do with him; but the sentence of the Lord compelled them to help him to keep the vow which he had made in his terror. Accordingly they said, imprudently for their purpose, but prudently for the purpose of the Lord, 'We will

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxvii. 11.

not chastise this one with severe blows, because he is young; we will only punish him by cutting with a knife the hard part of his feet.' They took the covering off his feet. Albinus instantly protected himself with the sign of the Cross. Then he chanted with all intentness the twelfth psalm, 'In the Lord put I my trust'; and then the rustic, half dead, the boy going before him with agile step, fled into the basilica to the protection of the saints."

A cynical reader might suggest that the disciplinary officers of the School of York resorted in those early times to unusual methods of making an impression on a careless boy.

The Life proceeds to inform us that Alcuin was trained under the prelate Hechbert, whom we know as Egbert, Bishop and later Archbishop of York, 732 to 766. That learned man was a disciple of Bede. He had under his tuition a flock of the sons of nobles, some of whom studied grammar, others the liberal arts, others the divine scriptures.<sup>1</sup> They studied the doctrine set forth by "the holy apostle of the English, Gregory; by Augustine, his disciple; by holy Benedict<sup>2</sup>; also by Cuthbert and Theodore, who followed in all things [a word is omitted here, presumably the footsteps<sup>3</sup>] of their first father and apostle<sup>4</sup>; and by the man most

<sup>1</sup> The relative numbers of these three "sides" of the School of York may possibly be indicated by the *quidam, alii, nonnulli*, of the author.

<sup>2</sup> Biscop.

<sup>3</sup> After a parenthetical paragraph the writer continues, "Cuius iam, ut dictum est, sequens Hechbertus vestigia."

<sup>4</sup> Gregory, it must be supposed. If one of the Apostles of the Lord had been meant, much more honorific words would have been used.

loved of the Lord, Bede the presbyter, Hechbert's own preceptor."

Then follows a very lifelike description of an ordinary day's work, when no inevitable expedition came in the way, nor any high solemnity or great festival of the saints. "From dawn of day to the sixth hour, and very often to the ninth hour, Ecgbert lay on his couch and opened to his disciples such of the secrets of scripture as suited each. Then he rose, and betook himself to most secret prayer, offering first to the Lord fat burnt-offerings with the incense of rams, and afterward, following the example of the blessed Job, lest by chance his sons should slip into the pit of benediction,<sup>1</sup> offering the Body of Christ and the Blood for all. By this time the vesper hour was coming near, and, except in Lent, all through the year, winter and summer, he took with his disciples a meal, slight but fittingly prepared, not sparing the tongue of the reader, that both kinds of food might bring refreshment. Then you might see the youths piercing one another with shafts prepared, discussing in private what afterwards they are to shoot forth in proper order in public. Does it not seem to you that of this too it might be said,<sup>2</sup> "As an eagle provoketh her young ones to fly, fluttereth over them, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings" ?

"Twice in the day did this father of the poor, this great lover and helper of Christ, pour out most secret prayer, watered from the most pure fountain of tears, both knees bent on the ground,

<sup>1</sup> Used antiphrastically for malediction : see Job i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxxii. 11.

hands long raised to heaven in the form of the Cross ; once, namely, before taking food, and again before celebrating Compline with all his flock. Which ended, no one of his disciples ever dared commit his limbs to his bed without the master's blessing laid upon his head.

“ He loved all his disciples, but of all he loved Alcuin the most, for Alcuin more closely than any of them followed his example in act and deed. There were two special virtues in Alcuin—one, that he never did anything which he was not quite clear that his master's approval covered ; the other, that whatever devices and temptations the enemy brought to his mind, he told them all straight out to his master without any sense of shame. Thus it came to pass that any stimulus of lust which he ever felt was most gloriously conquered by this wonderful method, dashing the children of Babylon against the stones, bruising the head of the serpent with the heel. He was careful that against him the words of Christ should not be spoken—‘ Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved ’ ; but rather that his lot should be with them of whom it is added—‘ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.’ O true monk without the monk's vow ! how very seldom is thy example followed by one whose vow binds him to it<sup>1</sup>.”

In the chapter from which these details are taken the author three times uses the name

<sup>1</sup> Chapter viii of the Rule of St. Benedict directs that a monk shall not conceal from his abbat evil thoughts which come into his heart.

“Albinus” for his hero, in place of “Alchuinus” with which he began the chapter. Throughout the Life he much more often calls him Albin than Alcuin. We must probably understand that he was known from his boyhood by both names; and it is evident that Albin would be more easy to pronounce than Alcuin, and would not unnaturally be more generally used. On the other hand, it is quite possible that he himself elected to call himself Albin.

If Alcuin took the name Albinus from any English source, the source is not far to seek. The English nation owes to the original Albinus the first suggestion to Bede that he should write the Church History of the English race. Bede tells us this in the Preface to his great work; and we have it still more directly expressed in a letter from him to Albinus in which he speaks of the History as *ad quam me scribendam iamdudum instigaveras*, and of Albinus as *semper amantissimus in Christo pater optimus*. He was Abbat of St. Peter and St. Paul, Canterbury, a pupil of Theodore and Hadrian, the latter of whom he succeeded. He greatly helped Bede by sending him full details of the conversion of Kent, “as he had learned the same from written records and from the oral tradition of his predecessors.” Bede sent to him the completed copy of the History, that he might have it transcribed, and informs us that Albinus had no small knowledge of Greek, and knew Latin as well as his native tongue, English. Alcuin may well have taken his name of Albinus from one with whom he had so much in common, who died only two or three years before Alcuin’s birth.

If, on the other hand, Alcuin took the name from some foreign source, again we have not far to seek. In Karl's first year as King of the Franks he gave a confirmatory charter to "the Monastery of St. Albinus, which is built near to the walls of Angers". The Tour St. Aubin and the Rue St. Aubin are still to be found at Angers, at the extreme south-east corner of the ancient city. Little is known of this martyr Albinus, and in consequence the Acts of our St. Alban have been transferred to him. At Angers, as at Alcuin's own Tours, there are remains of a great church of St. Martin; and, as was in early times the case at Tours, the Cathedral is dedicated to St. Maurice. It is possible that Alcuin took his name of Albinus from this local source, but it does not seem at all probable.

Alcuin's supremacy in wisdom and other virtues caused jealousy among his fellow disciples. This went so far that they could not look at him with unclouded eye or address him with pleasant words. He consulted his master, who by this time was Elebert (Archbishop of York, 767-78), known to Alcuin as Aelbert, and to us as Albert. The master advised him to try the effect of heaping coals of fire on their heads. He followed this advice, taking care that they should never hear from him a contrary word, and very often yielding to them when their arguments were unsound. This course of conduct he pursued until a complete change took place, and they all rejoiced to acknowledge in him the second master of their studies, next under Albert.

The Life relates at this point an interesting episode, in the description of which we may seem to hear Alcuin himself speaking to us:—

“Alcuin was reading the Gospel of St. John before the master, in company of his fellow disciples. He came to a part of the Gospel which only the pure in heart can comprehend—that part, namely, from where John says that he lay on the Lord’s breast, down to the point at which he relates that Jesus went with His disciples across the brook Cedron.<sup>1</sup> Inebriated with the mystical reading of the Gospel, suddenly, as he sat before the master’s couch, his spirit was carried away in ecstasy, and by those same who once in a ray of sunlight showed before the eyes of the most holy father Benedict the whole world, collected as it were in an enclosure, the whole world was now set before the eyes of Alcuin. And as he looked intently at what he saw, he saw the whole of the enclosure surrounded by a circle of blood. While he was held by this marvellous vision, his fellow disciples gazed at him in wonder, for the blood seemed to have left his face. They tried to rouse him, as one asleep; the noise they made attracted the attention of Albert, who looked at him for some time in silence, and then said, ‘Go on reading, my sons, do not disturb him; if he rests awhile he will be able to follow me more effectively when I expound the passage.’ When the reading was completed, and Albin came to himself again, the father told them all to go except Alcuin. When they were gone, he said, ‘What hast thou seen? I beg thee, do not hide it.’ Alcuin wished to keep secret what he had seen, fearing to fall into the pitfall of elation; so he said, ‘Why, my lord

<sup>1</sup> John xiii. 25 to xviii. 1 inclusive.



father?' The blessed man said again, 'Do not, my son, do not hide it from me. It is not from vain curiosity that I require this of you, but for your own good.' Alcuin saw that he could not keep it secret, and he told, humbly, how he had seen the whole world. Then the father said to him, 'See, my son, see that thou tellest not this vision to any but that one whom after my decease thou shalt hold to be the most faithful to thy person. And charge him to keep it secret up to the time of thy death.' Acting on this counsel, he told it only to Sigulf<sup>1</sup> during his lifetime. If any one desires to know how the whole world could be seen in one enclosure, he may turn to the book of Dialogues of the holy Gregory<sup>2</sup>; and in the meantime he may know that it was not the heaven and the earth that were contracted into a small space, but the mind of the seer that was dilated, so that when rapt in the Lord he could without difficulty see everything that was under God. Perhaps some one inquiring further may ask why under this figure of an enclosure, or why surrounded by blood? He may know that the Blood of Christ surrounds the fold of the holy Church, so that from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof those who are redeemed by His Passion can say the words which, without doubt, dominated the mind of Albin when he read before the master: 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious,

<sup>1</sup> Sigulf, as we have seen, told the writer the facts of Alcuin's life which he recorded.

<sup>2</sup> Dial. ii. 35. Benedict there narrates that he saw the whole world collected into one ray of the sun, in which the soul of Germanus, bishop of Capua, ascended to the heavens.

and His mercy endureth for ever.’<sup>1</sup> The whole world, then, is seen in one enclosure surrounded by the Blood of Christ; for all that the holy fathers have done and have written figuratively since the beginning of the world is unlocked by the Passion of Christ alone, who is the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David. But if by the encircled enclosure any should wish to be understood the life of his own carnal crimes surrounded by blood, thus shown to him that it may be trodden under foot by him, let that interpretation be left to his own judgement.”

Alcuin had been tonsured in early years. He was ordained deacon at York on the day of the Purification of the holy Mary, in or about the year 768. Elcbert, who had been for some time in bad health, felt that his death was drawing nigh, and he gave to Alcuin a sketch of the course of life which he wished him to pursue. The writer gives us a report of his actual words, stating that “they are now known”; this means, presumably, that here also Alcuin had communicated them to Sigulf, to be made public only after his death. They run thus:—“My will is that you go to Rome, and on the way back visit France.<sup>2</sup> For I know that you will do much good there. Christ will be the leader of your journey, guiding you and controlling you on your arrival, that you may demolish that most nefarious heresy which will

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cvi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Francia*, both here and in Alcuin's Letter 35, where he writes as if with these words in his mind: “I came to France, under pressure of ecclesiastical need, and to confirm the reason of the Catholic Faith.”

attempt to set forth Christ as adoptive man, and that you may be the firmest defender and the clearest preacher of the faith in the Holy Trinity.<sup>1</sup> You will persevere in the land of your peregrination, illumining the souls of many."

The holy father, Bishop Elebert, after blessing him with the benedictions of his predecessor above named, migrated to God on the eighth day of November, 780. "The pious Albinus mourned with tears, as for his mother, and would not take comfort. Endowed in hereditary right with the holy benedictions of the fathers,<sup>2</sup> he took pains to multiply exceedingly the talent of his lord.<sup>3</sup> He taught many in Britain, and not few later in France. It was now that he associated with him a man dear to God, remarkable for the nobility of mind and of body, Sigulf, the presbyter, Warden of the Church of the City of York, to remain with him perpetually.<sup>4</sup> Sigulf had gone as a boy to France with his uncle Autbert the presbyter, and by him had been taken to Rome to learn the ecclesiastical order; he had then been sent to the city of Metz to learn chanting. There he worked hard for some time, in great poverty, but with much profit. After the holy man, his uncle,

<sup>1</sup> There is a tradition that Alcuin wrote the Office for the Mass on Trinity Sunday. See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> The "hereditary right" seems to indicate that by these "benedictions" the library of York is meant, of which more will be said later on.

<sup>3</sup> "Talentum sui domini", sc. Eleberti?

<sup>4</sup> The perpetual presence of Sigulf was needed for the celebration of masses, Alcuin remaining a deacon. There is a curious mention of Alcuin's part in the administration of Holy Communion, and of the action of the young King Louis when receiving at his hand; see p. 32.

migrated to the Lord, he came back to his own land." We can almost see and hear Sigulf getting these little facts about himself and his uncle incorporated in the *Life of Alcuin*.

"When the Almighty God willed to glorify France with spiritual riches, as already with earthly riches, granting to the land a King after His own heart, a man of faith, fortitude, love of wisdom, and ineffable beauty of body, namely Karl, most illustrious in these respects, He put it into the mind of Albinus that he should fulfil the counsel and command of his father Albert, by going to Rome and then visiting France.

"By the command of Eanbald I, the Archbishop of York, the successor of Elcbert, he went to Rome to obtain the pallium for the archbishop from the Apostolic—that is, Hadrian I. On his way back with the pallium he met King Karl in the city of Parma.<sup>1</sup> The king addressed him with great persuasiveness and many prayers, begging that after completing his embassy he would come and join him in France. The king had become acquainted with him some years before, for Alcuin had been sent on a legation to him by the archbishop of the time."

We may interrupt our author's narrative at this point to state that the fact and the date of this former visit to Karl are recorded in the *Life of Hadrian I*, as also the further fact, not here hinted at, that Karl on that occasion sent Alcuin on to Rome. "In the year 773 Karl sent to Hadrian an embassy, consisting of the most holy bishop

<sup>1</sup> We can date this meeting fairly closely by the fact that Karl granted a *privilegium* to Parma on March 15, 781.

George,<sup>1</sup> the religious abbat Uulfhard,<sup>2</sup> and the king's favourite counsellor Albinus."

We may now return to the author of the *Life*. He tells us, to quote his own words, that when Karl begged Alcuin to come to him, Alcuin desired to do what would be useful, and therefore asked permission of his own king, Alfwald, and of his archbishop, Eanbald I, to leave his mastership of the School of York. He obtained permission, but on condition that he should in time come back to them. Under Christ's guidance he came to Karl. Karl embraced him as his father,<sup>3</sup> by whom he had been introduced to the liberal arts, in the study of which he could be somewhat cooled, but in his fervour he could never be too completely saturated with them. After Alcuin had spent some little time with him, he gave him two monasteries, that of Bethlehem, otherwise called Ferrières,<sup>4</sup> and that of St. Lupus<sup>5</sup> of Troyes.

<sup>1</sup> The bishop George whom we know as intimately concerned with the affairs of Hadrian I and with British interests was Bishop of Ostia. If this is he, we shall hear of him again in connexion with the Archbishopric of Lichfield.

<sup>2</sup> Abbat of St. Martin of Tours, a curiously early connexion of Alcuin with his future home. To him Alcuin addressed the earliest letter of his which is extant; see p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> Alcuin was about seven years older than Karl. They were at this time about forty-six and thirty-nine years of age.

<sup>4</sup> St. Peter of Ferrières, *dio. Sens*.

<sup>5</sup> Alcuin makes mention of his residence here during the autumn of 798 in his correspondence with Gisla, Karl's sister; see p. 253. The Museum of Troyes is housed in the old buildings of the Abbey of St. Loup.

## CHAPTER II

Alcuin finally leaves England.—The Adoptionist heresy.—Alcuin's retirement to Tours.—His knowledge of secrets.—Karl and the three kings his sons.—Fire at St. Martin's, Tours.—References to the life of St. Martin.—Alcuin's writings.—His interview with the devil.—His last days.

At length Alcuin felt that he ought not, without the authority of his own king and bishop, to desert the place in which he had been educated, tonsured, and ordained deacon. He asked leave of the great king to return to his fatherland. Karl received his request in a flattering manner. We may suppose that Alcuin retained an accurate recollection of the pleasant words and of his own answer, and reported them eventually to Sigulf, probably with a feeling that he had made a Yorkshire rejoinder to the king's rather pointed balance-sheet. On a formal occasion such as this, they probably addressed each other as scholars, in the Latin tongue, so that in reading the *Life* we seem to hear them speaking the actual words reported. The manner of address we may take to be correctly represented.

"*Karl*. Illustrious master,—of earthly riches we have enough, wherewith it is our joy to honour thee. With thy riches, long desired by us and scarce anywhere found, we pray thee illumine us in the wealth of thy piety.

"*Alcuin*. My lord king,—I am not inclined to oppose thy will, when it shall have been con-

firmed by the authority of the canons. Endowed in my paternal country with no small heritage, I am delighted to fling it away and stand here a pauper, so that I may be of use to thee. Thy part is only this,—to obtain for me the permission of my own king and bishop.”

Karl was at last persuaded to let him go; but he was not satisfied until it was settled that when Alcuin came back again he would stay with him always.

Some years after he came back to Karl a second time, he was placed at the head of the Monastery of St. Martin of Tours. In a godly manner he ruled this with his other monasteries. He corrected the lives of those under him as far as he could. Some were untamed when they came under his rule, but he so bestirred himself that they became reasonable, of honest morals, and seekers after truth. That is the author's statement. We shall hear more on the subject in the course of our study.

“Meantime the heresy hateful to God, which flourished in the parts of Spain, asserting that the Son of God is adoptive according to the flesh, is brought to the ears of Karl. The great king, in all things catholic, looked into this, and strove with all his might that the seed of the devil should be destroyed, and the tares completely eradicated from the wheat of God. Summoning to him Albinus his instructor from Tours, and the wretched Felix the constructor of this heresy from the parts of Spain, he collected a great synod of bishops in the imperial palace of Aix. Seated himself in the midst, he ordered Felix, who was

most unwilling, to dispute in argument with the most learned Albinus on the nature of the Son of God according to the flesh. What silence reigned among the bishops! How clear and unanswerable, with the authority of Karl, was the master's confession and defence of the faith! Felix tried to hide himself in all sorts of obscurities; Albinus pierced him with more and more darts, at such length that he 'went through almost all the cities of Israel<sup>1</sup> till the Son of Man should come'. Little else was done from the second to the seventh day of the week. At length his stupidity was laid bare to all. The heresy was confuted by the whole of the bishops with apostolic authority. To himself alone his folly was foully hidden, up to the point when he read with lamentable voice the words of Cyril the martyr, turned against him by Albinus: That nature which was corrupted by the devil is exalted above the angels by the triumph of Christ, and is set down at the right hand of the Father. When he read this sentence, he at last testified by voice and by excessive weeping that he had found himself out, that he had acted impiously. Any one who thirsts to know this more perfectly should read the master's letters to Felix and Elipantus, and theirs to him. He will then at once learn what he desires to know.

"By permission of Christ," the biographer continues, "I have up to this point written a little about the early part of the Life of Albinus, facts that I have supposed to be not known to all.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 23.



I have not thought of inserting in this little work facts about him which all know. From this point I shall attempt to trace to his last days my shaken reed of a pen, though it be with contemptible roughness.

“When he felt himself affected by old age, and increasingly by one infirmity,<sup>1</sup> he informed King Karl that he wished to retire from the world, as he had long had it in mind to do. He asked leave to live the monastic life, in accordance with the Rule of St. Benedict, at St. Boniface of Fulda,<sup>2</sup> and to distribute among his disciples the monasteries which had been granted to him, if that might be done. But the king, terrible and pious, with all regard for Alcuin’s request, denied the one part, while he received the other gladly. He begged that he would reside at Tours, in perfect quiet and in the greatest honour, and would not refuse to continue the spiritual care of Karl himself and of all the holy Church committed to him; the secular burdens which he had borne, the king, at his request, most willingly portioned out among his disciples. Albinus acted as the most wise king had asked, seeking what would be useful, not to himself but to many; and at Tours he awaited his last day. His manner of life was not inferior to the monastic life which he had desired. He abounded in fastings, in prayers, in mortification of the flesh, in almsgivings, in much celebration of psalms and masses,<sup>3</sup> and in the other virtues

<sup>1</sup> He was subject to febrile attacks.

<sup>2</sup> For Alcuin’s letter to Fulda, written after Karl’s refusal of permission, see Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> “In psalmorum et missarum multa celebratione.”

with which it is possible for human nature to be adorned. When he had fasted till evening, there very frequently was sent from heaven to his mouth such sweetness as no human speech could utter; whatever he then willed, he could dictate most rapidly without any effort, so that he could say,— I have loved, Lord, Thy commandments above gold and precious stone; how sweet are thy words unto my mouth, yea, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. In his youth he had not loved the study of the Psalms so much as another kind of reading; in his old age he could never have too much of them. As has been described in the case of his master,<sup>1</sup> he poured forth most secret prayer during the day, with long extension of his hands in the form of a cross, and with much groaning, for he very rarely found tears. This practice he passed on to his disciples, of whom the most noble was Sigulf, 'the little old fellow,' and the magnanimous Withso<sup>2</sup>; after them, Fredegisus<sup>3</sup> and his companions. In his latest days there clung to him assiduously Raganard and Waldrann, who still survive; Adalbert of blessed memory, who was with him as much as he could, being at that

<sup>1</sup> See p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Called Witto by Alcuin (ep. 107), and Candidus (106) as the Latin rendering of the Teutonic name.

<sup>3</sup> To Fredegisus Alcuin wrote letters on the three kinds of visions (257) and on the Trinity (258). He is understood to be the "Nathanael" of other letters. Of Fredegisus, Theodulfus, the Bishop of Orleans, wrote to Karl:

Stet levita decus Fredegis sociatus Osulfo,

Gnarus uterque artis, doctus uterque bene.

He was a master in the school of the Palace and afterwards Archdeacon. He became Abbat of Cormery, and eventually of Tours.

time the son of Sigulf, afterwards a venerated father as Abbat of Ferrières; and many others, the names of all of whom I trust that Christ knows. These with all circumspection earnestly studied to do nothing in his presence with which he could find fault, and very often in his absence too. For they knew that he was in close communion with God, and was enlightened by His Spirit; and though with his bodily eyes he could no longer see clearly, from old age and infirmity, they feared that nothing which they did escaped his knowledge.

“Filled as he was with the Spirit, he foretold to some their future, as he did to Raganard about Osulf.<sup>1</sup> This Raganard had in his sleep a horrible vision, which it is better not to describe. He told it the next day to the father, in fear lest it referred to himself. The father knew that it referred not to Raganard but to Osulf. With great grief he spoke thus: ‘O Osulf, thou wretched one, how oft have I warned thee, how oft corrected! Much labour did I devote to thine uncle, that he should reform and begin to walk in the way of the commandments of God; and I told him that if he did not he would be smitten with the plague of leprosy; which thing happened to him. And to thee, my son, I predict of Osulf, of whom is this vision, that neither in this land, nor in the land of his birth, shall he die.’ The prediction was true; he died in Lombardy.

<sup>1</sup> See the mention of him in previous note. Osulf was a household officer of the young King Charles, see p. 250. The last words of Alcuin’s interpretation of the vision suggest that he was an Englishman, one of the youths whom Alcuin brought from York as his assistant masters.

“This same Raganard, unknown to everybody, tried himself by vigils of too long duration and by an excess of abstinence; by this intemperance he fell into a most dangerous fever. Father Albinus came to visit him, and sent out of the house all except Sigulf. Then he rebuked Raganard thus: ‘Why hast thou tried to act so intemperately, without advice of any? I knew that thou didst wish to act thus, and therefore it was that I ordered thee to sleep in the dwelling in which I sleep. But thou didst immediately, when all were asleep, secretly light a candle, conceal it in a lantern, and going to that place didst watch through the whole night.’ And then all that he did there secretly, known to God alone, he told him of, and added:—‘When thou didst go with me to the refectory, and I bade thee drink wine, in the most crafty way thou didst say—I have drunk sufficiently, my lord father, with my uncle. But when thou didst come to thy uncle, and he too bade thee drink wine, thou didst say thou hadst drunk with me. Thy will was to delude us, and thou art deceived. When thou hast risen up from the fever, take thou care never to attempt anything of this kind again.’

“When Raganard heard this, he turned red, and was in great fear, knowing that he was caught. In wonder that his secret deeds could not escape the knowledge of Albinus, he asked how was this made known. To this day he bears witness that no man knew it before it was revealed; God alone. He repented, and for the rest of Alcuin’s life he never attempted anything of the kind without his advice and command.

“It very often happened that when messengers

were coming to Alcuin from the king and other friends, while they were yet a long way off, he would tell of their coming and of the cause of their coming, what they brought with them, what they wished to take back. Certain disciples, when they heard him speak thus, set it down to the folly of an old man, till it was proved to be true. Benedict<sup>1</sup>, the man of the Lord, who beyond all monks was bound in intimacy with Alcuin, used often to come to him from the parts of Gothia, to obtain advice for himself and his monks. On one occasion Benedict wished to come secretly, unknown to any one at Tours, so that Alcuin should not know till he stood in the doorway. When he was by no means near Tours, Albinus summoned an attendant, and said to him, 'Hasten to meet Benedict in such and such a place, and tell him to come to me quickly.' The messenger did as he was told, and on the third day arrived at the place, found Benedict there, and delivered his message. Astonished that his plan was discovered, Benedict went with all haste to Tours. When they had joyously kissed one another, Benedict, the reverend father, began suppliantly, 'Lord father, who foretold to thee my arrival?' He answered, 'No man told me by word of mouth.' Benedict asked again, 'Who then, my lord? Perhaps thou hast heard in a letter from some one?' He replied, 'Of a truth, not in a letter.' Again

<sup>1</sup> This was Benedict, the Abbat of Aniane in Languedoc. That region is here spoken of as Gothia, because the Goths had settled about Toulouse in the fifth century. The fact that Benedict used often to come to consult Alcuin is an interesting illustration of the disregard of distance in those days. As the crows fly, Toulouse is some 270 miles from Tours, and the journey was a long and arduous one.

Benedict asked, 'If neither from the words of any man, nor from any man's letter, thou knewest this beforehand, pray, my father, in what way didst thou know it?—tell me.' Albinus said, 'Do not interrogate me further on this.' There the matter ended. When the venerable man Benedict was minded to return, he asked Albinus to tell him in what special words he prayed, when he prayed for himself. Albinus said, 'This is what I ask of Christ:—Lord, grant me to understand my sins, and to make true confession, and to do fitting penance; and grant unto me remission of my sins.' The godly man Benedict said, 'Let us add, my father, to this thy prayer, one word, namely this, after remission, save me.' Albinus rejoiced, and said, 'Let it be so, most reverent son, let it be so.' Benedict then asked another question, would he tell him what were the words that silently moved his lips when he saw the Cross and bent before it? Albinus answered, 'Thy Cross we adore, O Lord; Thy glorious Passion we recall. Have mercy on us, Thou Who didst die for us.' Albinus then saw him on his way for a short distance, and sent him back rejoicing to his own place and people."

The biographer next sets before us a remarkable picture of the four most important personages of the time.

"The great king and powerful emperor Karl, wishing to offer prayer and to have some mutually desired conversation with Alcuin, paid a visit to the tomb of the holy Martin at Tours, with his sons Charles, Pepin, and Louis. The emperor took Alcuin by the hand, and said to him privately, 'My lord master, which of these sons of mine does

it seem to thee that I shall have as my successor in this honour to which God has raised me, all unworthy?' Alcuin turned his face towards Louis, the youngest of the three, and the most remarkable for his humility, on account of which he was regarded by many as of little account, and said, 'In the humble Louis thou shalt have an illustrious successor.' The emperor alone heard what he said. But when, later on, sitting on the spot where he wished to be buried, Alcuin saw these same three kings<sup>1</sup> enter the Church of St. Stephen for prayer, with head erect, and Louis with head bent, he said to those who stood by—'Do you see that Louis is more humble than his brothers? You will most certainly see him the most exalted successor of his father.' When with his own hand he administered to them the Communion of the Body of Christ and the Blood, the same Louis, most noted above all for humility, bent before the holy father and kissed his hand.<sup>2</sup> The man of the Lord said to Sigulf who stood by, 'Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Certainly the Frankish land shall rejoice to have this man emperor after his father.' That this has taken place, the biographer adds, we both see and rejoice.<sup>3</sup> They who seemed to be cedars are

<sup>1</sup> The three sons of Karl were all of them kings (practically sub-kings) of one part or another of his vast domains. The great partition of the empire was not arranged by Charlemagne till after Alcuin's death.

<sup>2</sup> It will be borne in mind that Alcuin was only in deacon's orders.

<sup>3</sup> This is one of the various indications of date which enable us to calculate the time at which the biography was written.

cast down, and the fruitful olive tree in the house of God is exalted.<sup>1</sup>

"The father Alcuin had with great care instructed Karl in liberal arts and in divine scripture, so that he became the most learned of all kings of the Franks who have been since the coming of Christ. He taught him, also, which of the Psalms he should sing throughout his whole life for various occasions; for times of penitence, with litany and entreaties and prayers; for times of special prayer; of praising God; of any tribulation; and for his being moved to exercise himself in divine praise. Any one who wishes to know all this may read it in the little book which he wrote to Karl on the principles of prayer."<sup>2</sup>

At this point in his narrative the biographer relates the scrape into which "the little old fellow" got in connexion with his secret study of Vergil, already described on page 2. As a further instance of Alcuin's remarkable knowledge of what was going on, he adds the interesting little story about a present of wine to Cormery which will be found on p. 223. Then comes the following amusing account, with its revelation of a dislike of Karl's favourites the foreigners, a dislike which Eginhard thus frankly reports in his vivid picture of the great King,<sup>3</sup> "He loved foreigners, and took great pains to attract them to him and to maintain them, so much so that the multitude of them not un-

<sup>1</sup> Charles and Pepin died before their father, and Louis became sole emperor and ruler of all that Charlemagne had held.

<sup>2</sup> With regard to some possible confusion here between Karl and his eldest son Charles, see p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Vita, c. 21.



reasonably seemed a heavy burden, not to the palace only but to the kingdom. His greatness of mind, however, was such, that he was not troubled by a burden of this kind; indeed even great inconveniences he regarded as compensated by the praise won by liberality and by the reward of good report."

This is the story. The presbyter Aigulf<sup>1</sup>, an Anglo-Saxon<sup>2</sup> himself too, came to Tours to visit the father. When he was standing at the door of Alcuin's dwelling, there happened to be four of the brethren of Tours talking together. When they saw him, they said one to another, not imagining that he knew anything of their language, "Here's a Briton, or a Scot<sup>3</sup>, come to see that other Briton inside. O God, deliver this monastery from these Britons! Like bees coming back to the mother-bee, these all come to this man of ours!" What would we not give to have this in the words in which they spoke it, instead of in the author's Latin. The presbyter went into Alcuin's dwelling, and, after other matters, told him what he had heard. "Do you know which they are?" Alcuin asked. "Indeed I do not. I could not for shame

<sup>1</sup> It is frequently impossible to calculate a man's nationality from his name in the century with which we are dealing, and it is unsafe to guess at it. Aigulf, for instance, was the name of the Gothic Count of Maguelone, the cup-bearer of Karl's son, Pepin of Aquitaine, and father of Benedict of Aniane.

<sup>2</sup> Engelsaxo.

<sup>3</sup> "Venit iste Britto vel Scotto." The Scot in those days was the Irishman. We may imagine that "Scotto" was formed derisively to match "Britto". But it should be remembered that in Alcuin's dialogue on grammar the disputants are Saxo and Franco, a very similar formation.

look at them when they said that." Alcuin said, "I am sure I know who they are." He called in some of the brethren by name, and said, "These are they." Greatly grieved by their folly, Alcuin yet spared them, saying, "May Christ, the Son of God, spare them." Then he gave them each a cup of wine to drink, and without severity sent them away. Aigulf afterwards made diligent inquiry, and found that they were the right men. We of to-day may remark that Alcuin evidently knew the characters of his pupils; but his ideas of discipline differed from ours. We should not have let them know that we had heard personal remarks of that kind; and we should not have given them glasses of wine. We may remember the words of Archbishop Temple to Bishop Creighton, when the Bishop had received the late Mr. John Kensit for an interview at Fulham, and had given him tea. "It was all right to receive the man; but you shouldn't ha' given him tea."

As we have seen, the biographer on the whole confines himself to those parts of Alcuin's Life which were not of common knowledge. But there was one story of sufficient importance in his judgment to be related at length, although it was well known. We may well take the same view, and be grateful to our author for having departed from his self-imposed limitations.

"I ought not", he writes, "to pass over in silence one fact which many know. The Keeper of the Sepulchre of St. Martin, who provided the wax and all the vestments which pertained to the basilica itself, entering with a lighted candle the sacristy where they were kept, fixed the candle on a

spike, and when he left he forgot to take it with him. He locked the door and went away. The burning candle fell upon some wax and sent a great flame which set fire to the vestments hanging on the pegs; and the vestments sent the flame up to the roof.<sup>1</sup> When the warden saw this, he fled with the key to another monastery.<sup>2</sup> People rushed from all sides; they beat at the door, but all their efforts failed to burst it open. The clerks threw out of the windows any valuables they had in their abode. The Church of St. Martin was denuded of some vestments, and no one expected anything but the burning of the whole monastery. The roof was all stripped of lead. Albinus came; he was now blind. He asked what was being done. One of his disciples, his 'little old fellow', said, 'Come away, father, or you will be killed by the lead they are throwing down or burned to death.' When Albinus was willing to go, Vetulus said to

<sup>1</sup> It is of at least local interest to remark that the latest of many burnings of York Minster, Alcuin's old abode, was caused very much in the same way. Carpenters had been at work, in the bell-chamber of the south-west tower, and left a candle burning on the table where they had been planing wood. The candle burned low and fell over on to some shavings, to which it set fire, and thence the flame grew and grew till it burst out, and the great fire of May 20, 1840, was the result. This present writer was a boy of six at the time, and from his bedroom window saw it all, from the beginning, through the sounding boards of the chamber. He was eventually carried off in a blanket, as the tower would have fallen into his father's house if it had come down. The house, it may be added, was the house in which Guy Fawkes was born. See also p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> The word *monasterium* has so many meanings that we cannot be sure what precisely is here meant. It may possibly mean the *maius monasterium*, Marmoutier, see p. 221.

him, 'My lord father, go to the sepulchre of the lord Martin, and intercede for us.' Albinus did as was suggested, and when he got to the place, he stretched himself on the ground in the form of a cross, and uttered groans heavenward. As soon as Albinus cast himself on the ground, in some wonderful and incredible way the whole fire was put out, as completely as if extinguished by a great river. When the clerks saw this, they rushed in joyous stupefaction to the spot where Albinus lay prostrate before the sepulchre of St. Martin, in the form of a cross, praying to God for them. They raised him from the ground, blessing God who through the prayers of Albinus had saved the whole monastery of Saint Martin from being consumed by fire. These be thy worthy examples, holy Martin, who once when thou wouldest escape the fire couldest not; turned to God in prayer thou hast extinguished this fire that threatened us. Lofty of a truth is the faith that by its ardour can extinguish globes of fire. Nor is it a matter of wonder that the elements leave their proper force at the prayers and commands of Albinus, since he rests in the heart of Him who loves them that love Him, and permits them not to be singed by the flame when they walk in fire. Thee in these we adore, Thee we glorify, Thee we laud, who, as Thou hast deigned to make promises to Thy servants who keep Thy commandments, hast shown them forth most clearly by Thy works in Thine own Albinus. Thou hast said, O Christ Jesus, whatsoever ye shall ask of Me in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

It will have been noticed that this passage from the *Life* attributes to St. Martin a failure to prevent the progress of a fire. The reference appears at first sight to be to the eleventh chapter of the *Life of St. Martin* by Sulpicius Severus<sup>1</sup>, written some four hundred years before the fire here described, and published in the lifetime of St. Martin, whom Severus had visited at Tours for the special purpose of learning the facts of his life.

"In a certain town, Martin set fire to a very ancient and famous pagan shrine. A house was attached to the walls of the temple, and the wind blew the globes of fire on to this house. When Martin saw this, he climbed rapidly to the roof of the house, and faced the flames. Then you would see the flame turn back in a marvellous manner against the force of the wind, the two elements fighting the one against the other. Thus by the virtue of Martin the fire operated only where it was bidden."

This is the only account in the *Life of St. Martin* to which the remark in the text could apply. But, as a matter of fact, the occasion referred to was quite different from this. The little story is an interesting example of the keenness of criticism in those very early times, and of the need of immediate corrections.

The contemporary readers of the *Life* were well aware of the fact that Martin himself was

<sup>1</sup> The historian here quoted, a contemporary of St. Martin, must not be confused with Sulpicius, Archbishop of Bourges, A. D. 584, surnamed Severus to distinguish him from a second Sulpicius Archbishop of Bourges, surnamed Pius, who died A. D. 644.

once half-burned. Knowing this, they fastened on the passage quoted, and spoke in a depreciatory way of Martin. They asked how could he be so great as to prevent houses being burned, if he was not great enough to prevent himself from being set on fire and nearly burned to death. These depreciatory remarks came to the ears of Sulpicius, and the very next day<sup>1</sup>, he sat down and wrote a letter to the presbyter Eusebius, to tell the actual facts of the other story with which unfavourable comparison has been made. The facts were as follows :—

The saint was visiting his diocese in midwinter. A bed had been prepared for him in a vestry, which was warmed by a fire below the floor. The pavement was rough and dilapidated. They had made for the saint a specially soft and comfortable bed of straw, but his practice was to sleep on the bare ground. Not being able to endure the blandient comfort of the straw, he threw it away and slept on the ground. By midnight the fire below had got at the straw through the crevices in the pavement, and Martin awoke to find the vestry full of fire. Then came, as he told Sulpicius, the temptation of the devil. Martin tried to escape, instead of turning to prayer. He rushed to the door and struggled with the bolt, in vain. The flames caught his dress and set it on fire. He fell down, and then remembered to pray. The flames felt the change and spared him. The monks, who had heard the fire crackling and roar-

<sup>1</sup> "*Hesterna die indicatur mihi,*" &c. We fortunately have the letter. It is Epistle I of the collected works of Sulpicius.

ing, burst open the door and looked for his dead body ; they found him safe and sound. He confessed to Sulpicius, not without groaning, that the devil had for the time overcome him. In these modern times, to lie down on the floor is a common precaution against being smothered by the smoke in a burning room.

This *Life of St. Martin* is very interesting reading. It is too tempting to give the substance of the chapter previous to the one given above. The saint was at his usual work of destroying a very ancient temple. When he had accomplished this, he set to work to fell a pine-tree which stood near. The chief priest and the pagan crowd drew the line at that, and would not allow it. Martin told them there was nothing worthy of worship in a piece of wood ; it was dedicated to a demon and it must come down. Thereupon a crafty pagan, seeing his way to getting rid of this objectionable destroyer of temples, and regarding the sacred tree as well lost for such a gain, proposed a bargain. "If you have sufficient confidence in your God whom you say you serve, we will ourselves cut down the tree, and it shall fall upon you ; if your Lord is with you, as you say, you will escape with your life." The bargain was struck on both sides. The tree leaned in a certain direction, so that there was no doubt where it would fall. Martin was tied by the rustics in the right place, and they began to cut with their axes. The tree began to nod, leaned more and more to the precise spot they had selected. At last they had cut deep enough ; the crash of the rending trunk was heard ; the monks turned pale ; the saint raised

his hand and made the sign of the cross; at the moment a whirlwind came and blew the tree far to one side.

We must now return to the life of St. Martin's faithful follower, Alcuin.

"This also must be mentioned to the praise of the Lord, that very frequently many infirm people, when they came to Albinus and received his benediction with faith, recovered bodily health. On a certain occasion, as is reported by some of the chief authorities, a poor man came, having his eyesight obstructed by a grievous dimness. He reached the door of the outer dwelling of Albinus, and begged that water be given him with which his eyes might be bathed; for he said it had been revealed to him that if he could wash his eyes with some of it he would recover his sight.<sup>1</sup> Unknown to Albinus, some of the water in which he had washed his own face and eyes was secretly given to the poor man who begged for water. The poor man bathed his eyes with the water, in full faith; the dimness disappeared, and he recovered his clearness of sight. We, too, are enlightened by thy sweat, father, and the sins of our souls are washed by thy pious doctrine. Thou, too, didst scarce see anything with thy bodily sight, but wast always engaged in lightening the eyes of others; and those whom thou couldest not enlighten in bodily presence thou didst in absence instruct by letters, writing many things profitable to the whole church.

<sup>1</sup> It may be that we have here an early hint of a practice of which we have record in later times. The water which had been used for washing the tomb of St. Martin was held to have healing properties in the later middle ages.



"For at the request of Karl he wrote a most useful book on the Holy Trinity; also on rhetoric, dialectic, and music. He wrote to Gundrad on the nature of the soul. At the most honourable request of the ladies Gisla and Rotruda, he composed a remarkable book on the Gospel of St. John, partly his own and partly taken from the holy Augustine. He wrote also on four Epistles of Paul, to the Ephesians, to Titus, to Philemon, and to the Hebrews;<sup>1</sup> to Fredegisus on the Psalms;<sup>2</sup> to Count Wido<sup>3</sup> homilies on the principal vices and virtues; to his own Sigulf very useful notes on Genesis; on the Proverbs of Solomon, on Ecclesiastes, on the Song of Songs clearly, briefly, indescribably. Under the names Frank and Saxon<sup>4</sup> he wrote a most able book on grammar in the form of question and answer. He collected two volumes of homilies from many works of the Fathers. He wrote on orthography. On the 118th Psalm (our 119th) he wrote with a pen of gold. There are many other writings in which any one who reads and studies them attentively will find no small edification, as in the letters which he wrote to

<sup>1</sup> Believed at that time to have been written by St. Paul.

<sup>2</sup> In our editions, Arno and not Fredegisus was the recipient of this treatise.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably the same as Withso and Witto.

<sup>4</sup> "Franci et Saxonis," the author says. But in the disputations dialogue they are called Saxo and Franco. Saxo addresses Franco as *O Franco!* but on one occasion he slips into the vocative *France*: "En habes, France, de adverbio satis." *Fr.* "Non satis; pausemus tamen ad horam." *Saxo.* "Pausemus." The dialogue is much of the same kind as that found in Aldhelm's works a hundred years earlier between Magister and Discipulus. See my *St. Aldhelm*, ch. xii.

many persons. In these and like works he spent the remainder of his days, living on earth the life of heaven. Preparing himself in his latest days for the coming of the Son of Man, that he might go in with Him to the wedding, he washed every night his couch with tears,<sup>1</sup> always fortifying himself with the intercessions of the saints, whose solemnities he regularly celebrated, lest he should be pierced by any darts of the ancient enemy, who never could steal into his dwelling so secretly as not to be at once detected by him and driven out by the sign of the Cross.

“On a certain night, when he desired to pour forth prayer in secret after his wont, with chanting of Psalms, he was oppressed by very heavy sleep. But he rose from his couch, and put on his cape; and when again he was oppressed with sleep, he took off all his clothes except his shirt and drawers. The sleepiness continuing, he took a censer, and going to the place where fire was kept burning, he filled it with live coal and put incense on it, and a sweet odour filled the chamber. In that hour the devil presented himself to him in bodily form, as it were a large man, very black and misshapen and bearded, hurling at him darts of blasphemy. ‘Why dost thou act the hypocrite, Alcuin?’<sup>2</sup> he asked. ‘Why dost thou attempt to appear just before men, when thou art a deceiver and a great dissimulator? Dost thou suppose that for these feignings of thine Christ can hold thee

<sup>1</sup> We have seen from the author that he could very seldom shed tears, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> There is a delicate touch in putting into the devil’s mouth the literal name and not the intimate name.

to be acceptable?' But the soldier of Christ, invincible, standing with David in the tower<sup>1</sup> builded for an armoury, wherein there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men, said with a heavenly voice, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? He is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid? Hear my crying, O Lord; incline thine ear to my calling, my King and my God, for unto Thee do I make my prayer.' With these and other verses of the Psalms the enemy was at length put to flight; Albinus completed his prayer and went to rest.<sup>2</sup> At that time only one of his disciples, Waltdramn by name, who is still alive, was watching with him; he saw all this from a place of concealment, a witness of this thing that took place."

St. Martin himself once had a meeting with the devil<sup>3</sup>. There came into his cell a purple light, and one stood in the midst thereof clad in a royal robe, having on his head a diadem of gold and precious stones, his shoes overlaid with gold, his countenance serene, his face full of joy, looking like anything but the devil. The devil spoke first. "Know, Martin, whom you behold. I am Christ. I am about to descend from heaven to the world. I willed first to manifest myself to thee." Martin held his tongue. "Why dost thou doubt, Martin, whom thou seest? I am Christ." Then the Spirit

<sup>1</sup> Cant. iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> A cynic might remark that Alcuin did not answer the clever question of the enemy. He could not deny that he was elaborately deceiving his attendants.

<sup>3</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Life*, c. 25.

revealed that this was the devil, not God, and he answered, "The Lord Jesus did not predict that He would come again resplendent with purple and diadem. I will not believe that Christ has come, except in the form in which He suffered, bearing the stigmata of the Cross." Thereupon the apparition vanished like smoke, leaving so very bad a smell that there was no doubt it was the devil. "This account I had from the mouth of Martin himself," Sulpicius adds.

"The father used a little wine, in accordance with the apostle's precept, not for the pleasure of the palate, but by reason of his bodily weakness.<sup>1</sup> In every kind of way he avoided idleness; either he read, or he wrote, or he taught his disciples, or he gave himself to prayer and the chanting of Psalms, yielding only to unavoidable necessities of the body. He was a father to the poor, more humble than the humble, an inviter to piety of the rich, lofty to the proud, a discernor of all, and a marvellous comforter. He celebrated every day many solemnities of masses<sup>2</sup> with honourable diligence, having proper masses deputed for each day of the week. Moreover, on the Lord's day, never at any time after the light of dawn began to

<sup>1</sup> Theodulf of Orleans makes a little apology to Karl for Alcuin's use of wine and beer (not English beer! see p. 267):

Aut si, Bacche, tui aut Cerealis pocla liquoris  
Porgere praecepiat, fors et utrumque volet;  
Quo melius doceat, melius sua fistula cantet,  
Si doctrinalis pectoris antra riget.

If he bids bring forth cups of thy liquor, O Bacchus, or cups of the liquor of corn, and perhaps takes both; it is that he may teach the better, the better may sing his stave, if he moistens the recesses of his instructive breast.

<sup>2</sup> "Celebrabat omni die missarum solemnia multa."

appear did he allow himself to slumber, but swiftly preparing himself as deacon with his own priest Sigulf he performed the solemnities of special masses till the third hour, and then with very great reverence he went to the public mass. His disciples, when they were in other places, especially when they assisted *ad opus Dei*, carefully studied that no cause of blame be seen in them by him.

“The time had come when Albinus had a desire to depart and be with Christ. He prayed with all his will that if it might be, he should pass from the world on the day on which the Holy Spirit was seen to come upon the apostles in tongues of fire, and filled their hearts. Saying for himself the vesper office, in the place which he had chosen as his resting-place after death, namely, near the Church of St. Martin, he sang through the evangelic hymn of the holy Mary with this antiphon<sup>1</sup>, ‘O Key of David, and sceptre of the house of Israel, who openest and none shutteth, shuttest and none openeth, come and lead forth from the house of his prison this fettered one, sitting in darkness and the shadow of death.’ Then he said the Lord’s Prayer. Then several Psalms—Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks. O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of hosts. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house. Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes. One thing I have desired of the Lord. Unto Thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul.

“He spent the season of Lent, according to his custom, in the most worthy manner, with all

<sup>1</sup> Based on Isa. xxii. 22.

contrition of flesh and spirit and purifying of habit. Every night he visited the basilicas of the saints which are within the monastery of St. Martin,<sup>1</sup> washing himself clean of his sins with heavy groans. When the solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord was accomplished, on the night of the Ascension he fell on his bed, oppressed with languor even unto death, and could not speak. On the third day before his departure he sang with exultant voice his favourite antiphon, 'O key of David,' and recited the verses mentioned above. On the day of Pentecost, the matin office having been performed, at the very hour at which he had been accustomed to attend masses, at opening dawn, the holy soul of Albinus is<sup>2</sup> released from the body, and by the ministry of the celestial deacons, having with them the first martyr Stephen and the arch-deacon Laurence, with an army of angels, he is led to Christ, whom he loved, whom he sought; and in the bliss of heaven he has for ever the fruition of the glory of Him whom in this world he so faithfully served."

The Annals of Pettau enable us to fill in some details of Alcuin's death. Pettau was not far from Salzburg, and therefore the monastery was likely to be well informed. Arno of Salzburg, Alcuin's great admiration and his devoted personal friend, would see to it that in his neighbourhood all ecclesiastics knew the details. The seizure on the occasion of his falling on his bed was a paralytic stroke. It occurred, according to the Annals

<sup>1</sup> See p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> The biographer here passes in a telling manner to the present tense.

from which we are quoting, on the fifth day of the week on the eighth of the Ides of May, that is, on May 8; but in that year, 804, Ascension Day fell on May 9, so that for the eighth of the Ides we must read the seventh of the Ides. The seizure took place at vesper tide, after sunset. He lived on till May 19, Whitsunday, on which day he died, just as the day broke.

"On that night," to return to the Life, "above the church of the holy Martin there was seen an inestimable clearness of splendour, so that to persons at a distance it seemed that the whole was on fire. By some, that splendour was seen through the whole night, to others it appeared three times in the night. Joseph the Archbishop of Tours testified that he and his companions saw this throughout the night. Many that are still sound in body testify the same. To more persons, however, this brightness appeared in the same manner, not on that but on a former night, namely, on the night of the first Sunday after the Ascension.

"At that same hour there was displayed to a certain hermit in Italy the army of the heavenly deacons, sounding forth the ineffable praises of Christ in the air; in the midst of whom Alcuin<sup>1</sup> stood, clothed with a most splendid dalmatic, entering with them into heaven to minister with perennial joy to the Eternal Pontiff. This hermit on that same day of Pentecost told what he had seen to one of the brethren of Tours, who was making his accustomed way to visit the thresholds

<sup>1</sup> Again the use of Alcuin's baptismal name at a critical point.

of the Apostles.<sup>1</sup> The hermit asked him these questions,—‘Who is that Abbat that lives at Tours, in the monastery of the holy Martin? By what name is he called? And was he well in body when you left?’ The brother replied, ‘He is called Alchuin, and he is the best teacher in all France. When I started on my way hither, I left him well.’ The solitary made rejoinder, with tears, that he was indeed enjoying the very happiest health; and he told him what he had seen at day-break that day. When the brother got back to Tours, he related what he had heard.

