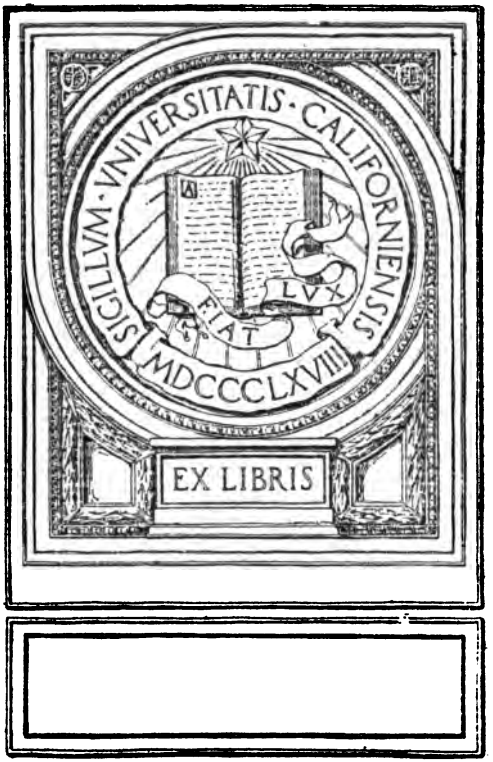
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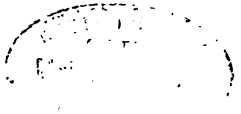
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ST. BONIFACE

BY

JAMES M. WILLIAMSON, M.D.

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS



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DATES

680 *c.* Birth of Boniface.

686. Kedwall succeeds Kentwin in Wessex.

688. Ina succeeds Kedwall in Wessex.

705. Old See of Dorchester divided into Winchester and Sherburne, having been at Winchester alone (moved from Dorchester) since 680.

715. Charles Martel succeeds Pepin of Heristal.

716. Boniface sets out for Friesland, but soon returns.
Charles Martel defeats Radbod and Chilperic at Amblève.

718. Boniface leaves Nutscelle for Rome.

719. Boniface leaves Rome via Lombardy and Bavaria for Thuringia.
Death of Radbod of Frisia.
Boniface returns to Frisia.

723. Boniface's second visit to Rome, where he is consecrated Bishop.
Boniface returns to Germany.

731. Death of Pope Gregory II; accession of Gregory III.

731(?2). Carl Martel defeats the Saracens at Tours.

731. Gregory III sends Boniface the pallium of Archbishop.

738. Boniface's third visit to Rome.
Boniface returns to Germany.

739. Luitprand, threatening Rome, is stayed by Gregory III's appeal to Charles Martel.

741. Deaths of Leo III, Gregory III, and Charles Martel.

742. Pepin and Carloman summon a State Council (?) at Salz.

743. Synod of Lessines.

744. Boniface appointed to See of Cologne. Founds by Sturm the Abbey of Fulda.

745. Boniface appointed to See of Mainz, which is raised to an Archbishopric.

746. Boniface founds Bishoprics of Wurtzburg, Franconia, Erfurt, &c.
Death of Bishop Daniel of Winchester.

747. Abdication of Carloman. Pepin rules alone.

?750. Deposition of Childeric, the last of the Merovingians.

750–1. State Assembly at Soissons. Pepin chosen King and crowned by Boniface.

752. Pope Zachary dies.

753. Pope Stephen visits Pepin regarding Luitprand's threats against Rome.

754. Pepin recrowned by Pope Stephen.

755. State Council at Braine. Lullus succeeds Boniface at Mainz.
Boniface revisits Frisia, and is slain at Dorkhum.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SAINT BONIFACE

I

About the year 680 there was born within a few miles of Exeter, at a place generally believed to have been Crediton, a man who lived to become a striking and a memorable figure in European history. His parents, who were Anglo-Saxons of Wessex, called their son Winfrith [1]. When he was well on in manhood Winfrith changed that name to the Latin one of Boniface, which he bore for the rest of his long life. His memory has been reverently passed down through the succeeding ages of Christendom as St. Boniface of Mainz, the Great Apostle of Germany.

Twelve long centuries throw their obscuring veil between us and the far distant year 680. The time is remote, facts that are trustworthy and fit to rest upon are few, and such records as are available are crusted over with legend. But even though these real difficulties were less than they are, it is natural

[1] Menzel's *Germany*, Bohn's edition, vol. i, p. 227.

that the mind should at first toss about rather helplessly when it is suddenly asked to realize, in due relation to its historical connexions, an event that happened so long ago. An endeavour is at once made to find some anchorage by trying to recall kindred events which took place at or near the period mentioned.

Now in regard to 680 several helpful facts of the sort rapidly present themselves; and as the date refers to the birth of a great churchman, a choice of such aids can be made from clerical careers. There is the pious St. Cuthbert[1], for instance, with seven important years still before him, but as yet spending his days austerely in his lonely cell on Lindisfarne. Then a thought is given to St. Chad of Lichfield, lying in his newly-made grave at Lestingay, a victim, only seven years before, to the great pestilence. A moment more and there stands before the mind the travelled and practical Benedict Biscop, just beginning from his Wearmouth Monastery to teach his fellow countrymen how to build stone churches instead of wooden ones; while, every bit as great a work as rearing buildings of stone, he was in that year 680 engaged in bringing up a little boy of seven, the future Venerable Bede of Jarrow. Four well-known names, these; and yet there will be no sense of overweight if room is made for two

[1] Butler's *Lives of the Saints.*

others. There was the worthy Aldhelm of Malmesbury, bent on study, but happiest as he worked out his service of song. And there was that energetic and restless man, Wilfrid of York, chafing this self-same year in his northern prison under King Egfrid's vindictive hand.