“Father Sigulf, with certain others, washed the body of the father with all honour, and placed it on a bier. Now Sigulf had at the time a great pain in the head, but being by faith sound in mind, he found a ready cure for his head. Raising his eyes above the couch of the master, he saw the comb<sup>2</sup> with which he was wont to comb his head. Taking it in his hands he said, ‘I believe, Lord Jesus, that if I combed my head with this my master’s comb, my head would at once be cured by his merits.’ The moment he drew the comb across his head, that part of the head which it touched was immediately cured, and thus by combing his head all round he lost the pain completely. Another of his disciples, Eangist by name, was grievously afflicted with immense pain in his teeth. By Sigulf’s advice he touched his

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the endless number of cases in which it is made quite clear that the original attraction to Rome was not the asserted bishopric of Peter, but the fact of the tombs of Peter and Paul. The cult of these two chiefs, princes of the Apostles, was the source of the reputation of Rome. See Appendix D.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 268.



teeth with the comb, and forthwith, because he did it in faith, he received a cure by the merits of Alcuin.

“When Joseph, the bishop of the city of Tours, a man good and beloved of God, heard that the blessed Alcuin was dead, he came to the spot immediately with his clerks, and washing Alcuin’s eyes with his tears, he kissed him frequently. He advised, moreover, using wise counsel, that he should not be buried outside, in the place where the father himself had willed, but with all possible honour within the basilica of the holy Martin, that the bodies of those whose souls are united in heaven should on earth lie in one home. And thus it was done. Above his tomb was placed, as he had directed, a title which he had dictated in his lifetime, engraved on a plate of bronze let into the wall.”<sup>1</sup>

The simple epitaph, apart from the title, ran thus:—

“Here doth rest the lord Alchuuin the Abbat, who died in peace on the fourteenth of the Kalends of June. When you read, O all ye who pass by, pray for him and say, The Lord grant unto him eternal rest.”

<sup>1</sup> The title consists of twenty-four elegiacs, with only ordinary thoughts.

## CHAPTER III

The large bulk of Alcuin's letters and other writings.—The main dates of his life.—Bede's advice to Egbert.—Careless lives of bishops.—No parochial system.—Inadequacy of the bishops' oversight.—Great monasteries to be used as sees for new bishoprics, and evil monasteries to be suppressed.—Election of abbats and hereditary descent.—Evils of pilgrimages.—Daily Eucharists.

WE in the diocese of Bristol have a special right to study and to make much of the letters of Alcuin. Our own great historian, William of Malmesbury, had in the library of Malmesbury from the year 1100 and onwards an important collection of these letters, from which he quotes frequently in support of the historical statements which he makes. More than that, we know of some of the letters of Alcuin only from the quotations from them thus made by William in this diocese some 800 years ago. This is specially stated by Abbat Froben, of Ratisbon, who edited the letters of Alcuin 140 years ago.

The letters of Alcuin are addressed to an emperor, to kings, queens, popes, patriarchs, archbishops, dukes, and others; so that of Alcuin's political importance there can be no question. As to his learning, William of Malmesbury pays him the great compliment of naming him along with our own Aldhelm and with Bede. "Of all the Angles," he says,<sup>1</sup> "of whom I have read, Alcuin

<sup>1</sup> *Gesta Regum*, i. 3.

was, next to the holy Aldhelm and Bede, certainly the most learned."

Alcuin was born in Northumbria in or about the year 735. He left England to live in France in 782, returned for a time in 792, and left finally in 793. He died in 804. We can thus see how he stands in regard of date to those with whom we have dealt in former lectures. Aldhelm and Wilfrith died in 709, only about a quarter of a century before Alcuin's birth. Bede died, according to the usual statement<sup>1</sup>, in 735,<sup>2</sup> the year of Alcuin's birth. Boniface was martyred in Holland in 755, when Alcuin was twenty years old.

As in the case of Gregory and of Boniface, who have been the subjects of the last two courses of lectures, the letters of Alcuin are the most important—or among the most important—sources of information for the history of the times. The letters are 236 in number, and they fill 373 columns of close small print in the large volumes of Migne's series. The letters of Boniface are not half so numerous, and they occupy considerably less than one-third of the space in the same print.

The letters of Alcuin, great as is their number and reach, form but a small part of his writings. His collected works are six times as large as his letters. His commentaries and treatises on the Holy Scriptures are much more lengthy than his collected letters, more than two-thirds as long again. His dogmatic writings are not far from

<sup>1</sup> The mention of Ascension Day in the account of Bede's death is in the judgement of some scholars more easily reconciled with the incidence of Ascension Day in the year 742.

half as long again as his letters. His book on Sacraments and kindred subjects is about two-thirds as long as his letters. His biographies of saints, his poems, his treatises on teaching and learning, are all together nearly as long as the letters; and there is almost the same bulk of works which are attributed to him on evidence of a less conclusive character.

Put briefly, this was his life. He was a boy at my own school, the Cathedral School of York, a school which had the credit of educating, 800 years later, another boy who made a mark on history, Guy Fawkes. The head master in Alcuin's time was Egbert, Archbishop of York and brother of the reigning king of Northumbria; and the second master was Albert, Egbert's cousin, and eventually his successor in the chief mastership and in the archbishopric. Alcuin succeeded to the practical part of the mastership on Egbert's death in 766, the new archbishop, Albert, retaining the government of the school and the chief part of the religious teaching. In 778 Alcuin became in all respects the head master of the school, and in the end of 780 Albert died, leaving to Alcuin the great collection of books which formed the famous library of York.

Alcuin had for some years travelled much on the continent of Europe, and he was well acquainted with its principal scholars. They were relatively few in number, learning having sunk very low on the continent, while in Northumbria it had been and still was at a very high level. Alcuin had also made acquaintance with Karl, not yet known as Karl der Grosse, Carolus Magnus,

Charlemagne, the son of Pepin, king as yet of the Franks, emperor in the year 800, a man about seven years younger than Alcuin. On a visit to the continent in 781 he again met Karl, who proposed to him that he should enter his service as master of the school of his palace, and practically minister of education for all parts of the vast empire over which Karl ruled. In 782 he joined Karl, having obtained leave of absence from the Northumbrian king Alfweald, Archbishop Egbert's great-nephew, and from the new archbishop, Eanbald I. From that time onwards he was Karl's right-hand man, in matters theological as well as educational; and in some matters of supreme political importance too. The leave of absence lasted some nine or ten years; at the end of that time Alcuin came back for a short time, but he soon after terminated his official connexion with York, and spent the rest of his life in the dominions of Karl.

Archbishop Egbert, Alcuin's master, had been a friend of the venerable Bede. The only occasion on which we know that Bede left his cloister was that of a visit to Egbert at York, shortly before Bede's death, if he died in 735. We have it from Bede himself that he had promised another visit to York in the following year, but was too ill to carry out his promise. Failing the opportunity of long conversations on the state of the Province of York, which corresponded to the bishoprics of York, Lindisfarne, Hexham, and Whithern, Bede set down his thoughts on parchment or tablets, and sent them to his friend. This Letter of Bede to Egbert is by very far the most important document of those

times which has come down to us; both because of the remarkable mass of information contained in it, which we get from no other source, and because of the large and broad views of ecclesiastical policy which it sets forth. It was no doubt the advice and warnings of Bede that led Ecgbert to create the educational conditions which developed the intellect of the most intellectual man of his times, the subject of these lectures. Inasmuch as it seems probable—indeed, is practically certain—that the distressful state of Northumbria was the final cause of Alcuin's abandonment of his native land, it will be well to summarize the main points of Bede's dirge. We should bear in mind the fact that we are reading a description by an ecclesiastic, a man keenly devoted to the monastic life; and that the date is that of the year of Alcuin's birth. It tells us, therefore, something of the setting in which Alcuin found himself in early boyhood.

Ecgbert had only become Bishop of York in the year of Bede's visit to him, 734. York was not as yet an Archbishopric; it was raised to that dignity in Ecgbert's time. Some writers call Paulinus Archbishop, because a pall was sent to him by Gregory; but the pall did not reach England till after Paulinus had run away from York.

Bede thinks it necessary to urge Ecgbert very earnestly to be careful in his talk. He does not suppose that Ecgbert sins in this respect, but it is matter of common report that some bishops do; that they have no men of religion or continence with them, but rather such as indulge in laughter and jests, in revellings, drunkenness, and other pleasures of loose life; men who feast daily in rich

banquets, and neglect to feed their minds on the heavenly sacrifice.

There were in 735 sixteen bishops' sees in England, held in the south by Tatuin of Canterbury, Ingwald of London, Daniel of Winchester, Aldwin of Lichfield, Alwig of Lindsey, Forthere of Sherborn, Ethelfrith of Elmham<sup>1</sup>, Wilfrid of Worcester, Wahlstod of Hereford, Sigga of Selsey, Eadulf of Rochester; and in the north by Egbert of York, Ethelwold of Lindisfarne, Frithobert of Hexham, and Frithwald of Whithern. We may, probably, narrow Bede's censure to Lindisfarne and Hexham, if he really did, as some assume, refer to his own parts. As a Northumbrian myself, I think that a long-headed man like Bede, a Northumbrian by birth, more probably referred to bishops of the parts which we now know as the Southern Province. Alcuin's letters, however, show that in his time there was much that needed improvement in the case of northern bishops as well as southern.

A bishop in those days had to do the main part of the teaching, and preaching, and ministering the Sacraments, throughout the diocese. Bede points out that Egbert's diocese was much too large for one man to cover it properly with ministrations. He must, therefore, ordain priests, and appoint teachers to preach the Word of God in each of the villages; to celebrate the heavenly mysteries; and especially to attend to sacred baptism<sup>2</sup>. The persons so appointed must make it their essential business to

<sup>1</sup> The see of Dunwich appears to have been vacant then.

<sup>2</sup> All this tells against the now exploded belief that Theodore established the parochial system. His *paroichia* was the diocese.

root deep in the memory of the people that Catholic Faith which is contained in the Apostles' Creed, and in like manner the Lord's Prayer. Those of the people who do not know Latin are to say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer over and over again in their native tongue; and this rule is not for the laity only, but also for clergy and monks who do not know Latin. For this purpose, Bede says he has often given translations of these two into English to uneducated priests; for St. Ambrose declared that all the faithful should say the Creed every morning, and the English practice was to chant the Lord's Prayer very often. How much we of to-day would give for just one copy of Bede's Creed and Lord's Prayer in English!<sup>1</sup>

Egbert's position in the sight of God, Bede says, will be very serious if he neglects to do as he advises, especially if he takes temporal gifts or payments from those to whom he does not give heavenly gifts. This last point Bede presses home with affectionate earnestness upon the "most beloved Prelate". "We have heard it reported," he says, "that there are many villages and dwellings, on inaccessible hills and in deep forests, where for many years no bishop has been seen, no bishop has

<sup>1</sup> The earliest pieces of English now extant in the original form are the inscriptions in Anglian runes on the cross erected in 670 in the churchyard of Bewcastle, in memory of the sub-king Alchfrith (see p. 9). The main inscription runs thus: +This sigbeen thun setton hwaetred wothgar olfwolthu aft alkfrithu ean kuning eac oswiung + gebid heo sinna sowhula. + This token of victory Hwaetred Wothgar Olfwolthu caused make in memory of Alchfrith once king and son of Oswy. + Pray for the high sin of his soul. See also p. 296.



ministered ; and yet no single person has been free from the payment of tribute to the bishop ; and that although not only has he never come to confirm those who have been baptized, but there has been no teacher to instruct them in the faith or show them the difference between good and evil. And if we believe and confess," he continues, " that in the laying on of hands the Holy Spirit is received, it is clear that that gift is absent from those who have not been confirmed. When a bishop has, from love of money, taken nominally under his government a larger part of the population than he can by any means visit with his ministrations in one whole year, the peril is great for himself, and great for those to whom he claims to be overseer while he is unable to oversee them."

Egbert has, Bede tells him, a most ready co-adjutor in the King of Northumbria, Ceolwulf, Egbert's near relative, his first cousin, whom Egbert's brother succeeded. The [arch]bishop should advise the King to place the ecclesiastical arrangements of the Northumbrian nation on a better footing. This would best be done by the appointment of more bishops. Pope Gregory had bidden Augustine to arrange for twelve bishops in the Northern Province, the Bishop of York to receive the pall as Metropolitan. Egbert should aim at that number. It may here be noted that in this year of grace 1908 there are still only nine diocesan bishops in the Northern Province, besides the archbishop, and five of these nine have been created in the lifetime of some of us. Bristol knows to its heavy cost that Ripon was the first of the five.

But Bede points out, and here we come to very interesting matter, that the negligence of some former kings, and the foolish gifts of others, had left it very difficult to find a suitable see for a new bishop. The monasteries were in possession everywhere. It may be remarked in passing that all over the Christian parts of the world monasteries existed, even in those early times, in very large numbers. We know the names, and the dates or periods of foundation, of no less than 1481 founded before the year 814, in various parts of the world; and the actual number was very much larger than that, from what we know of the facts, especially in the East. In the time of Henry VIII, besides the monasteries which had been suppressed by Wolsey, Fisher, and others, as also the large number of alien priories suppressed at an earlier date, and besides all the ecclesiastical foundations called hospitals and colleges, more than 600 monasteries remained in this land to be suppressed.

There being, then, no lands left to endow bishoprics, there was, in Bede's opinion, only one remedy; that was, the summoning of a Greater Council, at which an edict should be issued, by pontifical and royal consent, fixing upon some great monastery for a new episcopal seat. To conciliate the abbat and monks, the election of the bishop-abbat should be left to them. If it should prove necessary to provide more property still for the bishop, Bede pointed out that there were many establishments calling themselves monasteries which were not worthy of the name. He would like to see some of these transferred by synodical authority for the further maintenance of

the newly-created see, so that money which now went in luxury, vanity, and intemperance in meat and drink, might be used to further the cause of chastity, temperance, and piety. Here in Bristol, with Gloucester close at hand, we need no reminder of the closeness of the parallel between Bede's advice in 735 to King Ceolwulf and the actual course taken in 1535 by King Henry, and carried to completion by him in 1540-2, in the foundation of six new bishoprics on the spoils of as many great monasteries. Nor need it be pointed out that Bede's proposal to suppress small and ill-conditioned monasteries was a forecast of the original proposal of Henry VIII.

Bede then proceeds to speak with extreme severity of false monasteries. It appears that men bribed kings to make them grants of lands—professedly for monasteries—in hereditary possession, and paid moneys to bishops, abbats, and secular authorities, to ratify the grants by their signatures; and then they made them the dwellings of licentiousness and excess of all kinds. The men's wives set up corresponding establishments. Bede urged the annulment of all grants thus misused: again we seem to hear a note prophetic of eight hundred years later. To so great a pitch had this gone, that there were no lands left for grants to discharged soldiers, sons of nobles, and others. Thus it came to pass that such men either went beyond sea and abandoned their own country, for which they ought to fight, or else they lived as they could at home, not able to marry, and living unseemly lives. If this was allowed to go on, the land would be unable to

defend itself against the inroads of the barbarians. Bede's prophecy to that effect came crushingly true in Aleuin's time, not fifty years after it was written. And here again we have a remarkable forecast of Henry VIII's avowed purpose in the suppression of monasteries, that he must have means to defend his land against invasion. Thus the three arguments of Henry VIII, namely, that lands and money were needed for more soldiers and sailors, that lands and money were needed for more bishoprics, and that many of the religious houses did not deserve that name, were carefully set out by one whom we may call a High-Church ecclesiastic, eight hundred years before Henry.

On two of the points mentioned by Bede in connexion with monasteries, it may be well to say a little more by way of illustration. The two points are, the hereditary descent of monasteries, and the principle on which the election of the abbat should proceed. To take the second first,—Bede is very precise on this point. He says that when a monastery is to be taken as the seat of a bishop, licence should be given to the monks to elect one of themselves to fill the double office of abbat and bishop, and to rule the monastery in the one character and the adjacent diocese in the other. We should have thought it would have been better to leave them free to elect some prominent churchman from the outside, than to limit their choice to one of themselves. And the exception for which arrangement was made points in the same direction of limitation. If they have not the right man in their own monastery, at least they must choose one from their own family, or order, to preside over

them, in accordance with the decrees of the Canons. This strictness was traditional in Northumbria. The great founder of monastic institutions in the Northern Church, Benedict Biscop, who founded Monk Wearmouth in 674 and Jarrow in 685, was very decided about it. He would not have an abbat brought in from another monastery. The duty of the brethren, he said, when speaking to his monks on his own imminent decease, was, in accordance with the rule of Abbat Benedict the Great, and in accordance with the statutes of their own monastery of Wearmouth—which he had himself drawn up after consideration of the various rules on the Continent from the statutes of the seventeen monasteries which he liked best of all that he had seen—to inquire carefully who of themselves was best fitted for the post, and, after due election, have him confirmed as abbat by the benediction of the bishop. There is a great deal to be said in favour of this course, and there is a great deal to be said for more freedom of election. The case which comes nearest to it in our English life of to-day is that of the election of the Master of a College in one of the two Universities. In Cambridge the election—in two cases the appointment—is in every case open, in the sense that it is not confined to the Fellows of the College, and in very recent times there have been several cases of the election of a prominent man from another College, to the great advantage of the College thus electing.

The other point is of much wider importance, namely, the hereditary descent of monasteries and of their headship. Our Northumbrian abbat

Benedict was very decided here also. The brethren must not elect his successor on account of his birth. There must be no claim of next of kin. He was specially anxious that his own brother after the flesh should not be elected to succeed him. He would rather his monastery became a wilderness than have this man as his successor, for they all knew that he did not walk in the way of truth. Benedict evidently feared that a practice of hereditary succession to ecclesiastical office might spring up. No doubt he had seen at least the beginning of this in foreign parts. It was no visionary fear, for in times rather later we have examples of ecclesiastical benefices, and even bishoprics, going from father to son, and that in days of supposed celibacy. We have plenty of examples of monasteries descending from mother to daughter later on in England; and in Bede's own time he mentions without adverse remark that the Abbess of Wetadun (Watton, in East Yorkshire) persuaded Bishop John of Hexham to cure of an illness her daughter, whom she proposed to make abbess in her stead. Alcuin himself, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> tells us quite as a matter of ordinary occurrence, not calling for any remark, that he himself succeeded hereditarily to the first monastery which he ruled, situated on Spurn Point, the southern promontory of Yorkshire. We cannot doubt that the evils naturally arising, in some cases at least, from hereditary succession to spiritual positions, had much to do with the intemperate suppression of the secular clergy and the enforcement of clerical

<sup>1</sup> See p. 5.

celibacy. In considering the question as it concerned the times of Alcuin, we must bear in mind that we are dealing with times very long before the development of the idea of feudal succession.

It is interesting to note that the earliest manuscripts of the Rule of St. Benedict which are known to exist do not definitely lay down the precise rule that the person elected to an abbacy must be a member of the abbey or at least of the same order. The Rule was first printed in 1659 by a monk of Monte Cassino; and this print was carefully collated throughout with a manuscript of the thirteenth century at Fort Augustus for the edition published by Burns and Oates in 1886. Chapter 64 is as follows, taking the translation annexed to the Latin in that edition, though it does not in all cases give quite the force of the original.

"In the appointing<sup>1</sup> of an abbot, let this principle always be observed, that he be made abbot whom all the brethren with one consent in the fear of God, or even a small part of the community with more wholesome counsel, shall elect. Let him who is to be appointed be chosen for the merit of his life and the wisdom of his doctrine, even though he should be the last of the community. But if all the brethren with one accord (which God forbid) should elect a man willing to acquiesce in their evil habits, and these in some way come to the knowledge of the bishop to whose diocese that place belongs, or of the abbots or neighbouring Christians, let them not suffer the consent of these wicked men to prevail, but appoint<sup>2</sup> a worthy

<sup>1</sup> *In ordinatione.*

<sup>2</sup> *Constituant.*

steward over the house of God, knowing that for this they shall receive a good reward, if they do it with a pure intention and for the love of God, as, on the other hand, they will sin if they neglect it."

We hear a good deal in our early history of kings and great men renouncing the world and entering the cloister. Bede shows us the darker side of this practice. Ever since king Aldfrith died, he says, some thirty years before, there has not been one chief minister of state who has not provided himself while in office with a so-called monastery of this false kind, and his wife with another. The layman then is tonsured, and becomes not a monk but an abbat, knowing nothing of the monastic rule. And the bishops, who ought to restrain them by regular discipline, or else expel them from Holy Church, are eager to confirm the unrighteous decrees for the sake of the fees they receive for their signatures. Against this poison of covetousness Bede inveighs bitterly; and then he declares that if he were to treat in like manner of drunkenness, gluttony, sensuality, and like evils, his letter would extend to an immense length.

It may be well to mention here another religious practice which had two sides to it, the practice of going on pilgrimage. Anglo-Saxon men and women had a passion for visiting the tombs of the two princes of the Apostles, Peter, whose connexion with Rome is so shadowy up to the time of his death there, and Paul, their own Apostle, the teacher of the Gentiles, whose connexion with Rome is so solid a fact in the New Testament and in Church history. Bede tells us that in his times



many of the English, noble and ignoble, laymen and clerics, men and women, did this. As a result of the relaxed discipline of mixed travel, a complaint came to England, soon after, that the promiscuous journeyings on pilgrimage led to much immorality, so that there was scarcely a town on the route in which there were not English women leading immoral lives.

There is one striking passage in Bede's unique letter which shows us how great were the demands of the early Church upon the religious observances of the lay people ; while it shows with equal clearness the inadequacy of the response made by the English of the time. The passage will complete our knowledge of the state of religion among our Anglian forefathers towards the end of Bede's life. It refers to the bishop's work among the people of the world, outside the monastic institutions. The bishop must furnish them with competent teachers, who shall show them how to fortify themselves and all they have against the continual plots of unclean spirits, by the frequent use of the sign of the Cross, and by frequent joining in Holy Communion. "It is salutary," he says to Ecgbert, "for all classes of Christians to participate daily in the Body and Blood of the Lord, as you well know is done by the Church of Christ throughout Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece, and the whole of the East. This religious exercise, this devoted sanctification, has, through the neglect of the teachers, been so long abandoned by almost all the lay persons of the province of Northumbria, that even the more religious among them only communicate at Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter. And yet," he con-

tinues, "there are innumerable persons, innocent and of most chaste conversation, boys and girls, young men and virgins, old men and old women, who without any controversy could communicate on every Lord's Day, and indeed on the birthdays of the holy apostles and martyrs, as you have seen done in the holy Roman and Apostolic Church." The Church History of early times has a great deal of practical teaching for the church people of to-day.

If the life of religious people in the monasteries and in the world was thus tainted and slack, we can imagine what the ordinary secular life was likely to be. There was terrible force in Bede's suggestion that a nation so rotten could never withstand a hostile attack of any importance. Archbishop Egbert certainly did all that he could to bring things into order; and he wisely determined that the very best thing he could do to pull things round was to get hold of the youth of the nation, and train them with the utmost care in the way that they should go. This leads us on to the rise or revival of the Cathedral School of York.

## CHAPTER IV

The school of York.—Alcuin's poem on the Bishops and Saints of the Church of York.—The destruction of the Britons by the Saxons.—Description of Wilfrith II, Egbert, Albert, of York.—Balther and Eata.—Church building in York.—The Library of York.

It is usual to reckon the year 735 as the beginning of the great School of York, and Archbishop—or rather, as he then was, Bishop—Egbert as its originator. But it seems clear that we must carry its beginnings further back, and count as its originator a man who filled a much larger place in the world than even Egbert, archbishop as he became, and brother of the king as he was. When Wilfrith, the first Englishman to appeal to Rome, was put into the see of York by Theodore of Canterbury in 669, his chaplain and biographer, Stephen Eddi, tells of four principal works which, between that year and 678, his chief accomplished. The first was the restoration of the Cathedral Church of York, which had fallen into decay during the time when Lindisfarne was the seat of the Bishop of Northumbria. The second was the building of a noble church at Ripon for the people of the kingdom of Elmete, which Edwin, the first Christian king of Northumbria, had conquered from the Romano-Britons; corresponding to the West Riding of Yorkshire and parts of Lancashire, a portion of the great British kingdom of Rheged, at the court

of which the bard Taliessin had sung. The fourth was the building of a still more noble church at Hexham, to be the ecclesiastical centre of the northern part of Northumbria, replacing Lindisfarne in that character. And the third in order was the establishment of a School, no doubt at York, as that was his episcopal seat, and he himself was the chief teacher. The world credits William of Wickham with the invention of the idea of a public school in the modern sense of the word; but seven hundred<sup>1</sup> years before him Wilfrith had grasped the idea and put it into practice at York. This is what his chaplain tells us. The secular chiefs, the noblemen, sent their sons to him to be so taught that when the time of choice came they would be found fit to serve God in the ministry, if that was their choice, or to serve the king in arms if they preferred that career. We must certainly reckon the year 676, or thereabouts, as the date of foundation of the school at York, Wilfrith as its founder, and its principle that of the modern public school, which is supposed to give an education so liberal that whatever career its alumnus prefers he will be found fitted for it. The first scholars of the school of York entered, some of them, the ministry, as learned clerks; others, the army, as fit to be soldiers. It was still so when I went to that school sixty-four years ago. The school is older than Winchester by seven hundred years, and older than Eton by seven hundred and sixty-five.<sup>2</sup> Bede's strong appeal to Ecgbert led

<sup>1</sup> He was Bishop of Winchester A. D. 1367 to 1398; Wilfrith was Bishop of York A. D. 669 to 678.

<sup>2</sup> Eton was founded, in a very small way, in 1440.

to the revival of the school after the natural decay from which good institutions suffer in times of ecclesiastical and civil disorder, and we date the continuous life of the school from him. It was an interesting coincidence, that men saw in the year 735 the revival of the school and the birth of its most famous pupil, assistant master, and head master. We may now turn to that man, whose early lot was cast in a state of society, lay and clerical, such as that described in scathing terms by Bede; and who was the first-fruits of the remedy which Bede had suggested. As a link between Bede and Alcuin we may have in mind a pretty little story about Bede which we find in a letter of Alcuin's some fifty or sixty years after Bede's death.

Ep. 274  
before A.D.  
793.

Alcuin is writing to the monks of Wearmouth. He tells them how well he remembers what he saw at Wearmouth long years ago, and how much he was pleased with everything he saw. He encourages them to continue in the right way by reminding them of the virtues of their founders. "It is certain," he writes, "that your founders very often visit the place of your dwelling. They rejoice with all whom they find keeping their statutes and living right lives; and they cease not to intercede for such with the pious judge. Nor is it doubtful that visitations of angels frequent holy places; for it is reported that our master and your patron the blessed Bede said, 'I know that angels visit the canonical hours and the congregations of the brethren. What if they should not find me among the brethren? Would they not have to say, Where is Bede? Why does

he not come with the brethren to the appointed prayers?"

To us in England, and especially to those of us who are North-countrymen, nothing that Alcuin wrote has a higher interest than his poem in Latin hexameters on the Bishops and Saints of the Church of York. By the Church of York Alcuin evidently meant the Church of Northumbria, although his account of the prelates dwells chiefly on the archbishops of his time. Considering his long sojourn in France, it was fitting that the manuscript of this famous poem should be discovered at a monastery near Reims, the monastery of St. Theodoric, or Thierry according to the later spelling. A great part of the poem is in the main a versification of Bede's prose history of the conversion of the North to Christianity, and an adaptation of Bede's metrical life of St. Cuthbert. On this account the French transcriber from the original omitted about 1100 of the 1657 lines of which the poem consists, and only about 550 lines were originally printed by Mabillon in the *Acta Sanctorum*. When our own Gale was preparing to publish it, he got the missing verses both from the St. Theodoric MS. and also from a MS. at Reims itself. Both manuscripts disappeared long ago, probably in the devastations of the French Revolution<sup>1</sup>.

The poem describes the importance of York in the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, the residence, as Alcuin tells us, of the dukes of

<sup>1</sup> As to the treatment of ancient ecclesiastical MSS. in one part of France at the time of the Revolution, see pages 219, &c.

Britain, and of sovereigns of Rome. York was, in fact, the imperial city; it shared with Trèves the honour of being the only imperial cities north of the Alps. He speaks eloquently of its beautiful surroundings, its flowery fields, its noble edifices, its fertility, its charm as a home. This part of the poem inclines the reader to settle in favour of York the uncertainty as to the place of Alcuin's birth. One graphic touch, and the use of a special Latin name for the river Ouse which flows through the middle of the city, goes to the heart of those who in their youth have fished in that river—

*Hanc piscosa suis undis interluit Usa.*

He goes on to speak of the persistent inroads of the Picts after the withdrawal of the Roman troops. Inasmuch as the sixth legion was quartered at York, and all of the other three legions in Britain were withdrawn before the sixth, it may be claimed that York was the last place effectively occupied by the Roman troops. This indeed is in itself probable, since York was in the best position for checking the attempts of the Picts to reach the central and southern parts of Britain. He describes how the leaders of the Britons sent large bribes to a warlike race, to bring them over to protect the land, a race, he says, called from their hardness Saxi, as though Saxons meant stones.<sup>1</sup> The eventual conquest of the Britons by the Saxons evidently had Alcuin's full sympathy. The Britons were lazy; worse than that, they were wicked;

<sup>1</sup> It is now maintained that 'Saxon' is formed from *saxa*, stones, but for a different reason, being taken as describing 'armed men' in the stone age.

for their sins they were rightly driven out, and a better race entered into possession of their cities. We would give a great deal to have had from Alcuin a few words of tradition about some details of the occupation of York by the Angles, and of the fate of the British inhabitants. Alcuin's words would suggest that their fate was a cruel one, but we do not know anything of it from any source whatsoever. One of his remarks strikes us as curious, considering that the Britons were Christians and their conquerors were pagan: the expulsion, he says, was the work of God, that a race might enter into possession who should keep the precepts of the Lord. Clearly Alcuin held a brief for his ancestors of some five generations before his birth. He writes also in a rather lordly way of the kingdom of Kent, as though Northumbria was the really important province in the time of King Edwin, as indeed it unquestionably was. Edwin was the most prominent personage in England, the Bretwalda, at the time of the conversion of Northumbria. All that Alcuin says of Edwin's young wife Ethelburga, and of the kingdom of Kent whence she came, is this: "He took from the southern parts a faithful wife, of excellent disposition, of illustrious origin, endowed with all the virtues of the holy faith." We shall have, at a later stage, to remark upon the silence with which Wessex also was treated by Alcuin.

It is quite true that the facts of the greater part of the poem are taken from Bede. But it is of much interest to note the selection which Alcuin made. Of the kings, he writes of Edwin, Oswald, Oswy, Ecgfrith, and Aldfrith, omitting mention of



the sub-kings, several of whom were connected with constitutional difficulties. Of the bishops, he writes of Paulinus, Wilfrith, Cuthbert, Bosa, and John, mentioning Aidan only incidentally, but with the epithet "most holy". He avoids all controversial topics in writing of Wilfrith. There is just one word of reference to Wilfrith's many disturbances, in connexion with the only mention Alcuin makes here of Rome: Wilfrith, he says, was journeying to Rome, *compulsus*,<sup>1</sup> being driven to go there. It is worthy of remark that of the hundred and sixty-eight lines which Alcuin gives to his account of Wilfrith, he devotes nine to Wilfrith's vision, in which the name of the Blessed Virgin played so large a part. It was Wilfrith's chaplain, Eddi, who recorded this, not Bede, who is very reticent about Wilfrith. Michael appeared to Wilfrith at a crisis in a serious illness, and announced that he was sent by the Almighty to inform him that he would recover. The message went on to explain that this was due to the merits and prayers of the holy mother Mary, who from the celestial throne had heard with open ears the groans, the tears (*sic*)<sup>1</sup>, and the vows of the companions of Wilfrith, and had begged for him life and health. Stephen Eddi gives a highly characteristic ending to the message, which Alcuin omits. "Remember," the archangel said, "that in honour of St. Peter and St. Andrew thou hast built churches; but to the holy Mary, ever Virgin, who intercedes for thee, thou hast reared none. This thou must amend, by dedicating a church to her honour."

<sup>1</sup> It is so, also, in Eddi's prose account, "*pro lachrymis ad aures Dei pervenientibus.*"

The church which he had built for St. Peter was at Ripon, that for St. Andrew was at Hexham; we have still in each case the *confessio*, or crypt for relics, which he built under those churches. In obedience to the vision, Wilfrith now built a church of St. Mary by the side of the church of St. Andrew at Hexham. This present generation has seen a noble restoration and completion of the abbey church of Hexham.<sup>1</sup>

It is scarcely necessary to remark upon this grouping together of churches dedicated to various saints. At Malmesbury, under St. Aldhelm, there were six churches on the hill in one group, St. Andrew, St. Laurence, St. Mary, St. Michael, St. Peter and St. Paul, and the little Irish basilica of Maildulf.

Alcuin mentions also the missionary zeal of the Northumbrian church, beginning with the early Ecgbert, who on the expulsion of Wilfrith left Ripon, and lived for the rest of his life in Ireland as a trainer of missionaries. Besides him, Alcuin names as English missionaries Wibert, Wilbrord, the two Hewalds, Suidbert, and Wira.

So far Alcuin copied Bede and Eddi. In the last 442 lines of his poem he gives us information which we do not find elsewhere, dealing in some detail with Bishop Wilfrith II and Archbishops Ecgbert, Albert, and Eanbald, of York. Wilfrith II resigned the bishopric of York in the year of Alcuin's birth, after holding it for fourteen years. A delightful account of him had been handed down to Alcuin's time. He was to all acceptable, venerable, honourable, lovable. He took great pains in improving

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 137.

and beautifying the ornaments of his church, covering altar and crosses with silver plates, gilded. Other churches in the city he beautified in like manner. He was zealous in multiplying the congregations; following the precepts of the Lord; careful in doctrine; bright in example. Liberal with hand and mouth, he fed the minds of the studious and the bodies of the needy. In the end he retired and spent his latest years in contemplation.

Of Egbert, the succeeding bishop, Alcuin writes in terms of the highest praise. He was evidently more of a ruler than the second Wilfrith had been, and could be very severe with evil men. He had a love for beautiful things, and added much to the treasures of the church, special mention being made of silk hangings with foreign patterns woven in. It was to him that Bede wrote the striking letter which we have analysed above. He was of the royal house of Northumbria, and one of his brothers succeeded to the throne while Egbert was archbishop. The bishop had taken Bede's advice, had sought and obtained from Rome the pallium, as the sign of metropolitanical position. Curiously enough, Alcuin makes no reference to this, the most important ecclesiastical step of the time, another silence on his part which may have hid feelings he did not wish to express. He does mention the pall, but only as a matter of course, in comparing the two brothers, the prelate and the king; the one, he says, bore on his shoulder the palls sent by the Apostolic, the other on his head the diadems of his ancestors. He draws a charming picture of the two brothers working

together for the country's good, each in his own sphere,

The times were happy then for this our race,  
When king and prelate in lawful concord wielded  
The one the church's laws, the other the nation's affairs.

We have seen how slight a reference Alcuin makes to the fact of the pall from Rome. He appears to have held a very moderate view of its importance to the end of his life. His letter to the Pope, Leo III, in the year 797, conveying a request that the pall might be granted to the newly-consecrated Archbishop of York, Eanbald II, is an important document. After referring to his letter of the previous year, congratulating Leo on his accession, he proceeds as follows, curiously enough not mentioning by name the archbishop or his city or diocese. He is writing from his home in France.

"And now as regards these messengers—who Ep. 82.  
have come from my own fatherland and my own city, to solicit the dignity of the sacred pall, in canonical manner and in accordance with the apostolic precept of the blessed Gregory who brought us to Christ—I humbly pray your pious excellency that you receive benignantly the requests of ecclesiastical necessity. For in those parts the authority of the sacred pall is very necessary, to keep down the perversity of wicked men and to preserve the authority of holy church."

That is a remarkably limited statement of the need for the pall, when we remember the tremendous claims made for it in later times. And it is the more remarkable because Alcuin is evidently making the most persuasive appeal he

could construct; he would certainly state the case in its strongest terms when addressing the one man with whom it finally rested to say yes or no. He seems to say clearly that to have the pall was *bonum et utile* for the archbishop, for the purposes which he names; he says nothing, because apparently he knows nothing, of its affecting, one way or another, the archbishop's plenary right, in virtue of his election and consecration, to consecrate bishops, ordain priests, and rule his province and his diocese.

Alcuin digresses from the series of archbishops to deal with the saints of the Church of York, of times near to and coinciding with his own. Of the former, he naturally takes Bede, and he takes no other. To Bede he gives only thirty-one lines, but he does not stint his praise. Six of the thirty-one lines are devoted to Bede's abbat, Ceolfrith, who took from Wearmouth as a present to the Pope the famous Codex Amiatinus, now at Florence,<sup>1</sup> and died and was buried at Langres. From Alcuin's poem we learn that Ceolfrith's body was eventually brought back to Northumbria, and this enables us to accept William of Malmesbury's statement that King Edmund, on an expedition to the north, obtained the relics of Ceolfrith among many others, and had them safely buried at Glastonbury.

Of the saints who lived on to the time of Alcuin's own manhood he takes two, and we are rather surprised at his selection. The one is Balthar, the occupant of the Bass Rock, known later as Baldred of the Bass; the other is the

<sup>1</sup> See my *Lessons from Early English Church History*, pp. 74, 75.

anchorite Eata. Both, indeed, were anchorites, the one at Tynningham and on the Bass, the other at Cric, which is said to be Crayke in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Baldred died in 756, and Eata in 767. At Thornhill, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, there is a sepulchral monument, one of three with inscriptions in early Anglian runes, in memory of one Eata, who is described as Inne, which some have guessed to mean a hermit.<sup>1</sup> On the strength of this guess they have claimed that Thornhill was the place of burial of Alcuin's Eata. To Balther Alcuin gives more than twice as many lines as to Bede; to us this seems a remarkably disproportionate treatment. There is a considerable amount of uncertainty about Balther, and Alcuin's lines leave the uncertainty without solution. The events which he connects with the anchorite Balther, as one of the saints of the Northumbrian Church, are really connected with an earlier Balther, of the time of St. Kentigern, a saint of the ancient British Church of Cumbria. The death of this Balther is placed in 608; and in any case he was before the first formation of the Christian Church among the Northumbrian Angles. Simeon of Durham puts the death of Balther in 756, and this fits in well with Alcuin's statements; but we may most probably suppose that there was an earlier Balther and a later, and that the legendary events of the life of the earlier have been transferred to the life of the later. Alcuin certainly understood that his Balther was Balther of the Bass.

<sup>1</sup> Our word "inn" means a place enclosed, or a place comprising an enclosure.

It is when Alcuin comes to Archbishop Albert that he really lets himself go. Ecgbert had in fact established the eminence of the great School of York, and had himself acted as its chief governor and its religious teacher. But Alcuin does not even refer to that in his account of Ecgbert. The praise of the school goes all to the credit of Ecgbert's cousin, his successor in the mastership and eventually in the archbishopric, Albert. Eight lines of laudatory epithets Alcuin bestows upon Albert, before proceeding to detail; his laudation fitly culminates in what all ages have regarded as high praise, *non ore loquax sed strenuus actu*—not a great talker, but a strenuous doer.

In 766 Albert became archbishop. Like his immediate predecessors, he did much to beautify churches in the city. In this work Alcuin was one of his two right-hand men; and yet each detail which Alcuin gives is puzzling. He tells us that at the spot where the great warrior Edwin the king received the water of baptism, the prelate constructed a grand altar, which he covered with silver, precious stones, and gold, and dedicated under the name of St. Paul, the teacher of the world, whom the learned archbishop specially loved. There is a difficulty here. While it is certain that the church of stone of larger dimensions which Edwin and Paulinus began, to include the wooden oratory of St. Peter the place of Edwin's baptism, was the church which Oswald completed and the first Wilfrith restored, as the Cathedral Church of York, there was no altar of St. Paul in the Cathedral Church in the middle ages. We should naturally have supposed that an altar so

splendid as that which Albert constructed, at a spot so uniquely remarkable in the Christian history of Northumbria, would have been sedulously retained throughout all changes. The explanation may well be that not the size only but the level of the surface of the site has been greatly increased in the course of 1200 years. The herring-bone work of the walls of the early Anglian Church of York was found deep down below the surface when excavations were made after the fire of 1829, and at a later period in connexion with the hydraulic apparatus for the organ. Probably the altar of St. Paul, and the place of baptism, were down at that level, and were buried in the ruins of one fire after another, many feet below the present surface of the Minster Yard. My old friend Canon Raine, who edited the three volumes of the *Historians of the Church of York*, writing of the present crypt in his introduction to the first volume,<sup>1</sup> says, "In another peculiar place is the actual site, if I mistake not, of the font in which Edwin became a Christian." Canon Raine was secretive in connexion with antiquarian discoveries, and from inquiries which I have made it is to be feared that the secret of this site died with him. All we can say is, that where that site was, there was this splendid altar<sup>2</sup> of St. Paul, *mundi doctoris*.

A more doubtful point is raised by Alcuin's description of the building of a new and marvellous basilica, begun, completed, and consecrated, by Albert. Two of his pupils, Eanbald and Alcuin, were his ministers in the building, which was con-

<sup>1</sup> p. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> See also p. 141.



secrated only ten days before his death. It was very lofty, supported on solid columns, with curved arches; the roofs and windows were fine; it was surrounded by many porches, porticoes, which were in fact side chapels; it contained many chambers under various roofs, in which were thirty altars with sundry kinds of ornament. Alcuin describes this immediately after describing the construction of the altar of St. Paul in what must have been the old Cathedral Church; but he does not say that the new church was on the old site, or that it replaced the Cathedral Church. Still, a church of that magnitude can only have been the chief church of the city. Simeon of Durham throws light upon the point by stating as the reason for building this new basilica, that the monasterium of York—that is, the Minster, as it has always been called<sup>1</sup>—was burned<sup>2</sup> on Monday, May 23, 741; and the Saxon Chronicle has the entry<sup>3</sup>, "This

<sup>1</sup> "Monasterium" is used in the middle ages for a parish church in the country. "Minster" has always been a special Yorkshire word, "York Minster," "Ripon Minster," "Beverley Minster." The unique inscription at the side of the sun-dial at Kirkdale Church, dated as in the days of Tostig the Earl, sets forth that "Orm Gamal-suna bohte Sanctus Gregorius minster".

<sup>2</sup> The writer of this cannot refrain from mentioning a curious coincidence of dates and experience between himself and his schoolfellow and head master Alcuin. York Minster was burned on May 23, 741, when Alcuin was six years old. The cathedral school being within the precincts, Alcuin would have to be removed to a place of safety. York Minster was burned on May 20, 1840, curiously near to being the eleven-hundredth anniversary of the burning on May 23, 741, and the present writer, then aged six, was carried from his bed in the minster precincts to a place of safety in Castlegate.

<sup>3</sup> An. DCC.XLI. Her forbarn Eoferwic. This entry is found

year York was burned." The balance of argument on this disputed point is that Albert did really build a new Cathedral Church in place of one that was burned while Alcuin was a boy. The investigations which have taken place show that in Anglo-Saxon times a basilica of really important dimensions was in existence, much larger than Edwin's little oratory or Oswald's stone building, and all points to its being the "marvellous basilica" which Eanbald and Alcuin built by order of Albert.

Alcuin makes several statements about church-building in York. In lines 195-198, he tells us that King Edwin caused a small building to be hurriedly erected, in which he and his could receive the sacred water of baptism. We should naturally suppose that it was by the side of water. In lines 219-222 he tells us that Paulinus built ample churches in his cities. Among them he names that of York, supported on solid columns; it remains, he says, noble and beautiful, on the spot where Edwin was laved in the sacred wave. In lines 1221-1228 he tells us first that Wilfrith II greatly adorned "the church", evidently meaning his cathedral church, and then that he adorned with great gifts other churches in the city of York. In lines 1487-1505 he tells us that Albert took great care in the ornamentation of churches, and especially that at the spot of Edwin's baptism he made a grand

in the two MSS. of the Chronicle known as Cotton. Tib. B. 1 and Bodl. Laud. 636. These two MSS. have special information about Northumbrian affairs. They differ in the spelling of proper names, but in this case they take the same spelling of the Anglian name of York, which appears in five different forms in the Chronicle.

altar, which he covered with silver and gems and gold, and dedicated it under the name of Saint Paul whom he greatly loved. He made also, still it would seem at the same spot, another altar, covered with pure silver and precious stones, and dedicated it to the Martyrs and the Cross. As we have seen, there was no altar dedicated to St. Paul in the mediaeval Minster of York; but there was not an altar only but a small church—which remained as a parish church till very recent years—dedicated to Saint Crux. The parish of St. Crux is now absorbed in All Saints. Lastly, in lines 1506–1519 he describes the building of the great new basilica which Eanbald and himself built under the orders of Archbishop Albert. The conclusion appears to be that the new basilica—which probably became the cathedral church—did not stand on the site of Paulinus's church, but was erected close by that specially sacred spot; and that both Paulinus's stone oratory, beautified by Wilfrith II, with its added altars to St. Paul and St. Crux, and also the new and great basilica of Albert, are now absorbed in the vast area of the Minster of York.

Eanbald succeeded Albert in the archbishopric, and Alcuin succeeded Albert in the mastership of the School of York and in the ownership of the great library which for three generations had been got together at York. Alcuin tells us that it contained all Latin literature, all that Greece had handed on to the Romans, all that the Hebrew people had received from on high, all that Africa with clear-flowing light had given. Passing from the general to the particular, Alcuin names the authors whose works the library of York possessed.

What we would give for even five or six of those priceless manuscripts! Of the Christian Fathers, he records a rather mixed list. They had Jerome, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Athanasius, Orosius, Gregory the Great, Pope Leo, Basil, Fulgentius, Cassiodorus, and John Chrysostom. They had the works of the learned men of the English Church, our own Aldhelm of Malmesbury, and Bede; with them he names Victorinus and Boethius, and the old historians, Pompeius and Pliny, the acute Aristotle and the great rhetorician Tully. They had the poets, too, Sedulius, Juvenecus, Alcimus<sup>1</sup>, Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator, Fortunatus, Lactantius. They had also Virgil, Statius, and Lucan. They were rich in grammarians: Probus, Focas, Donatus, Priscian, Servius, Euticius, Pompeius, Comminianus. You will find, he says, in the library very many more masters, famous in study, art, and language, who have written very many volumes, but whose names it would be too long to recite in a poem. It may perhaps be a fair guess that he had used up all the names which he could conveniently get into dactyls and spondees for hexameter verse.

Two years after handing over to Alcuin the possession of this great library, and to Eanbald the archbishopric itself, Albert died. We may here remind ourselves of outstanding facts and dates. Alcuin, born in 735, had as a young man held the office of teacher in the School of York for some years. In 766 he had been promoted to

<sup>1</sup> Before Froben this was read Alcuinus, clearly an impossible reading in a list drawn up by Alcuin himself, and at a time when his chief effort of versification could not be in the library.

a position which so far as teaching was concerned was practically that of Head Master. In 778 he became in the fullest sense the master of the school. In 780 he inherited the great collection of books which had been brought together by successive archbishops. In 782 he was called away to become the teacher of the School of the Palace of Karl, and director of the studies of the empire, still continuing to hold the office of master in name. In 792 he left England for the last time, and his official connexion with the school of York came to an end. He gave twenty years of his older life to the service of the Franks, and died in 804.

## CHAPTER V

The affairs of Mercia.—Tripartite division of England.—The creation of a third archbishopric, at Lichfield.—Offa and Karl.—Alcuin's letter to Athelhard of Canterbury; to Beornwin of Mercia.—Karl's letter to Offa, a commercial treaty.—Alcuin's letter to Offa.—Offa's death.

ALTHOUGH Alcuin was a Northumbrian, and his interests were naturally with that kingdom, he was at one time of his life more intimately concerned with the affairs of Mercia. It seems, on the whole, best to deal first with that part, as it can be to a certain extent isolated from his correspondence with Northumbria, and from his life and work among the Franks. The special events in Mercian history with which he was concerned are in themselves of great interest. They are—(1) the personal and official dealings between Karl and the Mercian king, and (2) the creation and the extinction of a third metropolitical province in England, the archbishopric of Lichfield.

We have to accustom ourselves to the fact that the Heptarchy, that is, the division of England into seven independent kingdoms with seven independent kings, no longer existed in Alcuin's time. The land was divided into three kingdoms, Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex. The rivers Thames and Humber were, roughly speaking, the lines dividing the whole land into three. Kent, to which we probably attach too much importance by reason

of its being the first Christian kingdom, and of its having in its Archbishop the chief ecclesiastic of the whole land, was a conquered kingdom, the property at one time of Wessex, at another of Mercia. The South Saxons, our Sussex, had kings and dukes fitfully, and the territory was included in Wessex. The East Saxons, our Essex, had kings nominally, but belonged usually to Mercia. East Anglia was in a somewhat similar position, but held out for independence with much pertinacity and success till long after Alcuin's time. The year 828, a quarter of a century after Alcuin's death, saw the final defeat of Mercia by Egbert of Wessex, who had spent fifteen years in exile at the Court of Charlemagne in Alcuin's time, from 787 to 802, when he succeeded to the vacant throne of Wessex by a very remote claim, as great-great-grand-nephew of the famous king Ina. No doubt he learned in those strenuous years, under the tutelage of Karl, the lessons of war which brought him into dominance here, another link between Karl and England which passes almost entirely unrecognized. The year 829 saw the peaceful submission of the great men of Northumbria to Egbert, at Dore, in Derbyshire, and their recognition of him as their overlord. The mistake of supposing that Egbert thus became sole king of England as a single kingdom is now exploded; but he was, roughly speaking, master of the whole, and as time went on the petty kings and kinglets disappeared. The time which this process occupied was not short. The thirty-first king of Northumbria was reigning in Egbert's time, when his thegns made submission to Egbert; but fifteen more kings reigned in Northumbria, till

Eadred expelled the last of them in 954. In like manner, we have the coins of some kings of East Anglia, and mention of other kings, as late as 905.

That is a digression into times a hundred and a hundred and fifty years after Alcuin. In his time, as has been said, the Heptarchy had for practical purposes been consolidated into three main kingdoms, Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria.

This tri-partite arrangement of the seven kingdoms led to one of the most curious episodes of Alcuin's time, and, indeed, of English history.

Offa, the ambitious king of Mercia, who reigned from 757 to 796, saw that there were two archbishoprics in England, one of which, Canterbury, was centred in a conquered kingdom; while the other, York, had only been created some twenty years before he began to reign. Bede had advised that the bishopric of York should be raised to an archbishopric, with Northumbria as its province, and on application made to the Pope the thing had been done. Each of the two archbishops, as Offa saw, received special recognition from the Pope in the grant of the *pallium*; a costly luxury, no doubt, but a luxury of honour and dignity, worth a good deal of money—which it certainly cost. There was no Emperor of the West in those days, some fourteen years before the elevation of Karl to an imperial throne; and the Pope was, by the mystery of his ecclesiastical position, and in the glamour of pagan Rome, the greatest personage in the then chaotic world of Western Europe.