But full of interests as this little circle could be, the range must be widened. A general outline of the history of the day must be obtained, for it is desirable, in relation to Winfrith's birth, to picture before the mind something of the state of the southern part of this country towards the end of the seventh century. A little study will show how full the times were of activity, and how likely one of Winfrith's natural temperament was to be drawn to an earnestness and a decision of character by special circumstances that existed in the locality of his birth and early training.

All of us know that the English nation has drawn neither its origin nor its strength from a single parentage, but that it is indebted to repeated blendings with some of the most stalwart races of the European Continent. The nation has, as it were, gone through successive stages of development, and the initial steps of every stage produced, for a time, a convulsion throughout the country. About the year 680 England was passing through one of these mighty experiences. A new race was amalga-

mating with an old, while politically, socially, and religiously, freshly planted seeds of coming greatness and enlightenment were actively germinating.

Looking at the country at this time, it is seen that, although the land was still divided out into several small kingdoms, the Anglo-Saxons had entered into possession of the larger part of it. They had, indeed, rooted themselves in the whole of it with the exception of West Wales (that is to say, Cornwall with some portion of Devon), of North Wales (what we now call Wales), and of the northern kingdom of Strathclyde—districts which had as yet been left in the hands of the dispossessed Britons when they crowded into them for refuge from the conquering sword of the invaders.

Now, of the various principalities into which Anglo-Saxon England was broken up, there was one which had already begun to aspire towards that leading position among the rest which Egbert was destined, about a century later, to make supreme. This kingdom was Wessex. Founded in 519 by Cerdic, it was the fortune of Wessex to come under the government of some rather remarkable princes. For present purposes it is only necessary to take note of those whose reigns cover the period of Winfrith's time, and the following table brings their five names conveniently before the eye :—

Kings of Wessex from 680 to 755.	
Kentwin (Centwin) successor to Eskwin	676–686
Kedwall (Ceadwalla)	686–688
Ina	688–725
Edelard	725–741
Cuthred	741–755

It was Kentwin who was on the Wessex throne when Winfrith was born. He is said to have been a restless man, a warrior, and his people had little peace under him. They did not fare much better under Kedwall, his successor, who was also a man of war. In his youth he had been expelled from Wessex, but his ambitious desires were far from being quenched as he wandered in exile among the forests of Sussex. There he met another exile in the person of Wilfrid of York[1], who had been set free from captivity in the North but driven into banishment. Although the world would gladly have forgotten these men, they by no means forgot the world. In their enforced seclusion the two foregathered, and, pagan and half-barbarian though Kedwall was, Wilfrid of York provided him with such substantial aid that he was able to seize upon the Kingdom of Wessex. Safely placed, his sword was turned upon the Jutes, whose territory lay in Kent and the Isle of Wight; and the slaughter

[1] Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, vol. iv, p. 286.

he committed is set down as the chief event of his short reign. Kedwall only ruled two years. After securing the sovereignty of Wessex he sent for Wilfrid of York, and, in spite of all his savagery, his heart made some echo to the religious teaching that was then making its way in his kingdom. Increasing sympathy with the spreading Christianity led him shortly afterwards to make gifts of land to St. Peter's Minster at Medeshamstede[1]. His religious fervour grew stronger, and at last culminated in 688, when he was thirty years old[2], in his abdicating the throne and setting out for Rome under Aldhelm's care. At Rome Pope Sergius received him, baptizing him and renaming him Peter.

Ina followed Kedwall on the Wessex throne, and was one of the best princes who ever reigned in this country. He was a man of high renown as a conqueror and a prudent and wise king, but especially noted as a lawgiver.

The kings who followed Ina need not particularly concern us, for Winfrith had finally left England before Ina's reign ended. But of the princes who ruled Wessex from the time of Winfrith's birth until in mature manhood he left his native land, of Kentwin, Kedwall, and Ina it may be said that, politically, they were all men in earnest, men whose chief endeavour was to enlarge the size and influence as well as to improve the internal condition

[1] Bede (Bohn), p. 330. [2] Milton.

of their kingdom. During their respective reigns they seem to have oscillated between heathenism and Christianity, between something not far from barbarism and something approaching to civilization. Possibly much depended upon the demands of the occasion. It seems clear, however, that after Wessex had become Christian for a few years the Saxons behaved with far less ferocity to their enemies, especially to the British[1]; and there can be no doubt that the experiences of the British along the Damnonian borders of Wessex, during the latter part of the seventh century, were immensely less severe than the attacks upon them by Cerdic and his immediate successors. At the same time, whatever the Christianity of Kentwin, Kedwall, and Ina, it neither prevented them paying off old scores upon their neighbours, nor from absorbing, by force of arms, for conquest only, and at every opportunity, some portion of their neighbours' land. And, in extending their borders, they by no means overlooked those which, for the time, separated Wessex from West Wales. The British territory there steadily diminished before an ever-advancing Saxon boundary-line. For reasons that will be discussed later on it seems to be impossible now to define the course of this boundary-line in the vicinity of Crediton about the year 680. But enough is known to make it certain that Crediton must have stood

[1] Freeman, *Old English History*, p. 67.

very near the border. It is therefore easy to imagine how, in spite of every effort to blend and intermix the two populations and to mitigate severity, there would be daily seen and felt in the little village all the chafing, the soreness, and jealous heartburnings which only centuries can remove, from the point of contact between the new race and the old, the victor and the vanquished. A child of Wessex born into such a home would inhale the pride of patriotism with his native air, and, in his boyhood, he would be stamped for life with an undying loyalty to his Anglo-Saxon ancestry.