Quite apart from the possession of the *pallium*, the constitutional position of an English archbishop was very great. In our days it is some-



times asked about a wealthy man, how much is he worth. In Anglo-Saxon times that question had a direct meaning and a direct answer. Men of all the higher grades at least had their money value, a very considerable value, which any one who put an end to any of them must pay. While the luxury of killing a bishop was as costly as killing an ealdorman, that is, an earl, an archbishop was as dear as a prince of the blood. The bishop or earl was worth 8000 thrimsas, the thrimsa being probably threepence, say five shillings of our money, or £2000 in all; that was what had to be paid for the luxury of killing a bishop; the archbishop or royal prince rose to 15000 thrimsas, nearly twice as much, say £3750 of our money; it does not sound quite enough to our modern ears. The king was put at £7500. For drawing a weapon in the presence of a bishop or an ealdorman, the fine was 100 shillings, say £100 of our money; in the case of an archbishop it was 150 shillings, half as much again. In the laws of Ina, for violence done to the dwelling and seat of jurisdiction of a bishop, the fine was 80 shillings, in the case of an archbishop 120, the same as in the case of the king. This was not the only point in which the archbishop was on the same level as the king; his mere word, without oath, was—as the king's—incontrovertible. A bishop's oath was equivalent to the oaths of 240 ordinary tax payers. In the case of the archbishop of Canterbury at the times of which we are speaking, there was added the fact that the royal family of Kent had retired to Reculver and left the archbishop supreme in the capital city, as the bishops

of Rome had been left in Rome by the departure of the emperors to Constantinople. In Archbishop Jaenbert's time the royal family of Kent practically came to an end, as a regnant family, at the battle of Otford, near Sevenoaks, in the year 774, when Mercia conquered Kent. Archbishop Jaenbert of Canterbury is said to have proposed that he should become the temporal sovereign of Kent, as well as its ecclesiastical ruler, after the then recent fashion of the bishop of Rome, and to have offered to do homage to Karl, king of the Franks, for the kingdom. If that was so, we can well understand the determination of the conquering and powerful Offa to abate the archbishop's position and his pride.

Kent was but an outside annex of the Mercian kingdom proper. It had been subject to other kingdoms; it might be so subject again. The Lichfield bishopric was the real ecclesiastical centre of Offa's kingdom, and he determined to have an archbishop of Lichfield, and to have him duly recognized by the Pope. A visit of two legates of the Pope, accompanied by a representative of the King of the Franks, in the year 785, gave the opportunity.<sup>1</sup> Offa had already punished Jaenbert by taking away all manors belonging to the See of Canterbury in Mercian territories; and he now proposed that the jurisdiction of Canterbury should be limited to Kent, Sussex, and Wessex, and that all the land of England between the Thames and the Humber should become a third metropolitanical province, under the archiepiscopal rule of the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B, p. 310.

bishop of Lichfield. The synod at which this proposal was made is described in the Saxon Chronicle as geflitfullic, quarrelsome-like; but in the end, Offa's proposal was accepted. Pope Adrian gave his sanction and the pall. William of Malmesbury, with his usual skill and his wide experience, gives the explanation of this papal acquiescence in so violent a revolution in ecclesiastical matters: Offa, he says, obtained the papal licence by the gift of endless money, *pecunia infinita*, to the Apostolic See; which See, he adds, never fails one who gives money. That was the judgement of a historian after 250 years' additional experience of the secret of Roman sanction. The Pope of the time, it should be said, was a man of much distinction, Adrian or Hadrian I, a friend of Offa and of Karl. We shall have a good deal to say about the grants of Karl, and of Pepin his father, to the papacy, in another lecture.

There is a letter extant<sup>1</sup> from Pope Adrian I to Karl, written before the creation of the Mercian archbishopric, in which the Pope says he has heard from Karl of a report that Offa had proposed to persuade him to eject Adrian from the Papacy, and put in his place some one of the Frankish race. The Pope professes to feel that this is absolutely false; and yet he says so much about it that it is quite clear he was anxious. Karl had told him that Offa had not made any such proposal to him, and had not had any thought in his mind except that he hoped Adrian would continue to govern the Church all through his time. The

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 440

Pope adds that neither had he until that time heard of anything of the kind; and he does not believe that even a pagan would think of such a thing. Having said all this, in Latin much more cumbrous than Alcuin's charmingly clear style, he enters upon a long declaration of his personal courage and confidence whatever happened. "If God be with us, who shall be against us."

We must, I think, take it that there had been some hitch in negotiations between Offa and Adrian, and that Offa, with the outspoken vigour of a Mercian Angle, had in fact gone far beyond Henry VIII's greatest threats, and had declared to his counsellors that if Adrian was not more pliable, he and Karl would make some one Pope who would have first regard to the wishes of the Angles and the Franks.

Now it was Alcuin who had brought together Karl and Offa in the first instance, and had brought about their alliance. And on a later occasion when they quarrelled he made them friends again. We do not know what active part, if any, Alcuin took in the matter decided at the quarrelsome-like synod. But we have plenty of evidence that he highly approved of the reversal of Hadrian's act by his successor Leo III, with the assent, and indeed on the request, of Offa's successor Kenulf. He corresponded with Offa in a very friendly manner, as indeed Offa's general conduct well deserved. Here is a letter from him, in response to a request from the king that he would send him a teacher. "Always desirous faithfully to do what you wish, Ep. 43. I have sent to you this my best loved pupil, as you 787-796. have requested. I pray you have him in honour

until if God will I come to you. Do not let him wander about idle, do not let him take to drink. Provide him with pupils, and let your preceptors see that he teaches diligently. I know that he has learned well. I hope he will do well, for the success of my pupils is my reward with God.

"I am greatly pleased that you are so intent upon encouraging study, that the light of wisdom, in many places now extinct, may shine in your kingdom. You are the glory of Britain, the trumpet of defiance, the sword against hostile forces, the shield against the enemies."

It is only fair to Offa to say that this was not mere flattery. It is clear that in the eyes of Karl and Alcuin, Offa was the one leading man in the whole of England, the most powerful Englishman of his time, and of all the kings and princes the most worthy.

To Athelhard, the archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>1</sup> who succeeded Jaenbert, Lichfield still being the chief archbishopric, Alcuin wrote a remarkable letter, considering the humiliation of the archbishopric:—

Ep. 28.  
A.D. 793.

"Be a preacher; not a flatterer. It is better to fear God than man, to please God than to fawn upon men. What is a flatterer but a fawning enemy? He destroys both,—himself and his hearer.

"You have received the pastoral rod and the staff of fraternal consolation; the one to rule, the other to console; that those who mourn may find in you consolation, those who resist may feel cor-

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 790-805.

rection. The judge's power is to kill; thine, to make alive.

. . . . .  
 "Remember that the bishop<sup>1</sup> is the messenger of God most high, and the holy law is to be sought at his mouth, as we read in the prophet Malachi.<sup>2</sup> A watchman<sup>3</sup> is set at the highest place; whence the name *episcopus*, he being the chief watchman,<sup>4</sup> who ought by prudent counsel to foresee for the whole army of Christ what must be avoided and what must be done. These, that is the bishops<sup>5</sup>, are the lights of the holy church of God, the leaders of the flock of Christ. It is their duty actively to raise the standard of the holy cross in the front rank, and to stand intrepid against every attack of the hostile force. These are they who have received the talents, our King the God Christ having gone with triumph of glory to His Father's abode; and when He comes again

<sup>1</sup> "Sacerdos." It appears clear that Alcuin is using the word as equivalent to "*episcopus*", as it frequently was.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. ii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Speculator."

<sup>4</sup> "Super-speculator." Isidore explains in his *Etymologies* that bishops are called "*episcopi*" by the Greeks and "*speculatores*" by the Latins, because they are set on high in the church.

<sup>5</sup> "Sacerdotes." That Alcuin is speaking of bishops, not of priests in general, is clear from his verses at the end of the letter, where he repeats his phrases "*terrae sal*", "*lumina mundi*", and adds "*Bis sex signa poli*", the twelve stars of the sky, namely the bishops of the Southern Province. These were, not counting Athelhard himself, Higbert of Lichfield, Kenwalch or Eadbald of London, Kinbert of Winchester, Unwona of Leicester, Ceolwulf of Lindsey, Denefrith of Sherborne, Aelhun of Dunwich, Alheard of Elmham, Heathred of Worcester, Ceolmund of Hereford, Wiothun of Selsey, Weremund of Rochester.

in the great day of judgement they shall render an account. . . .

"Admonish most diligently your fellow-bishops<sup>1</sup> to labour instantly in the word of life, that they may appear before the judge eternal, glorious with multifold gain. Be of one mind in piety, constant in equity. Let no terror of human dignity separate you, no blandishments of flattery divide you; but join together in unity in firm ranks of the fortress of God. Thus will your concord strike terror into those who seek to speak against the Truth; as Solomon says,<sup>2</sup> 'When brother is helped by brother, the city is secure.'

"Ye are the light of all Britain, the salt of the earth, a city set on a hill, a candle high on a candlestick. . . .

"Our ancestors, though pagans, first as pagans possessed this land by their valour in war, by the dispensation of God. How great, then, is the reproach, if we, Christians, lose what they, pagans, acquired. I say this on account of the blow which has lately fallen upon a part of our island, a land which has for nearly 350 years been inhabited by our forefathers. It is read in the book of Gildas<sup>3</sup>, the wisest of the Britons, that those same Britons, because of the rapine and avarice of the princes, the iniquity and injustice of the judges, the sloth and laxity of the bishops, and the wicked habits of

<sup>1</sup> "Consacerdotes."

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xviii. 19. The Vulgate and the Septuagint versions give the force of the passage in Alcuin's sense. The Authorised Version gives, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city." The Revised Version agrees exactly with the A.V.

<sup>3</sup> Gildus, in Alcuin.

the people, lost their fatherland. Let us take care that those vices do not become the custom with us in these times of ours. . . . Do you, who along with the Apostles have received from Christ the key of the kingdom of heaven, the power of binding and loosing, open with assiduous prayer the gates of heaven to the people of God. Be not silent, lest the sins of the people be imputed to you: for of you will God require the souls which you have received to rule. Let your reward be multiplied by the salvation of those in your charge. Comfort those who are cast down, strengthen the humble, bring back to the way of truth those who wander, instruct the ignorant, exhort the learned, and confirm all by the good examples of your own life. Chastise with the pastoral rod those who are contumacious and resist the truth; support the others with the staff of consolation. And, if you are unanimous, who will be able to stand against you?"

Alcuin could be exceedingly outspoken in his letters, as we have seen. But he could also be very cautious, even—perhaps we should say especially—in a matter on which he felt deeply. In a letter to the Irish teacher Colcu he remarks that he did not know what he might have to do next. The reason was that something of a dis-

Ep. 14  
A.D. 790.

sension, diabolically inflamed, had arisen between Karl and Offa, the Mercian king, and had gone so far that each forbade entry to the other's merchants. "Some tell me," he says, "that I am to be sent to those parts to make peace."

The reason for the quarrel was a curious one. Karl had proposed that his son Charles should



marry one of Offa's daughters. Offa had made a supplementary proposal that his son Ecgfrith should marry Karl's daughter Bertha. This is said to have been considered presumptuous by Karl, and he showed his annoyance by breaking off the friendly relations which had existed between them.

It would appear that Alcuin's attitude was suspected by the Mercian king to be unfavourable to the English view of the quarrel, and the presbyter Beornwin, to whom Alcuin had written a letter not known to have survived, was set to write to him a fishing letter, in which it would seem that he suggested unfriendliness on Alcuin's part. Alcuin's reply is a non-committal document.

Ep. 15  
A D. 790.

"I have received the sweet letters of your love . . .

"Would that I were worthy to preach peace, not to sow discord; to carry the standard of Christ, not the arms of the devil. I should never have written to you if I had been unwilling to be at peace with you and to remain firm as we began in Christ.

"Of a truth I have never been unfaithful to King Offa, or to the Anglian nation. As to the utmost of my power I shall faithfully keep the friends whom God has given me in France, so I shall those whom I have left in my own country.

. . . . .

"As time or opportunity affords, my very dear brother, urge ever the will of God upon all persons: on the king, persuasively; on the bishops, with due honour; on the chief men, with confidence;

on all, with truth. It is ours to sow ; it is God's to fructify.

"And let no suspicion of any dissension between us remain. Let us not be of those of whom it is said : I am not come to send peace but a sword. Let us be of those to whom it is said : My peace I give unto you, My peace I leave with you.

"I have written a very short letter, for a few words to a wise man suffice."

The dissension was rather one-sided, for it appears that Offa continued to write friendly letters to Karl. In the end, Karl replied in a more than friendly letter, which is on many accounts well worth reproducing entire. It is the earliest extant commercial treaty with an English kingdom. The date is 796, four years before he became emperor.

"Charles, by the grace of God King of the <sup>Ep. 57</sup> Franks and Lombards and Patricius of the <sup>A.D. 796.</sup> Romans, to his dearest brother the venerated Offa, King of the Mercians, wishes present prosperity and eternal beatitude in Christ. To keep with inmost affection of heart the concord of holy love and the laws of friendship and peace federated in unity, among royal dignities and the great personages of the world, is wont to be profitable to many. And if we are bidden by our Lord's precept to loose the tangles of enmity, how much more ought we to be careful to bind the chains of love. We therefore, my most loved brother, mindful of the ancient pact between us, have addressed to your reverence these letters, that our treaty, fixed firm in the root of faith, may flourish in the fruit of love. We have read over the epistles of your

brotherliness, which at various times have been brought to us by the hands of your messengers, and we desire to answer adequately the several suggestions of your authority." It is clear that there were a good many of Offa's letters unanswered.

"First, we give thanks to Almighty God for the sincerity of catholic faith which we find laudably expressed in your pages; recognizing that you are not only very strong in protection of your fatherland, but also most devoted in defence of the holy faith.

"With regard to pilgrims, who for the love of God and the health of their souls desire to visit the thresholds of the blessed Apostles, as has been customary"—here again we see the reason of the reputation of Rome—"we give leave for them to go on their way peaceably without any disturbance, carrying with them such things as are necessary. But we have ascertained that traders seeking gain, not serving religion, have fraudulently joined themselves to bands of pilgrims. If such are found among the pilgrims, they must pay at the proper places the fixed toll; the rest will go in peace, free from toll.

"You have written to us also about merchants. We will and command that they have protection and patronage in our realm, lawfully, according to the ancient custom of trading. And if in any place they suffer from unjust oppression, they may appeal to us or our judges, and we will see that pious justice is done. And so for our merchants; if they suffer any injustice in your realm, let them appeal to the judgement of your equity. Thus no disturbance can arise among our merchants."

Karl evidently felt that the next point was the most difficult of all to handle successfully. He had given shelter and countenance to Mercians who had fled from Offa, and sought protection at his court. Egbert, who afterwards conquered Mercia, was among the exiles from Wessex.

"With regard to the presbyter Odberht, who on his return from Rome desires to live abroad for the love of God, not coming to us to accuse you, we make known to your love that we have sent him to Rome along with other exiles who in fear of death have fled to the wings of our protection. We have done this in order that in the presence of the lord apostolic and of your illustrious archbishop—in accordance, as your notes make known to us, with their vow—their cause may be heard and judged, so that equitable judgement may effect what pious intercession could not do. What could be safer for us than that the investigation of apostolic authority should discriminate in a case where the opinion of others differs?"

This is a typical example of the use made of a pope when monarchs disagreed.

"With regard to the black stones which your reverence earnestly solicited to have sent to you, let a messenger come and point out what kind they are that your mind desires. Wherever they may be found, we will gladly order them to be given, and their conveyance to be aided."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may be supposed that Offa was engaged in building an abbey church at St. Albans. William of Malmesbury says of the church built by Offa in honour of St Alban (*Gesta Regum*, i. 4): "The relics of St. Alban, at that time buried in obscurity, he had reverently taken up and placed in a shrine

Then comes in very skilfully a complaint that the Mercians have been exporting to France cloaks of inadequate length.

"But, as you have intimated your desire as to the length of the stones, our people make demand about the length of cloaks, that you will order them to be made to the pattern of those which in former times used to come to us.

"Further, we make known to your love that we have forwarded to each of the episcopal sees in your kingdom, and that of king Æthelred [of Northumbria, again no mention of Wessex], a gift from our collection of dalmatics and palls, in alms for the lord apostolic Adrian<sup>1</sup>, our father, your loving friend, praying you to order intercession for his soul, not in doubt that his blessed soul is at rest, but to show faith and love towards a friend to us most dear. So the blessed Augustine has taught that pious intercessions of the church should be made for all, asserting that to intercede for a good man is profitable to him that intercedes." That is a remarkable way of putting it.

"From the treasure of secular things which the Lord Jesus of gratuitous pity has granted to us, we have sent something to each of the metropolitan cities. To thy love, for joy and giving of thanks to Almighty God, we have sent a Hunnish belt and

decorated to the fullest extent of royal munificence with gold and jewels; a church of most beautiful workmanship was there erected, and a society of monks assembled." The black stones may have been wanted for pavements.

<sup>1</sup> Pope Hadrian I. He died December 27, 795, having held the Papacy for twenty-three years, with great distinction, at a most important time in its history.

sword and two silk palls, that everywhere among a Christian people the divine clemency may be preached, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be for ever glorified."

The Hunnish belt and sword and silk robes were part of the great spoil which Karl took in the year 795 when he conquered the Huns, destroyed their army, and put their prince to flight. The spoil included fifteen wagons loaded with gold and silver, and palls of white silk, each wagon drawn by four oxen. Karl divided the plunder between the churches and the poor.<sup>1</sup>

The gifts of Karl to the king and bishops of Northumbria were withdrawn under sad conditions, to which we must return in the next lecture. This is what Alcuin wrote to Offa, immediately after Karl's letter was written :—

"Your reverend love should know that the lord Ep. 58.  
King Charles has often spoken to me of you in A. D. 796.  
a loving and trusting manner. You have in him an entirely most faithful friend. Thus he sent messengers to Rome for the judgement of the lord apostolic and Ethelhard the archbishop. To your love he sent gifts worthy. To the several episcopal sees he sent gifts in alms for himself and the lord apostolic, that you might order prayers to be offered for them. Do you act faithfully, as you are wont to do with all your friends.

"In like manner he sent gifts to King Æthelred and his episcopal sees. But, alas for the grief! when the gifts and the letters were in the hands of the messengers, the sad news came from those who

<sup>1</sup> Simeon of Durham, under the year 795.

had returned from Scotia<sup>1</sup> by way of you, that the nation had revolted and the king [Æthelred] was killed. King Charles withdrew his gifts, so greatly was he enraged against the nation—‘that perfidious and perverse nation,’ as he called them, ‘murderers of their own lords,’ holding them to be worse than pagans. Indeed, if I had not interceded for them, whatever good thing he could have taken away from them, whatever bad thing he could have contrived for them, he would have done it.

“I was prepared to come to you with the king’s gifts, and to go back to my fatherland.” This was from three to four years later than his latest visit to our shores. “But it seemed to me better, for the sake of peace for my nation, to remain abroad. I did not know what I could do among them, where no one is safe, and no wholesome counsel is of any avail. Look at the very holiest places devastated by pagans, the altars fouled by perjuries, the monasteries violated by adulteries, the earth stained with the blood of lords and princes. What else could I do but groan with the prophet,<sup>2</sup> ‘Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers; they have forsaken the Lord, and blasphemed the holy Saviour of the world in their wickedness.’ And if it be true, as we read in the letter of your dignity, that the iniquity had its rise among the eldersmen, where is safety and fidelity to be hoped for if the turbid torrent of unfaithfulness flowed forth from the

<sup>1</sup> This would naturally mean Ireland at that time, but it is far from clear that Ireland is meant.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. i. 4.

very place where the purest fount of truth and faith was wont to spring?

"But do thou, O most wise ruler of the people of God, most diligently bring thy nation away from perverse habits, and make them learned in the precepts of God, lest by reason of the sins of the people the land which God has given us be destroyed. Be to the Church of Christ as a father, to the priests of God as a brother, to all the people pious and fair; in conversation and in word moderate and peaceable; in the praise of God always devout; that the divine clemency may keep thee in long prosperity, and may of the grace of its goodness deign to exalt, dilate, and crown to all eternity, with the benefaction of perpetual pity, thy kingdom—nay, all the English.

"I pray you direct the several Churches of your reverence to intercede for me. Into my unworthy hands the government of the Church of St. Martin has come. I have taken it not voluntarily but under pressure, by the advice of many."

Offa died in the year in which this letter was written, and his death brought great changes in Mercia. Excellent as Offa had in most ways been, we have evidence that the Mercian people were by no means worthy of the fine old Mercian king. In reading the letter which contains this evidence, we shall see that Offa had a murderous side of his character. In those rude days, chaos could not be dealt with under its worse conditions by men who could not at a crisis strike with unmitigated severity.



## CHAPTER VI

Grant to Malmesbury by Ecgfrith of Mercia.—Alcuin's letters to Mercia.—Kenulf and Leo III restore Canterbury to its primatial position.—Gifts of money to the Pope.—Alcuin's letters to the restored archbishop.—His letter to Karl on the archbishop's proposed visit. Letters of Karl to Offa (on a question of discipline) and Athelhard (in favour of Mercian exiles).

BEFORE proceeding to examine Alcuin's letter to a Mercian nobleman on the death of Offa and his son Ecgfrith, it should be remarked that we of the diocese of Bristol must not allow the mention of this poor young king Ecgfrith to pass without our acknowledgement for a deed of justice done. When Offa defeated the West Saxon king at Bensington, he took possession of a good deal of the border land, including two tracts of land which King Cadwalla of Wessex had given to Malmesbury, namely Tetbury in Gloucestershire and Purton in Wilts. William of Malmesbury naturally reports the iniquity of Offa in thus pillaging the abbey which was the home of William's life and studies. Offa gave Tetbury to the Bishop of Worcester. Purton was the subject of a deed by Ecgfrith during his reign of a few months. The deed has remarkable interest for us in this diocese, in that it is doubly dated; first as in the seven hundred and ninety-sixth year from the Incarnation, and next, with a very interesting recognition of our own Aldhelm, due to the fact that the theft had been from

Aldhelm's own Malmesbury, "in the eighty-seventh year from the passing of father Aldhelm." The deed restores land of thirty-five families at Piritune, on the east side of Braden Wood, to the abbat and brethren of Malmesbury, for the repose of the soul of his father Offa who had taken it from them, and in order that the memory of Ecgfrith might always be preserved in their prayers. As a sort of unimportant afterthought he adds that the abbat and brethren have given him two thousand shillings of pure silver, probably as many pounds of our money. The deed was signed by Athelhard of Canterbury, not by Lichfield. The reason no doubt is that Tetbury and Purton are south of the Thames, and so outside the Province of Lichfield and within the diminished Province of Canterbury.

When the death of Offa's son, the youthful Ecgfrith, king of Mercia, occurred in this same year 796 in which year his father Offa had died,<sup>1</sup> and a distant cousin Kenulf succeeded, Alcuin, as has been said, wrote a very serious letter to one of the chief officers of Mercia.

"These are times of tribulation everywhere in Ep. 79 the land; faith is failing; truth is dumb; malice A. D. 797. increases; and arrogance adds to your miseries. Men are not content to follow in the steps of our early fathers, in dress, or food, or honest ways. Some most foolish man thinks out something unsuited to human nature, and hateful to God; and straightway almost the whole of the people set themselves busily to follow this above all.

<sup>1</sup> Offa died July 26, 796, and Ecgfrith died in the middle of December in the same year, after a reign of 141 days.

"That most noble youth [Ecgfrith] is dead; not, as I think, because of his own sins alone, but also because the vengeance of his father's bloodshedding has reached the son. For you know best of all how much blood the father shed that the kingdom might be safe for the son. It proved to be the destruction, not the confirmation, of his reign.

"Admonish the more diligently your new king [Kenulf], yes, and the king of Northumbria [Ardwulf] too, that they keep in touch with the divine piety, avoiding adulteries; that they do not neglect their early wives<sup>1</sup> for the sake of adulteries with women of the nobility, but under the fear of God have their own wives, or by consent live in chastity. I fear that Ardwulf, the king of my part of the country, will soon<sup>2</sup> have to lose the kingdom because of the insult which he has offered to God in sending away his own wife, and, it is said, living openly with a concubine. It seems that the prosperity of the English is nearly at an end; unless indeed by assiduous prayers, and honest ways, and humble life, and chaste conversation, and keeping the faith, they win from God to keep the land which God of His free gift gave to our forefathers."

<sup>1</sup> In each of these two cases the new king was, in this year 796, most unexpectedly raised to the throne from a comparatively poor position, in which he had married a wife of his own position. Alcuin fears that they will be tempted to cast off the early wife and take some lady more fitted for a throne.

<sup>2</sup> This prophecy was not fulfilled. It was not till nine years after the date of this letter that Eardwulf was expelled from the kingdom.

With this letter we may fitly compare the letter which Alcuin wrote to the king himself, Kenulf, who had thus unexpectedly succeeded. It begins in a complimentary manner, but it is a very faithful letter. It carefully recognizes the inconsistencies of Offa's life, inconsistencies which appear to have characterized the best rulers in those times, very rude and violent times, when one occasion and another seemed to demand ruthless treatment.

"To the most excellent Coenulf, King of the Mercians, the humble levite Albinus wishes health. Ep. 80  
A.D. 797.

"Your goodness, moderation, and nobility of conduct, are a great joy to me. They are befitting to the royal dignity, which excels all others in honour, and ought to excel also in perfectness of conduct, in fairness of justice, in holiness of piety. The royal clemency should go beyond that of ordinary men, as we read in ancient histories, and in holy Scripture where it is said<sup>1</sup>—Mercy and truth exalt a throne; and in the Psalms it is said<sup>2</sup> of Almighty God—All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. The more a man shines forth in works of truth and mercy, the more has he in him of the image of the divine.

"Have always in mind Him who raised thee from a poor position and set thee as a ruler over the princes of His people. Know that thou art rather a shepherd, and a dispenser of the gifts of God, than a lord and an exactor.

"Have always in mind the very best features of the reign of your most noble predecessor Offa; his modest conversation; his zeal in correcting the life

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xx. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxiv. 10, Vulgate; xxv. 10, A.V.; xxv. 10, Psalter.

of a Christian people. Whatever good arrangements he made in the kingdom to thee by God given, let your devotion most diligently carry out; but if in any respect he acted with greed, or cruelty, know that this you must by all means avoid. For it is not without cause that that most noble son of his survived his father for so short a time. The deserts of a father are often visited on a son.

“Have prudent counsellors who fear God; love justice; seek peace with friends; show faith and holiness in pious manner of life.

“For the English race is vexed with tribulations by reason of its many sins. The goodness of kings, the preaching of the priests of Christ, the religious life of the people, can raise it to the height of its ancient honour; so that a blessed progeny of our fathers may deserve to possess perpetual happiness, stability of the kingdom, and fortitude against any foe; that the Church of Christ, as ordained by holy fathers, may grow and prosper. Always have in honour, most illustrious ruler, the priests of Christ; for the more reverently you are disposed to the servants of Christ, and the preachers of the word of God, the more will Christ, the King pious and true, exalt and confirm your honour, on the intercession of His saints.”

When Kenulf, this distant cousin of Ecgrith, came to the throne, he looked into the matter of the archbishopric of Lichfield, and he took a view adverse to Offa's action. He wrote to Pope Leo III a letter,<sup>1</sup> in which he put the points very

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 521, from *William of Malmesbury*, G. R. i. 4.

clearly. His bishops and learned men had told him that the division of the Province of Canterbury into two provinces was contrary to the canons and apostolical statutes of the most blessed Gregory, who had ordered that there should be twelve bishops under the archbishop of the southern province, seated at London. On the death of Augustine of Canterbury, it had seemed good to all the wise men of the race, the Witangemote, that not London but Canterbury should be the seat of the Primacy, where Augustine's body lay. King Offa, by reason of his enmity with the venerable archbishop Jaenbert and the people of Kent, set to work to divide the province into two. The most pious Adrian, at the request of the said king, had done what no one before had presumed to do, had raised the Mercian prelate to the dignity of the pallium. Kenulf did not blame either of them; but he hoped that the Pope would look into the matter and make a benign and just response. He had sent an embassy on the part of himself and the bishops in the previous year by Wada the Abbat; but Wada, after accepting the charge, had indolently—nay foolishly—withdrawn. He now sent by the hands of a presbyter, Birine, and two of his officers, Fildas and Cheolberth, a small present, out of his love for the Pope, namely, 120 mancuses,<sup>1</sup> some forty to fifty pounds, say not far off £1000 of our time.

Pope Leo addressed his reply to king Kenulf, his most loved bishops, and most glorious dukes. It was a difficult letter to write, for Kenulf had been very frank about the uncanonical action of

<sup>1</sup> A mancus was more than one-third of a pound, but that conveys no real idea to the modern mind of its actual value.

Hadrian the Pope. Leo answered this part of Kenulf's letter by stating that his predecessor had acted as he had done (1) because Offa had declared it to be the universal wish, the petition of all, that the archbishopric should be divided into two; (2) because of the great extension of the Mercian kingdom; (3) for very many causes and advantages. He, Leo, now authorized the departure from Pope Gregory's order in so far as this, that he recognized Canterbury, not London, as the chief seat of archiepiscopal authority. He declared that Canterbury was the primatial see, and must continue and be viewed as such. I cannot find in his letter a definite declaration that he annuls the act of his predecessor, but that is the effect of the letter; nor does he declare that Lichfield is no longer an archbishopric. Kenulf, as we have seen, had sent him, out of his affection for him, a gift of 120 mancuses. But he reminded the king that Offa had bound his successors to maintain the gift to the Pope, in each year, of as many mancuses as there are days in the year, namely, he says, 365, as alms to the poor, and as an endowment for keeping in order the lamps [in the churches]. This is much more likely than the shadowy gifts of Ina, king of Wessex, to have been the origin of Peter's Pence, a sum of money collected in England, at first fitfully and eventually year by year, and sent out to the Pope. The money was collected in the parishes of each diocese down to the time of the Reformation. It is a regular item in the churchwardens' accounts of the earlier years of Henry VIII. Only a fixed amount of the whole sum collected was sent to the Pope, the

balance being used for repairs in the several dioceses. We have a list prepared by a representative of a late mediaeval Pope giving £190 6s. 8d. as the amount received by him for the year, corresponding roughly to a normal 300 marks a year.

Offa's money for the Pope went of course from Mercia. When Wessex became predominant, Ethelwulf, the son of Ecgbert and father of Alfred, made large gifts to Rome, and left by will 300 mancuses, 100 in honour of St. Peter, specially for filling with oil all the lamps of his apostolic church on Easter Eve and at cock crow, 100 in honour of St. Paul, in the same terms and for the same purpose in respect of the basilica of St. Paul, and 100 for the Pope himself. King Alfred also sent presents to Rome. From 883 to 890 there are four records of gifts from Wessex. After 890 we have no such record in Alfred's reign; and in Alfred's will there is no mention of the spiritual head of the Church of the West.

We learn from our own great historian, William of Malmesbury, that Kenulf wrote two later letters to Leo on this subject, and he gives us Leo's reply.<sup>1</sup> Athelhard, the Pope says, has come to the holy churches of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, to fulfil his vow of prayer and to inform the Pope of his ecclesiastical mission. He tells the king that by the authority of St. Peter, the chief of the apostles, whose office though unworthily he fills, he gives to Athelhard such prelatial authority that if any in the province, whether kings, princes, or people, transgress the commands of the Lord, he

<sup>1</sup> *Gesta Regum*, i. 4.



shall excommunicate them till they repent. Concerning the jurisdiction which the archbishops of Canterbury had held, as well over bishops as over monasteries, of which they had been unjustly deprived, the Pope had made full inquiry, and now placed all ordinations and confirmations on their ancient footing, and restored them to him entire. Thus did Pope Leo III condemn the injustice of Pope Hadrian I. We had better have managed our own affairs, instead of paying to foreigners infinite sums of money to mismanage them.

Before we leave this strange episode of the creation of an archbishopric of Lichfield, it is of special local interest to us in Bristol, and to the deanery of Stapleton, that the chief Mercian prelate, Iligbert of Lichfield, signed deeds relating to Westbury upon Trym and Aust on Severn, above the archbishop of Canterbury. This was in 794. Offa the king signed first, Ecgferth, the king's young son, second, and then Hygeberht; Ethelhard of Canterbury coming fifth in one and fourth in the other. The first deed gave from the king to his officer Ethelmund, in 794, four cassates of land at the place called Westbury, in the province of the Huiccians, near the river called Avon, free of all public charges except the three which were common to all, namely, for the king's military expeditions, for the building of bridges, and for the fortification of strongholds.<sup>1</sup> The other

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, iii. 483. The names stand as follows: " +Ego Offa Rex Dei dono propriam donationis libertatem signo sanctæ crucis confirmo. +Ego Ecgferth, filius Regis, consensi. +Signum Hygeberhti Archiepiscopi. +Signum Ceolulfi Episcopi. +Signum Æthelheardi Archiepiscopi. Followed by eight bishops and three abbats.

deed restores to the see of Worcester (Wegrin) the land of five families at Aust, which the duke Bynna had taken without right, it being the property of the see of Worcester. To make all safe, six dukes made the sign of the cross at the foot of this deed, which is, as we all know, the origin of the modern phrase 'signing' a deed or a letter. The dukes included Bynna himself.

Alcuin wrote a very wise letter to Athelhard Ep. 85 of Canterbury on the occasion of the restoration A.D. 797. of the primacy. He advised that penance should be done. Athelhard and all the people should keep a fast, he for having left his see, they for having accepted error. There should be diligent prayers, and alms, and solemn masses, everywhere, that God might wipe out what any of them had done wrong. The archbishop was specially urged to bring back study into the house of God, that is, the conventual home of the monks and the archbishop, with its centre, the cathedral church. There should be young men reading, and a chorus of singers, and the study of books, in order that the dignity of that holy see might be renewed, and they might deserve to have the privilege of electing to the primacy.

"The unity of the Church, which has been in part cut asunder, not as it seems for any reasonable cause but from grasping at power, should, if it can be done, be restored in peaceful ways; the rent should be stitched up again. You should take counsel with all your bishops, and with your brother of York, on this principle, that the pious father Higbert of Lichfield be not deprived of his pall during his lifetime, but the consecration of

bishops must come back to the holy and primal see. Let your most holy wisdom see to it that loving concord exist among the chief shepherds of the churches of Christ."

Ep. 171  
A.D. 801.

With regard to the remark of Alcuin that Athelhard should do penance for having left his see, it may be explained that Alcuin had in vain advised Athelhard not to leave England on the restoration of the primacy to Canterbury. Athelhard persisted in visiting Rome, and informed Alcuin that he had commenced the journey. Alcuin thereupon wrote this:—"Return, return, holy father, as soon as your pious embassy is finished, to your lost sheep. As there are two eyes in the body, so I believe and desire that you two, Canterbury and York, give light throughout the breadth of all Britain. Do not deprive your country of its right eye."

Then Alcuin gives a very significant hint that the ways of the clergy of England are not good enough for France, and they had better not let Charlemagne see anything of that kind.

"If you come to the lord king, warn your companions, and especially the clergy, that they acquit themselves in an honourable manner, in all holy religion, in dress, and in ecclesiastical order; so that wherever you go you leave always an example of all goodness. Forbid them to wear in the presence of the lord king ornaments of gold or robes of silk; let them go humbly clad, after the manner of servants of God. And through every district you must pass with peace and honest conversation, for you know the manner and custom of this Frankish race."

Nothing could make more clear the commanding position held by Alcuin than this exceedingly free counsel from a deacon to the Primate of England. We may quote portions of yet another letter giving the same impression.

In a letter to Athelhard after his safe return to England and a favourable reception which he had reported to Alcuin, Alcuin congratulated the archbishop on the restoration to its ancient dignity of the most holy see of the first teacher of our race. By divine favour, the members now once more cohered in unity with the proper head, and natural peace shone forth between the two chief prelates of Britain, and one will of piety and concord was vigorous under the two cities of metropolitans. "And now," he writes, "now that you have received the power to correct and the liberty to preach, fear not, speak out! The silence of the bishop is the ruin of the people." Ep. 190  
A.D. 802.

It is an interesting fact that we have a letter which Alcuin wrote to Karl, introducing to him this same archbishop on the very journey of which he so decidedly disapproved.

"To the most greatly desired lord David the king, Flaccus his pensioner wishes eternal health in Christ." Ep. 172  
A.D. 801.

"The sweetness of your affection, and the assurance of your approved piety, very often urge me to address letters to your authority, and by the office of syllables to trace out that which bodily frailty prevents my will from accomplishing. But novel circumstances compel me now to write once more, that the paper may bring the affection of the heart, and may pour into the ears of your piety

the prayers which never have been in vain in the presence of your pity. Nor do I believe that my prayers for your stableness and safety are vain in the sight of God, for the divine grace gladly receives the tears which flow forth from the fount of love<sup>1</sup>.

"I have been informed that certain of the friends of your Flaccus, Edelard to wit, Metropolitan of the See of Dorobernia and Pontiff of the primatial see in Britain, and Ceilmund<sup>2</sup> of the kingdom of the Mercians, formerly minister of king Offa, and Torhemund<sup>3</sup> the faithful servant of king Edilred, a man approved in faith, strenuous in arms, who has boldly avenged the blood of his lord, desire to approach your piety<sup>4</sup>. All of these have been very faithful to me, and have aided me on my journey; they have also aided my boys as they went about hither and thither. I pray your best clemency to receive them with your wonted kindness, for they have been close friends to me. I have often known bishops religious and devoted in Christ's service, and men strong and faithful in secular dignity, to be laudable to your equity; for there is no doubt that all the best men, approved by their own conscience, love good men, being taught by the example of the omnipotent God who is the highest

<sup>1</sup> It has already been noted that Alcuin found it very difficult to shed tears.

<sup>2</sup> "Coolmund the duke," "Ceolmund the minister," often appears in the Mercian documents of the time.

<sup>3</sup> Simcon of Durham, under the year 779, has the entry, Duke Aldred, the slayer of King Ethelred, was slain by Duke Thorhtmund in revenge for his lord.

<sup>4</sup> This amounts to an official representation of the three great powers, the West Saxons, the Mercians, and the Northumbrians.

good. And it is most certain that every creature that has reason has by His goodness whatever of good it has, the Very Truth saying, 'I am the light of the world. He that followeth me walketh not in darkness but shall have the light of life.' John viii. 12."

Before we leave Mercian affairs and the relations between Karl and Offa, it may be of interest to give a letter<sup>1</sup> from Karl to Offa which will serve to show the extreme care he took in order to maintain ecclesiastical discipline, and the severity of that discipline. That a man with all the affairs of immense dominions on his hands should have made time to produce such a letter on such a point seems very worthy of note. Karl's statement of his titles shows that this is an early letter.

"Karl, by the grace of God king of the Franks and Defender of the Holy Church of God, to his loved brother and friend Offa greeting.

"That priest who is a Scot<sup>2</sup> has been living among us for some time, in the diocese of Hildesbold, Bishop<sup>3</sup> of Cologne. He has now been accused of eating meat in Lent. Our priests refuse to judge him, because they have not received full evidence from the accusers. They have, however, not allowed him to continue to reside there, on account of this evil report, lest the honour in which the priesthood is held should be diminished among ignorant folk, or others should be tempted by this rumour to violate the holy fast. Our priests are of opinion that he should

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 486.

<sup>2</sup> An Irishman.

<sup>3</sup> From 784 to 819.

be sent to the judgement of his own bishop, where his oath was taken.

"We pray your providence to order that he transfer himself as soon as conveniently may be to his own land, that he may be judged in the place from which he came forth. For there also it must be that the purity in manners and firmness in faith and honesty of conversation of the Holy Church of God are diligently kept according to canonical sanction, like a dove perfect and unspotted, whose wings are as of silver and the hinder parts should shine as gold.

"Life, health, and prosperity be given to thee and thy faithful ones by the God Christ for ever."

A letter which Karl wrote to Athelhard of Canterbury begging him to intercede for some exiles, sets forth his style and title very differently<sup>1</sup>, evidently at a later date.

It bears very directly upon one of the complaints which, as we have seen, Offa had made in letters to Karl; namely, the shelter afforded at Karl's court to fugitives from Mercia.

"Karl, by the grace of God king of the Franks and Lombards and Patrician of the Romans, to Athilhard the archbishop and Ceolwulf his brother bishop, eternal beatitude.

"In reliance on that friendship which we formed in speech when we met, we have sent to your piety these unhappy exiles from their fatherland; praying that you would deign to intercede for them with my dearest brother king Offa, that they may be allowed to live in their own land in peace,

<sup>1</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 487.

without any unjust oppression. For their lord Umhringsstan <sup>1</sup> is dead. It appeared to us that he would have been faithful to his own lord if he had been allowed to remain in his own land ; but, as he used to say, he fled to us to escape the danger of death, always ready to purge himself of any unfaithfulness. That reconciliation might ensue we kept him with us for a while, not from any unfriendliness.

“If you are able to obtain peace for these his fellow tribesmen, let them remain in their fatherland. But if my brother gives a hard reply about them, send them back to me uninjured. It is better to live abroad than to perish, to serve in a foreign land than to die at home. I have confidence in the goodness of my brother, if you plead strenuously with him for them, that he will receive them benignantly for the love that is between us, or rather for the love of Christ, who said, Forgive and it shall be forgiven you.

“May the divine piety keep thy holiness, interceding for us, safe for ever.”

It was a skilful stroke of business on Karl's part to send the men over to the charge of the archbishop, which amounted to putting them in sanctuary. If he had kept them in France and written to beg that they might be allowed to return, it would have been much easier for Offa to say no. And if he had sent them direct to Offa in the first instance, they would probably never have got out of his clutches at all.

<sup>1</sup> We know nothing certain of this person.



## CHAPTER VII

List of the ten kings of Northumbria of Alcuin's time.—Destruction of Lindisfarne, Wearmouth, and Jarrow, by the Danes.—Letters of Alcuin on the subject to King Ethelred, the Bishop and monks of Lindisfarne, and the monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow.—His letter to the Bishop and monks of Hexham.

WE must now turn to Alcuin's native kingdom of Northumbria, over whose evil fortunes he grieved so greatly in the home of his adoption.

I do not know how better some idea can be formed of the political chaos to which Northumbria was reduced in the time of Alcuin than by reading a list of the kings of that time. It is a most bewildering list.

All went well so long as Eadbert, the brother of Archbishop Egbert, reigned. He was the king of Alcuin's infancy and boyhood and earliest manhood. His reign lasted from 737 to 758, when he retired into a monastery. He was the 21st king, beginning with Ida who created the kingdom in 547. He was succeeded by (22) Oswulf his son, who was within a year slain by his household officers, July 24, 759, and was succeeded on August 4 by (23) Ethelwald, of whose parentage we do not know anything. In 765 he was deprived by a national assembly, and (24) Alchred was placed on the throne, a fifth cousin of the murdered Oswulf, and therefore of the royal line. In 774 he was banished, and went in exile to the

king of the Picts, being succeeded by (25) Ethelred, the son of his deprived predecessor Ethelwald. Ethelred reigned from 774 to 779, when in consequence of cruel murders ordered by him he was driven out, and (26) Alfwold, son of (22) Oswulf, and therefore of the old royal line, succeeded. Alfwold was murdered in 788, and was succeeded by (27) Osred, the son of (24) Alchred, sixth cousin of his predecessor, and therefore of the royal line. After a year he was deposed and tonsured, and was eventually put to death in 792 by (25) Ethelred, who had recovered the throne lost by his expulsion in 779. He was killed in 796 in a faction fight, after he had put to death the last two males, so far as we know, of the royal line of Eadbert, Ælf and Ælfwine, sons of (26) Alfwold. Simeon of Durham tells us (A. D. 791) that they were persuaded by false promises to leave sanctuary in the Cathedral Church of York; were taken by violence out of the city; and miserably put to death by Ethelred in Wonwaldrenute. He was succeeded by (28) Osbald, of unknown parentage, but a patrician of Northumbria; he only reigned twenty-seven days, fled to the king of the Picts, and died an abbat three years later, in 799. He was succeeded by (29) Eardulf, a patrician of the blood royal,<sup>1</sup> who had been left for dead by (25) Ethelred, but had recovered when laid out for burial by the monks of Ripon. He had the fullest recognition as king; was consecrated at the great altar of St. Paul in York Minster on May 26, 796, by Archbishop Eanbald. In his

<sup>1</sup> We cannot trace his pedigree.

reign Alcuin died. In 806 he was driven out by (30) Elfwald, of unknown parentage, but by the help of the Emperor Charlemagne he was restored in 808. He died in 810, and was succeeded by his son (31) Eanred, who was the last king but one of the royal house, and the last independent king of Northumbria, dying in 840, and being succeeded by his son (32) Ethelred II, expelled in 844, restored in the same year, and killed *sine prole* in 848.

This, as has been said, is a most bewildering list. It is, however, convenient to have it stated at length, inasmuch as several of these kings are named in a noteworthy manner in the letters of Alcuin. To emphasize the view that Alcuin took of the state of Northumbria, the list just given may be summarized thus, it being borne in mind that every king who reigned in Alcuin's time after Eadbert's death in 758 is included in the summary. Oswulf, murdered 759; Ethelwald, deprived 765; Alchred, banished 774; Ethelred, expelled 779; Alfwold, murdered 788; Osred, deposed 789; Ethelred, killed by his own people, 796; Osbald, expelled 797; Eardulf, expelled 806.

The Venerable Bede had said in his letter to Archbishop Egbert in 735 that unless some very great change for the better was made in all walks of life in Northumbria, that country would find its men quite unable to defend it successfully if an invasion took place. We have seen that so far as the reigning persons were concerned, the change was for the worse; we have now to see how bitterly true Bede's prophecy, or rather his calculation of the necessary consequences, proved to

be. We are taken in thought to the year 793, not quite sixty years after Bede's letter. One excellent reign had lasted twenty-one years, the next eight reigns averaged four and a half years, and all ended in violence.

Higbald, the eleventh Bishop of Lindisfarne, 780-803, takes us back nearly to the best times of that specially Holy Isle. Ethelwold, 724-40, his next predecessor but one, was the bishop under whom King Ceolwulf, to whom Bede dedicated his famous work the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Race*, became a monk. It was this king-monk that taught the monks of Lindisfarne to drink wine and ale instead of the milk and water prescribed by their Scotie founder, Aidan. His head was preserved in St. Cuthbert's coffin. Ethelwold's immediate predecessor was Eadfrith, 698-721, who wrote that glorious Evangelium which is a chief pride of England, the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. To Bishop Eadfrith and his monks Bede dedicated his *Life of St. Cuthbert*, between whom and Eadfrith only one bishop had intervened. The entry at the end of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* connects Ethelwold and Eadfrith with the production and binding of that noble specimen of the earliest Anglian work. Put into modern English it runs thus:—

“Eadfrith, bishop of the church of Lindisfarne, he wrote this book at first, for God and St. Cuthbert and all the saints that are in the island, and Ethelwold, the bishop of Lindisfarne island, he made it firm outside and bound it as well as he could.”

The entry proceeds to tell that Billfrith, the anchorite, wrought in smith's work the ornaments that were on the outside with gold and gems and

silver overlaid, a treasure without deceit. And Aldred, the presbyter, unworthy and most miserable, glossed it in English, and made himself at home with the three parts, the Matthew part for God and St. Cuthbert, the Mark part for the bishop—unfortunately it is not said for which of the bishops, the Luke part for the brotherhood. Only one bishop came between Ethelwold, who bound this priceless treasure, and Higbald, to whom we now turn.

The Saxon Chronicle has under the year 787 this entry:—"In this year King Beorhtric [of Wessex] took to wife Eadburg, daughter of King Offa. In his days came three ships of the Northmen from Haurthaland [on the west coast of Norway]. And the sheriff rode to meet them there, and would force them to the king's residence, for he knew not what they were. And there they slew him. These were the first ships of Danish men that sought the land of the English race."

They soon came again, this time not to the coast of Wessex, but to the coast easiest of access from their own land. In 793 this is the entry in the Saxon Chronicle:—

"In this year dire forewarnings came over the land of Northumbria and pitifully frightened the people, violent whirlwinds and lightnings, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. These tokens mickle hunger soon followed, and a little after that, in this same year, on the sixth of the ides of January [January 8] the harrying of heathen men pitifully destroyed God's church in Lindisfarne through rapine and manslaughter."

In the next year, 794, it is said:—

"The heathen ravaged among the Northumbrians, and plundered Ecgferth's minster at Donmouth [Wearmouth]; and there one of their leaders was slain, and also some of their ships were wrecked by a tempest, and many of them were there drowned, and some came to shore alive and men soon slew them off at the river mouth."

Wattenbach and Dümmler make the ruin of Lindisfarne take place not on January 8 but on June 8. The Saxon Chronicle has Ianr. in both of the MSS. which name the month. There is only one other entry in the year 793, and it follows this,—“And Sigga [who had murdered King Alfuold] died<sup>1</sup> on the 8th of the Kalends of March,” that is, February 22. It is clear that these two events took place at the end of 793, the years at that time ending with March, and January, not June, was the month of ruin.

The twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow are described as Ecgferth's minster, because King Ecgfrith of Northumbria, 670-85, gave land to Benet Biscop to found a monastery at the mouth of the Don, now called the Wear, and some years later another portion of land for the twin monastery of St. Paul, Jarrow. Later in Biscop's life he purchased two additional pieces of land from the next king, Aldfrith, giving for the first two royal robes, or palls, made all of silk, worked in an incomparable manner, which he had bought in Rome. For the second, a much larger piece, he gave to the king a manuscript collection of geographical writings, of beautiful workmanship.

<sup>1</sup> Simeon of Durham says that he committed suicide.

We in the south-west must always remember that Benedict Bishop first brought his vast ecclesiastical treasures to the court of Wessex, but finding his royal patron dead went up north with them. But for the death of the King of Wessex, we should have had Wearmouth and Jarrow here as well as Malmesbury, Bede as well as Aldhelm, and it may be Alcuin too.

We have letters of Alcuin to King Ethelred, to Higbald the Bishop of Lindisfarne, and to the monks of the twin monastery of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, on this catastrophe. The letter to Ethelred comes first:—

Ep. 22  
A.D. 793.

“To my most loved lord King Ethelred and all his chief men the humble levite Alchuine sends greeting.

“Mindful of your most sweet affection, my brothers and fathers and lords honourable in Christ; deeply desiring that the divine mercy may preserve to us in long-lived prosperity the fatherland which that mercy long ago gave to us with gratuitous freedom; I therefore, comrades most dear, whether present, if God allow it, by my words, or absent by my writings under the guidance of the divine spirit, do not cease from admonishing you, and by frequent repetition to convey to your ears, you who are citizens of the same fatherland, those things which are known to pertain to the safety of this earthly realm and to the blessedness of the heavenly home; so that things many times heard may grow into your minds with good result. For what is love to a friend if it keeps silence on matters useful to the friend? To what does a man owe fidelity if

not to his country? To whom does a man owe prosperity if not to its citizens? By a double relationship we are fellow-citizens of one city in Christ, that is as sons of Mother Church and of one native country. Let not therefore your humanity shrink from accepting benignly what my devotion seeks to offer for the safety of our land. Think not that I am charging faults against you: take it that I aim at warding off penalties."

We should here bear in mind that Ethelred had fourteen years before this been expelled for cruel murders, and that he was now in the first year of his restored reign and had already sent away his first wife and taken another, a scandal so great in those days—bad as they were—that the Saxon Chronicle with remarkable particularity gives the month and the day of the gross offence, September 29. He afterwards murdered the two surviving members of the royal house.

Alcuin's letter to the king proceeds:—

"It is now nearly 350 years that we and our fathers have dwelt in this most fair land, and never before has such a horror appeared in Britain as we now have suffered at the hands of pagans. And it was not supposed that such an attack from the sea was possible.<sup>1</sup> Behold, the church of the holy Cuthbert is deluged with the blood of the priests of God, is spoiled of all its ornaments; the place more venerable than any other in Britain is given as a prey to pagan races. From the spot where, after the departure of the holy Paulinus

<sup>1</sup> In theory, at least, we know better now.



from York, the Christian religion took its beginning amongst us, from that spot misery and calamity have begun. Who does not fear? Who does not mourn this as if his fatherland itself was captured?"

We should note Alcuin's recognition of the fact that the restoration of Christianity in Northumbria was due not to persons of the Anglo-Saxon race and Church, but to Aidan and his monks of the Irish race and Church.

"My brethren, give your most attentive consideration, your most diligent investigation, to this question,—is this most unaccustomed, most unheard-of evil, brought upon us by some unheard-of evil custom? I do not say that there was not among the people of old the sin of fornication. But since the days of King Alfwold<sup>1</sup> fornications, adulteries, incests, have inundated the land to such an extent that these sins are unblushingly perpetrated even among the handmaids dedicated to God. What shall I say of avarice, rapine, and judicial violence, when it is clearer than the light how these crimes have increased, and a despoiled people are the evidence of it. He who reads the Holy Scriptures, and revolves ancient history, and considers the working of the world, will find that for sins of this nature kings lose kingdoms, and peoples lose their father-land. He will find that when men in power have unjustly seized the property of others, they have justly lost their own.

. . . . .

"Consider the manner of dress, the manner of

<sup>1</sup> A. D. 779 to 788.

wearing the hair, the luxurious habits of princes and of people. Look at the way in which the pagan manner of trimming the beard and cutting the hair is imitated. Do you not fear those whom you thus copy? Look at the immoderate use of clothes, beyond any necessity of human nature. This superfluity of the princes is the poverty of the people. Some are loaded with garments, while others perish with cold. Some flow over with luxuries and feasts like the rich man in purple, while Lazarus at the gate dies of hunger. Where is brotherly love? Where is that pity which we are bidden have for the wretched? The satiety of the rich man is the hunger of the poor. That Scripture saying is to be dreaded, 'He shall have judgement without mercy that hath shewed no mercy'<sup>1</sup>; and we have the words of the blessed Peter the Apostle<sup>2</sup>, 'The time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God.' Judgement has begun, and with terrible force, at the house of God where rest so many lights of the whole of Britain. What is to be expected for other places, if the divine judgement has not spared this most holy place? It is not for the sins of only those who dwelled there that this has been sent.

"Would that the penalty that has come upon them could bring others to amend their lives. Would that the many would fear what the few have suffered, and each would say in his heart, groaning and trembling, 'if such men, if fathers so holy, did not save their own habitation, the place of their own repose, who shall save mine?' Save your country by assiduous prayers to God, by

<sup>1</sup> James ii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Pet. iv. 17.

works of justice and of mercy. Be moderate in dress and in food. There is no better defence of a country than the equity and piety of princes, and the prayers of the servants of God."

This is the letter which Alcuin wrote to the Bishop and monks of Lindisfarne:—

Ep. 24  
A.D. 793.

"To the best sons in Christ of the most blessed father the holy bishop Cuthbert, Higbald the bishop and the whole body of the Church of Lindisfarne, the deacon Alchuine sends greeting with heavenly benediction in Christ.

"When I was with you, your friendly love was wont to give me much joy. And now that I am absent the calamity of your affliction greatly saddens me every day. The pagans have contaminated the sanctuaries of God, and have poured out the blood of saints round about the altar; have laid waste the house of our hope, have trampled upon the bodies of saints in the temple of God like dung in the street. What can I say but groan forth along with you before the altar of Christ, Spare, O Lord, spare thy people; give not thine heritage to the Gentiles, lest the pagans say 'Where is the God of the Christians?'

"What assurance is there for the churches of Britain if the holy Cuthbert, with so great a number of saints, does not defend his own Church? Either this is the beginning of greater affliction, or else the sins of the dwellers there have called it upon them. It has not happened by chance; it is the sign that calamity was greatly deserved.

"But now, ye that survive, stand like men, fight bravely, defend the camp of God. Remember Judas Machabeus, how he purged the Temple of

God, and freed the people from a foreign yoke. If anything in your manner of life needs correction, pray correct it speedily. Call back to you your patrons, who have left you for a time. It was not that their influence with God's mercy failed; but, we know not why, they did not speak. Do not boast yourselves in the vanity of raiment; that is matter not of boasting but of disgrace for priests and servants of God. Do not blur the words of your prayers with drunkenness. Do not go forth after pleasures of the flesh and greediness of the world; but remain firmly in the service of God and in the discipline of the life by rule; that the most holy fathers whose sons you are may not cease to be your protectors. Go in their footsteps, and abide secure in their prayers. Be not degenerate sons of such ancestry. Never will they cease from your defence, if they see you follow their example.

"Be not utterly cast down in mind by this calamity. God chastens every son whom he receives; and He has chastened you the more because he loves you more. Jerusalem, the city loved of God, and the Temple of God, perished in the flames of the Chaldeans. Rome, with her coronal of holy Apostles and innumerable martyrs, has been broken up by a pagan visitation; but by God's pity has quickly recovered. Nearly the whole of Europe has been laid waste by the sword and the fire of Goths and of Huns; but now, by God's mercy, as the sky is adorned with stars, so the land of Europe shines bright with churches, and in them the divine offices of the religion of Christ flourish and increase.

“And thou, holy father, leader of the people of God, shepherd of the holy flock, physician of souls, light set upon a candlestick, be the form of all goodness to them that see you, the herald of salvation to all that hear you. Let your company be honest in character, an example to others unto life, not to destruction. Let thy banquets be with sobriety, not with drunkenness. Let thy dress be suited to thy condition. Be not conformed unto men of the world in any vain thing. The empty adornment of dress, and the useless care for it, is for thee a reproach before men and a sin before God. It is better to adorn with good habits the soul that is to live for ever, than to dress up in delicate garments the body that soon will decay in the dust. Let Christ be clothed and fed in the person of the poor man, that so with Christ you may reign. The ransom of a man is true riches. If we love gold, we should send it before us to heaven, where it will be of service to us. What we love, we have; then let us love that which is eternal, not that which is perishable. Let us aim at the praise of God, not of men. Let us do what did the holy men whom we laud. Let us follow their footsteps on earth, that we may be worthy to be partakers in their glory in the heavens.

“May the protection of the divine pity keep you from all adversity, and set you with your fathers in the glory of the kingdom of heaven. When our lord, King Karl, comes home, his enemies by God’s mercy subdued, we will arrange to go to him, God helping us. If we are able then to help your holiness, either in the matter

of the youths who have been carried captive by the pagans, or in any other need of yours, we will take diligent care to carry it through."

Alcuin soon after wrote another letter to the bishop and monks of Lindisfarne, and yet another to Cudrad, probably Cuthred, a presbyter of Lindisfarne, who had been carried off by the Northmen and then rescued. In these letters he urges them to bear in mind that prayers are more valuable as a defence than collections of arrows and weapons, and heaps of stones for hurling at an enemy. From this it would appear that the monastery at Lindisfarne was being fortified.

To the monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow, whose geographical situation rendered them very liable to a raid by the pirate northmen, he wrote a very long and interesting letter, some extracts from which may here be given.

"Keep most diligently the regular life [the life by rule] which your most holy fathers, [the abbats] Benedict<sup>1</sup> [Biscop] and Ceolfrid,<sup>2</sup> decreed for you. Ep. 27  
A.D. 793.

"Let the Rule of Saint Benedict [of Nursia, the abbat of Monte Cassino] be very often read in the assembly of the brethren, and expounded in the vulgar tongue that all may understand.

"Consider whom you have as your defence against the pagans who have appeared in your maritime parts. Set not your hope on arms, but on God. Trust not to carnal flight, but in the

<sup>1</sup> He died in 703.

<sup>2</sup> He resigned in 716, and took from the library of Wearmouth the Codex Amiatinus as a present to the Pope. This huge and noble codex is now in the Laurenziana, in Florence. See my *Lessons from Early English Church History*, pp. 72-75.

prayer of your forefathers. Who does not fear the terrible fate which has befallen the church of the holy Cuthbert? You, also, dwell on the sea, from which this pest first comes.

"Bear in mind the nobleness of your fathers, and be not degenerate sons. Look at the treasures of your library, the beauty of your churches, the fairness of your buildings. How happy the man who, from those most fair dwellings, passes to the joys of the kingdom of heaven.

"Accustom the boys to the praise of the heavenly King, not to digging out the earths of foxes, not to coursing the swift hare. How impious it is to leave the worship of Christ and follow the trace of the fox. Let them learn the sacred Scriptures, that when they are grown up they may teach others. He who does not learn in youth does not teach in age. Remember Bede the presbyter, the most noble teacher of our age, what a love he had for learning as a boy; what honour he has now among men; what glory of reward with God. Quickened slumbering minds with his example. Attend lectures; open your books; study the text; understand its meaning; that you may both feed yourselves and feed others with the food of the spiritual life.

"Avoid private feasting and secret drinking as a pitfall of hell. Solomon says that stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant, but the guests are in the depth of hell; he means that at such feasts there are demons present. Do not lose eternal joys for sloth of mind or fleshly delights."

As we have seen, the same destruction that had

come upon Lindisfarne came very soon after upon Wearmouth and Jarrow. Bede little knew how close home the blow which he forecast would strike.

We should have felt that something was wanting if no letter had been preserved from Alcuin to the bishop and monks of Hexham. Hexham was the see of one of Bede's most highly valued correspondents, Acca. Of the very small number of letters written by Bede which have come down to us, only fourteen in all, eight are addressed to Acca. They are in the main formal treatises on several parts of the Old and New Testaments, including a treatise on the Temple of Solomon which was probably suggested by the remarkable illustration of the Tabernacle in the *Codex Amiatinus*. The Church of St. Andrew, Hexham, built by Wilfrith, and St. Peter, Ripon, also built by him, were in Wilfrith's time the two finest churches north of the Alps. We have the description of them by Wilfrith's chaplain, Stephen Eddi.<sup>1</sup> Almost the whole of one of the two exquisite sculptured crosses which were placed at the head and foot of Acca's grave is still in existence. The magnificent restoration of the Abbey Church of Hexham in this year of grace, 1908, is one of the greatest ecclesiastical works of the young twentieth century.

"To the shepherd of chief dignity Aedilberit<sup>2</sup> Ep. 88,  
the bishop, and to all the congregation of the Before  
servants of God in the Church of St. Andrew [of Oct. 16,  
Hexham], Alchuini, the humble client of your 797.  
love in Christ, wishes health.

<sup>1</sup> See my *Theodore and Wilfrith*, pp. 106, 124, and for Acca's Cross, pp. 257-61.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Whithern (Candentis-Casae, Ep. 20, usually Candidae Casae), 777-789; of Hexham, 789-797.



“Earnestly desirous of spiritual friendship, I am at pains to address to your sanctity the poor letters of my littleness, both that I may renew the pact of our ancient intimacy and that I may commend myself to your most sacred prayers. And if according to the Apostle the prayer of one just man availeth much, how much more the prayers of a most holy congregation in Christ, the intercessions of whose peaceful concord daily at the canonical hours are believed to reach heaven, while the secret prayer of each single one beyond doubt reaches to the ears of the omnipotent God. Wherefore with all humility of entreaty, so far as my request may avail with your piety, I commend myself both to the united prayer of all and to the individual prayer of each; that by the prayers of your sanctity, freed from the chain of my sins, I may with you, my dearest friends, enter the gates of life.

“O most noble progeny of holy fathers, successors of their honour and their venerable life, and inhabitants of their most beautiful places, follow the footsteps of your fathers; that from these most beautiful habitations you may attain by the gift of God to a portion in the eternal blessedness of those that begat you, to the beauty of the kingdom of heaven.

“Learn to know God and to obey His precepts, Himself saying to you ‘If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments’. Therefore the reading of the Holy Scriptures is necessary, for in them each may learn what he must follow and what avoid. Let the light of learning dwell among you, and give light through you to other churches,

that the praise of you may sound forth in the mouth of all, and your reward may remain eternal in the heavens. Each man shall receive the reward of his own work. Teach diligently the boys and the young men the knowledge of books in the way of the Lord, that they may become worthy to succeed to your honour, and may be your intercessors. For the prayers of the living are profitable to the dying, whether to the pardon of sin or to the increase of glory. He who sows not does not reap; he who learns not does not teach. And such a house as yours without teachers cannot be, or can scarcely be, safe. Great is alms-doing, to feed the poor with food for the body; but greater is it to satisfy the hungry soul with spiritual doctrine. As the provident shepherd takes care to supply his flock with all that is best, so the good teacher ought with all pains to procure for those under him the pastures of eternal life. For the increase of the flock is the glory of the shepherd, and the multitude of the wise is the safety of the world. I am aware that you, most holy fathers, fully know all this, and accomplish it; but the love of him that dictates this has dragged the words from his mouth, believing that you are willing to read with pious humility that which I dictate with devoted soberness in the love of God. Again and again I beseech you that you deign to have my name in memory among those of your friends.

“May the God Christ Himself hearken to your kindness interceding for the whole Church of God, and grant that we may attain unto the glory of eternal beatitude, my dearest brothers.”

## CHAPTER VIII

Alcuin's letters to King Eardulf and the banished intruder Osbald.—His letters to King Ethelred and Ethelred's mother.—The Irish claim that Alcuin studied at Clonmacnoise.—Mayo of the Saxons.

ALCUIN had grievous anxieties about the manner of life of the kings of his native province, and the continual revolutions and disputed successions. Things got worse as he grew into older age—old age as it was then counted.

In the previous chapter we have seen a letter of his to Ethelred, the King of Northumbria, under date 793. He wrote another letter to him in that same year, which he addressed in the following affectionate form:—"To my most excellent son Ethelred the king, to my most sweet friends Osbald the patrician and Osbert the duke, to all the friends of my brotherly love, Alchuin the levite desires eternal beatitude."

In the year 796 Ethelred, as we have seen, was killed in a faction fight, after putting to death the last two males of the royal line of Eadbert, the brother of Archbishop Egbert, and was succeeded by "my most sweet friend Osbald the patrician", who, however, only reigned twenty-seven days, and had not time to strike any coins with his name and effigy. Eardulf, a man of considerable position, succeeded. He was in a very full manner

recognized as king, being consecrated, as Simeon of Durham tells us (A. D. 796), "in the Church of St. Peter, at the altar of the blessed apostle Paul, where the race of the Angles first received the grace of baptism." On this altar, see page 81.

It is an interesting fact that we have two letters of Alcuin, written, the one to (28) Osbold on his banishment, the other to (29) Eardulf on his succession to the throne from which Osbold had been banished. It can very seldom have happened that a man has had to write two letters under such conditions.

"To the illustrious man Eardwulf the King, Ep. 65  
Alcuine<sup>1</sup> the deacon sends greeting. A. D. 796.

"Mindful of the old friendship to which we are pledged, and rejoicing greatly in thy venerated salutation, I am at pains to address thy laudable person with a letter on a few points touching the prosperity of the kingdom conferred on thee by God, and the salvation of thy soul, and the manner in which the honour put into thy hands by the gift of God may remain stable.

"Thou knowest very well from what dangers the divine mercy has freed thee,<sup>2</sup> and how easily, when it would, it has brought thee to the kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> Writing to an Englishman, Alcuin gives his Anglian name in its Anglian spelling and without a Latin termination.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 123. The full story is given by Simeon of Durham under the year 790, meaning 791: "In the second year of Ethelred (i. e. of his restored sovereignty) Duke Eardulf was captured and taken to Ripon, and was ordered by the said king to be put to death outside the gate of the monastery. The brethren carried the body to the church with Gregorian chants, and placed it in a shed outside the door. He was found after midnight in the church, alive."

Be always grateful, and mindful of such very great gifts of God to thee ; that as far as thou canst the will of God thou wilt do with thy whole heart ; and be obedient to the servants of God who keep thee warned of His Commandments. Know of a surety that none other can preserve thy life than He who hath freed thee from present death ; and none can protect and keep thee in that honour of thine but He who of His free pity hath granted that dignity to thee. Keep diligently in thy mind mercy and justice, for, as Solomon says, and, more than that, God allows, in mercy and justice shall the throne of a kingdom be established.

“ Consider most intently for what sins thy predecessors have lost their kingdom and their life, and take exceeding care that thou do not the like, lest the same judgement fall on thee. The perjuries of some God has condemned ; the adulteries of others He has punished ; the avarice and deceits of others He has avenged ; the injustice of others has displeased Him. God is no respecter of persons, and those who do such things shall not possess the kingdom of God. Instruct first thyself in all goodness and soberness, and afterwards the people over whom thou art set, in all modesty of life and of raiment, in all truth of faith and of judgements, in keeping the Commandments of God and in probity of morals. So wilt thou both stablish thy kingdom, and save thy people, and rescue them from the wrath of God, which by sure signs has long been hanging over them.

“ Never would so much blood of nobles and of rulers be poured forth in your nation, never would the pagans lay waste holy places, never would such

injustice and arrogance prevail among the people, if it were not that the manifest vengeance of God hangs over the inhabitants of the land. Do thou, preserved as I believe for better times, kept to set thy country right, do thou, by God's grace aiding thee, work out with full intent, in God's will, the safety of thine own soul and the prosperity of the country and the people committed to thy charge; so that out of the setting-right of those subject to thy rule, thy kingdom here on earth may be established, and the glory of the kingdom to come be granted to thee and thy descendants.

"Let this letter, I pray you, be kept with you, and very often read, for the sake of thy welfare and of my love, that the omnipotent God may deign to preserve thee in the increase of His holy church for the welfare of our race, flourishing long time in thy kingdom and advancing in all that is good."

That letter finished, Alcuin proceeded next to write to the expelled usurper Osbald. He did not mince matters; he dealt, as people say, very faithfully with him.

"To my loved friend Osbald,<sup>1</sup> Alchuine the Ep. 66  
A.D. 796. deacon sends greeting.

"I am displeased with thee, that thou didst not obey me when I urged thee in my letter of more than two years ago to abandon the lay life

<sup>1</sup> In April, 796, the Patrician Osbald was made king by certain leading men of the nation. But after twenty-seven days he was deserted by the whole of the royal family and the chief men, and was put to flight and banished from the kingdom. He escaped with a few followers to the Isle of Lindisfarne, and thence went by sea with some of the brethren to the king of the Picts. Sim. Dur. 795.

and serve God according to thy vow. And now a worse, a more disastrous fate has come upon thy life. Turn again, turn again and fulfil thy vow. Seek an opportunity for entering upon the service of God, lest thou perish with those infamous men, if indeed thou art innocent of the blood of thy lord.<sup>1</sup> But if thou art guilty, by consent or design, confess thy sin; be reconciled with God, and leave the company of the murderers. The love of God and of the saints is better for thee than that of evil-doers.

“Add not sin to sin by devastating thy country, by shedding blood. Think how much blood of kings, princes, and people has been shed by thee and thy kinsmen. Unhappy generation, from which so many evils have happened to the land. Set thyself free, I beseech thee by God, that thou perish not eternally. While there is time, run, hasten, hurry, to the mercy of God, who is ready to receive the penitent and to comfort them that turn to Him; lest a day come when thou wouldest and canst not. Do not incur the shame of giving up what thou hast begun. There is more shame in your soul perishing eternally than in deserting in the present impious men. Better still if you can convert some of them from the wickedness they have committed: do your best, that you may have the reward of your own repentance and of other’s repentance too. This is the love that covereth a multitude of sins; do this, and live happily and fare well in peace.

“I beg that you will have this letter frequently

<sup>1</sup> Slain at Cobre (Corbridge has been suggested), April 18, 796.

read in your presence, that you may be mindful of yourself in God, and may know what care I have, distant though I am, of your welfare.

"If you can at all influence for good the people<sup>1</sup> among whom you are in exile, do not neglect the opportunity, that you may by God's grace the earlier reach your own recovery."

The murder of Ethelred gave rise to this letter. Alcuin had been very faithful in his advice to Ethelred, as the following letter well shows. It is very carefully composed, and a great anxiety breathes in every balanced phrase.

"To the most beloved lord Aedelred the king Ep. 42  
790-795.  
Alchuine the deacon sends greeting.

"The intimacy of love urges me to write an intimate letter to thee alone.<sup>2</sup> Because I shall always love thee I shall never cease to admonish thee, in order that, being subdued to the will of God thou mayest be made worthy of His protection, and the nobility of the royal dignity may be made honourable by nobility of conduct.

"No man is free or noble who is the slave of sin. The Lord says,<sup>3</sup> 'Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin.' It becometh not thee, seated on the throne of the kingdom, to live like common men. Anger should not be lord over thee, but reason. Pity should make thee loveable, not cruelty hateful. Truth should proceed from thy mouth, not falsehood. Be to thine own self conscious of chasteness, not of lust; of self-

<sup>1</sup> The Picts of the east of Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xviii. 15, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."

<sup>3</sup> John viii. 34.



control, not of riotous living; of sobriety, not of drunkenness. Be not notable in any sin, but laudable in every good work. Be large in giving, not greedy in taking. Let justice embellish all thine actions. Be the type of honour to all that see thee. Do not, do not, take other men's goods by force lest thou lose thine own. Fear God who has said 'with what judgement ye judge ye shall be judged'. Love the God Christ and obey His commands, that His mercy may preserve in blessing to thee, and to thy sons and followers, the kingdom which He has willed that thou shouldst hold, and may deign to grant the glory of future beatitude.

"May the omnipotent God cause to flourish in felicity of reign, in dignity of life, in length of prosperity, thee, my most beloved son."

We have letters written by Alcuin to Etheldryth the mother of king Ethelred, queen of Ethelwold Moll, king of Northumbria 759 to 765, who married her at Catterick in 762. In her widowhood she became an abbess, ruling over a mixed monastery of men and women, as is shown by the following letter, written before Ethelred's violent death:—

"To the most loved sister in Christ the Mother Aedilthyde the humble levite Alchuine sends greeting.

"When I gratefully received the gifts of your benignity, and gladly heard the salutation of your love, I confess that I was made glad by a great sweetness. For I knew that faithful love remained constant in your breast, which neither distance by land nor the stormy wave of tidal sea could stop from flying to me with beneficent munificence,

Ep. 50  
A.D.  
793-796.

even as it is said, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.'<sup>1</sup>

"That thou mayest be worthy to hear in the day of judgement the voice of God saying, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant,' instruct with instant care those that are under thee, admonish them by word, perfect them by example, for their safety is thy reward. Be not silent for fear of man, but for love of God speak, convince, rebuke, beseech. Them that sin openly chastise before all,<sup>2</sup> that the rest may fear. Some admonish in the spirit of gentleness, others seize in the pastoral staff, diligently thinking out the remedy which best suits each. Sweet potions cure some; bitter, others. Honour the old women and the old men as mothers and fathers; love the youthful as brothers and sisters; teach the little ones as sons and daughters; have care for all in Christ, that in Christ you may have reward for all.

"Let thy vigils and prayers be frequent; let psalms be in thy mouth, not vain talk on thy tongue; the love of God in thy heart, not worldly ambition in thy mind; for all that is loved in the world passes away, all that is esteemed in Christ remains. Whether we will or no, we shall be eternal. We should study with all intentness faithfully there to live where we are always to remain.

"Honour frequently with divine praise and alms to the poor the festivals of saints, that you may be worthy of their intercession and partakers of their bliss. Let thy discourses be laudable for

<sup>1</sup> Cant. viii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. v. 20.

their truth ; thy conduct loveable for its sobriety and modesty ; thy hands honourable for their free giving. Let the whole round of your life be an example in all goodness to others, that the dignity of your person be praised by all, be loved by many, and the name of God through thee be praised ; as the Truth Itself saith, ‘ Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ ”

The line which Alcuin takes in attempting to console Etheldryth after the violent death of a son who had lived a violent life, was a remarkable one.

Ep. 62.

“ I cannot in bodily presence address by word of mouth your most sweet affection, because we live so far apart. I therefore do by the ministry of a letter that which is denied to my tongue. With all the power of my heart, I desire that you go forward in every good thing, most dear mother, and be made worthy to be counted in the number of them of whom, in the gospel, our Lord Jesus Christ made answer, ‘ Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother and my brother.’<sup>1</sup> How ‘ mother’, unless He is daily generated by holy love in the bowels of a perfect heart? See what a Son a pious mother can have—that same God, King, Redeemer, in all tribulations Consoler.

“ Many are the tribulations of the just, but more are the consolations of Christ. By what event of secular misery should one be beaten who possesses in his breast the source of all consolation, that is, Christ indwelling. Nay, rather should such an

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 50. It will be seen that Alcuin does not quote exactly. The Vulgate has *frater et soror et mater*.

one rejoice in tribulations, because of the hope of eternal beatitude, as the Apostle says, 'By much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God,' and, 'The Lord chasteneth every son whom He receiveth'; and of the Apostles He saith, 'They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.'

"Let your love know that your spiritual Son the Lord Jesus is not mortal. He lives, He lives, on the right hand of God He lives and reigns.

"Be not broken down by the death of your son after the flesh, the departure of his body, but labour every hour, every moment, that his soul may live in happiness with Christ. Let the hope of His goodness be your consolation, for many are the mercies of God. He has left thee thy son's survivor that through thy intercessions and alms He may have mercy on him too. It may be that he died in his sins, but in the divine pity it may be wrought that he live; for the robber who in his wickedness hanged with Christ was saved in the mercy of Christ. Mourn not for him whom you can not recall. If he is with God, mourn him not as lost, but be glad that he has gone before you into rest. If there are two friends, the death of the first to die is happier than the death of the other, for he has one to intercede for him daily with brotherly love, and to wash with tears the errors of his earlier life. And doubt not that the care of pious solicitude which you have for his soul is profitable. It profits thee and him. Thee, that thou dost it in faith and love; him, that either his pain is lightened or his bliss is increased.

Great and inestimable is the pity of our Lord Jesus Christ, who would have all men be saved and none perish."

Our next episode takes us back to York, where one of Alcuin's own pupils was elected to the archbishopric. It may be well to mention here, and to dispose of, a curious question which has been raised in connexion with Alcuin's studies in the time of his youth, pursued as we believe only at York.

Alcuin is claimed by the Irish as one of the many English youths who were brought up in Irish monasteries, and they name Clonmacnoise as the place of study. Dr. John Healy, the learned Roman Bishop of Clonfert, writes thus<sup>1</sup>:—"There is fortunately a letter of his still preserved, which shows quite clearly that he was a student of Clonmacnoise, and a pupil of Colgu, and which also exhibits the affectionate veneration that he retained through life for his Alma Mater at Clonmacnoise." But the letter does not bear that interpretation, and, indeed, the learned bishop has to read Hibernia instead of Britannia in the only place where the island of Colgu's home is named, or to understand an implied contrast between Britain and Ireland which would be too obscure in a perfectly simple matter. "I have sent to your love", Alcuin says, "some oil, which now scarcely exists in Britain, that you may supply it where the bishops need it, for the furtherance of the honour of God."<sup>2</sup> I have sent also to the

Ep 14  
A. D. 790.

<sup>1</sup> *Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt oil specially pure, and vegetable; we may safely say olive oil, for purposes of chrism. Theodore of Canterbury informs us (*Theodore and Wilfrith*, S.P.C.K.

brethren, of the alms of King Karl<sup>1</sup>—I beseech you, pray for him—fifty sicles<sup>2</sup>, and of my own alms fifty sicles; to the brethren of Baldhuninga to the south, thirty sicles of the alms of the king and thirty of my own alms, and twenty sicles of the alms of the father of the family of Areida and twenty of my own alms; and to each of the anchorites three sicles of pure gold, that they may pray for me and for the lord King Charles.”

There is nothing here that points to Ireland except the name of the person to whom the letter is addressed, Coleu, whom Alcuin speaks of as “the blessed master and pious father”. The name Baldhuninga is very Northumbrian, the home of the family of Baldhun. The mention of anchorites has been supposed to look like Ireland, but we must remember that Alcuin himself, in singing the praises of the saints of the Church of York, tells of the life of only two persons of his own time other than kings and archbishops, and they were anchorites.<sup>3</sup> The gift of money from the father-of-the-family of Areida clearly comes from some one in Gaul who is very closely associated

p. 180) that “according to the Greeks a presbyter can . . . make the oil for exorcism and the chrism for the sick, if necessary; but according to the Romans only a bishop can do so”. Hence the mention of bishops in the letter of Alcuin. See also page 245, note 2.

<sup>1</sup> In this case Alcuin writes *Karli regis*; in other cases he uses the full form *Carolus*, which comes from rolling the *r* in *Karlus*.

<sup>2</sup> Shekels. On the argument that the didrachma was the shekel in the New Testament the sicle may be put at 1s. 7½d., but that gives no idea of its purchasing power then, which was probably nearer £1. It will be seen that in a later sentence sicles of pure gold are specified.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 79.

with Alcuin himself. It so happens that the Abbey of Tours had a small cell dedicated to St. Aredius, and the suggestion may be hazarded that the little family of monks there sent through their prior the twenty sicles which Alcuin doubled. It is evident that Colcu had conferred benefits on those in whom Alcuin was specially interested, and we may suppose that on some visit to Alcuin he had delivered a course of lectures by which the monks of St. Aredius had profited. He was probably a professor (his actual title was *lector*, a name still kept up for a public lecturer at the University of Cambridge) at the School of York. There was a famous Reader in Theology of the same name, or as much the same as any one can expect in early Erse, Colgan or Colgu, who lived and lectured at Clonmacnoise and died there in 794, four years after Alcuin wrote this letter at the beginning of the year 790. It is of course tempting to suppose that this famous Irishman, the first Ferlegind or Lector recorded in the Irish Annals, was the Colcu to whom Alcuin wrote, the Colcu of whom Alcuin in a letter written at the end of this same year 790 said that he was with him and was well. That letter was addressed to one of Alcuin's pupils, Joseph, whose master the letter says Colcu had been. On the whole, we must take it that our Colcu was too closely associated with Alcuin's teaching and with Northumbria to be the Colgu of whom Bishop Healy says that though he was a Munster-man by birth he seems to have lived and died at Clonmacnoise. But it is another puzzling coincidence that Simeon of Durham records the death of Colcu, evidently

as of one who had worked in the parts of which he was commissioned to write, in the year of the death of Colgu of Clonmacnoise, 794: "Colcu, presbyter and lector, migrated from this light to the Lord."

We have a letter of Alcuin's addressed to "the most noble sons of holy church who throughout the breadth of the Hibernian island are seen to serve Christ the God in the religious life and in the study of wisdom". In this letter Alcuin fully recognizes that in the old time most learned masters used to come from Hibernia to Britain, Gaul, and Italy, and did excellent work among the churches. But beyond that, the letter, which is far from a short one, is so completely vague that it is impossible to imagine that Alcuin had studied in Ireland, or had had the help, in England or in France, of one of the most famous of Irish teachers from one of the most famous of their seats of religion and learning.

The same impression is given by Alcuin's letter to the monks of Mayo, of whom he naturally knew more. When the Conference of Whitby went against the Scotie practices, Bishop Colman retired, first to Iona, then to Inisbofin, and then to the place in Ireland now called Mayo, where he settled the thirty Anglo-Saxon monks who had accompanied him, leaving the Scotie monks, formerly of Lindisfarne, in Inisbofin, "the island of the white heifer." Bede tells us that Mayo was kept supplied by English monks, so that it was called Mayo of the Saxons. Curiously enough they kept up the practice of having a bishop at their head in succession to their first head, Bishop

Ep. 217.

A.D.  
792-804.



Colman of Lindisfarne. There were bishops of Mayo down to 1559. In Alcuin's time Mayo was still a Saxon monastery. The Irish Annals of the Four Masters mention a Bishop Aedan of Mayo, in 768; but his real name was English, Edwin, not Irish, Aedan, as we learn from Simeon of Durham. Alcuin must certainly have mentioned his own visit to Ireland in his letter to the monks of Mayo, if such a visit had ever taken place. The letter was written late in his life. He tells them that when he lived in Northumbria he used to hear of them from brethren who visited England. He reminds them that for the love of Christ they had chosen to leave their own country, and live in a land foreign to them, and be oppressed by nefarious men. He urged them to keep zealously the regular life, as established by their holy predecessors; and to devote themselves to study, for a great light of knowledge had come forth from them, and had lighted many places in Northumbria. The lord bishop they must hold as a father in all reverence and love, and he must rule them and their life with all fear in the sight of God.

The story of the migration from Lindisfarne to Mayo, as told by Bede (*II. E. iv. 4*), is so quaintly Irish in its main part, that it may fairly be told here in Bede's words. After stating that Colman took with him all the Scotie monks of Lindisfarne, and thirty Saxons, and went first to Iona, he proceeds thus:—

“Then he went away to a small island some distance off the west coast of Hibernia, called in the Scotie tongue *Inis-bofin*, that is, the Isle of the White Heifer. There he built a monastery,

and in it he placed the monks of both nations whom he had brought with him. They could not agree among themselves; for the Scots left the monastery when the summer came and harvest had to be gathered in, and roamed about through places with which they were acquainted. When winter came they returned to the monastery, and claimed to live on what the English had stored. Colman felt that he must find some remedy. Looking about near and far he found a place on the main land suitable for the construction of a monastery, called in the Scots tongue Mageo. He bought a small portion of the land from the earl to whom it belonged, on which to build, on condition that the monks placed there should offer prayers to God for him who had allowed it to be purchased. With the help of the earl and all the neighbours he built the monastery and placed the English monks in it, leaving the Scots on Inisbofin. The monastery is to this day held by English monks. It has grown large from small beginnings, and is commonly called Mageo<sup>1</sup>. All has been brought into good order, and it contains an excellent body of monks, collected from the province of the Angles. They live by the labour of their own hands in great continence and simplicity, after the example of their venerable fathers, under the Rule and under a canonical abbat."

Bede appears to have not known anything of a bishop-abbat of Mayo.

<sup>1</sup> As in *year* the Anglo-Saxon *y* was pronounced as *y*, hence the name Mayo. In east Yorkshire a gate is still called a *yet*.

It is clear that the bishop-abbat acted as a diocesan bishop in the neighbourhood of Mayo. In the year 1209 the Irish Annals record the death of Cele O'Duffy, Bishop of Magh Eo of the Saxons, the name Magh Eo, or Mageo, meaning the Plain of Yews. In 1236 Mayo of the Saxons was pillaged by a Burke, who "left neither rick nor basket of corn in the church-enclosure of Mayo, or in the yard of the church of St. Michael the Archangel; and he carried away eighty baskets out of the churches themselves". It was for protection in such raids that the round towers were built adjoining the churches. In 1478 the death of Higgins, Bishop of Mayo of the Saxons, is recorded. The see was about that time annexed to Tuam so completely that the Canons of Mayo ceased to have the status of Canons of a Cathedral Church. Alcuin used the form Mugeo, not Mageo, and Simeon of Durham calls it "Migensis ecclesia". This last form explains the signature—or rather the "subscription"—of one of six bishops present at a Council under King Alfwold of Northumbria in 786, "Ego Aldulfus Myiensis ecclesiae episcopus devota voluntate subscripsi<sup>1</sup>."

See Appendix B.

## CHAPTER IX

Alcuin's letter to all the prelates of England.—To the Bishops of Elmham and Dunwich.—His letters on the election to the archbishopric of York.—To the new archbishop, and the monks whom he sent to advise him.—His urgency that Bishops should read Pope Gregory's Pastoral Care.

ALCUIN, as we have seen, felt himself entitled to write frankly to persons in the most exalted and important positions, though only an abbat. To individual bishops and archbishops he wrote very frankly, though only a deacon. In his correspondence with kings and bishops and other persons in his native land, we get the impression that he felt himself to be in a much larger sphere of operations, able to take a much larger view of affairs, than from the nature of the case they could be or do.

Here is a letter which may be taken as a good illustration of this remark:—

“To the most holy in Christ and in all honour Ep. 61  
to be by us beloved, the pontiffs of Britain our A.D. 796.  
most sweet native land, the humble levite Alcuin,  
a son of the holy church of York, greeting in the  
love of Christ.

“Having great confidence in your goodness, my reverend fathers, and in the acceptableness to God of your prayers, and having a convenient opportunity for commending myself to your charity as a body, I do not neglect the occasion of time and messenger. I offer myself to your holiness, suppli-

antly praying each one of you to take me as his son for the love and affection of God, and to intercede along with his fellow-warriors for the safety of my soul. For I also, according to the ability of my littleness, am a devoted interceder for your honour and success.

“Let your affection know that the lord Charles the king greatly desires the supplications of your holiness to the Lord, alike for himself and the stability of his realm and for the spread of the Christian name, and for the soul of the most reverend father Adrian the Pope, for faithfulness of friendship towards a dead friend is most highly approved.

“One who intercedes for such a friend no doubt greatly enhances his own merits with God. The aforesaid lord king for the furtherance of this his petition has sent to your holiness some small gifts of blessing.<sup>1</sup> I pray you to accept with gladness what he has sent and to do faithfully what he asks of you; that the faith of your goodness may meet with a great reward from God, and the religion of humbleness may be widely praised among men.

“O my most holy fathers and shepherds, O most clear light of the whole of Britain, feed the flock of Christ, which is with you, by assiduous preaching of the Gospel and good example of holy life. Preach with truth, correct with vigour, exhort with persuasion. Stand with your loins girt in the army of Christ, and your lights burning, that your light may shine before all who are in the house of God, that they may see your good works

<sup>1</sup> The passage is incomplete, but this is the sense of it.

and glorify our Father which is in Heaven. The time of labour here is exceeding short, the time of reward is the longest eternity. What is happier than to pass from this present misery to eternal bliss. See to it diligently that the land which our ancestors received by the gift of God may by celestial benediction be preserved to our descendants. The increase of the flock is the reward of the shepherd, the safety of the people the praise of the priest. Let all intemperance and injustice be prohibited, all honesty and sobriety be taught, that in every walk of life the God Christ be honoured, and His blessed grace keep you in every part to the praise and glory of His name for ever.

"That you may be sure this comes from us, we have sub-sealed it with our seal.

"The blessing of God the Father in the grace and love of Christ and in the consolation of the Holy Spirit be with you and keep you in all good, my lords most holy, my fathers most worthy of honour, mindful of us for ever. Amen."

That is a remarkable conclusion to a letter from a deacon in France to the Archbishops and Bishops of all England.

The following letter is written in a slightly humbler style. It was probably written towards the end of his life.

"To the most holy and venerable fathers the Bishops Alchard [Elmham, 786-811] and Tifred [Dunwich, 798-816] Alcuin the levite sends greeting.

Ep. 230  
A.D.  
798-801.

"I pray your most pious goodness that you take not this letter from so small a man to be presumptuous. It is in reliance on your regard that

I have dared to write. Christian humility should despise none, but should receive benignantly all in the pious bosom of love. This love I trust will abundantly show itself forth in you by the Holy Spirit, that, as the Truth saith in the Gospel, out of your belly may be seen to flow rivers of living water, that is, of sacred doctrine.

"It is yours to preach to all the word of God, to all to shine clear in the house of God, that all may recognize through you the light of truth and may be led through the pastures of perpetual beatitude. Your mouth must be the trumpet of the God Christ, for the tongues of your authority are the keys of heaven, having power to open and to shut; to open to the penitent, to shut against those that resist the truth. Wherefore make yourselves by your good lives worthy of such excellence; knowing that assiduity in preaching is the praise of bishops. The episcopal honour is no secular play. The Christian bishop must exercise himself with great diligence in the commands of God, that by example and word together he may educate a Christian people.

"The venerable brother the abbat Lull<sup>1</sup> has spoken to me in praise of your good conversation. It is on this account that I have cared to commend myself as a suppliant to your sanctity, that you may order some slight memorial of my name to be made throughout your churches. Not for my own merits but for the love of Christ I have presumed to make this earnest request. Pray grant it, as I trust in your good piety.

<sup>1</sup> This is not Lull of Malmesbury, who was so great a help to Boniface; he died an archbishop in 787.

"May the Lord God increase you by the grace of merits, and make you to advance in all holiness and in preaching the word of God, my most dear and longed-for fathers."

We saw in the previous chapter something of the anxiety which Alcuin felt when he marked the misdeeds of Northumbrian kings. There was another source of anxiety which troubled him in his thoughts of his native land, in the year 795. The old Archbishop of York, Eanbald I (780-796) could evidently not last much longer, and Alcuin feared that the general decadence had reached the ecclesiastics of York, and that some improper appointment might be secured by simoniacal methods.

To the old Archbishop himself he wrote an affectionate letter, as follows:—

"To my lord best loved of all health eternal in Christ. Ep. 36  
A.D. 795.

"I confess myself greatly rejoiced to hear from Eanbald<sup>1</sup>, of your household, of the soundness of your prosperity, so greatly desired by me. The love and faith which began long ago to dwell in my breast will never be able to leave me. The nearer the time of heavenly reward comes, the more careful should he be who is the first to leave the world that he has left in the world a friend. The sharpness of fever, and the delay of the king [Karl] in Saxony, has prevented my coming to you as I have desired to do. May the divine clemency grant to me to see thy face in joy before I die. If I come, I earnestly hope that I shall

<sup>1</sup> A presbyter, who succeeded his namesake in the archbishopric.



find you still in that honourable place of dignity in which you were when I left. And if some other dignity has been preferred by you,<sup>1</sup> I hope that you will not by any means allow violence to be done to the Church of Christ, and that the brethren may be left free to elect as your successor the best man, in the fear and by the grace of God most high. For in the sacred canons a terrible anathema is uttered against those who do any violence to the Church of Christ. You have always loved our [ecclesiastical] family of York and have done them very many kindnesses. We now need your help more than ever; and when our time of eternal rest has come, you will have us as perpetual intercessors in your behalf.

“May the divine clemency grant to thee prosperous and happy days in this life, and glory eternal with His saints, my dearest lord and father.”

Eanbald contemplated abdication in the end of 795, and Alcuin wrote the following anxious letter to the brethren of York, on whom the choice of a new archbishop would fall:—

Ep. 37

A. D. 795.

“To my best-loved friends, greeting.

“I beg of you, by the faith of love, that you act faithfully and wisely in the election of a pontiff, if the election must take place before I come. Again and again I call upon you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you by no

<sup>1</sup> We cannot imagine another dignity open to an aged Archbishop of York to be preferred to that which he already held. But it is evident that Alcuin referred to his retirement upon an abbacy, which would set him comparatively free from calls for exertion.

means allow any one to obtain the bishopric by the heresy of simony ; for if that takes place, it is the complete perdition of the race. This simoniacal heresy is that worst of heresies which the holy Peter condemned with an eternal anathema [Acts viii. 14, 20, seq.]. He who sells a bishopric gains gold and loses the kingdom of God.

“Up to this time, the holy Church of York has remained untainted in its elections. See that it be not tainted in your day. If, which be far distant, it loses its ecclesiastical reputation, I fear that you will lose the eternal kingdom. Judas sold the spouse, that is, Christ. And he that sells Christ’s spouse, that is, the Church, is guilty of the same crime ; for Christ and the Church are one body, as saith the Apostle<sup>1</sup>. He who sells the Church must of necessity be outside the Church ; and he who is outside the Church, where will he be but with the devil in eternal destruction. Fear not, hate not, him who speaks to you the truth ; for to this which I say, the books sent forth by the Holy Spirit testify. My desire is that you be without stain in the sight of God ; that you reign felicitously in this present world, and rejoice for ever with Christ. Live and be strong and happy in Christ.”

Eanbald I did not abdicate. He died on August 10, 796, and the electors immediately proceeded to the election, their choice falling upon Eanbald II. The election was so hasty that Eanbald II was consecrated five days after the Archbishop’s death.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 23.

Ep. 72  
A.D. 796.

This is Alcuin's letter to the new Archbishop :—  
"To his best-loved son in Christ, Eanbald the Archbishop, his in all things devoted father Albinus sends greeting.

"Laud and honour to the Lord God omnipotent who hath preserved my days in prosperity, so that I can rejoice in the exaltation of my dearest son; and have been allowed, though the lowliest servant of the Church, to train up one of my pupils to be regarded as worthy to become a dispenser of the mysteries of Christ and to labour in my stead in the Church where I was nourished and instructed; and to preside over those treasures of wisdom of which my beloved master Helbrecht left me his heir. I must pray with all intentness the divine clemency that he may be my survivor in this life as he was my solace alway in the time of his obedience; not that I wish for my own death but that I desire that his life should be prolonged. For not sons to fathers but fathers to sons should leave an heritage.<sup>1</sup>

"See, my dearest son, by God's favour you have all that man could hope for, and more than all that our small desert dared hope for. Now, then, act as a man and a strong man. The work of God which is put into your hands do to the full, for the profit of your own soul and the welfare of many souls. Let not your tongue cease from preaching; nor your foot from going about among the flock committed to you; nor your hand from labouring that alms be given and the holy Church

<sup>1</sup> It has been supposed that Alcuin refers to some purpose of bequeathing the library of York to Eanbald II.

of God be everywhere exalted. Be the outward expression of the well-being of all. In thee let there be the example of most holy manner of life; in thee let there be the solace of the miserable; in thee the strengthening of the doubting; in thee the rigour of discipline; in thee the confidence of truth; in thee the hope of every good. Let not the pomp of the world lift thee up; nor luxury of food enervate thee; nor the vanity of vestures make thee soft; nor the tongues of flatterers deceive thee; nor the gainsaying of detractors disturb thee; nor troubles break thee; nor joys lift thee up. Be not a reed shaken by the wind; be not a flower falling with the gale; be not a tottering wall; be not a house built upon the sand; but be the temple of the living God, built on the firm rock, whose indweller be the very Spirit, the Paraclete.

"How many days do you suppose you have to live? Put it in your mind at fifty years. Even that has its end; and you cannot expect to live so long as that. Let the weakness of your body make you strong in soul; be with the Apostle,—'when I am weak, then am I strong.' Let the affliction of your body be the gain of your soul. Show yourself gentle and humble to the better; hard and rigid to the proud; all things to all men that you may gain all. Have in your hands honey and wormwood; let each man eat which he chooses. Let him who would live on pious preaching have the honey; let him who needs hard invective drink of the wormwood, but so that he may hope for the honey of pardon to follow, if the blush and confusion of penitence go before."

Alcuin would have been an excellent man to have as preacher at the consecration of a bishop.

In a letter which quickly followed, Alcuin begged Eanbald to read frequently the above letter, and expressed the hope that if there was anything in it which could be regarded as less than quite affectionate, the Archbishop would feel sure that it was unintentional. One thing, and only one, he wished to add :—

Ep. 73  
A.D. 796.

“Do not allow the nobleness of mind which I so well know to be in you, and the integrity of faithfulness which is your wont to all, by any advice of friends, by any ambition of secular desires, to be corrupted or changed. Not every friend is fit to be an adviser; the Scripture<sup>1</sup> says, Let thy friends be many, thine adviser one only. Do not allow your goodness to be clouded by the wickedness of others.”

In yet another letter he finds a good deal to add :—

Ep. 74  
A.D. 796.

“If there is joy over a rise, there is fear for a fall: the loftier the position, the more dangerous the fall. According to your appellation be the chief overseer not only of the flock committed unto thee, but also of thyself, that in a few days of labour you may earn a great reward of bliss.

“These are dangerous times in Britain. The death of kings<sup>2</sup> is a signal of misery. Discord is the road to prison. The things which you have very often heard our master Archbishop Albert predict are hastening to come true.

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. vi. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ethelred of Northumbria was killed and Offa of Mercia died in this year 796.

“Be not covetous of gold and of silver but of gain of souls. Me remember daily in prayers and alms, thyself always in keeping of the commandments of God. If storms threaten on every side, steer manfully the ship of Christ, that in time you may arrive with your sailors at the port of prosperity. Let your tongue never be silent from the word of holy preaching, your hand never be benumbed from good work.

“Let not your mind become soft in adulation of princes or slow in correction of those under you. Let not the flatteries of the world deceive you, the transient honours uplift, the favour of the people subvert you. Be a very firm pillar in the house of God, not a reed shaken with the wind. Be a candle set on a candlestick, not hid under a bushel. Be to all a way of salvation, not an artery of perdition, that by thee very many may be corrected and saved, and with thee may attain unto eternal life.

“Wherever you go, let the Pastoral treatise of the blessed Gregory go with you. Read it, re-read it, very often, and see in it yourself and your work, that you may always have before your eyes how you ought to live, how you ought to teach. It is a mirror of a bishop’s life, and a specific against all the wounds of the devil’s fraud.”

Late in Alcuin’s life, he became very anxious about the conduct of this favourite pupil, Archbishop Eanbald II. Five years after the election he wrote two letters on the subject, one direct to the Archbishop, and one to two monks whom he sent to visit and advise him. To Eanbald he writes as to one in tribulation, the king Eardulf being set against him. “But”, he says, “I think that a part

Ep. 173  
A.D. 801.

of your tribulation arises from yourself. It may be that you shelter the enemies of the king, or protect their possessions. If you suffer justly, why be troubled? If unjustly, why not call to mind the Saints? As the apostle James says<sup>1</sup>—‘Ye have heard of the tribulations of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.’”

In this letter he goes no further into detail, remarking at its close that the Cuckoo will say more. The Cuckoo was one of his messengers, Cuculus, whom he calls in his playful way the bird of spring, the name being the Latin word for a cuckoo. To the Cuckoo, then, and the presbyter Calvin, he sends a letter of instructions.

Ep. 174  
A.D. 801.

“I have heard of the tribulations of my dearest son Simeon [that is, Eanbald]. You are to exhort him to act faithfully and be not pusillanimous in trials. His predecessors suffered such; and not they only but all the Saints. John Baptist, we read, was slain for testifying to the truth. Let the archbishop see to it that there is in him no cause of trial other than his preaching the truth. I fear that he is suffering for his acquisitions of lands, or his support of the enemies of the king. Let what he has suffice him; let him not grasp at what belongs to others, which often turns out to be very dangerous.