As compared with the state it was in a hundred years before, the country was not only advancing towards better times politically, but it was also making great strides towards social improvement. This was perhaps not so evident in the attitude of kingdom towards kingdom as it was in the relations between individuals and classes. Towards the original inhabitants the policy of the Saxons was changing from one of slavery or extermination into one of conciliation. It gradually became possible for British families to dwell within the borders of the more powerful Saxons, 'might' no doubt exacting some return as a 'right.' Honest efforts too were made, particularly during King Ina's time, to unite and fuse the two populations

by marriage and by equal laws and privileges. At the same time the condition of the poor and of the churls, or villeins, was improving, while the tyranny and oppression of their masters were checked by legal enactments. The precepts of religion had of course much to do with this forward step, as we know they have had to do later in our national history with not less important progress in the establishing of good government and the cause of freedom. These Wessex princes were shrewd enough to accept the aid of Christianity, as will presently be seen, in civilizing their subjects. Prompted by their clergy they framed laws to make the observance of the Sabbath, as a day of rest from toil, obligatory. The practice of charity also became compulsory, and it was provided that one-tenth of the land's produce should be handed over for the maintenance of the clergy and of the destitute. In this way the firm foundations of social stability and progress were being laid: protection and conciliatory treatment of the conquered; one day's rest in seven for the labouring bulk of the population; the feeding of the poor and destitute; and the support of those whose lives were spent in spreading religion, morality, and education.

It has been said that social advance was hardly so evident in the relations of the small kingdoms to each other, for, in the struggle for supremacy,

the various principalities continued to play their own self-interested parts without much regard to neighbourly considerations. But there was something promising in the idea that all might ultimately be absorbed into one. Such a thought may have taken its rise more in a popular aspiration than in a passion for conquest in the hearts of the kings themselves. Indeed some inward longings after the blessings and quiet strength of a single and compact nationality must have been foreshadowed in the minds of the people, for they were just then beginning to utter for the first time in history the name England. It would indeed be an inspiring thought if it could be believed that the first breathings of that mighty name were born of the wish that a time would come when those who were brethren would at last dwell together in unity.

It will be desirable now, in order to complete the outline, to leave the political and social side of the picture and to try to obtain some idea of the religious condition of Wessex when Winfrith was born; and, dealing with an ecclesiastical career, it may be excusable to go a little more fully over this part of the ground.

Wessex embraced Christianity in 634, and owed its conversion to the work of continental and of Celtic missionaries. But long before Jutes or

Angles ever set foot in this country, at quite an early date, the Britons were Christians. The Christian Church in South Britain seems to have been founded by missionaries from the Church in Gaul[1], who made their way into the country along the track of the Roman legions. Some believe the legend of Joseph of Arimathea and Glastonbury; others feel doubts whether there was any Christianity at all in Britain so far back as the first century. Trustworthy information is at best but scanty. If not in the first century, there must have been a Christian community of some vigour and enterprise in Britain soon afterwards, for there can be no doubt it was from South Britain that were projected those missionary efforts which planted the religion in North Britain, and there is evidence to make it more than probable there was Christianity in North Britain in the second century[2]. Following the course of years, history gives the year 303 as the date of the martyrdom of St. Alban at Verulam, and, about the same time, Julius and Aaron are known to have suffered at Lincoln[3]—signs that the religion was widely diffused. The fact that the bishops of London, York, and Lincoln attended the Council of Arles in 314 goes to indicate a Church rising in organization and dignity. Its progress need not

[1] Stephen's *History of the Scottish Church*, vol. i, 1894.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Gildas*, Giles's edition, p. 11.

be pursued further at this moment. It is sufficient to indicate this as the British Church, sometimes called the Church of the Welsh—the Christian Church existing in this country when the Anglo-Saxons arrived.

Pass now to the Church in North Britain, founded, as has been said, by missionaries from South Britain, very probably as early as the second century. It is most difficult to recover names from the dim shades of the history of those times, but among those whose names do remain as men of activity in the North British Church, none of the earliest ranks higher than St. Ninian, who was born in 360. During his day his Church sent missionaries into the north of Ireland, the Irish Dalriada, the land of the Scots. It is not only known that this offshoot was visited by Palladius in 430, but that it was inspired with great life and energy by St. Patrick[1], who spent his life there, and died there in 493. So mightily grew and prospered this branch of the North British Church that Central Europe received missionaries from it[2]. It did more than that: it revived its mother Church by sending Columba to Iona, whence he converted the Scots in the Scottish Dalriada and the Northern Picts. This then constituted the Church of North Britain, often spoken of as the Celtic Church or the Church of the Scots.

[1] Born near Dumbarton, buried at Downpatrick.

[2] Columbanus.

Now it is clear that both the Church of the British or Welsh, and the Celtic Church or Church of the Scots, were descended from the Gallican Church, and it was upon the latter as a model that they formed their worship. In all but some matters that were made a great deal of then, but would now be reckoned as far from material, such as the date of Easter and the shape of the tonsure, the form of worship was practically the same as that followed by the churches elsewhere in Europe, that is to say in Christendom [1].