“And why is there in his following such a large number of soldiers? He appears to keep them from pity for their condition. But it is harmful to the inhabitants of the monasteries which receive him

<sup>1</sup> James v. 11. Our version would have suited the occasion better than the Vulgate, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job.”

and his. He has, as I hear, far more than his predecessors had. And his soldiers have under them far more of a lower class than is necessary. My master [Archbishop Albert] allowed none of his followers to have more than one such under him, except the rulers of his household, and they were only allowed two. It is imprudent charity to help a few, and they perhaps criminals, and to harm many and they good men. Let him not blame me for suggesting this, but amend his conduct."

Alcuin had in the previous year, 800, written Ep. 149. a letter to the Cuckoo's colleague, Calvinus, in which he was very urgent that Eanbald II should have the best spiritual advice. He entreats Calvinus to warn him of perils, and to strengthen him in all good ways. In giving advice to the archbishop, he bids Calvinus "consider sagaciously time, place, and person; at what time, in what place, to what person, what should be said by the archbishop; all which can be best learned in the book of the blessed Gregory on the Pastoral Care".

Alcuin frequently presses upon his correspondents the value of a careful study of Pope Gregory's treatise on Pastoral Care. It was this book that King Alfred selected to have translated into English for the benefit of the clergy of England. Inasmuch as Alfred was born only fifty years after the death of Alcuin, there is no great improbability in the idea that Alcuin's influence in regard of this book survived to Alfred's time. The fact that it is chiefly on English bishops that he urges its frequent study may point in this direction. It was, however, not always the English bishops who received this advice.



Ep. 71  
A.D. 796.

To Arno, Bishop of Salzburg, Alcuin wrote a long and very valuable letter of advice as to the manner in which the Huns whom Karl was conquering should be brought to the faith. He speaks strongly of the necessity of adapting the teaching and discipline to the character of each individual, as also of each race.

"There be some infirmities which are better treated by sweet potions than by bitter; others better by bitter than by sweet. Whence a teacher of the people of God, while he ought to shine clear with all the lights of virtues in the house of God, should specially excel in the utmost sagacity of discretion. He should know what treatment best suits the sex, the age, the aim, even the occasion, of each person. All which the blessed Gregory, the most lucid doctor, in his book on the Pastoral Care has most diligently investigated, has adapted to various persons, has driven home by examples, has made sure by the authority of the divine scriptures. To the study of which book I refer you, most holy prelate; beseeching you to have it very frequently in your hands as a manual, to keep it in your heart."

Ep. 81  
A.D. 797.

To Higbald of Lindisfarne he writes:—

"Read very often, I beseech you, the book of the blessed Gregory, who brought the Gospel to us, on the Pastoral Care, that in it you may learn the peril of the episcopal office and may not forget the reward of him who serves the office well. Let that book be very often in your hands, let its points be firmly fixed in your memory, that you may know how a man should attain to the office of a bishop, and, having attained, with what

circumspection he should guide himself, how exemplary his life should be, how earnest his preaching. The author of the book has also given the most discreet advice as to the different ways of dealing with persons of different characters."

## CHAPTER X

Summary of Alcuin's work in France.—Adoptionism, Alcuin's seven books against Felix and three against Elipandus.—Alcuin's advice that a treatise of Felix be sent to the Pope and three others.—Alcuin's name dragged into the controversy on Transubstantiation.—Image-worship.—The four *Libri Carolini* and the Council of Frankfurt.—The bearing of the *Libri Carolini* on the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

HAVING seen something in detail of the earnestness and faithfulness of Alcuin's exhortations to the kings and bishops of his native land of England, and having learned from them to how sad a state things had fallen, especially in Northumbria once the nursery of saints, we must now turn to Alcuin's work on the continent of Europe.

It may be well to state again the leading dates.

Ethelbert, or Albert, master of the School of York and afterwards archbishop, took Alcuin with him as a tonsured youth on one of his visits to France and Rome, and on that occasion he appears to have studied for a short time in French monasteries. The first letter of his that has come down to us is a letter to the abbat of St. Martin at Tours, where he was destined to spend the latest years of his life, about a fugitive monk whom he had rescued; it was written some eight years before he first settled in France. On his return from this journey he was ordained deacon by Albert, probably in 768, when he would be about thirty-five years of age. He was sent again to Italy by

Albert, on a mission to Karl, the king of the Franks, and it would appear that Karl noticed him favourably. All this time he was working hard as master of the School of York. In 780 the new archbishop of York sent him late in the year to Rome for the pallium, and on his way back he again met Karl, at Parma, and Karl asked him to settle in France. He obtained leave of absence from York, and joined Karl in 782. His definite work was to govern the school at which the youths at the court of Karl, including Karl's own sons, were taught; the king himself often being present as a learner. He then planned for Karl a number of schools in various parts of the country, all based on the model of the Palace school, which he had organized on the plan of the School of York. Then he took in hand the correction of the service-books, which had become seriously debased by ignorant copyists; his liturgical work produced such an effect that the service-books of the Middle Ages owed more to Gallican than to Roman influences. Tradition tells us that Alcuin himself wrote the Office for Trinity Sunday, at that time not fixed as now to a particular day. He found that the Holy Scriptures themselves had become debased by the same process of ignorant copying of manuscripts, and in his later years he was set by Karl to take seriously in hand the revision of the Scriptures. From 790 to 792 he had lived in Northumbria; but the aggression of heresy in Karl's dominions had called him away again, and he had never returned. He was about fifty-eight years old when he finally left England, and he died in 804, at the age of sixty-nine.

The tendency towards attempting to define and explain the method in which Almighty power conducts its operations was a marked tendency of Alcuin's time. He combated it, on sound principles. The whole matter, for example, of the union of the two natures in Christ, he reminded his readers, was supernatural; therefore, it could not be fitly measured by human analogies. To deny the perfect union of the two perfect natures in one Person was to impugn the Divine omnipotence; to claim to understand and to define the method and manner of the union was to impugn the infiniteness of the mystery.

It was to this tendency to inquire into and seek to fathom divine mysteries that the controversy about transubstantiation was due. That controversy came into being a full generation after the death of Alcuin; and one of the most prominent opponents of any approach to a materialistic view of the manner of the Real Presence was a pupil of Alcuin's, Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz.

The heresy which reached such dimensions as to call Alcuin back from England to France was the heresy known as Adoptionism. It became prominent in the same manner, from the same tendency to pry into the divine secrets of operation, as did the theory of transubstantiation. The point was, how exactly did the human nature of the Son come into union with the divine nature? The answer given by Felix, Bishop of Urgel in Catalonia, was this—by adoption. Hence he and his followers were called Adoptionists.

The term Adoption had been applied to the Incarnation by some early Fathers, and indeed in the

Spanish Liturgy, which Felix naturally used. It was used probably as equivalent to assumption—He took upon Him—that is, assumed—our flesh. This use of the word Adoption in their liturgy led Felix and his followers to take a large step beyond the equivalence to assumption. They carried it to its full meaning in ordinary affairs, and declared that the divine nature of the Second Person of the Trinity adopted the human nature into sonship, as Son. The so-called Athanasian Creed has in our English form, “by taking the manhood into God.” In the original Latin the word “assumption” is used, *assumptione humanitatis in Deum*.<sup>1</sup>

Catalonia was at that time a part of Karl's dominions, and therefore he could operate upon Felix. But Elipandus, who supported Felix, was bishop of Toledo and primate of Spain under the Mohammedan dominion, and thus was beyond the reach of Karl. He was a man who, in his letters at least, used very abusive language.

The Adoptionists held that it was a confusion of the two natures in Christ to say that Christ was proper and real Son of God not only in his Godhead but in His whole Person. The highest that could befall humanity, they maintained, was to be adopted into sonship with God; therefore Christ's humanity is adopted into sonship. This adoption had three stages they said; the first at the moment of conception, the second at His baptism, the final stage at His resurrection. The

<sup>1</sup> In the older MSS. *in Deo*, which has a subtle unintentional bearing on the controversy with which we are dealing; unintentional if, as seems certain, we possess MSS. of the Athanasian symbol of a date earlier than the beginning of the heresy of Felix.

Adoptionists professed to deny that they were Nestorians, that is, that they divided Christ into two Persons; but it was urged against them that if they did not divide Christ into two persons, their theory did, when it was pressed to its necessary consequence. That is the history of the origin of many of the heresies.

Various measures had been taken against the heresy of the Adoptionists, both by Karl and by the Pope, Adrian. In course of time Karl sent the treatise of Felix to Alcuin, who was at the time in England, and Alcuin returned to France, never again to visit his native country. Simeon of Durham tells us that the English bishops made him their representative for the refutation of Felix. As such, probably, in part, but also by the special wish of Karl, he attended the Council of Frankfort in 794, and though only a deacon, argued against Felix. Felix was condemned. Alcuin's argument was at Karl's request or command developed into a treatise in seven books; and he wrote also a treatise in three books against Elipandus.

We have these ten books. They fill 220 very closely printed columns in Migne's series. The books against Felix are among the best and most independent of Alcuin's dogmatic work.

This by no means ended the matter. In the year 798 Karl sent to Alcuin a treatise by Felix, which he desired Alcuin to refute. Alcuin's reply has been the subject of so much controversy that it will be well to give it as literally as possible. The point is, the place assigned to the Pope as a judge of doctrine. I only quote that part of the very long letter.

"I beseech you, if it please your piety, that Ep. 100.  
a copy of the treatise be sent to the apostolic lord July, 798.  
[that is of course the Pope] and another to Paulinus  
the patriarch [of Aquileia]; similarly to Richbon  
[of Trèves] and Theodulf [of Orleans] bishops,  
doctors, and ministers; that they may (*singuli*)  
severally answer for themselves.<sup>1</sup> Your Flaccus  
[Alcuin] labours with you in giving account of  
the catholic faith. Allow him sufficient time to  
consider with his pupils, quietly and carefully, the  
opinions of the Fathers, what each has said on  
such views as this subverter has set forth in his  
book. Then, at a time appointed by you, let the  
answers of the above several persons (*singulorum*)  
be brought to you. And whatever of opinion or  
of meaning in that book is found to be contrary  
to the catholic faith, let it be overthrown by  
catholic quotations. And if the writings of all  
[of the above] sound forth equally and concordantly  
in profession or defence of the catholic faith, it  
will be clear that one spirit speaks through the  
voice and heart of all; but if anything diverse  
is found in the words or the writings (*dictis vel*  
*scriptis*) of any one of them, let it be judged which  
is most in accord with sacred scripture and the  
catholic fathers, and give the palm to him who  
is most firm in the divine evidences."

<sup>1</sup> The punctuation is that of Wattenbach and Dümmler. Migne puts a full stop after the Pope and another after the Patriarch: this would seem to make *singuli* refer to two persons only, the two bishops. The Roman controversialist makes a different punctuation, putting a full stop after the Pope and running the three others together. The whole passage ought to be read in the Latin without any punctuation. See Appendix C, p. 319.



It seems to be perfectly clear that Alcuin's plan was that he and his students should draw up a chain of passages from the Fathers, such as that which at an earlier stage he had himself sent to Felix;<sup>1</sup> that in this way they should spend the time till Karl had got answers by letter, or by the mouth of a messenger, or even at a personal interview, from each of the four, Pope, patriarch, and two bishops; and then that all the answers should be tested by the passages extracted from the writings of the Fathers. There is not the slightest sign of Pope Hadrian having a preponderant voice, or a voice on a doctrinal question more authoritative than that of the learned Bishop of Orleans. But if, as the Roman controversialist endeavours to maintain, the Pope was not included in the curious competition, and only the three others were to be counted, that is worse still for the position of the Pope; for Alcuin and Karl were to settle the matter without paying any attention to the Pope, indeed without considering anything that he might say. The Roman controversialist has to play tricks with the punctuation and with the Latin to separate off the Pope from the patriarch. There was no punctuation<sup>2</sup> in the letter, we must suppose; those who wrote in Latin as good as Alcuin's could make a sentence clear in its meaning without commas and semicolons; and if the passage is read without stops the Pope is included, as he is also with any punctuation other than that of the Roman controversialist. But, as I have said, if he was included with the other three he was given a full chance of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 30, A.D. 793.

<sup>2</sup> But see p. 283.

making his opinion felt on equal terms with that of each of the others ; if he was not included, the verdict was to be final without him.

Alcuin is drawn by the Romans into the controversy on Transubstantiation, which, as we have seen, had not commenced in his time. In a letter to Paulinus, the Patriarch of Aquileia, dated about 787, he requests his correspondent not to forget him in his prayers. "Store up my name in some treasure-house of your memory, and bring it out at that fitting time when you have consecrated the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ." If that expression had been used after the long controversy on the subject, it would have been very much more important than at most it is. But it comes nearly fifty years before the controversy was raised by Paschasius Radbert of Corbie in his treatise *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* (A. D. 831). Paschasius wrote that after consecration "there is nothing but the Body and Blood of the Lord", a material statement which Ratramn at once controverted. It was Ratramn's treatise, denying the carnal presence and maintaining a spiritual view, that had a dominant influence on Ridley and Cranmer. The more subtle refinement of the schoolmen of later times, which we know as transubstantiation, avoids the blunt materialism of Paschasius by distinguishing between an essential and a non-essential element of an existence such as that of bread ; giving to the essence which cannot be apprehended by the senses the name of substance, and to the non-essential the name of accident. The change effected by consecration did not, in their view, affect the non-essential, the accident, the

Ep. 11.  
July, 786.

part that can be perceived by the senses ; it affected only that which can not be so perceived, the essential, the substance. But all this is very far beyond any point which had been reached in Alcuin's time, or was reached for some long time after him. From him we do not hear anything of substance and accident, of essential and non-essential. He presumably used the expression quoted as a simple and strong statement of his belief in a very real presence, which he and the men of his time unquestionably held, but did not attempt to define.

We have an interesting opportunity of realizing the true feeling of leading personages of Alcuin's time in this matter of the Presence in the Eucharist, just where we might not have expected to find it, namely, in the controversy on the use of images, of which we must now see something. The Holy Eucharist is used as an illustration in this controversy. The Synod of Constantinople, which decided that the images of the Saviour must be destroyed, declared that the Eucharist is the only true image of the Saviour ; meaning that the union of the divine grace with the earthly elements represents that union of Godhead and manhood in His Person which images failed to convey, inasmuch as images of the Lord could only set forth His humanity. The objection was raised by the opposition Council of Nicaea that none of the Fathers had applied the term *imago* to that which is His Body and His Blood ; but otherwise they did not raise objection to the force of the comparison. If the modern Roman doctrine had been held by either side in the controversy, it must have shown itself in a declaration that a comparison was impossible, on the

ground that the consecrated elements actually are, by a change of substance, that which an image can never be, namely, the very Body and Blood of Christ. The controversialists of the time would certainly have brought out, in one form or another, this vital point, if they had held it or even had only heard of it.

The controversy about images is so entirely a part of general Church History, that our mention of it must be only in relation to the part which Alcuin played in it. In the year 754 a Council at Constantinople had decreed the abolition of images, and this decree was carried out with terrible cruelty towards those who defended the images. In the year 787 a Council was held at Nicaea to re-establish the use of images of the Saviour and the Blessed Virgin, of angels and of saints, whether in painting or in mosaic or in any other suitable material, as objects of reverence, not as objects of that worship which is due to God alone. This decision restored peace between the East, which had previously condemned images, and the West, which had retained their use. The Pope, Adrian, sent the decrees to Karl, no doubt expecting that he would accept them. It was never quite safe to expect that Karl would do what he was expected to do.

The subject was not a new one among the Franks. They had held a mixed assembly of clergy and laity under Karl's father in 767. There were present representatives of the then Pope, Paul I, and the iconoclast Emperor Constantine; and it is supposed that the decision, which is not recorded, was in accordance with the national feeling. That national feeling was guided by abhorrence of the

abominations of the idol-worship of the pagans by whom they were surrounded. Karl himself strongly shared this feeling. He sent the decrees, which the Pope had sent to him, to Alcuin, who, as we have seen, was then in England. Alcuin made remarks on them in a letter, out of which grew a treatise in four books called the *Libri Carolini*, the chief author of which was Alcuin, who was no doubt assisted by other ecclesiastics. Probably Karl himself kept his hand upon the work up to the time of its publication. The general line of the treatise is that images are useful for ornament and historical remembrance, and therefore they must not be destroyed; but worship of them must not be required. We must bear in mind that the word image means any kind of representation, the Nicæan Council of 787, as we have seen, specifying paintings and mosaics. One of the points on which these Caroline Books condemn the iconoclasts is, that they do not distinguish between images and idols; but this is a less grave mistake, the Caroline Books declare, than that committed by the Nicæan Council, in confusing the use of images with the worship of them. The former error is attributed to ignorance; the latter—it was a severe remark considering that the Pope had forwarded the decrees—is attributed to wickedness. It may be well, in this connexion, to recall the fact that the *imago*, the image of our Lord, which was carried in procession by Augustine and his monks at their interview with Ethelbert of Kent, was not an idol, but a painting on a tablet<sup>1</sup>. We of the Church of England keep this meaning of *imago*,

<sup>1</sup> Bede i. 25, “*Imaginem Domini salvatoris in tabula depictam.*”

in the allowance of paintings and mosaics in our churches, quite separate from the idea of an idol, which we disallow.

Adrian made a long but feeble reply to the Caroline Books. The great Frankish Council of Frankfort, in 794, which had the double character of an imperial diet and an ecclesiastical synod, and was presided over by Karl in person, held in strong terms the views of the Caroline Books; indeed, it appears to be far from certain that they were published before the Council was held. Alcuin, though he had not proceeded beyond deacons' orders, was admitted to the Council on account of his learning. The Council spoke with contempt of the Greek synod; showed no regard to the Roman view; refused both adoration and service of all kinds to images. It was a tremendously independent blow to the Pope as an arbiter of faith and morals. But Karl was much too important a person in the eyes of the Pope to be quarrelled with, and Adrian remained on excellent terms with him. Adrian died in 796, when his successor Leo sent the keys of the Confessio of St. Peter and the standard of the City of Rome to Karl, and begged him to send some of his chief men to Rome, to bind the people of Rome by oath to subjection and fidelity to the Pope.

These Caroline Books are so important in their unexpected bearing on the current belief on the nature of the real Presence in the Holy Eucharist, that we must look into their phrases with some little care.

In the second book of the four *Libri Carolini* Karl deals with the question of the adoration of images. In the twenty-seventh chapter he argues

against the temerity and absurdity of those who presumed to compare, as of equal importance, images and the Body and Blood of the Lord. He quotes these absurd persons as saying that "as the Body and Blood of the Lord passes across from the fruits of the earth to a remarkable mystery, so images pass across to the veneration of the persons whom they represent". No one of Karl's arguments against this parallel or equivalence gives the slightest indication of a belief or idea on his part that in consecration there is a change of substance. He says, "The sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord is effected by the hand of the priest and the invocation of the divine name to the commemoration of His passion and to the grant to us of our salvation by the same mediator between God and men"; whereas images are completely made by skilled workmen, &c. For the consecration, the vested priest, mingling the prayers of the people standing round with his own prayers, with groaning of spirit makes memorial of the Lord's Passion, of His resurrection from the dead, and of His most glorious ascension into Heaven, and entreats that these may be borne to the sublime altar of God by the hands of an angel and into the sight of His Majesty; the painter of images merely looks out a suitable place to execute his works, and paints them that they may look beautiful. Thus any one who attempts to compare on equal terms images and the Body and Blood of the Lord strays very far from the path of truth, of reason, and of discrimination. The commemoration of His most sacred Passion is not in the works of

artificers, but in consecration of His Body and Blood. That elect vessel Paul the Apostle says that the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood is not to be put on an equality with all sacraments, but is to be set before almost all sacraments, when he says, He that eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks his own damnation. Nothing of that kind is said of those who will not adore images. Karl sums up the discussion by stating concisely ten points of vital difference between the Lord's Supper and images. For our present purpose we need only take the ten points as they relate to the former. Our purpose is to consider how far the points stated can indicate a belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation, and how far they square better with that reticent doctrine of a Real Presence which is consistent with the formularies and the services of our own most truly Catholic Church of England. These are the ten points: The Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood (1) is effected by the invisible operation of the Spirit of God; (2) is consecrated by the priest by the invocation of the divine name; (3) is carried by angel hands to the sublime altar of God: (4) by it sins are remitted; (5) it has no growth or diminution of power; (6) it is confirmed by new antiquity and ancient newness; (7) it is the life and the refreshment of souls; (8) it leads by eating thereof to the entrance of the heavenly kingdom; (9) it cannot be abolished from the Church by persecution: (10) without reception of it no one is saved.



## CHAPTER XI

Karl and Rome.—His visits to that city.—The offences and troubles of Leo III.—The coronation of Charlemagne.—The Pope's adoration of the Emperor.—Alcuin's famous letter to Karl prior to his coronation. Two great Roman forgeries, the Donation of Constantine and the Letter of St. Peter to the Franks.

WE must now turn to the connexion of Karl with Rome, and especially to Alcuin's advice to him in the matter of declaring himself or being declared emperor. It is a highly noteworthy fact that the Englishman Boniface was the most trusted counsellor of Charlemagne's father Pepin at the time when it was proposed to raise him from Mayor of the Palace to King of the Franks, and that Alcuin the Englishman was the most trusted counsellor of Charlemagne himself, when it was under consideration that he should be raised or should raise himself from King of the Franks to Emperor of the West.

In 773 Pope Adrian had invited Karl to come to Italy and rid him of the oppressions of the Lombards. The Pope's messenger could not get through by land, by reason of the Lombard power, and he went by sea. Karl agreed to do as the Pope asked. He went with all his force to Geneva. There he divided his army into two

parts, sending his uncle Bernard with one portion by the Mons Jovis (the great St. Bernard, called the Mount of Jove because of the statue of Jupiter Peninus placed at its summit) and himself went by the Mont Cenis. The two parts joined at Clusae on the south side, between Susa and Turin, and proceeded to the siege of Pavia, the Lombard capital. Karl spent his Easter at Rome, and on his return to Pavia took the city and captured the king with his family and treasure.

At this visit he was received at Rome with the highest honours. In return, he confirmed and enlarged the donation of Pepin his father, adding, it is said, large parts of Italy—indeed, almost the whole peninsula. He laid the deed of gift on the tomb of the Apostle Peter.

Karl visited Rome again in 781, and it is this visit that from one point of view most concerns us, for it most concerned the course of Alcuin's life.

Karl had been to Rome again in the year 787, to visit Pope Adrian and settle terms with the Duchy of Beneventum. He had purposed to devastate the duchy, its bishoprics, and its monasteries; but in council with his bishops and chief men he determined to accept hostages, including the two sons of the hostile Duke, who did not himself dare to see the angry face of Karl. Karl completed his visit by adoring the tombs of the blessed Apostles, and paying there his vows; another sign that the great object of visits to Rome was to visit the tombs of the twin princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul. He then returned to France and rejoined his wife Fastrada, his sons and daughters, and his court, at Worms.

The all-important visit to Rome came at the end of the year 800. Pope Leo III, elected in 795, had been seized in the spring of 799 by his opponents, among whom two nephews of the late Pope, Adrian, played a leading part, and an attempt had been made to put out his eyes and cut out his tongue. He recovered<sup>1</sup> and escaped, and was called—or fled—to Karl at Paderborn. Leo had on his consecration sent to Karl, as the Patrician, the standard of Rome, the keys of Rome, and even the keys of the tomb of St. Peter, in recognition of his supremacy, the Eastern Emperor Constantine VI being disregarded. Karl was therefore doubly bound to take cognisance of the Pope's case. There were very grave charges against Leo. Alcuin names<sup>2</sup> adultery and perjury; but he writes very strongly against subjecting Leo to trial on these charges. He has read, he says, that by a canon of the blessed Silvester there must be not less than seventy-two adverse witnesses of blameless life if a pontiff was to be brought to trial. He has read in other canons that the Apostolic See judges, is not judged. What pastor, he asks, in the Church of Christ can be immune, if he who is the head of all the churches is overthrown by malefactors?

We may compare with this the reasons which another member of the trilogy of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics and scholars, St. Aldhelm, gave at Rome against condemning the Pope of his time, Sergius, for alleged immoral practices. The reasons were three. First, it was a wretchedly base thing

<sup>1</sup> The historian-monk of St. Gallen says that his new eyes were better than his old ones, both for use and to look at.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 120, to Arno.

to suspect their own pontiff of crimes. Next, what influence could the Roman pontiff have with the Britons and other nations across the seas, if he was attacked by his own citizens? Lastly, it did not seem likely, it could not be true, that one who remembered that he was set over the whole world would entangle himself in such a sin as this. Unhappily, for long periods in the history of the Papacy, it not only was likely, it was undoubtedly and overtly true.

Leo was received by Karl with great honour, and was sent back to Rome to resume his high office. Karl followed him<sup>1</sup> towards the end of the next year, 800, and was received by him at the twelfth milestone from Rome "with the greatest humility and the greatest honour". This was on November 23. The next day Leo with great pomp received Karl on the steps of the basilica of St. Peter, made an oration to him, and led him into the church. Seven days later, on December 1, Karl convoked an assembly, and expounded to them his reasons for coming to Rome, the first and most difficult being the need of a judicial inquiry into the charges against the Pope. It turned out that no witness appeared to substantiate the charges; but that seems to have been regarded as insufficient, and a formal abjuration was made by Leo. The Pope, Eginhart<sup>2</sup> says, in the presence of all the people, in the basilica of the blessed Peter the Apostle, carrying in his hands the Gospel, ascended the ambo, and invoking the name of the

<sup>1</sup> The account which follows is taken from the contemporary annals of Eginhart.

<sup>2</sup> Under the year 800.

Holy Trinity, purged himself by oath from the crimes laid against him<sup>1</sup>.

On the most sacred day of the Nativity of the Lord, Karl attended Mass at St. Peter's. As he rose from prayer before the Confessio<sup>2</sup> of the Apostle, Leo placed on his head a crown, the whole Roman people acclaiming—"To Charles Augustus, crowned by God the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans, life and victory!" After which the Pope adored him, that is, prostrated himself before the emperor and kissed his feet, as had been the custom with the former emperors. The title of Patrician was abandoned, and Charlemagne became Imperator and Augustus.

This is not the occasion for discussing the debated question whether the Pope acted on an impulse of gratitude, or was guided by a desire to interpose the most powerful personage in the West between Rome and the Emperor of the East; or the equally debated question whether Karl was an active and understanding receiver of the new burden of honour and responsibility; or the question what sort of right the Pope had to take such a step. To my mind the most pointed question is whether the Pope skilfully forestalled Charles by suddenly crowning him, in order to prevent his making himself emperor and crowning himself. But we cannot pass by without a word of comment the remarkable fact that the Pope performed

<sup>1</sup> The actual words are given by Baronius, but with a vague reference to his authority. They are given at length by Milman, *Hist. of Lat. Christianity*, ii. 205.

<sup>2</sup> The ordinary word for the crypt or other receptacle of the body of a saint.

the barbaric, Byzantine, humiliating, ceremony of prostration before the emperor and kissing his feet in adoration, as earlier Popes had had to do to earlier emperors. It is this same barbaric custom of what is technically called adoration, that the Popes, who used to perform it to their imperial superiors, have now for some centuries expected others to perform to them—the kissing of the Pope's toe as it is called by some, of the Pope's foot by others. The state of the foot of the great bronze figure of St. Peter in his church at Rome certainly renders the former the more accurate phrase.

It is clear that Karl had for many months been carefully considering the question of assuming the imperial crown in asserted succession to the Emperors of the West, who had come to an end three centuries and a half before.

This is the letter which Alcuin wrote to Karl at this most critical point in the history of Europe, a letter which has been described as the most important of all which Alcuin is known to have written. His remark that Karl's position was higher and his power for good greater than that of the Emperor of the East and that of the Pope, has been understood to mean that Karl would do well to restore in his own person the Empire of the West, so as to be supreme in title as well as in fact. The date is May 799. Ep. 114.

“To the peace-making Lord David the king, Flaccus Albinus greeting.

“We give thanks to thy goodness, most clement, most sweet David, that thou hast deigned to have in mind our littleness, and to note down for us

that which thy faithful servant hath told us by word of mouth. And not for this only do we give continual thanks to thy piety, but for all the boons which thou hast conferred upon me from the day on which my littleness became known to thee. Thou didst begin with the very best for me, thou hast gone on to better still. Wherefore with continual prayers I pray the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that having granted thee all that is best in earthly felicity, He may deign to grant to thee eternally the far realms of everlasting beatitude.

“If I were present with thee I would urge very many things on thy venerable dignity, if opportunity were afforded for thee to hear and for me to speak. For the pen of love is often wont to stir the deep things of my heart, to treat of the prosperity of thy excellency, the stability of the kingdom to thee by God given, and the profit of the holy Church of Christ. The Church is perturbed by the multiform wickedness of evil men, and stained by the nefarious attempts of the vilest, not of ignoble persons only, but of some also among the greatest and highest. This is matter for deep fear.

“Up to this time, there have been three loftiest persons in the world. One, the apostolical sublimity, which is wont to rule by vicarial office the see of the blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles. What has been done against him who has been the ruler of that see, thy venerated goodness has taken care to make known to me. Another, the imperial dignity and secular power of the second Rome. How impiously the governor of that empire has been deposed, not by those of another race, but

by his own people and fellow citizens, is becoming known everywhere. [This was Constantine VI, Emperor of the East, who had been affianced to Karl's daughter Rotrudis some eighteen years before, but had been forced by his mother Irene to break the contract. In 797, two years before Alcuin's letter, Irene had deposed him and put out his eyes; she was now reigning alone.] The third is the royal dignity, in which the dispensation of our Lord Jesus Christ has placed thee, more excelling in power than the other dignities named, more clear in wisdom, more sublime in dignity of reign. Lo, on thee alone the whole safety of the churches of Christ has fallen and rests. Thou art the punisher of crimes, thou the guide of the erring, thou the consoler of them that mourn, thou the exalter of good men.

"Is it not the case that in the see of Rome, where the greatest piety of religion once shone clear, the very worst examples of impiety have burst forth into view? They themselves, blinded in their own hearts, have blinded their own Head. There is not seen there fear of God, or wisdom, or love: what good thing can be there if nothing of these three is found there? If there had been fear of God they would not have dared, if there had been wisdom they would never have wished, if there had been love they would by no means have done, what they have done. These are the perilous times, foretold of old by the very Truth, because the love of many grows cold.

"The care of the head must never be neglected; it is a less evil that the feet suffer than the head.

"Let peace be made with those wicked Saxons,



if that can be done. Let threats be to some extent relaxed, so that men may not be hardened and driven away, but may be kept in hope until by wholesome counsel they be brought back to peace. Hold on to what has been won from them, lest if they are allowed to gain a little, the larger part be lost. Keep safe your own sheep-fold, that the ravening wolf devour not it. Let such labour be spent on outside affairs that no loss be suffered in your own affairs. Some time ago I spoke to your piety about the exaction of tithes: that it is decidedly better to abstain from the exaction, even for a considerable time, until the faith has got its roots fixed in the hearts, if indeed that Saxon land be held worthy of the choice of God. Those who have gone away were the best Christians, as is well known; and those who remained have continued in the dregs of wickedness. For by reason of the sins of the people, Babylon has become the habitation of devils, as it is said in the prophets.

“None of these things can have been overlooked by thy wisdom; for we know how well learned thou art in the sacred scriptures and in secular histories. From all of these full knowledge has been given to thee by God, that by thee the holy Church of God among a Christian people may be ruled, exalted, and preserved. What reward may be given by God to thy best devotion, who is able to say? For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Alcuin ends his letter with a pair of hexameters and some elegiacs, both because Karl was interested

in his versification, and—we may suppose—because high-flown compliments, from which Karl was not averse, come better in so-called poetry than in prose.

“From lofty heaven may Christ in mercy mild  
Thee rule, exalt, defend, adorn, and love.

The holy stars of the sky, the grasses of the green earth,  
All things together cry, May David prosper alway.  
The earth and the sky and the sea, the men and the birds  
and the beasts,  
Cry with concordant voice, Father be it well with thee.”

As we are dealing with the relations of the Papacy with the Franks, it may be well to say here something that ought to be said about the demands of the Popes for money and territories. The two demands which may on the whole be called the most monstrous of all the long series, were made, the one probably, the other certainly, in Alcuin's time: one by Hadrian, to influence Karl, the other by one of his predecessors to influence Karl's father, Pepin.

A ridiculous document was produced by the Popes, probably about the middle of this eighth century, with which we are dealing. It was called the Imperial Edict of Donation. Its alleged author was Constantine the Great. It professed to give to Silvester, the Bishop of Rome in Constantine's time, and to his successors, the Imperial Palace (that is, the Lateran) and the City of Rome; all the provinces, districts, and cities of the whole of Italy; and, in the Latin copy of the forgery, all islands. The islands are absent from the Greek copy of the forgery. It was on the strength of this forged donation of islands that a later Hadrian,

the one English Pope, Hadrian IV, professed to be the owner of Ireland, and gave it to our king Henry II just four centuries after the time with which we are dealing. Muratori was of opinion that this audacious forgery was concocted between 755 and 766, that is, when Alcuin was from twenty to thirty years of age, and while Offa was king of Mercia. In 774, when Karl had conquered the Lombards, he went to Rome, as we have seen; ratified the donation of his father Pepin, of which we must next speak, and laid the deed of donation on the altar or on the tomb of St. Peter in the ancient basilica of St. Peter. The original deed of Karl's donation has, so far as is known, long since perished; its terms are at best only vaguely known. It is said to have comprehended the whole of Italy, the exarchate of Ravenna, from Istria to the frontiers of Naples, and the island of Corsica. Karl, then, ratified the forged Donation of Constantine, at that time a quite recent forgery. The whole story, however, is very vague, and historians differ considerably in the deductions which they draw from the inadequate records. They differ almost more widely as to the date at which the document was first brought forward, the dates ranging from 760 to 1105. Of the fact of the forgery there is no question; it cannot be denied, and so far as I know no one of the Romans now is bold enough to deny that it is a forgery. There is one point in the forgery which has an important bearing on a very important question, namely, the true basis of the reputation of the city of Rome as the chief ecclesiastical centre of the Church of the West. Constantine is made to declare, in this

forged donation, that it was by the merits of St. Peter and St. Paul that he emerged from the font at baptism cleansed of his sins. More than that, he is made to declare that he makes this enormous donation to the blessed chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, and through them to Silvester, the Bishop of Rome. Either, then, at the time of the forgery it was completely recognized as a fact that the Popes claimed their sovereignty on the twin authority, in the twin name, by the twin principship, of Peter and Paul; or it was completely recognized at the time of the forgery that in the earliest times, and notably in the time of Constantine the Great, whose baptism took place in the year 337, Rome did base its claims to pre-eminence on its possession of the relics of St. Peter and St. Paul, and on the twin supremacy of those two princes of the Apostles, and, therefore, that it might stand the test of the touchstone of history, it was essential to use the twin names of Peter and Paul; if it had been Peter alone, it would have been detected as a forgery. See Appendix D.

When we come to the document which was produced for the purpose of influencing Pepin, Karl's father, we pass out of the atmosphere of vagueness, and find ourselves face to face with a scandalous, an impious, fact. Pope Stephen II<sup>1</sup>, who held the Papacy from 752 to 757, was reduced to extremities

<sup>1</sup> Stephen I was Pope 252 to 257. Another Stephen was elected on March 14, 752, but died before his consecration. On March 26, 752, the Stephen here spoken of was elected. He is thus more properly called Stephen II than Stephen III; and Stephen IV, who appears in Karl's time, should be called Stephen III. Many writers, however, call them Stephen III and Stephen IV.

by the arms of the Lombard kings of North Italy. He went in person to Pepin, king of the Franks, to entreat him to come over and succour the city of Rome and the domain of St. Peter. To show how difficult it is to be sure about facts of history when the chroniclers have a partisan bias, it may be mentioned that the Italian chronicler states that Pepin went to meet Stephen, and on meeting him dismounted from his horse, prostrated himself on the ground before the Pope, and then walked to the royal residence by the side of the Pope's palfrey. The Frankish chroniclers say that the Pope and his clergy, with ashes on their heads and sackcloth on their bodies, prostrated themselves as suppliants at the feet of Pepin, and would not rise till he had promised his aid against the Lombards.

The king lodged Stephen in the monastery of St. Denys for the winter, and well on into the next summer. There Stephen was attacked by an illness so dangerous that his recovery was regarded as a miracle, due to the intercessions of St. Dionys, St. Peter, and St. Paul ; where again we notice the twinship of St. Peter and St. Paul as regards the protection of the Pope, with the local saint added. After the return of the Pope to Rome, he was besieged by the Lombard king, who vowed not to leave him a scrap of territory the size of the palm of his hand. The Pope sent to Pepin a letter of entreaty and threat. The king, he said, hazarded eternal condemnation. He had vowed to secure to St. Peter the vast donation to which reference has been made, and St. Peter had promised to him eternal life. If the king was not faithful to his word, the Saint kept firmly the donation, as it

were the sign manual of the king, and this he would produce against him at the day of judgement.<sup>1</sup> The envoys came late in the year, and the king could not conduct an army into Italy in the winter. In February, 755, or a little earlier, Stephen wrote another letter, with a literally awe-full account of the horrors of the siege, which had then lasted fifty-five days. He conjured Pepin to come and help, "by God and his holy Mother, by the powers of the heavens, by the apostles Peter and Paul, and by the last day." The collocation and the order of these adjurations is significant. Still Pepin did not come. The Pope then resorted to the blasphemous proceeding which it has seemed necessary to describe. We may suppose that the Pope's metaphorical statement—that St. Peter had Pepin's sign manual to a document which would be produced against him at the day of judgement—had suggested to the harassed mind of the Pope the idea that an immediate letter from St. Peter himself would be more effective than the threat to produce signatures at the day of judgement; and that if the letter was addressed to the Franks at large, and not as the former letter to Pepin and his sons, the whole nation would be terrified into prompt action. However that may have been, a letter<sup>2</sup> was written with the heading: "Peter, called to be an Apostle by Jesus Christ the Son of the living God . . . and [after a long paragraph] Stephen the prelate of the catholic and apostolic Roman Church, . . . to the most excellent kings Pepin, Charles, and Carloman, with all the bishops,

<sup>1</sup> Labbe, *Concil.* xii. 539.

<sup>2</sup> Labbe, *Concil.* xii. 543.

abbats, priests, and all monks; all judges, dukes, counts, military officers, and the whole people of the Franks." The letter begins with the words "Ego Petrus Apostolus", I, Peter the Apostle. In it St. Peter adjures those whom he addresses to rescue Rome from the Lombards, making a special appeal that his own body, which suffered torture for the Lord Jesus Christ, may be preserved from desecration. "With me," he proceeds, "the Mother of God likewise adjures you, and admonishes and commands you, she as well as the thrones and dominions and all the host of heaven, to save the beloved city of Rome from the detested Lombards. If ye hasten, I, Peter the Apostle, promise you my protection in this life and the next; I will prepare for you the most glorious mansions in heaven; I will bestow upon you the everlasting joys of paradise. Make common cause with my people of Rome, and I will grant whatsoever ye may pray for. I conjure you not to yield up this city to be lacerated and tormented by the Lombards, lest your own souls be lacerated and tormented in hell with the devil and his pestilential angels. Of all nations under heaven, the Franks are highest in the esteem of St. Peter; to me you owe all your victories. Obey, and obey speedily, and, by my suffrage, our Lord Jesus Christ will give you in this life length of days, security, victory; in the life to come, will multiply His blessings upon you, among His saints and angels." That little summary is only about a twelfth part of the length of the letter itself.

The letter brought Pepin with a great host; he overcame the Lombard king; and he bestowed on

the Pope as a donation, by right—it would appear—of conquest, not only what are called the States of the Church, but also—and that in the teeth of the ambassador of Constantine Copronymus, the Emperor of Constantinople, who demanded its restoration to the Eastern Empire—the whole exarchate of Ravenna. Thus it was that the Pope became a temporal sovereign over vast portions of Italy. St. Peter's letter was probably the most important letter never written.



## CHAPTER XII

Alcuin retires to the Abbey and School of Tours.—Sends to York for more advanced books.—Begs for old wine from Orleans.—Karl calls Tours a smoky place.—Fees charged to the students.—History and remains of the Abbey Church of St. Martin.—The tombs of St. Martin and six other Saints.—The Public Library of Tours.—A famous Book of the Gospels.—St. Martin's secularised.—Martinensian bishops.

As time went on, Alcuin felt that he must withdraw from the varied and heavy work which he was accustomed to do at the court, whether at Aachen or elsewhere, and must retire to work quietly at one of his abbeys. He obtained the king's leave<sup>1</sup>. In 796 he wrote to inform Karl that he had, in accordance with the king's wish, opened the school at Tours; that he must send to York for books; and that he hoped the king would order the palace youths to continue to attend the palace school which he had now left.

Ep. 78  
A. D. 796.

"I, your Flaccus, in accordance with your desire and good pleasure, am busy with ministering, under the roof of the holy Martin, to some the honey<sup>2</sup> of the holy Scriptures; others I seek to inebriate with the old wine of ancient disciplines; others I shall begin to nourish with the apples of grammatical subtlety; some I purpose to illumine with the order of the stars, as the painter nobly adorns the roof of the house of God. I become very many

<sup>1</sup> See p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> The district was rich in wine, fruit, flowers, and honey.

things to very many men, that I may educate very many to the profit of the holy Church of God and the honour of your imperial realm, that no grace of Almighty God in me be unemployed, and no part of thy bounty be without fruit.

“But I, your poor servant, need some of the more abstruse books of scholastic learning which I had in my own land by the devoted labour of my master<sup>1</sup>, and to some extent of myself. I say this to your excellency that you may be pleased to allow me to send some of our young men to pick out what I need, and bring to France the flowers of Britain; that not in York only there may be a garden enclosed<sup>2</sup>, but in Tours also the scions of paradise may bear fruit; that the south wind may come and blow through the gardens by the river Loire, and the spices thereof may flow out. I take as a parable of the acquisition of wisdom the exhortation of Isaiah<sup>3</sup>, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money<sup>4</sup> and without price.’ Your most noble mind knows well that there is nothing loftier that can be acquired for a happy life, nothing more joyous as an exercise, nothing stronger against vices, nothing more laudable in all dignity. As the philosophers have told us, there is nothing more necessary for the ruling of a people, no better guide of the life to the very best principles, than the glory of wisdom, the praise of discipline, the efficacy of learning.

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Albert of York; see p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Solomon's Song, iv. 12-v. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah, lv. 1

<sup>4</sup> But see p. 209.

To the earnest study and daily exercise of wisdom, exhort, O king, the youths of your excellency's palace, that they may so advance while in the bloom of youth that they may be held worthy to bring to honour their grey hairs, and by wisdom may attain to perpetual happiness. To sow the seeds of wisdom in these parts, I, so far as my poor intellect enables me, shall not be found slack. In the morning of life, in the vigour of study, I sowed in Britain; now, my blood running cold, as in the evening of life, I cease not to sow in France. To me, shattered in body, an expression of the holy Jerome, in his letter to Nepotianus, is a solace: 'Almost all the powers of the body are changed in old men. Wisdom alone continues to increase; all the rest decrease.' And a little further on he says, 'The old age of those that have trained their youth in honourable arts, and have meditated in the law of God day and night, grows more learned with age, more expert with use, more wise with the process of time; it gathers the very sweetest fruits of former studies.'"

The brethren of St. Martin of Tours had not a high character for propriety of conduct. There are many evidences of this. It is interesting to know that the earliest letter of Alcuin to which we can reasonably assign a date is a letter appealing for a lapsed brother of this same abbey of St. Martin of Tours, over which Alcuin was now called to preside as an old man. The abbat to whom Alcuin addressed this letter was Wulfhard, of whom the life of Hadrian I, as printed by Muratori (iii. 1, 184, *Rev. Ital. Script.*), states that he was sent along with Albinus, that is, Alcuin, to

Hadrian, by Karl in 773.<sup>1</sup> The letter was probably written in 774.

"To the pious father Uulthard the abbat Ep. 1  
Albinus the humble levite wishes health. A. D. 774.

"I found this poor lamb wandering through the rough places of neglect. Moved by pity, I brought him by sedulous admonition to the home of our discipline, binding up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil. To your piety, gentlest of fathers, I send him back, beseeching you to receive him for the love of Him who, amid the joy of the angels, has brought back on His own shoulders into the home of His delights all of us, who were wandering among the precipices of sins. Do not in austerity repel from thee one whom Christ has for pity gathered back to Himself, nay, has met penitent, has run to and embraced, has brought back to the house of feasting. And if any envious man advise you to reject him, let such an one fear lest he himself be rejected by Him who has said, 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' . . . And though he have sinned ten times, have not we sinned an hundred times; and though he owe an hundred pence, do we not owe ten thousand talents? . . ."

Alcuin had a high regard for the wines of the Loire, and he particularly liked them old. The best wine of that time would appear to have been grown about the city of Orleans, and to have

<sup>1</sup> There are great difficulties in the way of accepting this statement of a mission by Karl in 773. The passage calls Albinus *deliciosus ipsius regis*, and is quoted by Ducange as an evidence of the use of the word. It appears to imply a more intimate acquaintance than at that early date there can have been.

been kept under the charge of the Bishop of Orleans as the chief owner of the terraced lands on which the vines grew.<sup>1</sup> Here is a frolicsome letter about a present of wine from Orleans. It is full of quotations from the Song of Songs applied to local conditions, for the most part rather obscure. When he comes to his concluding words, there is no obscurity in his request that if wine is coming, good old wine may be sent.

“To Theodulf, bishop of Orleans.

Ep. 153  
A. D.  
796-800.

“To the great pontiff and father of vineyards, Teodulf<sup>2</sup>, Albinus sends greeting.

“We read in the Chronicles<sup>3</sup> that in the time of David, the king most loved of God, Zabdi was over the wine-cellars of the vineyards. Now, by the mercy of God, a second David [Karl] rules over a better people, and under him a nobler Zabdi [Theodulf] is over the wine-cellars of the vineyards. The king has brought him into the house of wine and set over him the banner of love, that students may stay him with flowers and fill him full of the apples of them that languish with love,<sup>4</sup> that is, love of that which maketh glad the heart of man.

<sup>1</sup> In modern times, better wine is grown near Tours than near Orleans. The wines of Vouvray, for example, beyond Marmoutier, are much esteemed. A waiter at Tours concedes that wine is still grown at Orleans, *mais pas de spécialité comme ici*.

<sup>2</sup> The spellings of ordinary names are varied in those times almost at will, and it is interesting to note how often the letter *h* plays a part in the variation.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chron. xxvii. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Song of Songs, ii. 1. Alcuin takes on the whole the Vulgate version. It will be seen by reference to the text and margin of the Authorised and the Revised Versions that there

"Now even though there be a lack of that which strengthens, namely bread, there is perhaps no lack of that which maketh glad, namely wine, in the cellars of Orleans; for our hope is set on a thriving vineyard and not on a fig-tree dried up. Wherefore Jonathan, the counsellor of David, a man of letters,<sup>1</sup> sends unto Zabdi, saying: Let us get up early: let us see how well the vineyard of Sorech thrives: to them that chant the treaders' cry therein the streams of the cellarer are dispersed abroad. But now that the storehouse is opened with the key of love, let this verse be sung by the ruler of the vineyard in the towers of Orleans:<sup>2</sup> Eat with me, my friends; drink, and drink abundantly: come ye and take wine and milk without price. My throat is as the best wine meet for the drinking of my beloved, to be tasted by his lips. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.

"It must not be replied—I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?<sup>3</sup> I cannot rise and give to thee.<sup>4</sup> If by chance the three loaves are not at hand, which were lacking in the store-

is much variety in the rendering of the Hebrew, especially as regards the word here rendered "flowers". The Septuagint gives a sixth meaning, "perfumes" or "unguents".

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. xxvii. 32. Alcuin makes here an unusually bold use of Scripture, first in taking to himself the description of David's uncle, Jonathan, and then in putting into his mouth a cento of phrases from Judges xvi. 4, Jer. xlviii. 33, Prov. v. 16.

<sup>2</sup> This song is built up from Song of Solomon vii. 12, v. 1, 2, vii. 9, vi. 3, and Isa lv. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Song of Songs v. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xi. 5, 7.

houses of Gibeon,<sup>1</sup> by the blessing of Christ the seven water-pots are full of the best wine, which has been kept till now. Who does not know that some of this wine, according to the command of the Virgin's Son,<sup>2</sup> is to be borne to the ruler of the feast of the city of Tours? But remember this: You must not put new wine into old skins. No one, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith—The old is better.

“Blessed is he that speaks to an attentive ear.”

Tours was not in Alcuin's time the bright place which it is now. When Karl endeavoured to persuade Alcuin to accompany him to Rome in 779, Alcuin begged that he might be excused. The journey was long, and he wished to remain at Tours. It is evident that Karl in his reply spoke of the splendours of Rome and contrasted them with “the smoky dwellings” of Tours.

This is what Alcuin had said to the king:—

Ep. 118  
A. D. 799.

“Now about that long and laborious undertaking of going to Rome. I cannot in any way think that this poor little body of my frailty—weak and shattered with daily pains—could accomplish the journey. I should have earnestly desired to do it, if I had had the strength. I therefore entreat the most clement benevolence of your paternity that you leave me to aid your journey by the faithful and earnest prayers of myself and of those who with me serve God at St. Martin's.”

Karl's answer we have not got. Alcuin's rejoinder to it contains this passage:—

Ep. 119  
A. D. 799.

“With regard to that with which it is your will

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> This appears to be going beyond a joke.

to upbraid me, that I prefer the houses of Tours, sordid with smoke, to the gilded citadels of the Romans, I know that your prudence has read that elogium of Solomon's, 'it is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house'.<sup>1</sup>

"And, if I may be pardoned for saying it, the sword hurts the eyes more than smoke does. For Tours, content in its smoky houses, by the gift of God through the providence of your goodness dwells in peace. But Rome, which is given up to fraternal strife, ceases not to hold the implanted venom of dissension, and now compels the power of your venerated dignity to hasten from the sweet dwellings of Germany to restrain this pernicious plague."