With the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons a change came over the scene in South Britain. When they answered the appeal of the British, after the departure of the Romans, and came in 429 to help in driving off the Picts and Scots, they set out from a pagan home, and they brought their paganism across the seas with them. When, as events took their course between 449 and 455, the Anglo-Saxons turned against the British and drove them westward, they were steeped as deeply in heathenism as ever; and after they at last succeeded in hunting the Britons into Wales and West Wales, and in settling themselves firmly down, paganism reigned supreme in that portion of the land. Savagery inflicted extermination or slavery on the vanquished, those who saved their lives lost their religion with their liberty, and in that portion of

[1] Stephen's *History of the Scottish Church*, vol. i, 1894.

the land Christianity was swallowed up in heathenism.

> 'Heaven's high will
> Permits a second and a darker shade
> Of pagan night[1].'

Religion in this country thus offered a notable picture in the fifth and sixth centuries: the Britons, in their retreats on the west, practising the rites of the Christian faith, while their Anglo-Saxon successors elsewhere in the country wallowed in idolatry and darkness. It does not appear that the fact either disturbed or stimulated the consciences of the Britons. An exception may perhaps be allowed in regard to the oft-quoted[2] Gildas[3], himself the son of a British lord and reared in a Glamorganshire monastery[4]. He seems to have written an invective against the British clergy for their sloth in never vouchsafing their Saxon neighbours the means of conversion. Yet the British Church had not been deficient in missionary spirit, as can be seen by what it did for North Britain. It has been charitably asked[5] what means there was of converting in the midst of so much hostility, a question it is certainly not easy now to determine. Better times were, however, at hand. At last, after

[1] Wordsworth, *Eccles. Sonnets*, xi (Power's copy, p. 314).
[2] Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 34.
[3] Born 494, died (Usher) 570, (Ralph of Disse, 581).
[4] St. Iltutus.
[5] Milton's Prose Works, Bohn's edition, vol. v, p. 268.

the Anglo-Saxons in the country had lain for 150 years in their paganism, the beams of the Sun of Righteousness were to visit even them. Denied a passage through the Britons on the west, the light touched the country on the east, on its Kentish shore, coming, as we all know, straight from Rome through Pope Gregory the Great, in the person of St. Augustine, in 597. Augustine, welcomed and helped by King Ethelbert and his wife Bertha, did his best to plant what he believed to be the religion of the Cross; and after fourteen years' labour he was succeeded by others who worked, more or less well, with the same object. Here, then, is the direct introduction of Christianity into this country from Rome, the Church of Rome.

There were now at work in the country three religious centres—the Church of the Welsh, the Church of the Scots, and the Church of the Romans. It was in the nature of things that an approach should before long take place between at least two of these centres, the first and the third, and, as a fact, such an approach was made by Augustine. Among the British or Welsh he found a Church that was still one of some proportions. Shrunken and contracted as it was[1], it owned seven bishoprics and an archbishop. But for Augustine's object it was unapproachable. Towards himself it displayed

[1] *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, Bohn, vol. v, p. 268.

a proud disdain, and towards the Anglo-Saxons it still nursed its old animosities. Dinooth was its spokesman. He was abbot of a noble church at Bangor, and gave Augustine for his answer that the British Church owed no subjection to him, nor would they join him in preaching the Gospel to their enemies, reckoning their faith and religion as nothing, and being no more willing to communicate with the Angles than with dogs. It is hard to believe that this speech came from a teacher of the precepts of the Man of Nazareth. But the most religious of us, whether in the pulpit or on his knees, has still in him a huge element of human frailty, and injuries have a way of rankling even in an abbot's breast. Perhaps, too, tact and the lowly spirit were not very outwardly visible in Augustine at the interview. The result was a failure, and he returned to carry on his work without native aid.

The success of the Romish Church after sixty years' labour in Britain was not satisfactory to them[1]. They never penetrated Wessex, Sussex, or Mercia; they failed to establish themselves in Essex, East Anglia, and in Northumbria; and, after working for forty years, all that remained to them was Kent. Now the British Church had, as has been said, ceased to conceive any missionary longings. But the Church of the Scots had not[2].

[1] Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, vol. iv, p. 127.

[2] Freeman, *Old English History*, p. 61.

Strengthened by the establishment of Columba in Iona, it roused itself to do what the British Church would not and what the Romish Church could not. Invited by King Oswald, Iona sent Aidan to found in Lindisfarne a see from which a great part of the country eventually derived its salvation.

But here we must now limit down our scope. Wessex, it has been already said, received Christianity in 634. Let us understand how this came about. For the first preaching of the Gospel it was indebted to Birinus, who was sent by Pope Honorius. He had no connexion with the older Augustinian mission in Kent, nor did he seek any[1]. Some think this shows that Pope Honorius disapproved of the Kentish mission wasting its forces and rousing opposition by vain disputes with the Church of the Scots, and that he wished to project an entirely new effort. At any rate, it often brings better success to make a fresh start, especially if one uses a well-chosen and judicious man, adapted to the object in view.

Birinus found Wessex under the government of two brothers named Cuichelm and Cynegils. About this time Oswald of Northumbria, who was last mentioned as having brought from Iona into his kingdom Aidan of the Church of the Scots, went south into Wessex to marry the daughter of Cyne-

[1] Vide W. H. Jones's *Life of Aldhelm*.

gils. When he arrived there, he found Birinus[1] doing his best; and, to Oswald's everlasting honour, as well as to the great credit of the sincerity of his Celtic Church training, he not only gave Birinus his countenance, but his cordial help, persuading Cynegils to be baptized, and actually standing godfather to his own father-in-law. Thus consecrated in the royal family circle, the work thenceforward never stopped. To Birinus there succeeded a monk[2] trained in the Church of the Scots, and as there soon spread through Wessex an outcry for native preachers to speak to the people in their own tongue, a wise provision was made for this in the person of Vini and others. And so did events fortunately develop that in 655 we have the comfortable sight of the fifth successor to St. Augustine at Canterbury, Frithona, otherwise called Deusdedit—kindly disposed, no doubt by being himself a West Saxon—showing something of the liberality of a true Christian spirit by entering into intercourse with the Celtic bishops of his native kingdom.

As there is nothing of importance to relate from this period until Wilfrid of York came on the scene in 686, the situation that is presented to the eye at the time of Winfrith's birth is easily defined.

[1] Birinus is understood to have founded the Cathedral of Winchester. Vide Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, vol. vi, p. 99, footnote.

[2] Agilbert.

There was the Church of the British or Welsh holding itself aloof, while in a Christianized Wessex there were the Celtic or Scottish and the Romish missions, still separate, but approaching one another not unamiably. Even with the British Church a *modus vivendi* had become possible, at least within the conquered area, and on the borderlands where contact took place. But with all this the two sides debated the old points of difference with that tenacity which inspires religious disputes; and where the tides of opinion and practice actually met, it was more apt to be in waves of opposition than in smooth and combining streams of confluence. It is not hard to imagine what complexion would be given to the mind of an Anglo-Saxon youth who was being carefully and seriously trained within earshot of such constant discussions, and how essential he would come to consider the accomplishment, if at all possible, of a unity that would bring quietness, discipline, and strength.

II

In setting to work at this point to take up the biographical thread, there arises the difficulty, none the less real because anticipated, of knowing what is reliable history and what is legend. About one thing no one has any doubt. Winfrith was born in the Damnonian corner of the kingdom of Wessex in or about the year 680. It is usual to find historians speaking of his parents as of noble or distinguished family, and this is the generally accepted account[1]. There is another and irreconcilable story that he was the son of a wheelwright. It is worth while mentioning this story because it goes on to relate that in his archiepiscopal days Boniface was so far from being ashamed of his origin that he assumed a pair of wheels as his armorial bearings. On the coat-of-arms of the city of Mayence, the seat of his archbishopric, there is still to be found a pair of wheels, and the presence of this device is accounted for in the way just mentioned. But it must not be forgotten that in the seventh century Anglo-Saxon tradesmen occupied a very inferior position, and such men as

[1] *History of England*, by Rapin Thoyras, translated by Tindal.

smiths and carpenters, and no doubt also wheelwrights, were mostly attached in a servile position to the establishments of the wealthy. It is very unlikely, therefore, that if his parents were not in a higher station of life, Winfrith's early years could have been spent among the educational and religious influences that are known to have surrounded them.

The actual birthplace of Winfrith is believed to have been the ancient little town of Crediton, which lies seven miles to the north-west of Exeter. It is true that in the oldest biography of Boniface, written not long after his death by Willibald, the name of Crediton is not given. But it is mentioned in another biography, the work of Othlone[1], in the eleventh century, and later authors have followed him in his statement. In our rather ruthless age it is the custom to throw a searching light upon everything, and by applying the process to this little fact about Crediton, it has proved possible to cast a shadow of doubt. This doubt has been raised by no less an authority than Freeman[2]. It is known that the western Wessex boundary did not reach Taunton till 710, and only extended

[1] 'Ergo Bonifacius natus est in Saxonia Occidentali et quidem in hodierno Comitatu Devoniae, urbe Cridianto, Crediton, seu Kirton.' Othlone's *Life of St. Boniface*, Pathol. Curs. Comp., vol. 89, Migne.

[2] Rev. Prebendary Smith on 'The Early History of Crediton,' *Trans. Dev. Assoc. for Adv. of Science*, 1882.

to Exeter at some time between 688 and 710. Seeing this, Freeman acknowledges a difficulty in understanding how an Anglo-Saxon family happened to be living so far within what was presumably British territory as Crediton. Rather than believe the Wessex borders at that time overlapped Crediton, he would abandon the idea that Winfrith was born there. The matter was debated from the opposite side by Richard John King[1], a keen observer and possessed of great local knowledge, himself now lying in Crediton churchyard. But as the Danes burnt most of the records of the time, it will perhaps never be possible now to indicate precisely where the boundary ran about the year 680. Allowance must also be made for the fact that conciliatory methods having been adopted about this period, Anglo-Saxon families did here and there trust themselves over the borders and lived among their British neighbours on the other side. On this ground, if not on the other, even critical minds are willing to accept it as a fact that Winfrith was born at Crediton.

A visit to Crediton itself reveals nothing in regard to it, and is apt to cause disappointment. It is a quiet, sleepy town, in a fertile and well-wooded country. Green undulating hills ascend around it, and the houses lie sweltering in the

[1] Died in 1879.

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hollow. Half way up the long straggling street stands the handsome church, an old representative of a distinguished past. But it is in vain to look anywhere for a link with St. Boniface. There is a well, partly arched over, and evidently very old. Some writers speak of it as St. Winfrith's Well, but it is not so recognized by those who live near it, and who name it to the traveller as Libbot's Well, or the Abbot's Well. In the church, in the town, there is no memorial, no sign: the connexion with Boniface, known to some of the inhabitants, stirs no enthusiasm, and is at best a piece of pale and vague sentiment.