From the foundation of the School of Tours, the students paid fees. The great endowments of the abbey, much enlarged by Karl in 774 when he granted to Abbat Wulfhard a large amount of property in the neighbourhood of Pavia, do not appear to have been applied to the maintenance of the School. A change was made about forty years after Alcuin, and then the education of the school was given free. We learn that after Alcuin's death the school continued to flourish under Abbats Wulfhard II, Fridugisus, and Adalard, the masters of the school receiving stipends from the fees of the students. This "mercantile" arrangement was hateful to Abbat Adalard, and the change came in his time, and by his order; but it was not financed from the regular income of the abbey. The master

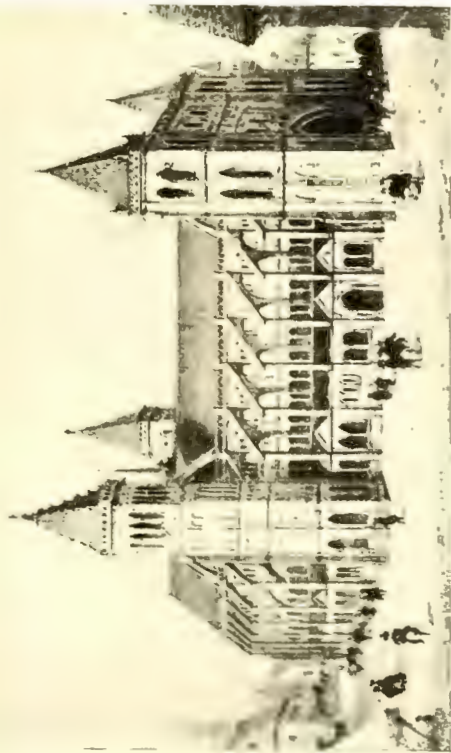
<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxv. 24.



at the time was Amalric, who afterwards became Archbishop of Tours, dying in 855. He gave to the abbey from his own private property certain funds for the payment of the teachers, and in August, 841, it was decreed that the schooling should be free. Amalric had many students under his tuition who rose to important positions, of whom Paul the Archbishop of Rouen, and Joseph the Chancellor of Aquitaine, are specially mentioned. He was a good example of the "school master bishops" with whom the Church of England was well stocked a generation ago.

The church of St. Martin, so magnificent in the times of the historian Archbishop Gregory of Tours (573-94), became more and more magnificent after several destructions by fire. It had reached its greatest splendour when it was pillaged by the Huguenots. Tours claims to have originated the name of those destructive people, who in the beginning used to steal out for secret meetings at night beyond the walls of the city, flitting about like the local bogey *le roi Hugon*.<sup>1</sup> And Tours possesses to this day in the name of one of its streets a reminiscence of the early hunting down of the Huguenots as a highly enjoyable form of the *chasse aux renards*. When their time came, they wreaked a savage revenge, and practically destroyed the noble Abbey Church. A reproduction of its appearance in the perfection of symmetry has been prepared from plans and drawings, and is shown in Plate 1. The only remains left by the Revolution

<sup>1</sup> This is of course not the usually assigned derivation; but it sounds the more reasonable of the two.



The Abbey Church of St. Martin of Tours, before the pillage.



St. Martin's, Tours; the Horloge.

and by the necessity for new streets are the south-west tower, called of St. Martin,<sup>1</sup> or of the Horloge, and a tower of the north transept, called of Charlemagne.<sup>2</sup> They are of 12th-century foundation, but the latter has a capital of earlier date still clinging to it. Louis XI had surrounded the shrine of St. Martin with a rich and very massive gallery of solid silver, but his needy successor Francis was beforehand with the Huguenots and coined it into crown pieces.

The tombs of St. Martin and the Saints who lay near him were destroyed by the Huguenots, and their relics were burned. Portions were saved, and in the new basilica of St. Martin, close to the site of the old basilica, there is a noble crypt with a reproduction of the massive tomb of St. Martin.<sup>3</sup> On the wall is an inscription to the following effect :

*Nomina corporum sanctorum quæ hic sepulta erant circum tumulum Beati Martini.*

SS. Briccius, Spanus, Perpetuus, Gregorius Tur., Eustochius, Eufronius, quorum venerabiles reliquæ in capsis existentes ab hæreticis impiissime in dicta ecclesia fuerunt combustæ anno 1562.

EUSTOCHIUS		BRICCIUS
PERPETUUS	MARTINUS	SPANUS MARTYR
GREGORIUS		EUFRONIUS

*Sic erant corpora horum in ecclesia B. Martini Tur. ordinata.*

The Rue des Halles runs right through the site of the old basilica. The new basilica lies at right angles to the old one, its axis lying north and south, an arrangement which places the modern

<sup>1</sup> Plate II.

<sup>2</sup> Plate III.

<sup>3</sup> Plate IV.

*confessio*, with its reproduction of the old tomb, practically on the site of the old *confessio*.

The connexion of St. Martin with Tours came about in this way. He was born about 316, a native of Lower Hungary; had a taste for the monastic life; was compelled by edict to become a soldier; served for three years up to the age of eighteen; went to visit Hilary at Poitiers; after some years came again to Hilary, and founded the monastery of Lugugé, near Poitiers, said to have been the first monastic institution in Gaul. His reputation stood so high that in 371 he was elected by the populace to the bishopric of Tours, much against his will. He built the monastery of Marmoutier, *Mains Monasterium*, about two miles to the north-east of the walls of Tours, where a large number of students received an education in such learning as then was known. His time was mostly spent in conversion of the pagans in his diocese. At the age of eighty, in 396, he was called to Condate to settle an ecclesiastical dispute, was seized with fever, and died. It was just at that time that his great admirer, Ninian, was finishing his stone church at Whithern, in Galloway, and to Martin he dedicated it. From that time, and owing to the connexion between Britain and Gaul, dedications to St. Martin were frequent, as is instanced by the old British church of St. Martin at Canterbury.

When Martin died, the people of Poitiers flocked to Condate to claim the body of their former abbat. But the people of Tours asserted their better claim, and carried him off in a ship to Tours. The body of the saint was landed from the ship on the south



St. Martin's, Tours; the Tour Charlemagne, with the dome of the new St. Martin's on the left.



The modern reproduction of the Tomb of St. Martin.

bank of the Loire, and deposited in a small oratory; the spot was called the Station of the Body of St. Martin. It was moved thence to a more central spot, and miracles began to be wrought at its new abode. Briccius, his successor in the bishopric, built a church over it in the eleventh year after the Saint's death. Perpetuus removed this church and built a more magnificent structure. The rich gifts of kings and others made the church of Perpetuus very beautiful. St. Odo, in a sermon on its destruction by fire, described it as lined with various coloured marbles; in one place the walls were red with Protonis marble, in another white with Parian, in another green with Prasine. This church was burned by Willicharius. Chlotaire I rebuilt it. The Normans burned it again in 853 and 903, and soon after the year 1000 it was rebuilt by Hervey the Treasurer in the form in which it existed to the time of the Revolution. The Calvinists pillaged it, as has been said above. At the destruction in the time of the Revolution the various parts of the church were sold to speculators, and under the First Empire all disappeared except the two towers which now remain. The Cathedral church in the old Roman city, the eastern part of the present city, was burned in the wars between Louis VII of France and our Henry II, who was Lord of Tours and Count of Anjou.

In 1861 a rock-hewn tomb was found under a house which was known to stand on the site of the high altar of the Abbey church. A subterranean chapel was built over the tomb, and adorned with red granite. This is now the Confessio of the new basilica of St. Martin.



There had only been two bishops of Tours before Martin. The first, Gatian, died in 301. He had officiated secretly<sup>1</sup> in the remarkable cave, across the front of which the ancient church of St. Radegonde now stands, with its inscriptions.

Sca Radegundis Gemma Galliae Pretiosissima, Ora pro nobis. S. R. Regina Gallie. Scus Gatianus Turonum Primus Episcopus huius Parochiae Fundator Primo Sæculo.

Lidorius succeeded Gatian after a lapse of thirty-seven years, and built a small basilica for his bishop's stool.

Martin had, during his bishopric, brought from St. Maurice, in the valley of the Rhone, some relics of that saint, which he deposited in a chapel built by Lidorius, to which also he removed from the cemetery the remains of Gatian. This was the origin of the Cathedral church of Tours, and we are thus enabled to see why its primary dedication was to St. Maurice, and its second and permanent dedication is to St. Gatian.

The public library at Tours, which is now on the quay facing the Loire, and not at the place, as indicated by the guide-books, where the Mairie stands, has a remarkably interesting collection of manuscripts. Two of the finest of them are undoubtedly of Charlemagne's time. One of these, Tours No. 22 (St. Martin No. 247) is a beautiful Book of the Gospels, written all in gold on very white parchment, in remarkably perfect condition.

<sup>1</sup> Multitudo paganorum idolatriis dedita. Per cryptas et latibula cum paucis Christianis per eundem conversis, mysterium solemnitis diei Dominici clanculo celebrabat.

The gold employed must have been singularly pure. There are 277 leaves each with double columns of 25 lines, and in all 289 leaves; the size is  $12\frac{2}{5}$  by  $9\frac{1}{5}$  inches. The initial letters are quite simple, and in exceedingly good taste. The other, Tours No. 23 (St. Martin No. 174), is also a Book of the Gospels, with 193 leaves,  $11\frac{3}{5}$  by  $9\frac{1}{5}$  inches. It has so-called Hibernian initial letters, purple, with interlacements, and birds' heads with the characteristic eyes and beaks. It is much more probably Anglian than Hibernian, and we may attribute it to the scriptorium of the school of York, or to that of St. Martin of Tours as a copy from a York manuscript. The present librarian assigns it to the writing school of Marmoutier, across the Loire, which he thinks was the chief writing school of Tours in Alcuin's time. That opinion is founded on a remark in connexion with the first establishment of Marmoutier, to which reference will be made below;<sup>1</sup> the English student may well attribute the MS. to St. Martin's itself, produced, as a copy, under Alcuin's own eye, especially as it has always appeared in the catalogue of St. Martin's and not in that of Marmoutier, and is now classed as a St. Martin's MS.

The *Evangeliarium* first mentioned, in gold letters on white parchment, is a book of historic fame. It is the book on which the kings of France down to Louis XIV, in 1650, took their oath of fidelity and protection to St. Martin of Tours, when admitted as abbat and first canon of the collegiate church. The book was bound with great magni-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 221.

ficence of gold and gems ; and when the Huguenots, under the Prince of Condé, sacked the place, they carried off the rich binding, but fortunately left the manuscript itself quite uninjured. The oath of the kings is written on the reverse of folio 277, in a style closely copied from the manuscript itself, probably in the eleventh or twelfth century, all in small gold capital letters, with a point after every word. The entry runs as follows ;—

*Hoc est iuramentum regis Francie quod facere tenetur dum primo recipitur in abbatem et canonicum huius ecclesie beati Martini Turonensis.*

*Ego N. annuente Domino Francorum rex Abbas et canonicus huius ecclesie Beati Martini Turonensis iuro Deo et Beato Martino me de cetero protectorem et defensorem fore huius Ecclesie in omnibus necessitatibus et utilitatibus suis custodiendo et conservando possessiones honores iura privilegia libertates franchisias et immunitates eiusdem Ecclesie quantum divino fultus adiutorio secundum posse meum recta et pura fide sic me Deus adiuvet et hec sancta verba.*

The first king who held the secular abbacy of St. Martin of Tours was Charles the Bald, Charlemagne's grandson, who became king of France (Neustria) in 843, about thirty years after Charlemagne's death. There were ecclesiastical abbats till the year 845, when the Count Vivian became the first lay abbat. After Charles the Bald it is probable that the kings held the abbacy. Hugh Capet (987-996) united the title of Abbat of St. Martin to that of King of France. The fifteen kings from Louis VII in 1137 to Louis XIV in 1630 took the oath on this book on admission to the abbacy.

The status of the abbat and of the brethren of

St. Martin was long in uncertainty. Charlemagne refers to the vague status of the brethren in his letter of rebuke to them, which is given on p. 237 ; they called themselves canons, or monks, as best suited the necessities of an occasion. Probably there had been a time when the monastery included both secular and regular inmates. It is uncertain also whether the brethren elected the bishop (or archbishop) of Tours, and, indeed, whether they had not a bishop of their own. Hadrian I, addressing the abbat Itherius, who was the first founder of Cormery as a place of residence for regular monks of St. Benedict, writes thus<sup>1</sup> of St. Martin's—"we decree that it be lawful to have a bishop there as has been from ancient times up to now, by whose preaching the people who come from various parts with devoted mind to the holy thresholds of the said confessor of Christ may receive remedial help from the Creator of souls." Urban II, in 1096, at the Council of Tours, recognized this, and "united the Martinensian bishopric to the Apostolic See", a very honourable extinction. We have the names of eight abbats before Itherius. The seventh of them, Wieterbus, was bishop and abbat; the eighth, the immediate predecessor of Itherius, Wulfhard I, was abbat only. It is supposed that the appointment of Alcuin, one of the secular clergy and in deacon's orders, was a decided step in the secularization of the Abbey, and that his policy was in the same direction. It may be suggested that already in the time of Itherius that abbat was conscious of a secularizing tendency, and on that

<sup>1</sup> For further extracts from Hadrian's decree, see p. 228.

account founded Cormery; and that Alcuin found the existence of the regular abbey at Cormery a convenient outlet for the remnant of regular brethren at St. Martin's, and handed St. Martin's over to his successor, Wulfhard II, as a purely secular foundation. The step to a lay abbacy was then not a long one.

## CHAPTER XIII

Further details of the Public Library of Tours.—Marmoutier.—The Royal Abbey of Cormery.—Licence of Hadrian I to St. Martin's to elect bishops.—Details of the Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Tours.

THE Public Library of Tours, as we have seen, has a very large and interesting collection of manuscripts, which have come mainly from three sources, the libraries, namely, of (1) the Cathedral church of Tours, (2) the Monastery known as Marmoutier, and (3) the Collegiate church of St. Martin. Twenty-one other churches and foundations in the neighbourhood contributed manuscripts, besides such collections as the expelled nobles possessed. In 1791 the libraries of the old churches were collected into one depot, the French Church having been organized as a civil institution in that year and monastic vows made illegal. In 1793 the Conseil Général of the Indre-et-Loire ordered that "les livres et manuscrits provenant des maisons religieuses et des émigrés seront placés au ci-devant Évêché, à l'effet de quoi le citoyen Suzor sera averti de l'évacuer au plus tard le 15 mars prochain". The third floor of the Évêché was used for housing the manuscripts, &c., and by a most fortunate appointment a true lover of the old things was made librarian. This was Dom

Jean Joseph Abrassart, ex-religious of Marmoutier. He succeeded in saving a very large proportion of the ancient manuscripts known to be in existence in the neighbourhood, especially those at Marmoutier.

The library of the Cathedral church at Tours dated from the time of St. Perpetuus, the sixth bishop, who left to his Cathedral church all his manuscripts except the copy of the Gospels written by the hand of St. Hilary of Poitiers (353-68) whom St. Martin had visited.<sup>1</sup> Perpetuus was Bishop of Tours from 460 to 494. Ruinart, whose edition of Gregory of Tours Migne took as the original of his edition, notes that he had seen in the Cathedral library at Tours a book in Saxon characters which had been supposed to be the work of Hilary's own hand; but he found that it contained matter much later than Hilary's time, and that the author had appended an inscription stating himself to be Holaindus by name. A catalogue of the Cathedral library was made in 1706 by the Chanoine Victor d'Avanne, at which time the library contained 461 manuscripts. The Chanoine complained that many other manuscripts had been borrowed by savants and not returned; he names as culprits Auguste de Thou, André Duchesne, Maan,

<sup>1</sup> His last testament is printed by Migne in the Appendix to the works of Gregory of Tours, columns 1148-51. "Simul et omnes libros meos praeter Evangeliorum librum quem scripsit Hilarius quondam Pictavensis sacerdos quem tibi Eufronio fratri et consacerdoti dilectissimo cum prefata theca do lego volo statuo." This theca was one of silver, containing relics of saints, which he used to carry about with him. Another theca, gilt, was in his chest, with two chalices of gold and a gold cross made by Mabuin; these he left to his church.

and Michel de Marolls. Of the 461 manuscripts catalogued, the Public Library now has 309.

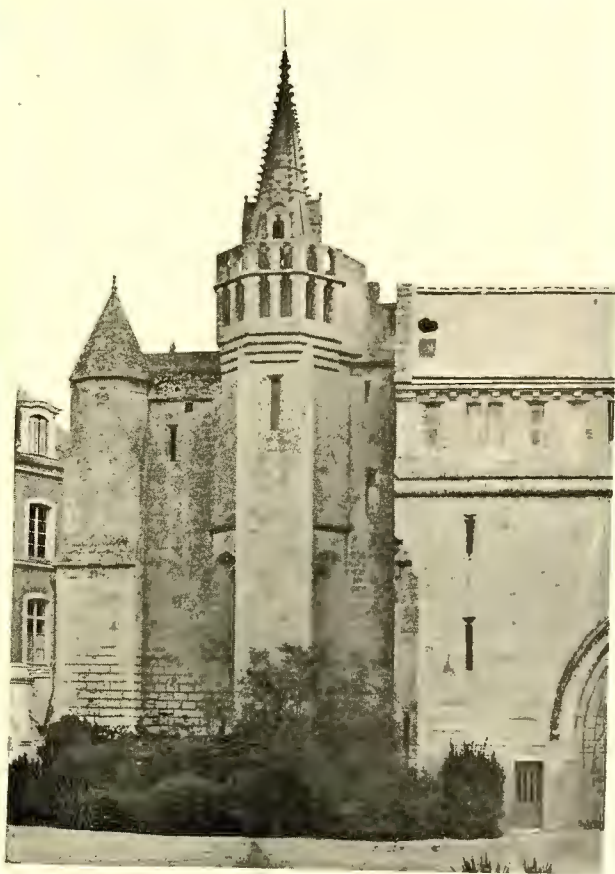
The library of Marmoutier was founded by St. Martin himself with the abbey: so at least the phrase is understood to mean, "except writing (or scripture) no art was exercised there." Dom Gérout, librarian of Marmoutier, made a catalogue of the manuscripts in his charge, and Chalmel's copy of that catalogue is now in the library of Tours. There were, in 1754, 360 manuscripts, and there are now 263 of them in the library. Many of these are of value. Marmoutier was always rich in Latin manuscripts. In 1716 a great collection made by the Lesdignièrès family was bought at Toulouse; these were chiefly French, and thus it comes about that the library of Tours now possesses some of the very first rank of the most ancient monuments of French literature.

Sulpicius Severus, who made a special visit to St. Martin at Tours, gives us an exact description of the site of this monastery, founded by Martin in or about 372, at a distance of two miles from the city, on its north-east side. He describes it as bounded on the north by a range of precipitous rock, and on the south by a portion of the stream of the river Loire, here divided. In those times it was only accessible by one narrow way. Martin's own cell was of wood, but many of the eighty brethren excavated cells for themselves in the rock, the nature of which lends itself to such excavation. The range of cliff is honeycombed to this day for stables, wagon-sheds, &c.; indeed, excavations of this character are a feature of the district, observable from Poitiers to many miles on



the Orleans side of Tours. This abbey, like that of St. Martin, gradually became secularized, and it, like St. Martin's, was ruled by Count Vivian forty years after Alcuin's death. The names of many of its abbats before Alcuin's time are known, but it is only from the year 814 that a continuous series is recorded. A photograph of some remains of the abbey is given in Plate V.

The library of the Collegiate church of St. Martin was founded by Alcuin, who borrowed books from England, mainly from York, and had them copied; probably some of the borrowed books remained at Tours, for Northumbria was in too disturbed a state to look after manuscripts lent to France. In 1739 Bernard de Montfaucon published an inventory of this library, which then contained 272 manuscripts. Of these the library of Tours now possesses 140. The twenty-one other sources referred to above have provided 96 manuscripts, and the library has, besides, 159 which cannot be traced to their source. This makes nearly 1,000 manuscripts in all from these sources. The twenty-one sources referred to, and the number of manuscripts each has provided, are as follows: The Augustins of Tours 16; les Carmes 11; les Capucins 1; les Dames du Calvaire 3; l'Oratoire 19; les Récollets 1; le Grand Séminaire St. Julien 3; St. Pierre le Puellier 2; l'Union Chrétienne 3; la Visitation 2; Aigues Vives 1; Amboise 3; St. Florentin d'Amboise 1; l'Abbaye de Beaumont 4; Bois-Rayer 1; Cormery 5; Notre-Dame de Loches 2; la Chartreuse du Liget 5; les Augustines de Beaulieu-lès-Loches 1; les Religieuses Hospitalières de Loches 1; les Minimes du Plessis-lès-Tours 11. What endless treasures



Some remains of Marmoutier.

England would now have possessed if municipal authorities had taken such care as this of the monastic libraries in the time of Henry VIII.

In translating the life of Aleuin, we omitted one of the examples of Aleuin's insight into the ways of men which the anonymous author gives. It relates to Cormery, some miles up the river Indre, one of the places from which manuscripts were brought into the library of Tours. The trick played was as clever in itself as the detection of it was. It got over the difficulty of the vessels being found to be partly empty, and the difficulty that, if they were filled up with water, the taster of the monastery would detect the fraud at once.

This is the passage in the *Life* :—

“To the brothers of Cormery, whom he greatly loved, the father had ordered a hundred measures of wine to be given. When the wine was to be taken to the monastery, he ordered the stewards of the monastery, through Sigulf, a monk of Abbat Benedict, that they should detain the conveyors of the wine, until in their presence the wine should be poured from the vessels in which they had brought it into others; because some of them had stealthily taken out some of the wine, and, in order that the vessels might be full when they reached the monastery, had put into them river-sand. That this had been done, the fathers proved most conclusively.”

The monastery of St. Paul at Cormery has a special interest for students of Aleuin. William of Malmesbury makes mention of it in the famous passage in which he so highly praises Aleuin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Gesta Regum*, i. 3.

After quoting Alcuin's request<sup>1</sup> to Karl that he may have sent over from his library of York some of the manuscripts which he describes as the flowers of Britain, "that the garden of paradise may not be confined to York, but some of its scions may be transplanted to Tours," William proceeds thus: "This is that same Alcuin who, as I have said, was sent into France to treat of peace, and during his abode with Charles, captivated either by the pleasantness of the country or the kindness of the king, settled there; and being held in high estimation, he taught the king, during his leisure from the cares of state, a thorough knowledge of logic, rhetoric, and astronomy. Alcuin was, of all the Angles of whom I have read, next to St. Aldhelm and Bede, certainly the most learned, and has given proof of his talents in a variety of compositions. He lies buried in France, at the church of St. Paul of Cormery<sup>2</sup>, which monastery Charles the Great built at his suggestion; on which account, even at the present day (about 1130 A.D.), the subsistence of four monks is distributed in alms for the soul of our Alcuin in that church."

We have the documents which relate to the foundation of St. Paul of Cormery, and they do not quite carry out William's statement. Itherius, the predecessor of Alcuin at St. Martin's of Tours, had acquired land at Cormery for the residence of monks, and in 791 had issued a precept for the construction of a monastery. Much discussion has centred round this fact, to which further reference is made in another part of this book.<sup>3</sup> In the year

<sup>1</sup> See p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> But see p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 217.

800, Karl issued two interesting documents<sup>1</sup>, both dated from St. Martin's at Tours, one signed by the king himself, the other certified by Genesius, acting as deputy for the chancellor Hircambold. The first of these documents has interesting features, and in it we find the reason for the abbey being called, down to the Revolution, *l'Abbaye Royale de Cormery*, and having as its armorial bearings the crowned eagle of the empire impaling the lilies of France ancient. It is addressed to "all the faithful men of St. Martin at that time serving in the holy place where that precious confessor of Christ rests in the body, and to all who shall follow them. Our beloved master Albinus has with pious devotion begged of us that he may be allowed to settle monks in the cell of St. Paul, which in rustic speech is called Cormery, there to live the regular life according to the statutes of the holy Benedict. This place his predecessor Abbat Itherius had acquired; he had built it, and handed it over to St. Martin. We have thought it right to give our assent to his pious devotion, and have caused it to be confirmed by our letters under the seal of our authority, in order that no severance may ever take place. For if divine piety has given to our parents and to us the power over the whole monastery of St. Martin, and the right to give it to whom we will, how much more have we the power of assigning to God the aforesaid place. It is not lawful for any one to condemn the donation or confirmation of royal benignity, especially in an order so pious and wholesome as this. Therefore we entirely

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *Gallia Christiana* under Tours. See p. 228.

order that this our donation stand to all time fixed and inviolate, and that this place be never taken away from the possession of St. Martin, but that there monks shall live under the full rule of St. Benedict and have protection and help from the abbats of the monastery of St. Martin. If any abbat in time to come should disregard this our precept, let him know that he shall render an account of his presumption to our Lord Jesus Christ in the day of His great advent. So also shall any who diminishes aught of the things which Abbat Itherius of blessed memory acquired, of the property of St. Martin which he gave to the church of St. Paul, or of the things which the said Abbat Albinus has given, at whose request we have caused write these letters, or anything which any one may have given in alms for his soul. That this may stand the more firm, we have determined to subscribe it with our own hand and have caused it to be sealed with our ring."

The other document, addressed to all bishops, counts, officers, &c., grants licence to the monks, "at the request of our most beloved and faithful the venerable Abbat Albinus", to have two ships coming and going with necessary things on the rivers Loire, Sarthe, and Vienne, free from toll. This was ordered to be sealed with Karl's ring. The navigation of the Indre, being their own river, was no doubt free to them without grant.

Ithier governed St. Martin's at Tours from 770 to 791. Soon after 791 he died, and was buried in a grave at the entrance of the nave of the abbatial church of Cormery, on the north side. The place can still be pointed out. Fridugisus, the Nathanael



Capital found at Cormery.

of Alcuin's letters, who was designated by Alcuin as his immediate successor, became abbat of St. Martin's after Wulfhard II. He built a stone church, the west front of which still stands in considerable part, with the eleventh-century Romanesque tower, most of which still stands, applied to it, the east wall of the tower being the west front of Fridugisus. Plate VI shows a capital which has recently been found, evidently of the time of Fridugisus. Considerable parts of the later Gothic walls still stand. They are carefully tended by M. Octave Bobeau, the local correspondent of the Minister of Public Education, whose apartments are in the refectory of the abbey. The curé of Cormery, M. l'abbé Jaillet, is a most obliging guide to the ruins, as also to his own very fine cruciform parish church. In these most recent days "his own" is a misdescription. The inventories have been taken, and Monsieur le Maire is the master of the parish church and its services. The large house of the abbats of Cormery is now a dwelling-house in connexion with the communal school. An early engraving in a French account of Touraine shows that the western tower was crowned with a gallery and spire, not unlike that shown in the illustration of Marmoutier, Plate V.

Some commentators suppose that the "other monastery", which Alcuin informs Arno he has built some eight miles from the city, was this monastery of Cormery. But the distance named is not easily reconciled with the geographical facts, and Alcuin could not properly have stated that he was the founder of Cormery.

Cormery provided a home for the severer side of



the monastic life, St. Martin's and Marmoutier remaining secular. Cormery being a considerable distance away, a Benedictine abbey, of St. Julien, was established in the eastern part of Tours, in the tenth century, by Archbishop Théotolon, and a Romanesque abbey-church was built, the square tower of which still remains; the church in its present state has some ancient paintings, and deserves a visit. Being within the limits of the ancient Roman town, it would naturally be under the jurisdiction of the archbishop.

This will be a convenient point at which to give further details<sup>1</sup> of the remarkable licence of Hadrian for a permanent bishopric of the western part of the present city, at that time a district separate from the ancient city, in which latter was the stool of the archbishop of Tours.

The licence of Hadrian I, allowing the abbat and brethren of St. Martin's to elect and to have their own bishop, is printed (from Baluz) in *Gallia Christiana*, vol. xiv, p. 7 of the *Instrumenta* relating to Tours. The date is 786. The licence is addressed to Abbat Autherius, that is, Itherius. It sets forth that by royal and papal privileges the Abbey of St. Martin of Tours was in all respects independent of the episcopal authority of the bishop of Tours;<sup>2</sup> whatsoever in the flock of St. Martin needed arranging, ruling, or correcting, was a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> It may be helpful to remember that the abbey was originally outside the ancient Roman city, and its district was called Martinopolis. The ancient Gallican bishoprics were bishoprics of cities rather than of dioceses in our wide sense of the word. This may conceivably have a bearing on the curious question raised by Hadrian.

matter for the abbat, provost, dean, and other most approved men. Hadrian declares that they may have a bishop of their own, as had been the custom from ancient times until most recent times, because of the great numbers of persons who flocked from all parts to visit the shrine and needed instruction in the faith. The person elected by the abbat and the flock shall be ordained by the neighbouring bishops. The metropolitan bishop—that is, the archbishop of Tours—shall not enter the church for any exercise of his episcopal office, such as ordinations, or making the chrism, nor shall he have power to summon any of the priests of the monastery to appear before him. The abbey bishop must not be impleaded without the assent of the abbat. He is to have the pastoral care of the neighbouring districts held by the abbey, and is to amend and correct in canonical manner and due order with the consent of his abbat. If the abbat does not choose to settle any matter of dispute which may arise between the St. Martin's bishop and the bishops of the neighbourhood, the matter must come direct to the apostolic see.

That is a very remarkable document. We are not without indications of other unusual customs in the province of Tours.

The Archbishop of Tours had eventually eleven suffragans, Le Mans, Angers, Rennes, Nantes, Vannes, Cornouaille, Léon, Tréquier, St. Briec, St. Malo, Dol. Some of these bishoprics trace their origin to refugees from Britain in the middle of the sixth century. A marked feature of the Archbishopric was the existence and permanence of the office of Archpresbyter. The Chapter of

Tours itself, in its most complete form, consisted of Dean, Archdeacon of Tours, Treasurer, Prae-centor, Chancellor, two other Archdeacons, the Archpresbyter of Tours, and fifty or more Canons. The Princeps Archipresbyter preached on the greater Sundays, as the Ecclesiastes Theologus did on other Sundays. At Le Mans, before Alcuin's time at Tours, there were two Archpresbyters, each in management of half of the diocese; in the eleventh century there were three; in 1200, eight. In 1230 Maurice replaced them by seven Archdeacons, who had under them a number of rural deans, *decani rusticanis negotiis*, an office into which the Archpresbyters, once so important, subsided. Archdeacons of Le Mans are first named in the will of St. Bertramn, in 623. At Angers the chief Archdeacon had under him four Archpresbyters; the second Archdeacon had one Archpresbyter and two Rural Deans; the third Archdeacon had three Rural Deans. At Angers the Archbishop of Tours acted in 1334 much as the Archbishop acted at St. Martin's at Tours in or before Alcuin's time; he freed the Chapter from episcopal control and himself confirmed the Deans <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See my *Constitution of French Chapters*, Proceedings of St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society, Vol. III, 1895.

## CHAPTER XIV

Great dispute on right of sanctuary.—Letters of Alcuin on the subject to his representatives at court and to a bishop.—The emperor's severe letter to St. Martin's.—Alcuin's reply.—Verses of the bishop of Orleans on Charlemagne, Luitgard, and Alcuin.

IN the year 801, or early in 802, a question of sanctuary arose on which Alcuin and Charlemagne took opposite views. The Emperor was imperious in his dealing with the matter.

Two of Alcuin's pupils, Candidus and Nathanael, held offices in the court of the Emperor at Aachen. Nathanael was the pupil to whom Alcuin wrote a well-known letter about the temptations and occupations of the court, his warnings against the temptations being conveyed under cover of figurative language. "Let not the crowned doves come Ep. 179. to thy windows, that flit about in the chambers of the palace; let not wild horses break in at the door of thy chamber; do not occupy thyself with dancing bears." To Candidus and Nathanael he wrote, in evident anxiety, to tell them what had happened, and to bid them put it before the Emperor in a favourable light. This is what he says.

"The venerable father Theudulfus the Bishop Ep. 180 [of Orleans] has a dispute with some of your A. D. 801-2.

brethren of St. Martin's about a certain fugitive culprit. This culprit, after suffering very many kinds of punishment, suddenly escaped from confinement, fled to the church of St. Martin a chief confessor of Christ, confessed his sins, begged for reconciliation, appealed to Caesar, and demanded to go to his most holy presence. We gave him up to the messengers of the said bishop. They knew, it is said, that preparations had been made to waylay them; they dismissed him as he stood before the doors of the church, and went their way. Thereupon there came a large number of the men of the said venerated bishop, in a hostile manner as we have ascertained. Eight principal men entered the church on the Lord's day with our own bishop [Joseph, the Archbishop of Tours]. These were not the 'eight principal men' who are read of in the prophet<sup>1</sup> as wasting the land of Nimrod with swords and lances; they came to carry off the culprit, to profane the sanctity of the house of God, to belittle the honour of the holy confessor of Christ, Martin; indeed they rushed into the sanctuary within the gates of the altar. The brethren drove them out before the front of the altar. If they deny this, they say what is absolutely false. No one of them at that time bowed the head before the altar of God.

"The report spread that a hostile force had come from Orleans [a distance of seventy miles] to violate the rights of St. Martin, for they were known to be Orleans men. The pensioners rushed together from every part of the city to the defence

<sup>1</sup> Micah v. 5, 6.

of their own defender. Tumult and fear grew rapidly all over. Our brethren rescued the men of the aforesaid bishop from the hands of the crowd, lest they should be evil intreated, and drove the people out of the church.

"Now I know that the above-named pontiff will bring many accusations against our brethren; will exaggerate what was done; will say that things were done which were not done; for we have it in his letters.

"I therefore charge you, my dearest sons, that you cast yourselves at the feet of my lord David the most just and serene emperor. Beg of him that when the bishop comes to complain, an opportunity of defence may be afforded, and of disputing with him whether it is just that an accused person should be taken by force from a church and subjected to the very punishments from which he has fled; whether it is right that one who has appealed to Caesar should not be brought to Caesar; whether it is lawful to spoil of all his goods, even to a boot-lace, one who is penitent and has confessed his sins; whether that saying of the Scripture<sup>1</sup> is well observed, Mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

Alcuin then criticises the letter of the Bishop of Orleans, which has not been preserved. In the course of the criticism he says two rather clever things.

"The venerable father says that an accused sinner ought not to be received in the church. But if sinners are not to enter the church, how are you

<sup>1</sup> James ii. 13.

to have a priest to say mass in the church, or who will there be to respond except some quite newly baptised person? For does not St. John say, If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Again, we find that in the venerable bishop's letter the accused man is called a devil, not a man. Think what the Apostle says, Judge not before the time."

Alcuin then proceeds to quote the canons on fugitives, and to describe the arrangements made in all parts for men to take sanctuary. He ends with a powerful appeal to the Emperor to bear in mind the danger of allowing any supreme dignity to be made light of.

Ep. 181  
A frag-  
ment.

In another letter, written at the same time, and in great part in the same words, to a bishop not named, Alcuin adds something to what he has said in the letter to his pupils. The man, he says, had certainly committed many sins and done very impious wickedness. But he had the evidence of two priests, Christian of St. Benedict of Tours and Adalbert of St. Martin, that he had made confession to them before he was seized and bound and tortured. Probably Alcuin thought that would not appeal very forcibly to the mind of the Emperor, and that the impiousness of the man would do more harm to his cause than the fact of confession would do good. The man was given up by the brethren of St. Martin not that he might be taken off to Orleans, but that he might be taken before the Archbishop of Tours by the messengers of the Bishop of Orleans, a matter very different from what it appeared to be in Alcuin's letter to his representatives at Court.

The attempt to carry off the fugitive was very unscrupulous, for the man was within the altar rails and was actually lying prostrate in supplication and appeal before the sepulchre of St. Martin.

Alcuin thought it best to send the fugitive far out of the way. We do not know what he had done, or who he was ; but we may gather that his name was something like Kalb from the words which Alcuin applies to him in sending him to Salzburg, to the safe keeping of Arno the Archbishop.

"I have sent to you this animal, the calf of my hand, that you may help him and keep him out of the hands of his enemies. Help him as much as you can, for the venerable bishop, that is Theodulfus, is greatly enraged against us. I have put into the mouth of this youth, the calf being an animal unnaturally rational, what he must moo in the ears of your holiness." Ep. 183  
A. D. 801-2.

Now let us hear the voice of the emperor, by no means the moo of a calf. We learn from his letter what on other grounds we should have imagined, namely, that the culprit was a cleric. Well might the bishop of Orleans rage against the Abbat of St. Martin.

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Charles &c.<sup>1</sup> to the Venerable Master Albinus and the whole congregation of the monastery of St. Martin. Bp. 182.

"The day before your letter reached our pre-

<sup>1</sup> We know from other sources that this "&c." meant Most Serene Augustus, crowned by God, great peace-making Emperor, Governor of the Roman Empire, by the mercy of God King of the Franks and of the Lombards.



sence, a letter was brought to us from Bishop Theodulf [of Orleans], containing complaint of dishonour done to his men, or rather to the bishop of the city [of Tours], and in contempt of the order of our empire. Which order we caused write under the authority of our name for the rendering up of a certain cleric, escaped from the bishop's custody, and in hiding in the basilica of St. Martin, a copy of which you have sent to us. In it we think that we did not decree anything unjustly, as you have thought we did.

"We have had both letters read to us again, yours [that is, Alcuin's] and Theodulf's. Your letter appears to us to be much harsher than Theodulf's, and to have been written in anger, without any seasoning of charity towards him; in defence of the fugitive, and in accusation against the bishop. Under cover of a concealed name it maintains that the accused person could and should be allowed to bring an accusation, whereas both divine and human law forbids to allow a criminous person to accuse another. For this he was defended and protected by you, under pretext of the authority of our name; as though one who had been accused and judged in sight of the people of his own city of Orleans should have an opportunity of bringing an accusation by appeal to the emperor, after the example of the blessed Paul the Apostle. But Paul, when accused by his own nation before the princes of Judaea, but not as yet judged, appealed to Caesar, and by the princes he was sent to Caesar to be judged. That does not at all coincide with the present case. For this cleric of evil repute was accused, and judged, and sent to prison, and thence

escaped, and contrary to law entered the basilica, which he ought not to have entered till after he had done penance, and still—it is said—ceases not to live perversely; this man you say has appealed to Caesar in the same manner as Paul. But he certainly is not coming to Caesar as Paul did.

“We have given orders to Bishop Theodulf, by whom he was judged and sent to prison, and from whose custody he escaped, that he be brought back; and the bishop must bring him to our audience, whether he speaks truth or falsehood; for it consists not with our dignity that for such a man as this there should be any change of our original order.

“We greatly wonder that to you alone it should seem fit to go against our authoritative sanction and decree, when it is quite clear, both from ancient custom and from the constitution, that the decrees of enactments ought to be unalterable, and that to no one is it permitted to disregard their edicts and statutes. And herein we can not sufficiently marvel that you have preferred to yield to the entreaties of that wretch, rather than to our authoritative commands.

“Now you yourselves, who are called the congregation of this monastery and the servants of God, yea the true God, know how your life is now frequently evil spoken of by many, and not without cause. You declare yourselves sometimes to be monks, sometimes canons, sometimes neither. And we, acting for your good and to remove your evil repute, looked out a suitable master and rector for you and invited him to come from a distant province. He by his words and admonitions, and

—for that he is a religious man—by his example of good conversation, could have amended the manner of your life. But—ah, the grief of it—all has turned out the other way. The devil has found you as his ministers for sowing discord exactly in the wrong place, namely, between wise men and doctors of the church. And those who ought to correct and chastise sinners you drive into the sin of envy and wrath. But they, by God's mercy, will not lend an ear to your evil suggestions.

“And you, who stand out as contemners of our command, whether you be called canons or monks,<sup>1</sup> know that at our pleasure, as our present messenger will indicate to you, you must appear before us; and although a letter sent to us here excuses you of actual sedition, you must come and wipe out your unjust crime by condign amends.”

Alcuin's reply was more than twice as long.

Ep. 184.

“To the lord most excellent, and of all honour most worthy, Charles, king, emperor, and most victorious most great most good and most serene Augustus, Albinus his servitor wishes the welfare of present prosperity, and of future beatitude, eternal in Christ the Lord God.

“On the first face of this letter I see that thanks from my whole heart must be given by me to our Lord God for your safety and welfare, not to me only but to all Christians most necessary. Next, with prostrate body, contrite heart, tearful voice,

<sup>1</sup> The emperor irresistibly reminds us of the Eton master and the boy who complained that his name was not that called for punishment:—

Sive tu mavis Bösänquet vocari

Sive Bösänquet,

Te vapulabo.

mercy must be begged of the piety of your goodness for the brethren of St. Martin, to whose service your goodness delegated me however little worthy. I call God as the witness of my conscience that never have I understood the brethren to be such as I hear that they are called by some who are more ready to accuse than to save. As far as can be seen and known, they worthily perform the office in the churches of Christ, and I most truly bear witness that never any where have I seen other men celebrating more perfectly or more diligently, in daily course interceding for your safety and the stability of the Christian empire. Of their life and conversation you can learn from a perfect man, an incorrupt judge, and a faithful messenger, Wido [Count of the shore of Britany]. He has looked into all their affairs and knows what they have done and how they have lived.

"I have not been slow to admonish them concerning the strictness of the monastic life, as they themselves will testify, if any one will accept their testimony. And I do not know what faults they have committed against their accusers, that they should pursue them with such hatred.

"It is a matter of wonder why they<sup>1</sup> wish to push themselves, contrary to the edict of the law, into another's harvest. The illustrious doctor forbids this where he says<sup>2</sup> Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand. For the city of Tours has a pastor [Joseph, the Archbishop], in his life

<sup>1</sup> That is, Theodulfus, the Bishop of Orleans.

<sup>2</sup> Romans xiv. 4.

elect, in preaching devout, who knows how best to give to the family of Christ their portion of meat. Let each shepherd watch over his own flock, that no member of it lack the grace of God; that when the shepherd of all shall come He may find them worthy of eternal reward.

“With regard to the concourse and tumult which arose in the church of St. Martin, or without in the atrium, I testify in the sight of Him that knows the heart of each that it took place without any incitement or foreknowledge or even wish of mine. And I confess that never was I in greater trouble for other men’s offences than then. Nor, as far as I have been able to understand or to hear, was any thing done by design of the brethren. I have not even been able to learn that they wished it; and there can be no doubt that no one who fears God and cares for his own salvation, should—I will not say do such a thing but—even think of it.

“Did not the venerable man Teotbert, sent by your authority, spend nineteen days among them for the purpose of this enquiry? Whom he would, he flogged; whom he would, he put in chains; whom he would, he put on oath; whom he pleased, he summoned to your presence.

“In vain have I so long time served my Lord Jesus Christ if His mercy and providence have so forsaken me that I should fall into this impious wickedness in the days of my old age.

“The true cause of this tumult, as far as I have been able to understand, I am not ashamed to lay before your excellency, sparing no one, so that I may produce testimony to the truth.

"It appears to me that in the doing of this impious deed no one has offended more gravely than the guard of this wretch, from whose negligence so many evils came. If I may say so to those who hear this letter read, I think it would be more just that he by whose negligence the accused man escaped from his bonds should suffer the same bonds, than that the fugitive to the protection of Christ our God and of His saints, should be sent back from the church into the same bonds. I will not put this on my own opinion, I am supported by the word of God who bade<sup>1</sup> the prophet say to the king of Israel who had let go out of his hand the king of Syria, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go a man worthy of death, thy life shall be for his life.

"In the second place, I take it that the men were the cause of the tumult who came armed in larger number than was necessary from Orleans to Tours ; especially because the report ran through the populace that they had come to carry off with violence a man who had fled to the protection of the Church of Christ and St. Martin. For all men everywhere take it ill that their holy ones are dishonoured. Perhaps, too, the miserable man had called upon the rustics who came to his dwelling in their cups to defend the church of St. Martin and not allow him to be snatched from it.

"There was a third cause of the tumult. Our holy father and pontiff [Archbishop Joseph] inopportunely, the people being present, entered the church along with the men who were supposed to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xx. 42.

have come to drag away the man. He may have done this in the simplicity of his heart, not imagining that any harm could come.<sup>1</sup> When the ignorant people, always doing thoughtlessly inconvenient things, saw this, they cried out, they took to their clubs; some energetic men ran out when they heard the bells sound. They were rung by unskilled hands; your own judges ascertained that, and our accusers themselves allowed that it was so, for in their presence the holy Gospel was brought; there was laid upon it the wood of the holy Cross; they made such of the brethren as they chose, swear by that. When the brethren heard the bells, they rushed out of the refectory to learn why they were being rung. As I am informed, they did what they could to allay the tumult; only some youths, who were found and sent to your presence, were the offenders in the concourse. From them it can be learned what they did; they have sworn that they acted on the prompting of no man, only on the impulse of their own folly. Not one of the servants of St. Martin was there, except a man called Amalgarius, who was with me at the moment. Him I sent at once with the other brethren to appease the tumult, and to extricate the men of the venerable bishop from the hands of the people, so that no harm should be done them. As soon as the tumult was appeased, they were brought into the monastery, where they were safe. These men were so burning with wrath against me that they turned a kindness I had ordered to be done to them into evil, saying that

<sup>1</sup> This refers, no doubt, to the immunity of St. Martin's from the intervention of the Archbishop.

it was in insult that I had sent them some food.<sup>1</sup> This was absolutely false. They did not know that I was imbued with the Lord's command, Do good unto them that hate you.

"Let your holy piety, most pious lord, consider these facts and recognize the truth. Be favourable to thy servants in the love of God omnipotent and in the honour of the holy Martin your intercessor, who always has been honoured in the kingdom and by the kings of the Franks.

"We are wont to say in confessing our sins, If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? And to thee we may say, forasmuch as we know thee to be a member of that same Head, if thou wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who, lord, may abide it? Above all, because the special virtue, goodness, and praise of emperors has always been their clemency towards their subjects; in so much that the most noble emperor Titus said that no one should leave the presence of the emperor sad. Rejoice the minds of thy servants by the highest gift of thy mercy; let mercy rejoice against judgement. Men who have been guilty of the greatest crimes of perfidy against your authority you have been able to pardon with laudable piety; overlook our infelicity, in accordance with the most pious nobility of your most holy disposition, which I have always known to abound in a marvellous degree in the mind of

<sup>1</sup> *Eulogias*. Wattenbach and Dümmler gloss this *cibos*. From its original meaning of the consecrated wafer it came to mean the *pain benit*, then any present, and then a salutation. There is no clue to its special meaning here.



your wisdom. We read how David, the ancestor of Christ, was praised in the greatness of his mercy and the justness of his judgements. In like manner we know that your blessedness is, by the gift of Christ, always worthy of all laudation and praise for these two great merits.

“May the omnipotent God the Father, by His only Son our Lord Jesus Christ, illumine, fill, and rejoice the heart of your blessedness with all blessing and wisdom in the Spirit the Comforter, and deign to grant to your most noble offspring, for the welfare of a Christian people, perpetual prosperity, most dearly loved lord, best and most august father of the fatherland.”

We know no more than this. There appears to be no possibility of carrying the investigation further. Reading between the lines we seem to see signs of ecclesiastical tension between the archbishop, seated at his cathedral church of St. Gatian, and Abbat Alcuin of St. Martin's. Until the time of Alcuin's penultimate predecessor, the abbat of St. Martin's had been the archbishop of Tours, and, as we have seen, there are curious references to a claim of St. Martin's to have bishops of its own. This may have caused tension, beyond that which was not very improbable under the ordinary conditions.

Theodulf of Orleans was an old friend of Alcuin, and an admirer. He gives to Alcuin a large place in his description of the court of Charlemagne. Theodulf was a laudatory poet, and his poem was very properly meant to please those whom he described. Of the king himself he says—

O face, face more shining than gold thrice refined,  
 Happy he who always is with thee.  
 The head illustrious, the chin, the neck so beautiful,  
 The hands of gold, that banish poverty.  
 The breast, the legs, the feet, all laudable,<sup>1</sup>  
 All shining forth in beauty and in strength.

The latest wife of the king, Luitgard, has eight pretty lines devoted to her, after an inauspicious opening address to "the fair virago, Luitgard". This dates the poem before 801, in which year Luitgard died at Tours. The tower of St. Martin's, now called the tower of Charlemagne, was raised over her tomb.<sup>2</sup>

Alcuin was evidently a very prominent figure at court, keeping things alive by his knowledge and wit and subtleties.

And Flaccus too is there, the glory of our poets,  
 Who pours forth many things in lyric foot.  
 An able sophist, a poet, too, melodious,  
 Able in mind and able in practice alike.  
 He brings forth pious lessons from Holy Writ,  
 And solves the puzzles of numbers with favouring jest.  
 He puts an easy question now, and then a hard;  
 Of this world now, then of the world above.  
 The king alone, of many that fain would,  
 Can solve the skilful puzzles Flaccus sets.

There was evidently no standing ill-feeling against the Abbat of St. Martin's on the part of the Bishop of Orleans.

<sup>1</sup> The character of the Latin verse may be gathered from the closing words of this hexameter, *est non laudabile cui nil*.

<sup>2</sup> In another poem Theodulf begs Queen Luitgard to send him some oil of balsam, to enable him to compose and consecrate cream for chrism. We must suppose that Luitgard had some special connexion with ports to which balsams were brought.

Balsameum regina mihi transmittite liquorem,  
 Quo bene per populos chrismatis unguen eat.  
 Inde seges crescet tibinet mercedis opimae  
 Christicolum nomen cum dabit unguen idem.

## CHAPTER XV

Alcuin's letters to Charlemagne's sons.—Recension of the Bible.—The "Alcuin Bible" at the British Museum.—Other supposed "Alcuin Bibles".—Anglo-Saxon Forms of Coronation used at the coronations of French kings.

THERE is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris a letter headed "In nomine Dei summi incipit scriptum Albini magistri ad Karolum imperatorem". It is, however, held to be uncertain whether the letter is addressed to the emperor or to his son Charles, who died some three years before his father. The internal evidence appears to be decidedly against its having been addressed to the emperor. Alcuin could not have denied himself the pleasure of referring to the emperor when he mentions king David as the authority for his advice, and we have no letter of Alcuin to the emperor so completely free from honorific titles and phrases, with nothing but the simple *vos* throughout. It is to be said on the other hand that the author of the *Life of the blessed Alcuin the Abbat*, with which we dealt fully in Chapters I and II, refers<sup>1</sup> to a *libellus* which Alcuin wrote for Charlemagne, setting forth the psalms which he was to use according as penitence, tribulation, or joy, was his theme.

The interest of the letter in question fortunately

<sup>1</sup> See p. 33.

lies in its advice, not in the person to whom the advice is given. This is the letter, with its ordinary heading :—

“Alcuin dedicates to Charles the Emperor a Ep. 244. breviary<sup>1</sup> of prayer to God.

“The blessed David, the great king and servant of God most high, gave us the rule of singing, how man should pour forth prayers to God at certain stated hours. ‘Seven times a day,’ he says, ‘do I praise Thee,’—that is, at the first hour of the day, the second, third, sixth, ninth, the evening hour, and the twelfth. David the king, then, gave praise to God at these seven hours. The holy Daniel, the prophet, at the third, sixth, and ninth hour of the day, went into his chamber to pray to the Lord, and with hands stretched upward to Heaven entreated God for himself and for the people of Israel. The same David said<sup>2</sup> further, ‘I will make mention of Thy righteousness only.’ And again, ‘At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee,’ that is, at the hour of night. And again he says, ‘I have thought upon Thy name in the night season,’ that is, at cock-crow. And, ‘Have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon Thee when I was waking?’ Here are three courses of the office during the night, and seven by day, making the ten courses which we sing, following the number of the ten laws of Moses. But you have asked me to write to you in a net form the order in which

<sup>1</sup> That is, a summary, epitome ; not as yet a service-book.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxx. 14. The Vulgate, which Alcuin quotes, has more point for his present purpose, *adiciam super omnem laudem tuam*, “I will add Thy praise above all praise.”

a layman in active life should pray to God at the stated hours. You live after a Christian fashion, and you desire to do Christian deeds; you are not ignorant how prayer should be made to the Lord; but at your request I will briefly state my opinion. When you have risen from your bed, say first 'O Lord Jesu Christ, son of the living God, in Thy name will I lift up my hands, make haste to deliver me.' Say this thrice, with the psalm 'Ponder my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. O hearken thou unto the voice of my calling, my king and my God, for unto Thee will I make my prayer. My voice shalt thou hear betimes, O Lord, early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee.' Then, 'Our Father,' and the prayers, 'Vouchsafe O Lord to keep us this day,' 'Perfect my steps,' 'Praised be the Lord daily,' 'Direct and sanctify,' 'O Lord let Thy mercy lighten upon us.' Then, rising, begin the verse 'Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord'. When that is ended, with the Gloria, begin the psalm 'Lord how are they increased'. Then follows 'God be merciful unto me'. Then 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord'. Then psalms, as many as you will."

We have two letters of Alcuin which were certainly written to Charles the king, the eldest son of Charlemagne. The first was written in 801 to congratulate Charles on his anointment as king by Leo III on the same day (Christmas Day, 800) that saw his father crowned as emperor.

Ep. 162.

"I have heard from the lord apostolic [Leo III] that with the consent of the most excellent Lord David [Charlemagne] the title of king and the crown of kingly dignity have been conferred upon

you. I greatly rejoice in the honour both of the title and of the power. I pray that your dignity and nobleness may be for the safety of many peoples, nations, and churches of Christ; may be glorious in the world and terrible to the adversaries of the Christian religion; may be vigorous and strong through a long season of prosperity; and with the blessing of God may always follow after better things, ascend to higher, and grow even unto the perfect day of eternal blessedness.

"Do justice, my best-loved son, and mercy, among Christian people, for it is these, as Solomon testifies, that exalt the throne of a kingdom and render the kingly power laudable and pleasing to God. Have as counsellors men good, pious, prudent, and god-fearing; men in whom truth reigns, not covetousness, for the gift blindeth the wise and perverteth the words of the righteous.<sup>1</sup> Never allow the dishonesty of others to sully the name of your dignity, nor permit others to do with wicked mind in covetousness that which you would not yourself do; the fault of the subject is often imputed to the ruler. Let not the impious will of some, under the name of thy beatitude, fill their money-bags with the mammon of unrighteousness.

"Good examples are not far to seek. In the home in which you were brought up you have the best examples of all goodness. You may have perfect confidence that you will by the gift of God attain to the blessing of that most excellent and in all honour most noble father of thine, ruler and emperor of a Christian people, if you strive to

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxiii. 8. Alcuin reads *corda sapientium* where the Vulgate has *prudentes*.

imitate the manner of his nobility and piety and complete discretion ; and will most fully obtain the mercy of God, which is better than all the glory of the world.

“Wheresoever your way may lead, may the footsteps of piety ever follow thee, that you may have praise of men and eternal reward with God.”

Alcuin must needs end a congratulatory letter to a royalty with hexameter and pentameter :—

Prosperous even for ever be thou great hope of the nations.

Be to thee Christ as love, light, way, and safety, and life.

The next letter to King Charles was probably later. It seems to indicate some anxiety on the part of Alcuin, and, indeed, Charles was not as fine a character as his brother Louis, who is mentioned in this letter. Alcuin would appear to have kept a copy of the former letter, and to have made a good deal of it do service a second time.

Ep. 245.

“I rejoice, my dearest son, in the devotion of your good will which Osulf your attendant has narrated to me, whether as regards the largeness of your alms-giving, or as regards the gentleness of your rule. Know of a surety that all this is greatly pleasing to God, and deserves at the hand of His mercy perpetual blessing. Do thou, my son, my dearest son, always to the utmost of your power work for the honour of God Almighty in all goodness and piety ; following the example of your most excellent father in all honesty and sobriety, that the divine clemency of Christ the God may grant to thee to possess his blessing by right of inheritance.

“Be a pious hearer of the wretched, and judge their cause with the utmost justness. Do not permit the judges who are under you to judge for presents and gifts; for gifts, it is said in Holy Scripture, blind the hearts of the wise, and subvert the words of the just. Hold in honour the servants of Christ, those who are true servants of God, for some come in sheeps’ clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves. The Truth says, By their fruits ye shall know them. Have as counsellors wise men, who fear God; not flatterers, for a flatterer, as it is said, is a bland enemy and often seduces those who consent unto him. Be prudent in thought and cautious in speech; always setting your hope on God, for He never faileth them whose hope is set on Him.

“Would that it were allowed me more frequently to address a letter of advice to thy benignity, as the most noble youth Louis your brother has asked me to do frequently for him. This I have done, and, if God will, I shall continue to do; he reads my letters with great humility.

“My greatest joy is when I hear—as, indeed, it is right that I should hear—of a good manner of life on your part. For this is the gift of God, the prosperity of a kingdom, that the rulers of a Christian people live most strict lives, and have their conversation among men in a way pleasing to God. Thus a blessing from heaven is certain to come on the nation and kingdom, which may God vouchsafe to grant eternally to your nobility.

“May you flourish, grow, and be strong, advancing in all that is good and prosperous, to the exaltation of His Holy Church, my dearest son.”



We have only one of Alcuin's letters to King Pepin, who died young, leaving a son Bernard who became king on his father's death.

Ep. 77.

"To the most noble and beloved son Pippin Albinus sends greeting in the love of Christ.

"We give thanks to thy benevolence and to the piety of the lord King who has piously consented to our petition concerning the redemption of captives. I know that in such works of piety you earn blessing and a long and prosperous reign.

"And do thou, most excellent youth, study to adorn nobility of birth by nobility of conduct. Strive with all thy power to fulfil the will and the honour of the omnipotent God, that His ineffable piety may exalt the throne of thy kingdom and extend its bounds, and subject the nations to thy power. Be liberal to the wretched, good to foreigners, devout in the service of Christ, treating honourably His servants and His churches that their sedulous prayer may aid thee. Be clean in conversation, chaste in body. Rejoice with the wife of thy youth and let not other women have any part in thee, that the blessing granted unto thee may lead to a long posterity of descendants.

"Be strong against adversaries, faithful to friends, humble to Christians, terrible to pagans, affable to the wretched, provident in council. Use the advice of the old men, the service of the young. Let equity be the judgement in thy kingdom. Let the praise of God everywhere resound at the fitting hours, and especially in the presence of thy piety. This kind of devotion to the offices of the church will render thee loveable to God and honoured among men. Let thoughts of

sobriety be in your heart, words of truth in your mouth, examples of honour in your conduct, that the divine clemency may in all ways exalt and preserve thee.

"I pray you let this letter go with you as a testimony of my love. Though it be not worthy to be hung at the girdle of thy veneration, yet let its admonition be worthy to be stored in the mind of thy wisdom."

We must now say something on the part which Alcuin played in connexion with the revision of the manuscripts of the Bible.

Alcuin is credited with a revision of the whole of the Latin Bible, both the Old Testament and the New. We have a letter of his in which he states in precise terms that he had been commissioned by Karl to correct the corrupted text. The letter is addressed to Gisla, Abbess of Chelles, Karl's sister, and Rotruda, Karl's daughter, whom he addresses as Columba, the Dove.

"I have sent for the solace of your sanctity Ep. 136  
a small book, written in short sections, that you A. D. 800  
may use it during these days<sup>1</sup> for your holy devotion. In such study you best spend these most holy days, and especially in the Gospel of the blessed John, wherein are the deeper mysteries of divinity, and the most holy words of our Lord Jesus Christ which He spoke on that night when He willed to be betrayed for the salvation of the world.

"I might have sent you an exposition of the whole Gospel, if I had not been occupied, by the

<sup>1</sup> The letter was written in Lent. Easter day in 800 was April 19.

command of the lord king, in the emendation of the Old and the New Testament. But if life last and God help, I will, when occasion serves, finish the task now begun, and dedicate the completed work to your name."

Ep. 137. Gisla and Rotruda sent him a delightfully affectionate and bright letter in reply. They liken Alcuin to Jerome sending the Scriptures from his cave in Bethlehem to Rome; and in begging him to send the rest of the commentary on St. John they remind him that the shallow Loire is crossed with less danger than the Tuscan Sea, and that a messenger gets more easily from Tours to Paris than from Bethlehem to Rome.

It is certain from the dedicatory verses of Alcuin's which have been preserved, that at least four complete copies of the whole Bible had been corrected by him or under his direction, and sent to the emperor. Of these, not one is known to be still in existence. Of one of them Alcuin makes definite mention in the following letter:—

Ep. 205 "To the most desired and entirely loveable  
A. D. 801-3. David the king Albinus wishes present prosperity and eternal beatitude in Christ.

"I have long deliberated upon the question what could the devotion of my mind think of as worthy to be given towards the splendour of your imperial power and the increase of your most rich treasury. I feared lest the poor intelligence of my mind should remain torpid in empty idleness, while others were offering various rich gifts, and the messenger of my littleness should come before the presence of your beatitude with empty hands. I have at length, by the inspiration of the Holy

Spirit, found something which it is fitting that I should send and it may be agreeable to your prudence to receive.

“In the most sacred solicitude of your piety it is clear beyond doubt what the Holy Spirit works through you for the safety of the whole Church, and how earnestly all faithful people should pray that your empire be extended to full glory, and be loved at home by all God’s people, and terrible abroad to all the enemies of His Son. To my questioning and desiring mind, nothing seemed more worthy of your most peace-giving honour than a present of the divine books, which by the dictation of the Holy Spirit and the ministration of Christ God have been written by the pen of divine grace for the salvation of the whole race of man. These, brought together into the sanctity of one most clear body, and diligently emended, I have sent to your most lofty authority by this dearest son of ours and faithful servant of yours, that with full hands he may with most joyous service stand before your dignity. He has been ill for a long time, but now that by God’s mercy he has to some extent recovered, he has with the greatest satisfaction hastened to approach your piety.

“The small gifts of my tears I send by faithful promise in prayer to St. Martin for the ardently desired prosperity of your authority. Let my messenger serve the most pious lord as is fitting; I will pray for the most loved lord as the visitation of the Holy Spirit shall deign to illumine my heart. If the devotion of my mind could have found anything better, I would with ready will offer it towards the increase of your honour.”

The messenger was Nathanael, that is, Frederegisus. We learn this from Letter 206, which commences "Albinus greets Nathanael", and after addressing him as though he were the real Nathanael who was seen under the fig-tree by Jesus, proceeds thus :—

Ep. 206.

"Salute Lucia my sister and Columba our daughter.<sup>1</sup> Pray them to be mindful of my old age in sacred prayers and of their own salvation in good works. And hide not from them the beauty of your wisdom, but irrigate the flower-beds of good will in them. What is more beautiful than the flowers of wisdom, which never fade? What is richer than the wealth of knowledge, which is never exhausted? To this exhort them. Let them live day and night in meditation on the law of God, that they may find Him of whom Moses in the law wrote, and the prophets. Bid them hold Him and not let Him go till they are led into the chambers of the King's glory to be supported by flowers of eternal blessedness, the Bridegroom's left hand of present prosperity under their head, and the right hand of eternal bliss embracing them.<sup>2</sup>

"Convey the letter of my littleness, with the most holy gift of divine Scripture and peaceful words of salutation, to my lord David. To him we owe as many thanks and praises for all his goodness to me and to my sons as this Book has syllables; to him may God give as many blessings as in this Book there are letters."

<sup>1</sup> These were Gisla, Charlemagne's sister, and Rodtruda, his daughter; see also p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from chapters i and ii of Solomon's Song.

The natural supposition is that Alcuin brought—or had sent—from York accurate copies of the Scriptures, from which he corrected the faulty manuscripts of France and Germany, to use modern names. Errors were due, probably, at least as much to mispronunciation on the part of the person who dictated to the writers, or to mis-hearing on their part, as to carelessness in transcribing. We have to remember that the practice was for one monk to read out word by word the sentence which the writers in the scriptorium were to take down, so that in this way twenty or thirty—it is said as many as two hundred—copies of a poem or a book could be written at the same time. This practice gave many opportunities for error.

We have at the British Museum a magnificent Bible, one of the largest manuscripts in existence, called Alcuin's Bible. It contains 449 sheets of very fine parchment, 20 by 14½ inches. It was purchased for the Museum in 1836 for £750, the price asked at first being £12,000, reduced to £6,500 as "an immense sacrifice". The story of its acquisition, and the question of its date and its connexion with Alcuin, were stated and discussed by Sir F. Madden in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1836, pages 358 to 363, 468 to 477, 580 to 587. That able archaeologist believed it to be of Alcuin's own time, and, indeed, to be the very copy which Alcuin presented to Charlemagne in 801, on the completion of the recension which Karl had entrusted to him. The evidence in favour of this view is found on the last page of the MS., in some elegiac verses composed by Alcuin. The verses begin with an appeal from the book itself to its

readers that it may be called a Pandect, and not a Bibliotheca<sup>1</sup>, and after eight more verses, in which it is called a Codex, they end as follows :—

Mercedes habeat, Christo donante, per aevum  
 Is Carolus qui iam scribere iussit eum.  
 Haec dator aeternus cunctorum, Christe, bonorum  
 Munera de donis accipe sancta tuis,  
 Quae Pater Albinus, devoto pectore supplex,  
 Nominis ad laudes obtulit ecce tui ;  
 Quem tua perpetuis conservet dextra diebus,  
 Ut felix tecum vivat in aeternae poli.  
 Pro me quisque legas versus orare memento,  
 Alchuine dicor ego. Tu sine fine vale.

“May Charles, who bade this book be written, receive eternal rewards. May the giver of all good accept this offering of His own gifts, which Father Albinus has made, whom may Thy hand preserve to live with Thee. Thou who readest these verses, remember to pray for me ; my name is Alchuine ; mayest thou for ever fare well.”

That these verses were written in the great Pandect of Alcuin's recension, which Alcuin presented to Charlemagne, we may take to be certain. But we may also take it as certain that they would be written also in copies made from that special

<sup>1</sup> Nomine pandecten proprio vocitare memento

Hoc corpus sacrum, lector, in ore tuo.

Quid nunc a multis constat bibliotheca dictum

Nomine non proprio, ut lingua pelasga probat.

A *pandect* was the whole Bible, Old and New Testament, as its name, “containing everything,” implies. A *bibliotheca*, like our word “library,” meant both a room or case where books were stored, and also the collection of books in the place ; hence it might be used for the pandect, on the ground that it was a collection of all the books of the Bible.

Pandect; and it has been decided by the most competent modern critics that the Bible in the Museum was not written till a generation had passed away after Alcuin's death.

That the verses were entered in other copies also is certain. The Fathers of the Oratory della Vallicella at Rome had a copy of this recension, which was believed to be written by Alcuin's own hand and presented to Charlemagne. In it there is a long copy of verses, including those in the Museum Bible, but with curious alterations and additions, which make it probable that the Vallicella Bible was written for Charlemagne's grandson, Charles le Chauve. *Quae Pater Albinus devoto pectore supplex* is altered into *Quae tibi devoto Carolus rex pectore supplex*, and verses are added, stating that the Bible was written for a new church which Charles had just built. The alteration cuts out the personal note of Alcuin, and the addition cuts out Charlemagne and points to another Charles. This is far from being the only case in which confusion is caused by the fact that Charlemagne was himself for many years Charles the king; that his oldest son was Charles the king; that his grandson was Charles the king; as also two great grandsons, a great great grandson, and even two generations further still.

Others besides Alcuin and the royal family were interested in the various versions of Scripture. For example, his contemporary Theodulf, the learned bishop of Orleans, sent to his own daughter Gisla a psalter, radiant with silver and gold, with both the earlier and the later versions of Jerome.

Our use of the word *Graduale* for the book con-



taining the words and the music sung by the choir at the service of the Mass is an evidence of the large part played by the Gallican Church in the arrangement and improvement of the early mediæval service books. Rome spoke of the *Antiphonale Missarum* and *Antiphonale Horarum*, while Gaul spoke of the *Graduale* for Mass Music and *Antiphonale* for the Music of the Hours. Under Alcuin's guiding hand, the influence of Charlemagne and his times upon the services was wide and deep. In the document described as Ep. 31, A.D. 794, Karl has a good deal to say about the success of his own efforts to put down irregular methods of singing the services, and to bring all into general accord with the Roman method.<sup>1</sup> Alcuin's work re-acted upon the Roman use itself, and is understood to have been the operating cause of the mark left upon it.

Ep. 72  
A. D. 796.

Alcuin had strong opinions as to the best manner of singing the services. In a letter to Eanbald II, he writes thus, for the benefit of the Church of York:—"Let the clergy chant with moderated voice, striving to please God rather than men. An immoderate exaltation of voice is a sign of boastfulness. And let them not be above learning the Roman Orders of Service, that they may have eternal benediction from the blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, whom Our Lord Jesus Christ made the head of His elect flock."

Alcuin was versed in secular music also. We learn from Ep. 100 that Karl had asked him to

<sup>1</sup> Wattenbach and Dümmler, 223-4.

write peaceful and soothing songs, both words and music, for soldiers to sing when engaged in the horrors of war, and that he complied with the request.

We have some very interesting evidences of the borrowing of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts for use in France, and of the influence of Anglo-Saxon forms on French services. There are two Anglo-Saxon forms for the coronation of a king. One of these is found in the Pontifical of Egbert, the Bishop and later the Archbishop of York, to which a date of about 745 may be given. It is merely the supplement to the Mass on the occasion of a coronation, and accordingly it does not give the details of the ceremony. The other is a later form, and it gives at length the details of the ceremony, one of the longest prayers describing the king as raised to the royal throne of the Angles and Saxons. But, curiously enough, we learn the most interesting parts of the ceremony of crowning an Anglo-Saxon king, not from this manuscript, but from three manuscripts of the form for the coronation of a king of the French. The first of these to be mentioned is a manuscript form of an Abbat of Corbie. In it we find the prayer for "This thy servant whom with suppliant devotion we elect equally to the kingdom of the whole of Albion, that is to say, of the Franks . . . That he may nourish and teach the Church of the whole of Albion, with the peoples committed to his charge". Here it would appear that a marginal note had been added to the Anglo-Saxon form at the first mention of "Albion", "that is to say, of the Franks," and has afterwards been incorporated in

one place and not in the other. The "elect equally" indicates that the form was used for an Anglo-Saxon king who claimed to be king of the whole land, while yet the old division into three main nations was fresh in mind.<sup>1</sup> It is a further evidence in favour of this being an Anglo-Saxon form, that the only saint mentioned besides the Blessed Virgin and St. Peter is "Holy Gregory, Apostolic of the Angles". In the preparation of the Sens Order, to be mentioned later, this flaw had been discovered, and St. Denys and St. Remy put in the place of St. Gregory.

In a manuscript in the National Library of Paris, we have a second Order for the Coronation of a King of the Franks, which is indubitably an Anglo-Saxon Order. The following phrases occur: "This thy servant whom with suppliant devotion we elect equally . . . That the sceptre desert not the royal throne, that is to say, of the Saxons, Mercians, and Northumbrians (Nordanchimbro-rum) . . . That supported by the due subjection of both of these peoples . . ."

In a third Order for the Coronation of French Kings, from the Pontifical of the illustrious Church of Sens, we find the prayer "that the sceptre desert not the royal throne, that is to say, of the Saxons, Mercians, and Northumbrians (Nordan Cymbrorum)", and "that the king, supported by the due subjection of both these peoples . . .".

It may be added that the French Benedictional of Archbishop Robert, now at Rouen, has the

<sup>1</sup> See on this point pp. 86-9.

form "Angles and Saxons". So late as 1364 Charles V of France was crowned with a form which named the throne as that of the Saxons, Mercians, and Northchimbrians; while at the same time the peers of Guienne swore to protect him against the king of England, his people, and allies.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See my *Anglo-Saxon Coronation Forms, and the use of the word Protestant in the Coronation Oath*, S. P. C. K.

## CHAPTER XVI

Examples of Alcuin's style in his letters, allusive, jocose, playful.—The perils of the Alps.—The vision of Drithelme.—Letters to Arno.—Bacchus and Cupid.

A LETTER written by Alcuin in September, 799, may be taken as an extreme example of his allusive style. A good deal of interpretation is needed before the letter can be understood; it is a collection of riddles.

Ep. 121  
A. D. 799.

The opening sentence runs thus: "The first letter to the first, and the fifteenth to the sixth. The number consecrated in steps to the number perfect in the works of God."

The first letter is A, and thus the first words mean A(lcuin) to A(dalhard), Abbat of Corbie, or Arno, Archbishop of Salzburg; but inasmuch as A is described in the letter as *gallus monasticus*, and Arno was Aquila, we must understand that the Abbat of Corbie is meant. No other known A satisfies the conditions. The fifteenth letter is P, the sixth is F, and therefore we have P(ater) F(ilio), the father to the son. The Psalms of Degrees are fifteen, the day of completion of the works of God in creation was the sixth, and therefore the concluding words are only a repetition of "father to son".

"Why does that brother come with empty hands? In his tongue he brought a *Hail!* to my ears; in his hands he brought nothing to my eyes. Thou who art seated at a dividing of the ways [Corbie], why hast thou demanded nothing certain of him who dwelleth in Maresa? The crows fly about the roofs of the houses and cry out; and the dove, nourished on the pavements of the church, is silent. I should have trusted that dove had he said anything about the eagle [Leo III] which lately deserted the roofs of the citadel of Rome to drink at the fountains of the Saxon land [the Pope had come to Paderborn] to see the lion [Karl]; or if our blackbird, flying between them, had demanded of the monastic cock [Adalhard] who rouses the brethren to their matin watch, that by means of him the sparrow [Alcuin] sitting alone upon the house top might know what is the convention between the lion and the eagle; and if the youth of the eagle, as the psalmist prophesies, is renewed<sup>1</sup> to pristine gladness; and if new dwellings grow up in the marshes of perfidy that were cleansed<sup>2</sup>; and if the lion, in pursuit of the ibex, meditates crossing the heights of the Alps.

"The sparrow hath his ears open. But I see that the proverbial wolf [this is said to mean the devil] in the fable<sup>3</sup> has taken away the cock's voice; lest it happen that if he crowed, the apos-

<sup>1</sup> That is, if the Pope has recovered from the attempt to blind him and cut out his tongue.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, if new charges are made against the Pope.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to Pliny's Natural History, where wolves are credited with this power; see also Virgil, *Ecl.* ix. 53, 54.

tolie denial<sup>1</sup> should be renewed in the city of his former power, and the last error be worse than the first.

“Why has love sinned, which has not seen *Vale* [fare thee well] written, while I hear that the partridges [messengers], running across the fields, have come to the dwelling [Corbie] of the cock. Perfect love driveth away fear. Perfect love with the sparkling pupils of the eyes sees everything, and with the clear intuition of piety will always find a fixed rule of wholesome counsel. It would seem that the cock is turned into a cuckoo, which is silent when the sun ascends into the summer constellation of the crab, while the nest-making sparrow at every season alike twitters on the smoky roofs.<sup>2</sup>

“That sparrow now in this September month flies to revisit his beloved nest<sup>3</sup>, that he may feed his young<sup>4</sup>, gaping with hungry beaks, with little grains of piety: desiring that some time on the banks of this river Loire, rich in fish, he may hear the voice of the cock sounding forth the *Vale*, and that he who with flapping of his wings rouses himself to matutinal melodies may come and exhort the sparrow in the midst of his young.”

At this point the letter changes its character, and we need not follow it further.

Thus Alcuin could write a jocose letter, even

<sup>1</sup> A reference to Leo's denial of the charges against him at Paderborn, and also to St. Peter's denial. We must credit Alcuin with having seen that he would be taken to mean that one was as true as the other. The denial was renewed at Rome, see p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> His pupils.

<sup>3</sup> St. Martin's at Tours.

quoting Scripture in that vein. Let us see another. He was detained in Britain at the end of the year 790 by an unexpected event, of which mention has already more than once been made. Ethelred, the king of Northumbria, had been deposed and kept in prison till the end of 790. Alcuin wrote to his pupil Joseph, in Gaul, to tell him that Ethelred had passed from prison to throne, from misery to majesty; and things were so unsettled that he did not like to leave for France. He was evidently not well supplied with money, food, or clothing. He begged Joseph to send him Ep. 16 what was necessary for the sea voyage; also five A.D. 790. pounds weight of silver which he had sent to his charge, and another five from his possessions in France; three garments, of goat-skin and of wool for the use of his attendants, lay and clerical, and of linen for his own use; also black and red cloaks of goat skin, if he could find such, and many pigments of sulphur and colours for pictures. Then he turns to the question of meat and drink. Quoting 2 Kings iv. 40, he exclaims, "'O, thou man of God, there is death in the pot', for [again quoting, from 1 Sam. ix. 7, and putting wine in place of bread] the wine 'is spent in our vessels': and [he adds] the acid beer of these parts makes havoc in our stomachs."

Here is another example of his playfulness and lightness of touch.

"To the most illustrious man Flavius Damoeta Ep. 9  
Albinus sends abundant greeting of perpetual A.D. 783-6.  
peace."

This was Riculfus, Archbishop of Mainz, whom in another letter he addresses as the great Ep. 12.



Ep. 101.

fisherman, probably because of piscatorial rights which he naturally had as a riparian proprietor. Alcuin himself—we may note—was a fisherman. He writes to Arno in 798, from Tours, that he does not know in which of two places he will be the next month, but whichever it was it would find him fishing. “I know not whether I shall play the diver on the banks of the Meuse and catch fish, or float on the waters of the Loire and catch salmon.” There are salmon now both in the Meuse and in the Loire; but the phrases in Alcuin’s letter seem to point to bottom-fishing on the Meuse and surface-fishing on the Loire. Alcuin learned to fish on the Ouse at York, of which he writes, as we have seen above<sup>1</sup>, “Hanc piscosa suis undis interluit Usa.” We must return to Letter 9.

“I greatly rejoice in your welfare, and am much delighted with your loving present, sending you as many thanks as I have counted teeth in your gift. It is a wonderful animal, with two heads, and with sixty teeth, not of elephantine size but of the beauty of ivory. I am not terrified by the horror of this beast, but delighted by its appearance; I have no fear of its biting me with gnashing teeth. I am pleased with its fawning caresses, which smooth the hair of my head. I see not ferocity in its teeth; I see only the love of the sender.”

Carmen  
cexix, ed.  
Quercet.

Alcuin afterwards made this ivory comb the subject of a poetic riddle:—

A beast has sudden come to this my house,  
A beast of wonder, who two heads has got,  
And yet the beast has only one jaw-bone.  
Twice three times ten of horrid teeth it has.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 72.

Its food grows always on this body of mine,  
Not flesh, not fruit. It eats not with its teeth,  
Drinks not. Its open mouth shows no decay.  
Tell me, Damoeta dear, what beast is this?

We can imagine the beauty of this ivory comb, with one row of sixty teeth,<sup>1</sup> the solid piece at the top being ornamented with a lion's head at each end looking outwards. A hundred years later, the comb, if made in Northumbria, might have had a ridged top, with two bears' heads, the muzzles looking inwards. It was, no doubt, this beautiful comb that played a large part in the miracles wrought by Alcuin after his death, as described at page 49.

Considering the frequent passages to and fro across the Alps in Alcuin's time by Karl, and, indeed, by Alcuin himself, and the coming and going between Salzburg, Arno's see, and Gaul, we should have expected more reference to the hardships of the way than we find in the letters of Alcuin.

In writing to Remedius or Remigius, the Bishop of Chur, or Coire, a place very well known now, he makes no reference to any difficulty in reaching the city. It was, as we know, a place of considerable importance, and it possesses to this day some very interesting Carolingian charters. The only local allusion which Alcuin makes in his various letters to Remedius informs us of the

<sup>1</sup> It is a curious coincidence that the ivory comb found in St. Cuthbert's coffin, provided by Westone after the Norman Conquest, had—as nearly as we can count—sixty teeth, sixteen large and forty-four small. Alcuin's comb may have had the same double row of teeth, with a knob in the shape of a lion's head projecting from the ends of the central ivory.

heavy tolls charged by those who held the passes, a matter about which our King Canute spoke so strongly to the Pope.

- Ep. 213. "By this letter I commend to your fatherly protection this merchant of ours, who is conveying merchandise to Italy. Let him have safe passage over the roads of your land in going and in returning. And in the defiles of the mountains let him not be troubled by your officers of custom, but by the freedom of your charity let him have free passage."

The inconsiderable references which we do find to the difficulties of the way come chiefly in the addresses of his letters. Thus he addresses a letter to Arno, Archbishop of Salzburg, in these words:—

- Ep. 91. "To the eagle that flies across the Alps; goes swiftly over the plains; stalks through the cities; a humble inhabitant of the earth sends greeting."

"To Paulinus, Patriarch of Aquileia.

- Ep. 129. "Four friends send greeting across the waters of the Alps in a ship laden with love."

- Ep. 200. "To Peter, Archbishop of Milan.

"O that I had the wings of an eagle, that I might fly across the heights of the Alps swifter than the winds."

In his *Life of Willibrord*,<sup>1</sup> cap. xxxii, he says:—

"The Alps of St. Maurice are exalted more felicitously by the blood of the Theban saints than by the height of their snows."

- Ep. 151. To Arno.

"To my father, of most sweet love, the eagle prelate, a swan from across the sea sends wishes

<sup>1</sup> *Monumenta Alcuiniana*, Wattenbach and Dümmler, p. 63.

for perpetual health with the pen-feathers of holy affection."

To Arno.

Ep. 184.

"To the eagle, of all the birds of the Alpine heights most dear, Albinus sends greeting."

To Arno.

Ep. 126.

"A love which neither the cold of the Alps nor the heat of Italy can overthrow."

To Arno.

Ep. 101.

"I long to hear when the eagle, flying high, transcends the summits of the Alps, and, wearied with flight, composes its wings in the parts of Rhetia."

It will have been noticed that most of these are addressed to the Tyrol. It may be remarked that there are traditions of the presence of Karl in the far east of the Alps, especially in a valley about twenty miles due west of the city of Trent. Mr. D. W. Freshfield has printed<sup>1</sup> the long Latin inscription which gives an explanation of frescoes in the Church of San Stefano in Val Rendena, showing Karl and a Pope baptizing heathen. The inscription credits the district with having been full, in Karl's time, of castles held by pagan lords or by Jews, who were converted or slain.

We have an interesting evidence of the sufferings endured in crossing the Alps in the later Anglo-Saxon times. It is well known that persons who granted charters of lands, under conditions, invoked desperate penalties on the heads of any who should attempt to alienate the lands or trifle with the conditions. In the reigns of Athelstane

<sup>1</sup> *Italian Alps*, Longmans, 1875, Appendix D, pp. 371-3.

and Eadmund, under dates ranging from A. D. 938 to 946, a West Saxon scribe produced and employed frequently a new form and idea of curse. He made the royal and archiepiscopal signatories indulge in the pious and fervent wish that any one who endeavoured to violate the gift set forth in the charter might suffer from the cold blasts of the ice-fields and the pennine host of malignant spirits<sup>1</sup>.

William of Malmesbury relates<sup>2</sup> the death of an Archbishop of Canterbury from cold in the passage of the Alps. When Odo died in 959, Aelfsin, the Bishop of Winchester, bought the archbishopric and behaved with mad violence. He stamped on the grave of Odo, addressing him as "worst of old men", taunting him that he had got his desire (which Odo had always opposed), namely, the succession to the archbishopric. That night the departed Odo appeared to him in a dream and warned him of a speedy end. Aelfsin disregarded the warning, and set off to Rome for the pallium. On the way across the Alps he was overcome with cold. His feet were frost-bitten, and there was no remedy but to put them into the warm carcasses of disembowelled horses, these feet with which he had done violence to the grave of Odo. Even so he could not get warm, and he was frozen to death. His death made way for Dunstan, and he is not reckoned among the archbishops.

The misery of extreme cold was a familiar fact

<sup>1</sup> Kemble, *Cod. Dipl.* ii. 208-62. Coolidge, *Swiss Travel*, 160. "Perpressus sit gelidis glacierum (and *glaciarum*) flatibus, et pennino exercitu malignorum spirituum."

<sup>2</sup> *Gesta Pontificum*, Rolls series, pp. 25, 26, 265.

to the Northumbrians after the experiences of Benedict Biscop and others in crossing the Alps. It is brought out in a very graphic way in the description which Bede gives of the trance of one Drithelme<sup>1</sup>, who had appeared to be dead for six hours. Among other remarkable visions of the other world, he came in his trance to a valley, on one side of which was piercing cold, and on the other unquenchable fire. The unhappy souls, tortured in the biting cold, leaped madly across for warmth into the flames. Then, scorched in the fearful heat, they sprang back again for coolness into the torturing cold. In that continual alternation of tortures their time was spent. Drithelme was wont ever after, in beating down his animal passions, to stand up to his neck in the river, even in winter with broken masses of ice dashing against him. And when one called to him from the bank, "I wonder, brother Drithelme, that you endure such cold," he would reply, "I, at least, have seen worse cold than this."

Here is a peep behind the scenes in connexion with the morals of a Pope, and an example of wisdom in burning letters that ought not to see the light. Alcuin is writing to Arno.

"You were the third cause of my [proposed] Ep. 127  
journey. The first was that of the churches of A. D. 799.  
Christ. The second was that of the lord king,  
because mourning in tears I left him; my desire  
being to inscribe on my soul a perpetual memory of  
the joy of his presence. The third was the long-  
ing to see the most sweet face of your dearness.

<sup>1</sup> See my *Lessons from Early English Church History*, pp. 45, 46.

But I am prevented from accomplishing that which I have strongly wished to accomplish. It will come to pass through your holy prayers, if it do but please Him without whom nothing good can be done.

"Your former letter<sup>1</sup>, which reached us under your name, contained some complaints about the manner of life of the apostolic<sup>2</sup> and about the danger you were in when with him by reason of the Romans. Your clerk Baldric, as I suppose, brought it, bringing also a cope stitched together in the Roman fashion, a vestment of linen and wool. As I did not wish that your letter should fall into other hands, Candidus alone read it with me; and then I put it in the fire, lest any scandal should arise through carelessness on the part of the keeper of my papers.

"I would gladly write more, but the runner has your orders to get back quickly."

Nothing could exceed the affectionateness of Alcuin's letters to Arno, the Archbishop of Salzburg, to whose care in preserving the letters addressed to him we owe so much. Arno's name recalled to Alcuin's mind the early days when he saw hovering in the Yorkshire skies the great eagles that gave their Anglian name of *earn* (*arn*) to Arncliffe and other places. He always thought of him as the Arn, addressed him as the Aquila, the eagle.

"To the Eagle, most noble of birds, the Goose, with strident voice, sends greeting.

"When I heard of you as winging your way

<sup>1</sup> Written from Rome; not preserved.

<sup>2</sup> Leo III.

from transalpine hills to your nest of sweetest quiet, a great repose shone suddenly forth upon my mind anxious on your account. My mind flew back, as from crashing storms, to a haven of placid peace. For love is wont to be joyful in prosperity and oppressed in adversity. Thus it is that the voice of the bride, bewailing the absence of the longed-for spouse, cries 'I am wounded with love'.<sup>1</sup> For both are true : your love wounds, and it heals. One part of the wound inflicted by love remains an open sore, your longed-for face has not yet beamed upon the eyes of your lover. The anxiety of not knowing that you were well has been removed from my mind, but the hunger of the eyes is not yet appeased by the sight of your countenance. This Sorrow we trust may very soon be taken away, by the ministry of that grace which has deigned to remove the anxiety of mind by the arrival of your letters ; and then he who desires both health and vision will be full of joy in the arrival of yourself.

"You have written to me of the religious life and justness of the lord apostolic<sup>2</sup>, what great and unjust trials he suffers at the hands of the children of discord. I confess that I glow with great joy that the father of the churches sets himself about the service of God with pious and faithful mind, without guile. No wonder that justice suffers persecution in his person at the hands of evil men, when in our Chief, the fount of all goodness and justice, the God Christ, justice suffered persecution even unto death."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 281 note.

<sup>2</sup> Leo III, see p. 188.



After referring sympathetically to Arno's complaints that his life has been a very unquiet one of late, by reason of much travelling, Alcuin continues :—

"There is one journey upon which I wish that you would enter. Would that I could see you praying in the venerable temple of blessed Martin our protector, that thy supplication and ours might restore my strength, that by Christ's mercy the pious consolation of love might advance us both on the way of perpetual beatitude. How this may come about, let your providence consider. If the opportunity of the present year does not grant to us our will, by reason of the hindrance of affairs, may we meet in quiet times and at a quiet season, after Easter of next year, at St. Amand<sup>1</sup>. The frequent infirmity of my poor little body would make a long journey very fatiguing to me in the storms of winter."

Arno could himself write a genial and affectionate letter. One of his letters to the Cuckoo<sup>2</sup> has been preserved :—

Ep. 287. "*Kartula dic: Cuculus valeat per saecula nostra.* To the very dear bird the Cuckoo the Eagle sends greeting.

"Be mindful of thyself and of me. Do what I have enjoined, accomplish what you have promised. Be gentle and true to our father [Alcuin], obedient and devoted to God. Love Him who has raised thee from the mire and set thee to stand

<sup>1</sup> There were two monasteries with this dedication. One of these, *Iuvavense*, was at Salzburg, and probably it is the one to which reference is made.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 168.

before princes. Stand like a man against your adversary; go higher, never lower; advance, never fall back.

“I have dipped my pen in love to write this letter. Rise, rise, most pleasing bird. The winter is passing away; the rains have gone; the flowers are showing on the earth; the time of song has come. Let your friends—that is, the angelic dignities—hear your voice. Your voice is sweet to them, may your appearance be fair in the eyes of the Lord thy God, who desires your presence.”

The Cuckoo's enemy, against whom he was to fight manfully, was drink. He was evidently a very sweet and sympathetic singer at the frequent feasts,<sup>1</sup> and was not sufficiently careful in respect of strong drink. Alcuin's *Carmen* 277 mourns in forty-eight lines the absence of the Cuckoo, gone they did not know where. Some of the lines are significant: “Ah me! if Bacchus has sunk him in that pestiferous vortex!” And again: “Alas! that impious Bacchus, I suppose, is entertaining him, Bacchus who desires to subvert all hearts. Weep for the Cuckoo, weep all for the Cuckoo. He left us in triumph, in tears he will return. Would that we had the Cuckoo, even in tears; for then with the Cuckoo we could weep.”

Though himself a judge of wine, with a decided preference for good and ripe wine, Alcuin was a determined advocate for strict temperance. Total

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that he was called Cuckoo from the refrain of some favourite song of his. The Teutonic name for the “bird of spring” was not a likely personal name, any more than cuckoo is with us.

abstinence was not his idea of temperance. Of another temptation of the physical senses he says surprisingly little; indeed, he hardly ever refers to it. In Carmen 260, *To his brothers of York*, a poem with a charming description of spring in its opening verses, he gives to the younger brethren a very direct warning on both of these physical temptations<sup>1</sup>:—

“Let not the tipsy Bacchus cast his fetters upon you, nor, noxious, wipe out the lessons engraved on your minds. Nor let that wicked Cretan boy, armed with piercing darts, drive you from the citadel of safety.”

The conversion of Arno into Aquila was very natural to a Yorkshireman. In several cases we can only guess at the Teutonic names which Alcuin translated into Latin; for example, Gallicellulus (Ep. 260). In two cases, at least, he translates into Greek. Cambridge men who remember with much affection their private tutor in Mathematics, William Walton, will remember his skill in thus rendering names; his Prosgennades still survives, known to the world as Atkinson. With Alcuin, Hechstan becomes Altapetra. The abbess Adaula evidently had a Teutonic name. Anthropolos was his friend Monna. Stratocles had some such name as Heribercht. Epistle 282 is addressed, very near the end of his life, “to my best-loved friends in Christ, brother and son, Anthropolos and Stratocles, the humble levite Alchuine sends greeting.” Epistle 283, of the same late date, is addressed “to my dearest son Altapetra, the levite Albinus sends

<sup>1</sup> See also Epistle 186 in Appendix A.

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greeting". In the course of this letter to Hechstan, Alcuin sends greetings and requests for prayers to two friends whose names would not fall very easily into Latin, Scaest and Baegnod, the latter a common Anglo-Saxon name, usually in the form Beagnoth, with the final *d* aspirated. It occurs in runes on a knife in the British Museum, and is found in Kent and Wessex.

## CHAPTER XVII

Grammatical questions submitted to Alcuin by Karl.—Alcuin and Eginhart.—Eginhart's description of Charlemagne.—Alcuin's interest in missions.—The premature exaction of tithes.—Charlemagne's elephant Abulabaz.—Figures of elephants in silk stuffs.—Earliest examples of French and German.—Boniface's *Abrenuntiatio Diaboli*.—Early Saxon.—The earliest examples of Anglo-Saxon prose and verse.

IN many of Alcuin's letters we find answers or allusions to questions addressed to him by Karl. In Epistle 253 Alcuin writes twelve paragraphs to the emperor in answer to twelve questions. In Epistle 252 he writes to Homer (Angilbert), who has been commanded by the emperor to consult him on the gender of the word *rubus* and on the difference in meaning of *despicere* and *dispicere*. In regard to *rubus*, he sums up a long list of authorities on both sides by the correct remark that a bramble must not be counted as a tree, and therefore *rubus* follows the ordinary rule of words ending in *us* and is masculine. On the difference between *despicere* and *dispicere* he has much to write, and in the course of his letter he makes free use of quotations from the Greek. From Epistle 254 we find that Charlemagne had inquired, through Candidus, as to the distinction between *aeternum* and *sempiternum*; *perpetuum* and *immortale*; *saeculum*, *aevum*, and *tempus*. In Epistle 240, a very long letter, he writes to the emperor in reply to his inquiry as to the force of a question put by the Greek master—an Athenian sophist—about the price of human salvation.

Considering the large part which the annalist Eginhart played in the administrative work of Charlemagne's reign, as secretary to the king and emperor, it is remarkable that we find only one reference to him in Alcuin's letters. This one reference is affectionate in tone, and gives no reason at all for supposing that Alcuin was jealous of the quick and skilful secretary. The reference occurs in Ep. 112, A. D. 799, a letter addressed to Karl by Alcuin. The letter itself is of so interesting a character that the opportunity of giving it in its entirety should not be lost. From its contents we gather that Alcuin had sent to Karl a treatise which he had hastily dictated and had not read over and corrected. Karl had noted errors in the writing and punctuation, and had sent it back to be corrected, a charming piece of discipline which raises Karl higher than ever in our appreciative regard.

"To the most pious and excellent lord king Ep. 112  
David, Flaccus wounded<sup>1</sup> with the pen of love A. D. 799.  
sends greeting.

"We give thanks to your venerable piety that you have caused to be read to the ears of your wisdom the booklet sent to you in accordance with the injunction of your command; and that you have had errors in it noted, and have sent it back for correction. It would, however, have been

<sup>1</sup> Herc, and in Ep. 108, to Arno, Alcuin combines two phrases from the Song of Solomon, v. 7 and 8: "The watchmen have wounded me," "I am sick of love." In the letter to Arno he appears to quote the actual words of a text in his possession: *vulnerata karitate ego sum*; in the present letter he writes *caritatis calamo vulneratus sum*. The Vulgate has *vulneraverunt me—amore langueo*. See p. 275.

better corrected by yourself, because in any work the judgement of another is most frequently of more value than that of the actual author.

"You have done somewhat less than the full office of love demanded, in that you have not in like manner noted opinions not learnedly set forth or catholically worked out. I have a suspicion that your letter indicates that not all which is written in my booklet has your approval. For you have directed a defence of the work to be sent to your excellency, whereas my poor words could have no defender or emender better than yourself. The authority of him who commands should defend the work of him who obeys.

"That the booklet does not run so scholarly in letter and punctuation as the order and rule of the art of grammar demands is no unusual effect of rapidity of thought, while the mind of the reader forestalls the action of the eyes. Wearied with a bad headache I cannot examine the words which flow by a sudden rush from my mouth as I dictate; and one who is not willing to impute to himself the negligence of another should not impute negligence to another.

"The account of the disputation of Felix with a Saracen I have not seen, nor can we find it here; indeed I never heard of it before. But in the course of very diligent inquiry whether any of our people have heard of its existence, I have been told that it might be found with Laidrad the Bishop of Lyon. I have at once sent a messenger to the said bishop in order that if it can be found there it may be sent as quickly as possible to your presence.

"When I went as a young man to Rome, and spent some days in the royal city of Pavia, a certain Jew, Lullus by name, had a disputation with Master Peter, and I heard in the same city that there was a written record of the controversy. This was the same Peter who with such clearness taught grammar in your palace<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps our Homer<sup>2</sup> has heard something about it from him.

"I have sent to your excellency some modes of expression, supported by examples or verses from venerable fathers, and also some figures of arithmetical subtlety for your amusement, on the blank part of the paper which you have sent to us; in order that what offered itself to our eye naked may come back to you clothed. It seemed right that paper which came to us ennobled by your seal should receive honour from our letters. And if any of the said forms of expression are inadequately supported by examples, Beselel<sup>3</sup> your familiar—yea and ours too—will be able to add others. He can also make out the arithmetical puzzles.

"The major and minor distinctions of punctuation add greatly to the beauty of sentences; but the use of them has been almost lost by the rusticity of our scribes. Now that the beauty of all wisdom and the ornament of salutary learning is beginning to be renewed by the exertions of your nobility, so there is good hope that the use of punctuation is to be restored in the hands of scribes.

<sup>1</sup> Eginhart in his life of Karl (ch. 25) states that the king studied grammar under Peter of Pisa, an aged deacon.

<sup>2</sup> This was Angilbertus.

<sup>3</sup> That is, Eginhart, the man skilled in many arts, as was Bezaleel, the chief architect of the Tabernacle.



"I for my part, though little proficient, fight daily against rusticity at Tours. Let your authority teach the palace youths to produce in the most elegant manner whatsoever your most lucid eloquence shall have dictated, that documents which circulate in the name of the king may bear on their face the nobility of the royal wisdom."

That appears to be the only case in which Eginhart is spoken of by Alcuin. Curiously enough, it appears that Alcuin is only once spoken of by Eginhart. We might have expected some mention of Alcuin in Eginhart's statement of Karl's fondness for foreigners<sup>1</sup>. The remarkable passage in which Eginhart mentions Alcuin forms chapter 25 of the *Vita Caroli Magni*, coming in the course of this fine description of a man clearly worthy to be called Great:—

"In eloquence he was copious and exuberant; whatever he wished to express he could express in the clearest manner. Nor was he content to speak only in his native tongue; he worked hard at learning foreign tongues. Latin he had learned so well that he was wont to pray in that tongue equally with his own. Greek he understood better than he spoke. He was so able in speech that he appeared as a teacher. He cultivated most studiously the liberal arts, and exceedingly respected and greatly honoured those who taught them. In learning grammar he heard the aged Peter of Pisa, a deacon. In other studies he had as his preceptor Albinus, whose cognomen was Alcuin, also a deacon, of the Saxon race, from Britain, a man most learned.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 33.

With him he spent much time and labour on rhetoric and dialectic, and especially on the study of astronomy. He learned the art of computation, and with much sagacity he scrutinized most closely the courses of the stars. He made efforts, too, to become a scribe, for which purpose he used to have tablets and specimens carried about under the pillows of his bed, that he might practise his hand in writing when he had any spare time; but he did not make much way with a task begun so late in his life."

It would have been strange if Alcuin had not taken special interest in the spread of Christianity among the pagan races on the eastern borders of the kingdom of Karl. Our West-Saxon Boniface had made such a mark, by himself and by his Malmesbury monks Lull and Burchardt and others, and his Wimborne nuns and *magistrae*, that Alcuin found familiar names in many parts of the eastern and north-eastern fringe, and made many inquiries about the progress of the work. In one of the earliest of his letters which have been preserved, he addresses an abbat who had gone to visit the Bishop of Bremen. "Salute a thousand times my best loved bishop Uilhaed. It sorely grieves me that I have parted from him. Would that I could see him." This was our own Northumbrian Angle Willehad, born in 730, five years before Alcuin, and no doubt his school-fellow. He had narrowly escaped martyrdom, and had bent before the storm; but he returned to the scene of his dangerous labours, and Karl caused him to be consecrated at Worms first bishop of Bremen on July 13, 787. He built his cathedral church at Bremen, and con-

Ep. 13  
A. D. 789.

secrated it on November 1, 789; on November 8 he died of fever at Blexen, close by. In this letter Alcuin charges the abbat—

“Inform me by letter how far the Saxons fall in with your preaching, and if there is any hope of the conversion of the Danes, and if the Wilts and Vionuds<sup>1</sup>, whom the king has recently<sup>2</sup> acquired, accept the faith of Christ, and what is going on in those parts, and what the lord king intends to do about the Huns<sup>3</sup>.”

In a letter to Colcu<sup>4</sup>, in the beginning of the next year, he says:—

Ep. 14  
A. D. 790.

“Let your dilection know that by the mercy of God the holy Church in the parts of Europe has peace, advances, grows. The Old Saxons and the Frisians have been converted to the faith of Christ at the instance of Karl, some by rewards, some by threats. Last year the said king with a great host attacked the Slaves, whom we called Vionuds, and brought them into subjection.

“Further, the dukes and tribunes of the same most Christian king have taken from the Saracens a large part of Spain, with a coast line three hundred miles in length. But—ah the grief!—those same accursed Saracens are dominant over the whole of Africa and the greatest part of Asia.”

<sup>1</sup> The Wends.

<sup>2</sup> Eginhard tells us under this year 789 that Karl crossed the Rhine at Cologne with a great army, pushed through Saxony as far as the Elbe, and brought the Wiltzi to terms. That, he says, is their name in the Frank tongue. In their own tongue they are Welatabi.

<sup>3</sup> The Huns, or Avars, had in the previous year invaded Italy and Bavaria.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 151.

To Higbald of Lindisfarne, in the letter given at page 132, he writes :—

“Almost the whole of Europe was destroyed by the fire and the sword of the Goths or the Huns. But now, by the mercy of God, as the sky shines bright with stars so Europe shines with the ornament of churches, and in them the offices of the Christian religion flourish and increase.”