Winfrith was not the only child of the family; the home had at least another, a little sister named Winna. It seems to have been, for the times, a home of some refinement and education, and in the habit of receiving visits from those who came into the neighbourhood to preach religion to the people. We can imagine the house, a wooden structure, without chimneys, and without glass windows, for glass was not known to the Anglo-Saxons in the seventh century. In the midst of the dirt and smoke inseparable from these deficiencies, curtains and hangings were plentiful, and the benches and seats, which surrounded the wooden tables, had their coverings. Little Winfrith attracted the attention of the priests and clerics who visited the parental dwelling by the interest he took in sacred

things, and by the questions he asked, even at the early age of four or five[1]. There were, in consequence, plenty who urged the parents to give to the Church a child of such early promise. To this the father strenuously objected, and it is said he would hear nothing of it until prostration on a bed of sickness brought him to another state of mind, and he yielded. The home life of Winfrith only lasted till he was seven years old, till what the Anglo-Saxons termed the period of infancy ended and that of childhood began. At the age of seven[2], then[3], he was handed over to Abbot Wolfhard (Uulfhardo)[4] and given to the Church; and we hear no more of parents or parental influences. As it was, the power of parents over their children was just beginning to be somewhat curtailed by the clergy, and a boy little more than twice the age of seven (sixteen) might, without parental approval, enter himself as a monk.

Wolfhard, to whom Winfrith was committed by his parents, was abbot of a monastery at Exeter, known then as Adestancastre[5], Adescancastre, Ad Exam Castrum, and later as Excester; and to a school attached to this monastery he conveyed his youthful charge. It has been asserted that this

[1] 'Circiter quatuor seu quinque,' Willibald.

[2] Not seven but thirteen; Butler's *Lives of the Saints*.

[3] *Apostles of Mediaeval Europe*.

[4] Willibald's *Life*.

[5] Ibid.

monastery was a British (Celtic) one[1], and there seem sufficient reasons for believing that this at least was so at the time Winfrith was placed there. There is a belief that a monastery[2] existed at Exeter two centuries before Winfrith went there, and it, of course, must have been British. Then we know that Exeter was not incorporated into Wessex till Ina's reign; and though it was acquired before 710, it is hardly likely that it was gained prior to 694, because Ina, who began to reign in 688, was occupied at first with a civil war, and afterwards with an attack upon Kent, which he did not reduce till 694. Even when Exeter was said to have been taken, it remained in reality a 'double city[3],' that is to say, its southern half was British and its northern was English. And while it is admitted that Aldhelm, as Abbot of Malmesbury, did his best to soften the religious relations between the British and the English, trying hard to persuade the former to accept the Romish teachings held by the latter, it is clear that his work in that direction must have been mainly attempted after Ina's incorporation of the city and his own appointment to the newly-created bishopric of Sherburne had given him special influence upon Exeter establish-

[1] *Illustrated Notes of Church History*, Lane.

[2] Oliver's *Lives of the Bishops of Exeter*, p. 3, 'Legenda Sanct. Bishop Grandisson.'

[3] Green, *Making of England*, p. 391.

ments. This was after Winfrith had been placed at the conventual school there, and therefore it is probable that, although the monastery and its school may have been undergoing modifications, they were still essentially Celtic.

In this ancient city of Exeter, which had already been the city of the Briton, the Roman, and the Saxon, Winfrith spent the earlier part of his youth attending the monastic school. In Exeter an old tradition is repeated that during his stay Winfrith lived in a narrow street called St. Pancras Lane[1]. It would be of much more interest if we could discover where the monastery itself was situated. A supposition has been offered that it occupied the site of the existing cathedral. This may be at least admitted as possible, for there is good authority for believing that on, or close to, the site of the present cathedral, which is known to be the direct local descendant of a conventual church founded in 1019, Athelstane established a monastery in 932[2]. It is far from improbable that Athelstane took for his purpose the piece of ground that had been devoted to the same object three or four centuries before, the monastery spoken of as at Adescancastre.

Winfrith's father followed the usual custom of the day when he sent his son to the monastery, for such

[1] Worth's *Guide to Exeter Cathedral.*

[2] Hoker *alias* Vowell.

institutions were the only centres from which the social, industrial, and educational life of the inhabitants were improved, and where those objects were inculcated by all the force of teaching combined with practical example. Just at that time monasteries were not disciplined by a strict adherence to the Benedictine rules, as came to be the case a very few years afterwards; still less did they resemble those places of careless and degenerate life which turned a whole country against them later on in the centuries. The monks to whom Winfrith was sent lived together as brethren, and they toiled for their daily bread. Their duties were by no means confined to religious observances, but included severe manual labour. The political and religious movements of those active times allowed no idlers, no fossilizing by reason of insincerity.

Under such circumstances, then, Winfrith's period of CNIHTHADE, as the Anglo-Saxons called it, passed in the acquisition of learning, in the stimulation of whatever there was in him of piety, without the least of anything to damp his zeal. His progress was more than satisfactory to his teachers, while they were struck with the development of the sincere and pious elements of his character. The distinction he earned in these respects marked him out as one deserving of special care, and led to his being transferred, after a few years, to the abbey of Nhutscelle, near Southampton, and placed

in the charge there of Abbot Winberct. There he was to remain and complete his studies till the time arrived for his ordination to the priesthood.

It is recorded that in the course of his education much of Winfrith's time was bestowed upon the study of the Bible, in which he became very proficient, and he showed skill in writing verse, but especially distinguished himself in rhetoric. Abbot Winberct seems to have had that great gift of the true teacher of discovering a pupil's natural talents, and cultivating them to every advantage.

The abbey of Nhutscelle, Nutscelle, or Nutcell was in the diocese of Winchester. In the year 639, five years after the conversion of Wessex, a bishopric was erected at Dorchester, in Oxfordshire. For some reason, perhaps because Dorchester proved too far out of the way as the kingdom spread westwards, the bishopric was moved about 680 to Winchester, but the diocese remained precisely the same. It was presently found to be too extensive, and, when Bishop Hedda died in 705[1], the opportunity was taken to divide it. A second bishopric was created by raising the monastery of Sherburne into a cathedral. To it were assigned Wilts., Berks., Somerset, Dorset, Devonshire, and as much of Cornwall as the Saxons had conquered; and Aldhelm unwillingly relinquished the abbacy of

[1] 703, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Bohn, p. 335 (Bede's *History* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*).

Malmesbury, which he had held for thirty years, to rule over it. To the bishopric of Winchester there was left Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight; and this see was placed under an excellent man named Bishop Daniel.

The social improvement that was going on in Wessex at the beginning of the eighth century greatly forwarded the progress of church government. It is natural to suppose that there would flow from it a much closer supervision of clerical and monastic life; and that, whatever may have been the want of cohesion and of strictness of control which Bede described as existing in many parts of the country as a legacy from more primitive arrangements, the internal discipline of most conventual establishments would begin to receive more careful attention. Nutscelle being within twenty miles of Winchester, the change in the episcopal affairs would be a source of great interest to the monks there; and as the narrowed compass of the see enabled the bishop's work to be more efficient, no doubt their abbey would fall in for some of his earliest and closest supervision.

The great Order under which the monasteries of England were established was the Benedictine, and to this Nutscelle was no exception. The Order, founded by St. Benedict in Italy about 520, was introduced into this country by St. Augustine, and, when fully obeyed, was under a very strict rule.

The observance of what was enjoined by it imposed no slight yoke upon those who submitted themselves to it. It aimed at activity in arts and letters, and simplicity in devotion[1]. Labour and prayer, silence and solitude, obedience and humility, were its principles. What between the hours for labour and study, for spiritual functions and church observances, and for the attainment of the virtues, especially the virtue of humility, the days of the brethren must have been crowded with employment. Their nights were not undisturbed. Every monk slept in his clothes, upon a mat, in his own cell, and rose two hours after midnight to spend the time between matins and daybreak in meditation. England is indebted deeply to men attached to this Order for a vast extent of her progress in civilization and government, not to speak of religion; and she should never be ashamed to acknowledge her debt, for all creeds and Christian countries reverence the name of St. Benedict[2].

Winfrith was not one to relax for himself one atom of the Benedictine discipline, and if Bishop Daniel found it necessary on his accession to tighten the reins, we may judge by the demands he made on others in the exercise of his authority in later years, Winfrith himself, when called upon, would submit loyally to what was required.

[1] See *Eccles. Biographies*, Sir J. Stephens, vol. i, p. 365.

[2] *Dict. of Univ. Biog.*, 'St. Benedict.'

One would like to be able to localize with certainty the monastery of Nutscelle, but once again we have to face contradictory assertions among writers. Some[1] say that it was destroyed by the Danes, and never rebuilt. Others[2] speak of it as the same as Netley, near Southampton, where there is known to have been an abbey founded in 1235. There are three places in Hampshire whose names are not unlike Nutscelle, and Warner in his *History of Hampshire* mentions them, with their ancient names, as follows :—

Modern Names.	Ancient Names.
Netley	Nehelie
Nutley	Nutley
Nutshalling *alias* Nursling	Nottesselinge

The question is not settled, and is worth investigating.

The years of preparation passed on, and at last, at the mature age of thirty, Winfrith's course of study was finished, and he took orders. Parents, guardians, teachers, and directors, all had done their best for him from his infancy onwards. Their labour had been well bestowed. It had been spent upon one to whom nature had given vigour and

[1] Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, 'Boniface,' footnote.

[2] Green, *Making of England*, p. 413, and Dean Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*.

capacity, energy, and a wide sympathy, while all around could see that he had been touched with the celestial fire.

His duties became now more extended. The work of the monks outside of the monasteries brought them intimately into relation with men as the teachers of the people. They taught the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and the services of Baptism and of the Mass were explained so that the words could be understood. Besides this there was regular Sunday preaching in English, with exposition of portions of the Scriptures. One can imagine the scope this Sunday work would give to an eloquent man well versed in the study of the Bible. Just as Winfrith had distinguished himself by ardour in his studies, so he now began to attract attention by his growing capacity for influencing and dealing with men. His own brethren in the monastery bore testimony to his conspicuous talents, while outside the abbey his fame spread far and wide for his knowledge of the Scriptures and his eloquent and fervent preaching. Here evidently was the sort of man of whom the Church in those times stood greatly in need. There were those in high places who were on the watch for such men.

An occasion soon arose that brought Winfrith forward into greater prominence. A synod had been held in Wessex, and King Ina desired to have explained, with some tact, to Berthwald, the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury, the special circumstances under which the council had been convened. Ina turned to his kinsman, Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherburne, and from him received a strong recommendation to employ Winfrith. The mission was a delicate one, and in undertaking it Winfrith was to make his first entry into public life. Berthwald, who had been Archbishop since 693, is spoken of by Bede[1] as a man learned in the Scriptures and well instructed in ecclesiastical and monastic discipline, though he does not appear to have been endowed with the highest capacity. Winfrith performed the office he had committed to him sufficiently well to demonstrate that he was qualified for a far wider sphere of action than the life of an ordinary monk.

We have seen, however, that the life of a Benedictine monk was no light one. One of the objections often urged against the monastic system is that it is characterized by the most deliberate selfishness. It has been said that 'the good of his soul is the sovereign object of a monk's cares, and that his meditations, even if they embrace the compass of heaven, come round, ever and again, to find their ultimate issue in his own bosom[2].' That may be true of some Orders; it certainly need not be so of the Benedictine. It is not true of Winfrith's

[1] Bede's *Eccles. History*, Bohn's edit., p. 246.