Writing to his most intimate friend Arno, Archbishop of Salzburg, who was about to accompany an army against the Avars, Alcuin warns him against the premature imposition of tithes :—

“Be a preacher of piety, not an exactor of tithes ; for the freshly converted soul is to be fed with the milk of apostolical piety until it grows, strengthens, and becomes strong enough to receive solid food. Tithes, it is said, have subverted the faith of the Saxons. Why should we place on the neck of the ignorant a yoke which neither we nor our brethren have been able to bear ?”

Again, writing to Karl after the subjugation of the Huns, Alcuin says this :—

“Now let your most wise and God-pleasing piety provide for the new people pious preachers, of honest life, learned in sacred science, imbued with evangelical precepts, intent in their preaching on the examples of the holy Apostles, who were wont to minister milk—that is, gentle precepts—to their hearers who were beginners in the faith.”

“These things being thus considered, let your most holy piety take into wise consideration whether it is well to impose upon an ignorant race, at the beginning of the faith, the yoke of tithes, so that

Ep. 24

A. D. 793.

Ep. 64

post Mai.  
796.

Ep. 67

post Aug.  
796.

they shall be fully exacted from house to house. It is worth considering whether the Apostles, taught by the God Christ Himself, and sent to preach to the world, required the exaction of tithes or anywhere demanded them. We know that the tithing of our substance is a very good thing; but it is better to sacrifice the tithe than to lose the faith. And indeed we, born and brought up and taught in the Catholic faith, scarce consent to tithe to the full our substance; how much does feeble faith not consent to the gift of tithe, and the infant will, and the covetous mind. But when faith has become strong, and the practice of Christianity is confirmed, then, as to perfect men, may stronger precepts be given, from which the mind, become solid in the Christian religion, may not recoil."

He then proceeds to urge that the adults of the conquered Huns shall not be baptized until they have first been carefully taught, "lest the ablution of sacred baptism of the body profit nothing." On this subject of the baptism of the Huns a long report is found in a tenth-century collection of Alcuin's letters, written by Paulinus the Patriarch of Aquileia, describing a discussion which took place at a meeting of bishops, or in the College of Bishops, summoned by King Pippin in the summer of this year 796.

Ep. 69.

In the autumn of 796, Alcuin again writes on the subject of tithes, this time addressing his friend<sup>1</sup> Megenfrid, the treasurer of the palace, and dealing not with the Huns, but with the Saxons. Alcuin writes to him as to one of the

<sup>1</sup> "Amice carissime."

principal advisers of Karl, enters fully into the oft repeated argument about milk and strong meat, and arrives thus at his point.

"If the yoke easy and the burden light of Christ had been preached to this most hard race, the Saxons, as carefully as the rendering of tithes was required, and the legal penalties for the very smallest faults, it may be that they would not have abhorred the sacraments of baptism. As to those who are sent to teach them, *sint praedicatores non praedatores*, let them preach, not prey."

In another letter of that autumn, he sends full Ep. 71. advice to Arno, the bishop of Salzburg, as to the manner of teaching the faith to the Huns. In the course of this letter he reminds Arno that the wretched race of the Saxons has repeatedly lost the sacrament of baptism, because it never had in heart the foundation of the faith.

In the year 801 the news reached Charlemagne that one Isaac the Jew, whom he had sent four years before to the King of Persia, was returning, bringing with him an elephant and many other presents. He had got as far as Fez. Special arrangements were made for bringing the elephant across the sea, and he arrived at Spezzia in October, wintering at Vercelli because the Alps were already covered with snow. Eginhart thought the arrival of the elephant at Aix-la-Chapelle to be of sufficient importance to have the precise day named, the only event thus honoured in a year rather full of events. It was the twentieth of July; and the elephant's name was Abulabaz. Under the year 810, another year full of important events, Eginhart records that Charlemagne

heard of a sudden and successful raid of Northmen upon the Frisians; he set off in great haste, summoned all his forces from all parts, crossed the Rhine at Lippenheim, and waited there a few days for the troops to assemble. He had taken his favourite animal with him. While he was waiting, the elephant died suddenly. See Appendix E.

The strange form of an elephant made it a frequent subject for the ornamentation of silk and woollen robes. We hear of silk pallia thus adorned in Charlemagne's lifetime, and it is probable that in a stuff of this kind his body was clothed in the grave at Aachen. Alcuin's great predecessor in learning, Aldhelm, had a chasuble of scarlet silk, wrought with black scrolls containing the representations of peacocks,<sup>1</sup> and this chasuble was preserved at Malmesbury in the time of William of Malmesbury, about 1140. The silk robes in which the body of St. Cuthbert was wrapped were ornamented with large circular spaces containing men on horseback with hawk and hound, and an island with trees, fishes, and eider ducks.

Plate VII shows one medallion of a piece of silk found on the body of Charlemagne when the grave was opened in the time of the present German Emperor. It is certainly not of Charlemagne's time. But it seems a fairly safe guess to suppose that his well-known regard for his favourite beast Abulabaz, who died only four years before him, caused his son to have the body wrapped in one of the robes decorated with elephants which we know that he possessed; and

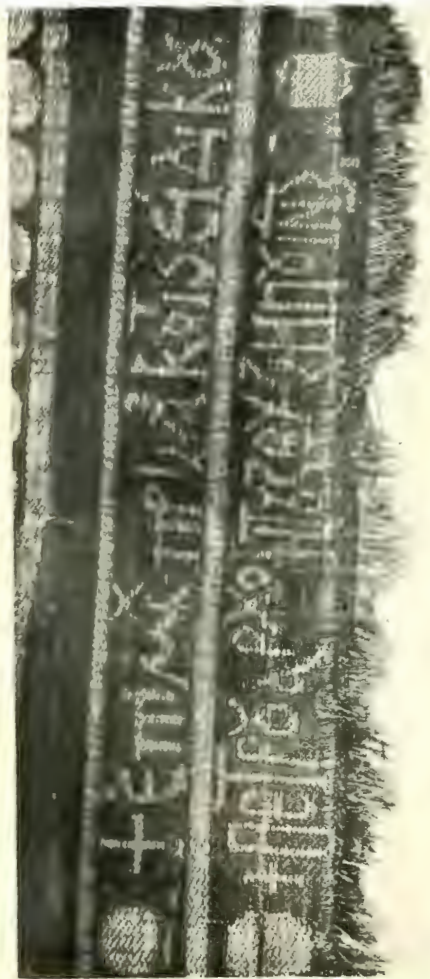
<sup>1</sup> See my *Aldhelm*, S.P.C.K., p. 129.



Elephant from the tomb of Charlemagne.



PLATE VIII



The fringe of the robe from the Tomb of Charlemagne.

*To face p. 291.*

that either in the year 1000, when Otho III opened the tomb, or in 1166, under Barbarossa, when Charlemagne was canonized, this piece of silk replaced the decayed robe originally buried there. We know of the two elephant-robcs referred to from Anastasius<sup>1</sup>, who gives an enormous list of the art works in gold and silver and silk and cloth of gold which were wrought for Leo III, Charlemagne's contemporary. One item is "two robes of Syrian purple, with borders of cloth of gold wrought with elephants". These robes Leo gave to Charlemagne.

We can all but give the exact date of this remarkable Byzantine beast. The inscription breaks off exactly where the date came. The Greek inscription worked in the stuff (Plate VIII) sets forth that it was made "under Michael the great chamberlain and controller of the privy purse of the emperor, when Peter was the manager of Zeuxippos", i. e. the Byzantine court factory in Negropont. Then comes the tantalizing *Indictionos* (? B), and the date is lost.

Dreger, in his *Europäische Weberei und Stickerei*,<sup>2</sup> gives some early examples of elephants in art. His Figure 37*b* shows an archaic silver relief of an elephant with a castle containing armed men. His Figure 37*a* shows a silk stuff of the seventh or eighth century, of Asiatic manufacture, with circular medallions containing elephants, griffins and winged horses, hippogryffs; and he remarks that "the elephant is one of the most holy beasts of Buddhism". This silk stuff is shown in our

<sup>1</sup> Mansi, *Concilia*, xiii. 937.

<sup>2</sup> Vienna, 1904.

Plate IX from a photograph of the original. A comparison of these elephants with the elephant shown in Plate VIII makes it fairly clear that the Charlemagne stuff is later than the other, while in all of the details of the beast itself, ears, three toes, eye, trunk, they are exactly the same. Each has a tree behind the elephant; but while the Charlemagne tree is a piece of stiff conventional work, the other is a natural tree with leaves and fruit, much resembling the vegetable ornamentation of some early Egyptian stuffs. Another feature pointing in the same direction is the thirty-two conventional patterns on the circular enclosing border. These in the earlier piece are twenty-eight plain disks.

There is an example of sculptured elephants something like this one, but much more like the real beast, especially about the feet. The elephants are the legs of the ivory chair<sup>1</sup> of Urso, at Canossa; he was Bishop of Bari and Canossa 1078-89.

Something should be said about the language spoken by the people of France and Germany in the times with which we are dealing, the reference to a rustic tongue being not infrequent.

In the Council convened by Charlemagne at Tours in the year 813, equally representing Eastern France and Western France, Austrasia and Neustria, Germany and the Galliae, the bishops in the Transalpine Empire were enjoined to be diligent in preaching, and to take care that their discourses should be rendered either into Romana Rustica or

<sup>1</sup> Cummings, *History of Architecture in Italy*, ii. 71.



Silk stuff of the seventh or eighth century.

into Theotisc or Deutsch, that all might understand. It may be of interest to give the earliest specimens we have of these native languages. Philologically, these examples are of the very highest importance.

In 841, after the dreadful battle of Fontenai near Vézelay in Burgundy, where Charles-le-Chauve and Louis-le-Germanique combined against their brother Lothar and their nephew Pepin and defeated them, they held a Congress at Strassburg to confirm their alliance.

Louis and Charles each made announcement in Latin of the purpose of their agreement, and of their intention to take in public an oath each to other. That done, Louis, as the elder, first took the oath. Being the ruler of the German portion of the empire, he took the oath in the language of the Franks, the Romance tongue, *Rustica Romana*, in order that the adherents of Charles might hear and understand his undertaking. These were the words of his oath, probably read by a chancellor, for the Latin account<sup>1</sup> says *haec se servaturum testatus est* :—

“Pro Deo amur et pro christian poblo et nostro commun salvament, dist di<sup>2</sup> in avant, in quant Deus savir et podir me dunat<sup>3</sup>, si salvarai eo cist meon fradre Karlo, et in aiudha et in cadhuna<sup>4</sup> cosa, si cum om<sup>5</sup> per dreit<sup>6</sup> son fradra salvar dist, in o quid il mi altresi fazet<sup>7</sup>; et ab Ludher nul plaid numquam prindrai, qui meon vol<sup>8</sup> cist meon fradre Karle in damno sit.”

Then Charles said the same in the language of the Germans, the Teudisc or Deutsch tongue. The

<sup>1</sup> Pertz, *Monumenta (Scriptores)*, ii. 665, 6.

<sup>2</sup> de ista die.

<sup>3</sup> savoir et pouvoir me donne.

<sup>4</sup> chacune.

<sup>5</sup> comme homme.

<sup>6</sup> droit.

<sup>7</sup> faciet.

<sup>8</sup> secundum meum velle.

Latin account uses a different phrase here, *hæc eadem verba testatus est*.

“In Godes minna ind in thes christianes folches ind unser bedhero gehaltmissi, fon thesemo dage frammordes, so fram so mir Got geuizci indi mahd furgibit, so haldi thesan minan brudher, soso man mit rehtu sinan brudher scal, in thiu, thaz er mig so sama duo; indi mit Ludheren in nohheiniu thing ne gegango, the minan uuillon imo ce scadhen uuerdhen.”

The peoples then swore an oath, each in their own, not the other's, tongue. The Frank people swore in the Romance language:—

“Si Lodhuvigs sacrament, que son fradre Karlo iurat, conservat, et Karlus meos sendra de suo part non los tanit, si io returnar non l'int pois: ne io ne neuls, cui eo returnar int pois, in nulla aiudha contra Lodhuuig nun li iv er.”

The others then swore in the Teudisc language:—

“Oba Karl then eid, then er sinemo brudher Ludhuuige gesuor, geleistit, indi Ludhuuige min herro then er imo gesuor forbriehit, ob ih inan es iruuenden ne mag: noh ih no thero nohhein, then ih es iruuenden mag, uuidhar Karle imo ce follusti ne uuirdhit.”

An example of language nearly a hundred years earlier than this is found in the renunciation of the devil and the declaration of belief in God which our own Boniface required of his converts from paganism. The form is found attached to the decrees of a Council<sup>1</sup> held by Boniface, probably in the year 743. It exists in a Vatican manuscript (Vat. Palat. nro. 577, fol. 6, 7), which Pertz and

<sup>1</sup> *Concilium Liptincense.*

conyuncat. uulibaldur episcopus demonum cepio achiradi madulpeur episcopus  
 ciuit. uulidunir. hufurpeur episcopus ciuit birentionir. leodenir gur episcopus ciuitay bio  
 zur. eufrebiur episcopus ciuit coponir. zello episcopus ciuit coepur. diddo manipolur episcopus  
 ciuit undecaur. + Paulrudur ab demonum cepio reidionisio. kurt prindur. ab  
 de pto zaymuno. johannir ab de pto plodo uldo. dnuht zungur ab de gemelico  
 uuthleaur ab de punta nellur. uurt mugur ab de centulu. leodhugur ab  
 de copberu manure ab de plunniaco. dnuhtugur ab de noualicio. uualdo ab  
 de pto iohanne. fubizandur ab de bur brunno. zodobatur ab de pur bu ar  
 zehulbatur ab de fubapur uindrudur ab de pto columba ebaur prindur.  
 ab de ual dnie zepurur ab de nuu ellu. puzingurur ab de urico.

Illustratio dia-  
 bolu lingue  
 Testis ueteris.

Porpachur diabolus. dnuht. ec porpacho diabolus end illum diabol  
 zelde pappon. end ec porpacho illum diabol zelde end illum diabol uuthaun  
 papp. end ec porpacho illum diabol uuthaun und uupudum thinnu ch  
 in deuodet end de paxnote endo allum than unholdum thethipuzenotay

¶ sint

other scholars believe to be of contemporary date. The form is of such extreme interest that I have had that part of it which is at the foot of folio 6 photographed, by the kind help of a friend in the Vatican Library; see figure 10, the four lowest lines.

This is the form:—

“Forsachistu diabolae? Ec forsacho diabolae.

End allum diabolgelde? End ec forsacho allum diabolgeldae.

End allum dioboles uuercum? End ec forsacho allum dioboles uuercum and uuordum thunaer ende uuoden ende saxnote ende allum them unholdum the hira genotas sint.

Gelobistu in Got alamehtigen fadaer? Ec gelobo in Got alamechtigen fadaer.

Gelobistu in Crist Godes suno? Ec gelobo in Crist Godes suno.

Gelobistu in halogen Gast? Ec gelobo in halogen Gast.”

An isolated piece of early “Saxon” is found in one of the letters contained in vol. iii of the *Epistolae* of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, the volume containing *Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini Aevi* (Berlin, 1892). The letter is No. 146 of the “letters of Boniface and Lull”. It is written by a poor and humble monk to a personage described as *reverentissimus atque sanctissimus*, who would appear to have had the reputation of not carrying out his purposes. The proverb looks like the eighth century; Brandl thinks that it is pre-Christian. The dialect is probably Northumbrian, varied by a West-Saxon or a German scribe.

“I hear of thee that thou proposest to make



a journey: I exhort thee not to fail. Do what thou hast begun. Remember the Saxon saying

Oft daedlata dôme foreldit

Sigisitha gahuem sunyltit thi âna ”.

That is, Often the tardy man (deed-late) loses glory, some victory; thus he dies solitary.

The suggested date of the letter is A.D. 757–786.

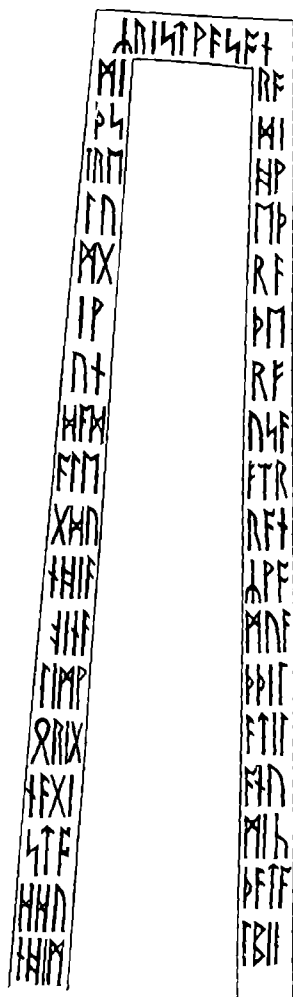
Mention was made on page 57 of the inscriptions which exist on the great shaft of a cross in the churchyard of Bewcastle in Cumberland. These inscriptions are the earliest extant pieces of English prose. They give the names of the King of Mercia, Wulfhere, his queen and her sister, with the date “first year of Egfrith King of this realm”, that is, A.D. 670. We have another inscription dated in Egfrith’s reign, that, namely, on the dedication stone of the basilica of St. Paul at Jarrow, “in the 15th year of King Egfrith and the fourth year of Abbat Ceolfrid”, so that the manner of dating the Bewcastle cross was that usual at the time; the Jarrow inscription is in Latin<sup>1</sup>. Plate XI shows a facsimile of all except the two top lines (which were beyond my reach) of the main inscription on the Bewcastle cross, a copy of which is given in a note on page 57. The runes on Plate XI begin with the *gar* of *Wothgar*, the second of the three persons who “set up this slender token of victory in memory of Alehfrith once King and son of Oswy”, the half-brother of King Egfrith; mention has been made of him on page 9.

The earliest pieces of English verse in existence

<sup>1</sup> A photograph of this inscription is reproduced at p. 209 of my *Conversion of the Heptarchy*.



Runes incised on the Bowcastle Cross.



Runes incised on the Ruthwell Cross.

To face p. 297.

in their original form are found on the Cross at Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, a monument of equal magnificence with the Bewcastle Cross, and probably about fourteen years later. King Egfrith was slain by the Picts in 685, and the Angles were never dominant in the south-west of Scotland after his death. Plate XII shows a portion of the many runes on this great monument, which is described at pages 235-254 of my little book on *Theodore and Wilfrith*. Reading across the top and down the right side the runes are as follows:—

*Krist wæs on rodi hwethræ ther fusæ fearran  
kwomu æththilæ til anum ic thæt al bih[eald].*  
Christ was on the cross, and there hastening from far came they to the noble prince. I that all beh[eald].

Beginning at the top again and reading down the left side, we have:—

*Mith strelum giwundad alegdun hie hinc lim-  
woerigne gistoddun him (æt his licces heafdum).*  
With missiles wounded, they laid Him down limb-weary, they stood at His body's head.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Alcuin's latest days.—His letters mention his ill health.—His appeals for the prayers of friends, and of strangers.—An affectionate letter to Charlemagne.—The death scene.

Ep. 147  
June 26,  
800.

ALCUIN'S health began to break in the later part of the year 800, or early in 801. In June, 800, he wrote a letter to Arno of Salzburg which shows that he had in the first days of the month travelled with Karl from Tours to Aix by way of Orleans and Paris, and after a debate with Felix the Adoptionist had returned to Tours. We do not find in this long letter any mention of failing health. Indeed, he overflows with affectionateness, a feeling always displayed in his letters to Arno. "I am sending to your dearness three little gifts; a tent to protect your venerated head from the rain<sup>1</sup>, a bed-cover to keep warm your sacred breast, and a glass in which your bread may be dipped at table, that whenever they are used they may bring to your sanctity a recollection of my name."

In this letter he describes his debate with Felix.

"I have had a great dispute with the heretic Felix in presence of the lord king and holy fathers. He was obdurate; would recognize the authority of no one who took an opposite view; held himself to

<sup>1</sup> This must have come very near to being an umbrella.

be wiser than all in this, that he was more foolish than all. But the divine clemency touched his heart; he confessed that he had of late been carried away by a false opinion; he professed that he held firmly the Catholic faith. We could not see into his mind, and we left the cause to the Judge of secret things. We handed him over to Laidrad [the Bishop of Lyon (798-814)] our dearest son, who is to keep him and see whether it is true that he believes, and whether he will write letters condemning the heresy which he has preached. The king had intended to send him to Archbishop Riculf [of Maintz] to be kept and chastised; and his presbyter, who is worse than his master, was to be sent to you and your providence. But now that they say they are converted to the Catholic faith, they have been handed over to Laidrad, who is to test their sincerity."

On May 24, 801, Alcuin received a letter from Arno, Archbishop of Salzburg, at nine o'clock in the morning, and the messenger told him he must leave again at three in the afternoon. In the course of the six hours he dictated fourteen paragraphs in reply. One of these concerned his health. "My Candidus has been able to tell you all about my weakness. It is therefore superfluous to write on the subject, except to say that all bodily fitness has left me, and pleasures of the world have fled far away."

Ep. 189  
May, 802.

The interesting remark in this letter that the messenger from Salzburg to Tours, a distance of some six hundred miles, must go back in six hours is not the only interesting detail. We learn, also, that many letters were lost in the difficulties of the

journey. The eyes of the Sassenach of to-day, who rides some forty miles in a Scottish mail-cart in Sutherland, and sees the letters shied out into kail-yards and steadings, are opened to the possibilities of loss in primitive methods of letter-carrying. The admirable arrangements of the early Roman empire, for conveyance of men and things, had been thrown into chaos long before Alcuin's time, and special messengers, or "runners", were used by important people for the transmission of letters.

Ep. 189  
May, 802. "To Arno. My devotedness is greatly grieved by the unfaithfulness of those whom I have trusted with letters to you. Last year I sent to you on your return from Italy two letters, and I also sent to you other two to meet you on your arrival at the palace [Aachen]. I do not know that any of them reached your presence."

Ep. 193. Alcuin wrote to the Emperor Charles in 802, or possibly in 803, begging that he might be allowed to stay quietly at St. Martin's, Tours. "I am so very weak in body that I am unequal to any more travelling or labour. To speak truth, all the fitness and strength of my body has left me; it has gone, and day by day will be further away; I fear it will never come back to me in this world."

Ep. 194. Again, writing to Arno in 802 or 803, he tells him how he longs to see him at St. Martin's, "not for the sake of your black hair, but for your most sweet eyes and lovable talk." Though bidden to the palace, where he would have met him, his poor little body was too weak for the journey: he could not go.

Ep. 196  
A. D. 802-3. In another letter to Arno he writes: "I have been summoned to my lord David [Charlemagne],

but my bodily weakness prevented my going: the will of God detained me." We have his letter of excuse to the emperor. He begins with the Ep. 198 simile of the aged soldier, unable not only to bear A. D. 802-3. the weight of armour, but even to support his own body. Then he proceeds: "To speak simply, let not the mind of my lord be inflamed against me for my delay; I am not strong enough to come. A more favourable opportunity may occur."

He became more than ever pressing in his entreaties that his friends would pray for him. In seeking for the prayers of others we find him turning to a part of England of which we do not appear to have any other mention in his letters, Ep. 230. namely, Norfolk and Suffolk, called then the dioceses of Elmham and Dunwich (see page 159). In like manner, and for a like purpose, he wrote to the brethren of Candida Casa, i. e. Whithorn in Galloway, the following letter:—

"I pray the unanimity of your piety to have my Ep. 271 name in memory. Deign to intercede for my A. D. 804. littleness in the church of your most holy father Nynia the bishop.

"He shone bright with many virtues, as has recently been related to me by a skilful poem which our faithful disciples the scholars of the church of York have sent. In that poem I have discerned in that which I have read there both the skill of the writer and the holiness of him who wrought the miracles. Wherefore, I pray you, by your holy intercessions to commend me to his prayers, that by the most holy prayers of the same your father, and by the assiduous intercessions of your love, I may receive pardon for my sins, by the mercy of



the God Christ, and may come to the communion of saints who have bravely conquered the labours of the world, and have received the crown of perpetual praise.

I send to the body of our holy father Nyniga (*sic*) a robe of whole silk, that my name may be remembered, and that I may merit to have always the pious intercession both of him and of you.

May Christ's right hand protect and rule you, brothers."

Here is a very touching letter, which sets clearly before our eyes the dear affectionate old man—old as men then counted age—beaten at last by bodily weakness, while his heart was as loving as ever. It is addressed to "the most longed for lord David, most worthy of all honour."

Ep. 170  
A.D. 801,  
early  
autumn.

"Day by day, with hungry intentness of heart, my ears hanging on the words of messengers, I wondered anxiously what they could tell me of my most sweet lord David: when he would come home; when he would return to his own land. At last, though late, the wished-for voice sounded in the ears of my desire: 'He will soon come. He has already crossed the Alps, he whose presence thou hast desired, O Albinus, with such fervour of mind.' And then I cried over and over again with tearful voice: 'O Lord Jesu, why dost thou not give me the wings of an eagle? Why dost thou not grant me the translation of the prophet Abacuc<sup>1</sup> for one day, or even one hour, that I might embrace and kiss the steps of him my dearest one, and—above all that can be loved in

<sup>1</sup> Dan. xiv. 35, Vulgate.

this world—see the most clear eyes of my sweetest one, and hear his most joyous words. And why dost thou, mine enemy of fever, oppress me at this inopportune time, and not permit me to have my wonted alacrity of body, so that, though tardily, that might be accomplished which promptly it cannot do.’”

The dates and the story of his final illness and his death are found, as we have seen (Ch. II), in the life written about twenty years later by a pupil of Alcuin's favourite priest Sigulf, and more concisely in the Annals of Pettau, a monastery not far from Salzburg, and therefore likely to be well-informed. Some of the touching facts should be repeated here.

Early in 804 he was evidently failing. He prayed earnestly that he might die on the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles in tongues of fire. All through Lent he was able to move about, night after night, to the several basilicas of saints which were included in the monastery of St. Martin, cleansing himself from his sins with much groaning. He kept the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection; but on the night of the Ascension he fell upon his couch, oppressed by languor even unto death, and unable to speak. The Annals of Pettau tell us that this was a paralytic stroke, and that it fell on Thursday, May 8, in the evening, after sunset. On the third day before his death he recovered the power of speech, and with a voice of exultation sang through his favourite antiphon, *O clavis David*, based upon Isaiah xxii. 22: "The key of the house of David I will lay upon his shoulder; so he shall

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open and none shall shut, he shall shut and none shall open." Then he repeated a number of verses from several psalms: "Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks." "O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of hosts; blessed are they that dwell in Thy house." "Unto Thee do I lift up mine eyes." "One thing I have desired of the Lord." "Unto Thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul." And others of like kind. On the day of Pentecost, matins having been said, at full dawn, just at the hour at which he was wont to enter the church for Mass, the holy soul of Alcuin was released from the flesh. He had prayed months before that he might die on Whit Sunday; on Whit Sunday he died.

## APPENDIX A

(Page 26)

It would appear that when Alcuin was not allowed by Charlemagne to retire to Fulda, as he had wished to do, an impulse of affectionate responsibility brought him to pour himself out in advice and help to those with whom he had hoped to spend his last days. This is his letter to the monks of Fulda.

"To the most holy, and by us with all love to Ep. 186  
be cherished, the brethren of the holy Boniface<sup>1</sup>, A.D. 801-  
our father and protector, the humble levite Alcuin  
wishes eternal beatitude in Christ.

"I am mindful of your most sweet love, with which you most benignantly received me long ago with all joy. Greatly as I then was glad in your presence, so greatly is my mind now tortured in your absence, desiring to see you whom it loves, to have present you whom it esteems. Since this is denied to the eyes of the flesh, let love be made perpetual by spiritual presence; love which can come to an end has never been true love.

"Let us therefore aim at that which is never to have an end, where is blessed eternity and eternal blessedness. That ye may deserve to attain to this, let no labour affright you, no blandishments

<sup>1</sup> *Bonefatii*. This was, of course, the great English missionary Archbishop of Mainz, martyred at Dorkum in 755.

of this life keep you back. Let there always burn in your hearts the love of Him that appeared as their companion on the way to the two apostles, who, when He was removed from their carnal eyes, said 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?' In the writings of the holy fathers let us seek Him whom they, not yet learned in the Scriptures, understood. Now all is open; now He has opened the meaning of Whom it was said 'Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.' Now the gospel truth shines forth in all the world; now the enigmas of the prophets are clearer than the sun in the churches of Christ. This light of truth follow ye with your whole soul and understand Christ; in it love Christ, follow Christ; that cleaving to His most sacred footsteps ye may merit to have in His most holy presence life eternal.

"Be mindful of the apostolic mandate,<sup>1</sup> 'My brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable; always in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Be stedfast in your own place and in the devotion of your purpose. Leave not your most holy father. Stand about his sepulchre, that he may offer your prayers to Almighty God. Desire not the vanities of the world, but love celestial blessings. 'And,' as the teacher of the Gentiles says,<sup>2</sup> 'be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' It is a base thing

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xii. 2.

for a monk to lose the spiritual warfare and to immerse himself in the affairs of the world.

"Let there be no murmurings among you, no hatreds, no envyings, no evil speakings.<sup>1</sup> Judge not one another. Let everything be done in humility and concord, in obedience to those set over you, not to the eye only but from the heart, as in the presence of God. Let your obedience, your love, your humility be known to all, that very many may be taught by your good examples and may advance in the salvation of their souls.

"If the venerable father Bouulf,<sup>2</sup> my most loved friend, is unable by reason of his weakness to observe the full hardness of the life by rule, judge ye not him, but obey him from your heart and love him as a father, for he will have to give account of your souls. He labours for you in wanderings and journeyings, that you may live quiet and keep the life by rule and have what is necessary for your bodies. Do you act as very dear sons. Fear God, love God, and have care of your most holy father in your prayers, that he may live in long prosperity with you, and that he with you and you with him may merit to have everlasting life.

"Warn, instruct, teach your young men in all holy discipline and Catholic doctrine; that they may be held worthy to stand in the place of you and to send up prayers for you wherever you may remain. Warn them about chastity of body, about confession of their sins, about study and

Based on 1 Pet. ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> He was Abbat of Fulda from 780 to 802, when he resigned the office.

manual labour without murmur, and about all things which seem necessary at their age. And let them become subject to their elders and masters in good humility, in most pious religion. And do you who are older afford to them good examples, so that they may learn not from your words only but by the religion of your life. Let them not be given to luxury, not slaves to drink, not despisers, not following empty games; but let them learn to be good servants in the house of God, that by the intercession of holy Boniface their father they may deserve to receive from the God Christ blessing and favour.

“And as to myself, I pray you have me in perpetual recollection with yourselves in your holy prayers. For the time is at hand which no man can escape. Let each one prepare himself, that he may appear in the presence of his God not naked but clothed with good practices.

“I have sent a pall for the body of the holy Boniface our father, on whose holy intercession for my sins I place great reliance; that I, a sinner, may even merit pardon in that day, when your holiness shall receive the crown of eternal blessedness.

“To you, O most holy presbyters, I have sent a little collection of words for the Mass, for use on various days on which any one desires to offer prayers to God, whether in honour of the Holy Trinity<sup>1</sup>, or in love of wisdom, or in tears of penitence, or in perfect love, or asking for angelic support, or in address to any one of all the saints;

<sup>1</sup> This, no doubt, is the origin of the tradition that Alcuin wrote the Office for Trinity Sunday. See pp. 20, 173.

or if any one wish to offer prayers for his own sins, or for any living friend, or for many friends, or for brothers departing this life; or, especially, when one wishes to invoke the intercessions of blessed Mary, mother of God, ever virgin; or when any desires to chant and invoke by his prayers the most pious presence of the most holy Boniface your father. All these things we have been at the pains to send to you by the intuition of love, praying your humility to receive benignantly that which with the fullest love we send you. Let each make of it such use as each pleases; and blame me not in this office of love. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind<sup>1</sup> and do always such things as are pleasing to God and all saints, that with them they may be found worthy to enjoy the perpetual vision of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“May the Lord God hearken to your holy blessedness mindful of me in all holy supplication, and deign to grant unto you present felicity and future beatitude, my most loved brothers.

“I beg that you make known to me by letter from your blessedness, if this letter reaches you, and what it pleases your prudence to do. What it is mine to do I have done, fulfilling the office of affection in the love and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv. 5.



## APPENDIX B

(Page 91)

We have the report which the legates George and Theophylact sent to Pope Hadrian on their mission. No reference is made in it to the matter of the Archbishopric of Lichfield. Iaenbricht is still the sole southern archbishop, and Higbert of Lichfield is only bishop.

Ep. 10  
A.D. 786.

"Your holy prayers favouring us, we set sail with joyous countenance obeying your commands. But the tempter hindered us with a contrary wind. He who stills the waves hearkened unto your deprecatory entreaty, calmed the blue strait, led us across to a safe haven, and brought us to the shore of the English unharmed, but afflicted with many dangers.

"We were received first by Iaenberht, Archbishop of the holy church of Dorovernia,<sup>1</sup> whose other name is Cantia, where the holy Augustine rests in the body; dwelling there we gave him the necessary information.

"Going on thence, we arrived at the dwelling of Offa, King of the Mercians. With great joy, for reverence of the blessed Peter and honour of your apostolate, he received both us and the messages sent from the highest see. Then Offa the King of the Mercians, and Cynewulf the King

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that no mention is made of a king of Kent. See p. 91.

of the West Saxons, came together in a council to which we delivered your holy writings; and they forthwith promised that they would correct the vices named.<sup>1</sup> Then, after counsel held with the said kings, pontiffs, and elders of the land, considering that that corner of the world stretches far and wide, we gave permission to Theophylact, the venerable bishop, to go to the King of the Mercians<sup>2</sup> and the parts of Britain.

"I for my part, taking with me the companion whom your most excellent King Karl sent with us out of reverence to your apostolate, Wighod, abbat and presbyter, went on to the country of the Northanymbrians, to Aelfuald the King, and the Archbishop of the holy church of the city of York, Eanbald. The King was living far off in the north, and the said Archbishop sent his messengers to the King, who at once with all joy fixed a day for a council,<sup>3</sup> to which the chief men of the district came, ecclesiastical and secular. It was related in our hearing that other vices,<sup>4</sup> and by no means the least, needed correction. For, as you know, from the time of the holy pontiff Augustine no Roman priest<sup>5</sup> [or bishop] has been sent there except ourselves. We wrote a Capitular of the several matters, and brought them to their hearing, discussing each in order. They, with all

<sup>1</sup> See the list on the next pages.

<sup>2</sup> This would indicate that the *aula* at which they had met the king and held the council was one of Offa's outlying manors, and not his central royal residence.

<sup>3</sup> Supposed, on slight reasoning, to have been held at Corbridge, see p. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Besides those in the Pope's list.

<sup>5</sup> *Sacerdos*. It is uncertain to how late a date *sacerdos* is to be rendered bishop.

humility of subjection and with clear will, honoured both your admonition and our insignificance, and pledged themselves to obey in all things. Then we handed to them your letters to be read, charging them to keep the sacred decrees in themselves and in those dependent on them.

"These are the chapters which we delivered to them to be kept.<sup>1</sup>

"1. Of keeping the faith of the Nicene Council.

"2. Of Baptism, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer.

"3. Of two Councils to be held every year.

"4. Of the service and vesture of Canons and Monks.

"5. Of the elections of Abbats and Abbesses.

"6. Of ordaining Priests and Deacons.

"7. Of the Canonical Hours.

"8. Of the rights of churches granted by the See of Rome.

"9. That ecclesiastics do not take food secretly.

"10. That priests do not perform sacred rites with bare legs<sup>2</sup>; of the offerings of the faithful; that chalice and paten for sacrificing to God be not made from ox-horn, because they are bloody; that bishops in their councils judge not secular matters.

"11. Let kings and princes study justice, obey

<sup>1</sup> Wattenbach and Dümmler give only the headings of the chapters, as here. The chapters themselves will be found in Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 448-58.

<sup>2</sup> There are many injunctions that priests and others serving at the altar must wear drawers. There is quite a large literature on the subject of these garments (*femoralia*), in which such of the early fathers as are given to symbolism find symbolic meanings. They were an essential part of the dress of the Levitical priesthood (Exod. xxviii. 42, 43).

bishops, venerate the church, employ prudent counsellors.

"12. That in the ordination of kings no one permit the assent of evil men to prevail; kings must be lawfully elected by the priesthood and the elders of the people, and be not born of adultery or incest; let honour be paid by all to kings; let no one be a detractor of a king; let no one dare to conspire for the death of a king, because he is the anointed of the Lord; if any one have part in such wickedness, if he be a bishop or of priestly order let him be thrust out from it, and every one who has assented to such sacrilege shall perish in the eternal fetters of anathema. For by examples among yourselves it has frequently been proved that those who have been the cause of the death of sovereigns have soon lost their life, being outside the protection of divine and human law.

"13. That powerful and rich men decree just judgements.

"14. Of the forbidding of fraud, violence, rapine; that unjust tribute be not imposed on churches; of keeping peace.

"15. Unlawful and incestuous unions are forbidden to all, alike with the handmaids of God and other illicit persons and with those in affinity and kindred and with other men's wives.

"16. Lawful heirship is by decree refused to the children of harlots.

"17. Of tithes to be given; of usury to be forbidden; of just measures and equal weights to be established.

"18. Of vows to be fulfilled.

"19. We have added that each faithful Christian must take example from Catholic men; and if anything has remained of the rites of pagans it must be plucked out, contemned, cast away.

"For God made man fair in form and appearance; but the pagans with diabolical instinct have inflicted most horrible scars,<sup>1</sup> as Prudentius says:

He tainted the innocent ground<sup>2</sup> with sordid spots,  
for he evidently does injury to God, who fouls and defiles His creature. Without doubt a man would receive a rich reward who underwent for God this injury of staining. But to one who does it from gentile superstition it profiteth nothing, as circumcision to the Jews without belief of heart.

"Further, you wear your clothes after the manner of the gentiles whom by God's help your fathers drove out of the land by arms. It is a wonderful and astonishing thing that you imitate the fashion of those whose life you always hate.

"You have the evil habit of maiming your horses: you slit their nostrils, you fasten their ears together and make them deaf, you cut off their tails; and though you could have them entirely unblemished, you will not have that, but make them odious to every one.

"We have heard also that when you go to law with one another you cast lots after the fashion of the gentiles. This is counted as completely sacrilegious in these days.

"Further, many of you eat horses, which no Christian in eastern lands does. This you must

<sup>1</sup> Probably referring to the practice of tattooing.

<sup>2</sup> Prudentius (*Dipt.* i. 3) has "Adam" not "humum".

give up. Strive earnestly that all your things be done decently and in order.

"20. Of sins to be confessed and penance to be done.

"These decrees, most blessed Pope Hadrian, we propounded in a public council in presence of King Aelfuuald, Archbishop Eanbald, and all the bishops and abbats of that region, also of the ealdormen, dukes, and people of the land. And they, as we said above, with all devotion of mind vowed that they would in all things keep them according to the utmost of their power, the divine clemency aiding them. And they confirmed them in our hand (in your stead) with the sign of the holy cross. And afterwards they wrote on the paper of this page with careful pen, affixing the mark of the holy cross.

"I Aelfuualdus king of the Transhumbrane race, consenting, have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"I Dilberch<sup>1</sup> prelate<sup>2</sup> of the church of Hexham joyfully have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"I Eanbald by the grace of God archbishop of the holy church of York have subscribed to the pious and catholic force of this document with the sign of the holy cross.

"I Hyguuald bishop of the church of Lindisfarne obediently have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

<sup>1</sup> This was Tilbert, Bishop of Hexham (Augustald) 781-789. There is no reason of seniority or priority that should make him sign above the Archbishop. If, as is probable, the Council was held at Corbridge, in his diocese, he might sign first as bishop of the place.

<sup>2</sup> *Fraesul*. In the other signatures *episcopus* is used.

"I Aedilberch bishop of Whithern<sup>1</sup> suppliant have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"I Aldulf bishop of the church of Mayo<sup>2</sup> have subscribed with devoted will.

"I Aetheluuin<sup>3</sup> bishop have subscribed by delegates.

"I Sigha the patrician with placid mind have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.<sup>4</sup>

"To these most salutary admonitions we too, presbyters and deacons of churches and abbats of mouasteries, judges, chief men, and nobles, unanimously consent and have subscribed.

"I duke Alrich have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"I duke Siguulf have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"I abbat Aldberich<sup>5</sup> have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"I abbat Erhart have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"All this having been accomplished, and the benediction pronounced, we set out again, taking with us illustrious representatives of the king and

<sup>1</sup> *Candens-casa*, usually *Candida-casa*, so named from its being the first church built of white stone in that region.

<sup>2</sup> *Myensis*. See p. 156. Aldulf was consecrated in 786, the year of this Council, by Eanbald, Tilberht, and Hygbald, at Corbridge. It is on this account that the Germans think the Council was held at Corbridge. Hexham would equally meet the case, and better meets the suggestion of a previous note.

<sup>3</sup> Not as yet identified.

<sup>4</sup> It is rather quaint that Sigha should have chosen *placido mente* as the phrase to describe his manner of assent to No. 12 above, for two years later he killed King Aelfwald, and he eventually died by his own hand.

<sup>5</sup> Of Ripon, 786-787.

the archbishop, the readers Maluin<sup>1</sup> to wit and Pyttel. We travelled together, and they brought the above decrees to a council of the Mercians, at which the glorious King Offa was present, with the senators of the kingdom, the Archbishop Iænbercht<sup>2</sup> of the holy Dorovernian Church, and the other bishops of those parts. In presence of the council the several chapters were read out in a clear voice, and lucidly expounded both in Latin and in Teuton so that all could understand. Then all with one voice and with eager mind, grateful for the admonitions of your apostolate, promised, that they would according to their ability with most ready will keep in all respects these statutes, the divine favour supporting them. Moreover, as at the northern council, the king and his chief men, the archbishop and his colleagues, confirmed them in our hand (in the stead of your lordship) with the sign of the holy cross, and again ratified this present document with the sacred sign.

“I Ieanbrecht<sup>2</sup>, archbishop of the holy church of Dorovernum, suppliant have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

“I Offa king of the Mercians, consenting to these statutes, with ready will have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

“I Hugibreht<sup>3</sup> bishop of the church of Lichtenfelse have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

“I Ceoluulf bishop of the Lindisfaras<sup>4</sup> have subscribed.

<sup>1</sup> Some read Alquinum here, and make Alcuin one of the two lectores.

<sup>2</sup> The text has two forms of this variously spelled name.

<sup>3</sup> Higbert of Lichfield 779-802.

<sup>4</sup> Lindsey 767-796. The Lindisfaras had nothing to do with Lindisfarne.



"I Unnuona bishop of the Legorenses<sup>1</sup> have subscribed.

"I Alchard<sup>2</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Eadberht<sup>3</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Chumbrech<sup>4</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Harchel<sup>5</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Acine<sup>6</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Tora<sup>7</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Uuaremund<sup>8</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Adalmund<sup>9</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"I Adored<sup>10</sup> bishop have subscribed.

"Edrabord abbat. Alemund abbat. Boduuin abbat. Uttel abbat.

"I duke Brorda have subscribed with the sign of the holy cross.

"I duke Eadbald have subscribed.

"I duke Bercoald have subscribed.

"I count Othbald have subscribed."

<sup>1</sup> Leicester 781-802.

<sup>2</sup> Elmham 786-811, see p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> London 794-801.

<sup>4</sup> Kinbert of Winchester 785-801.

<sup>5</sup> Hendred of Dunwich, 781-789.

<sup>6</sup> Esne of Hereford 781-789. <sup>7</sup> Tolta of Selsey 781-789.

<sup>8</sup> Rochester 785-803.

<sup>9</sup> Sherborn 766-793.

<sup>10</sup> Worcester 781-798.

## APPENDIX C

(Page 177)

Sed obsecro si vestrae placeat pietati ut exemplarium illius libelli domno dirigatur apostolico aliud quoque Paulino patriarchae similiter Richobono et Teudolfo episcopis doctoribus et magistris ut singuli pro se respondeant Flaccus vero tuus tecum laborat in reddenda ratione catholicae fidei tantum detur ei spatium ut quiete et diligenter liceat illi cum pueris suis considerare sensus quid unusquisque diceret de sententiis quas posuit prefatus subversor in suo libello et tempore praefinito a vobis ferantur vestrae auctoritati singulorum responsa et quidquid in isto libello vel sententiarum vel sensuum contra catholicam fidem inveniatur omnia catholicis exemplis destruantur et si aequaliter et concorditer cunctorum in professione vel defensione catholicae fidei resonant scripta intelligi potest quod per omnium ora et corda unus loquitur spiritus sin autem diversum aliquid inveniatur in dictis vel scriptis cuiuslibet videatur quis maiore auctoritate sanctarum scripturarum vel catholicorum patrum innitatur et huic laudis palma tribuatur qui divinis magis inhaereat testimoniis.

## APPENDIX D

(Page 197)

The following are the passages of the Donation which touch the question of the joint patronage of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Church of Rome. The edition from which they are taken is thus described on the title-page:—

Constantini M. Imp. Donatio Sylvestro Papae Rom. inscripta : non ut a Gratiano truncatim, sed integre edita : cum versione Graeca duplici, Theodori Balsamonis, Patriarchae Antiocheni, et Matthaei Blastaris, I(uris) C(anonici) Graeci.

Typis Gotthardi Voegelini

(1610).

The first page of the Latin Edict is not represented in the Greek Thespisma. It ends with the words : "Postquam docente beato Sylvestro trina me mersione verbi salutis purificatum et ab omni leprae squalore mundatum beneficiis beati Petri et Pauli Apostolorum cognovi."

Iustum quippe est, ut ibi lex sancta caput teneat principatus, ubi sanctorum legum institutor salvator noster beatum Petrum Apostolatus obtinere praecepit cathedram, ubi et crucis patibulum sustinens beatae mortis poculum sumpsit suique magistri et domini imitator apparuit : et ibi gentes pro Christi nominis confessione colla flectant, ubi

eorum doctor beatus Paulus Apostolus pro Christo extenso collo martyris coronatus est: illic usque in finem quaerant *doctorem, ubi sancti doctoris corpus quiescit*; the Greek has τὸν διδάσκαλον ὅπου τὰ τῶν ἁγίων λείψανα ἀναπαύονται.

Construximus itaque ecclesias beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum, quas argento et auro locupletavimus: ubi sacratissima eorum corpora cum magno honore recondentes, et thecas ipsorum ex electro (cui nulla fortitudo praevallet elementorum) construximus, et crucem ex auro purissimo et gemmis pretiosis per singulas eorum thecas posuimus et clavis aureis confiximus.

Pro quo concedimus ipsis sanctis Apostolis dominis meis, beatissimo Petro et Paulo, et per eos etiam beato Silvestro patri nostro summo Pontifici et universali urbis Romae Papae et omnibus eius successoribus Pontificibus, qui usque in finem mundi in sede beati Petri erunt sessuri, atque de praesenti concedimus palatium imperii nostri Lateranense, quod omnibus praefertur atque prae-cellit palatiis.

Si quis autem (quod non credimus) temerator aut contemptor extiterit, aeternis condemnationibus subiaceat innodatus, et sanctos Dei principes Apostolorum Petrum et Paulum, sibi in praesenti et in futura vita sentiat contrarios, atque in inferno

inferiori conerematus cum diabolo et omnibus deficiat impiis.

The learned editor makes an interesting comment on the recognition by Constantine of the *par utriusque meritum*, the equal merit of the two apostles Peter and Paul. The fate of Paul, he says, resembles that of Pollux. The two brothers, Castor and Pollux, had a Temple in common in the Forum, but it came to be called the Temple of Castor alone.

In using such a document as this, the temptation to alter words must have been very great. As an example of such change, the words which follow on our first quotation may be cited—"utile iudicavimus una cum omnibus satrapis et universo senatu, optimatibus etiam et cuncto populo Romani gloriæ imperii subiacente." For *gloriæ* Gratian reads *ecclesiæ*. The Greek version has τῆς ῥωμαικῆς δόξης.

On a phrase of the Donation—"eligentes nobis ipsum principem Apostolorum vel eius vicarios firmos apud Deum esse patronos"—the editor quotes a remarkable passage from Aimoin<sup>1</sup> v. 2, which it is specially fitting to reproduce here, since it relates to Charlemagne and his sons: "Post non multum tempus incidit ei desiderium dominam quondam orbis videre Romam, principis Apostolorum atque doctoris gentium adire limina, seque suamque prolem eis commendare; ut talibus nitens suffragatoribus, quibus coeli terræque po-

<sup>1</sup> "Aimoini monachi, qui antea Annonii nomine editus est, Historiæ Francorum" Lib. V, *Parisiis*, 1567.

testas attributa est, ipse quoque subiectis consulere, perduellionumque [si emersissent<sup>1</sup>] proterviam proterere posset. Ratus etiam non mediocre sibi subsidium conferri, si a *Vicario eorum* cum benedictione sacerdotali tam ipse quam et filii eius regalia sumerent insignia.”

In a letter to Karl of the highest importance, Hadrian I uses a remarkable phrase in describing Karl's regard for the Church of Rome. He speaks of his faith and love towards the church of the blessed chiefs of the apostles Peter and Paul,—*quantum erga beatorum principum apostolorum Petri et Pauli ecclesiam fidem geritis et amorem.* In the same letter he employs an argument which—while it would naturally have force with Karl—appears to assign to national churches other than that of Rome a remarkable position of independence. “If,” he says, “everywhere canonical churches possess their dioceses intact, how much more should the holy catholic and apostolic Roman church, which is the head of all the churches of God,—*Si enim ubique Christianorum ecclesiae canonicae intactas suas possident dioceses, quanto amplius sancta catholica et apostolica Romana ecclesia, quae est caput omnium Dei ecclesiarum . . .*”

Ep. 33.  
A.D. 794.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted in the quotation.

## APPENDIX E

(Page 290)

Eginhart gives the name of Charlemagne's elephant as Abulabaz. This probably represents *Abū'l 'Abbās*, the elephant being in that case named after his royal donor, the first Abbasid Caliph, who was none other than our old friend of many tales of adventure, Harun al Raschid. His caliphate lasted from 786 to 809, and thus coincided with the most brilliant period of Charlemagne's reign as king and emperor. His policy was to remain on most friendly terms with Charlemagne, while sending to Irene's supplanter at Constantinople, Nicephorus, communications of the following character:—

“Harun al Raschid, Commander of the Faithful, to Nicephorus, the Roman dog.

“I have read thy letter, O thou son of an unbelieving mother. Thou shalt not hear, but behold my reply!”

Eginhart tells us under the year 807 of noble presents sent by the Saracen king of the Persians to Charlemagne. They included a pavilion and court tents, all, including the ropes, of linen of divers colours; palls of silk many and precious; scents, unguents, and balsam; two great candelabra of brass (orichale) of marvellous size and height; and above all a wonderful clock made of brass (orichale). The principle of this remarkable machine was that of the water clock. At each complete hour little balls of brass were set free, which fell on to a cymbal below with a tinkling sound, while at the same time twelve knights on horseback opened windows and pushed out, closing windows which had been open.

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