[2] *History of Enthusiasm*, p. 230.

great contemporary, the Venerable Bede, who was at this time absorbed, as indeed he remained all his days, in a life of study in his cell at Jarrow. The fruits of the historical portions of that study remain to us still, and have been invaluable. Nor was it the case with Winfrith, who, the very antipodes of Bede, did not wrap himself out of temptation's way for the remainder of his life in the rigorous gloom of his cell. There was no morbid self-consciousness or self-seeking, for when brought in contact, as he was later on, with some of the mighty ones of the earth, he was distinguished for his modesty and his wilfully setting aside every opportunity for his personal aggrandizement.

For six years from his ordination—until he was six-and-thirty—Winfrith continued in residence at Nutscelle under Abbot Winberct. He taught history, poetry, rhetoric, and the Holy Scripture. By his preaching and his increasing power over men's minds, as well as by his success in whatever high ecclesiastical duties were assigned to him, there was every reason to believe that he would attain a foremost position in the Anglo-Saxon Church. This evidently was the hope not only in Nutscelle, but of Bishop Daniel. Though both likely and possible, this was not to be. His sympathies were of a wider mould than would be satisfied in the limited sphere of official rank in the Church, and his enthusiasm was of a kind that would not bear the restraints such

a position would impose. This is the missionary mind, and as in his case the spirit was linked with capacities exactly fitted for mission work, nothing was wanting but the spark to fire the zeal. It came in the shape of remarkable accounts that were reaching England of the results of Willibrord's evangelizing labours in Friesland. To Winfrith these were of surpassing interest, and their effect upon him was to alter the course of his whole life. The grand characteristics of his race impelled him forwards. The Saxon has been likened to the arrowy seeds of the dandelion, that travel on the wind and strike root afar[1]. We see that shown in the colonizing faculty, and the missionary zeal is or ought to be to it, not only closely allied, but as the spirit to the body. Nor would he lose sight of the links of ancestry. From that self-same Friesland his heathen forefathers had swept down upon Britain, remaining to become Englishmen and Christians; while those who had stayed behind in Frisia, all of them his brethren, lay steeped in darkness and idolatry. Thus the keen sympathies of this man of capacity were told upon by the zeal to spread Christianity, by the claims of ancestry, and by the provision of a great opportunity. Little wonder was it that he embraced the preaching of the Gospel to the Frisians as the object of his life.

[1] A. Smith's *Summer in Skye*, p. 469.

III

Now the Anglo-Saxons, who by successive invasions between 450 and 547 contrived to spread themselves over a large part of this country, do not appear for a long time afterwards to have concerned themselves much about the kinsmen they had left behind them in the fatherland. To begin with, their departure from the fatherland had not, according to tradition, been altogether a voluntary matter. When Hengist and Horsa presented themselves on their arrival to Vortigern, the British king, Hengist is said to have expressed himself as follows[1]:—'Most noble king, Saxony, which is one of the countries of Germany, was the place of our birth; and the occasion of our coming was to offer our service to you or some other prince. For we were driven out of our native country for no other reason but that the laws of the kingdom required it. It is customary among us that, when we come to be overstocked with people, our princes from all the provinces meet together, and command all the youths of the kingdom to assemble before them: then,

[1] Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bohn's *Six Old Eng. Chronicles*, p. 183.

casting lots, they make choice of the strongest and ablest of them to go into foreign nations, to procure themselves a subsistence, and free their native country from a superfluous multitude of people. Our country, therefore, being of late overstocked, our princes met, and after having cast lots, made choice of the youth which you see in your presence, and have obliged us to obey the custom which has been established of old. In obedience, therefore, to the laws so long established, we put out to sea, and under the good guidance of Mercury have arrived in your kingdom.' They had, in short, been sent away to find a new settlement for themselves, and were under oath never to return[1]. And then, having found a new settlement, their minds were kept sufficiently occupied in getting a firm grasp of the home their swords had given them, in settling affairs with the British, and in establishing the various little kingdoms into which they had formed themselves. It was not till well on into the seventh century that they seem to have had either time or caring to look abroad. When they at last began to do so, it followed close upon the conversion of the country to Christianity, as the table given on p. 38 will show; and the inspiring cause was without doubt neither social nor political, but essentially the desire to carry the new religion into the ancestral home.

[1] Menzel's *History of Germany* (Bohn), vol. i, p. 211.

Tribe[1].	Kingdom.	Date of Occupation.	Date of Conversion.
Jutes	Kent	449	597
Saxons	Sussex	477	681
	Essex	530	654
	Wessex	495	634
Angles	Northumbria	547	635
	Mercia	560	653
	East Anglia	585	631

Directly they turned to that great district of Northern Germany where their forefathers and kindred dwelt, they must have been stirred with enthusiasm over the ancient and almost invincible valour of their people[2]. The Romans had never been able to subdue them, and although they had nominally been drawn within the great kingdom of the Franks it was no true subjugation, for their real independence had never been crushed out of them. It was impossible not to be proud of their intense love of liberty, their physical strength, their endurance and courage.

But looked at from another side, the condition of these Saxon people was pitiable indeed. They were mere barbarians wrapped in the darkness of paganism. Their religion, which had descended to them with more or less variation from the ancient Germans

[1] From Lane's *Illustrated Notes of English Church History.*

[2] Menzel's *Germany*, vol. i, p. 233.

and Scandinavians, was, like that of most rude barbarians, largely built upon the worship of external nature, mixed up with the adoration of special qualities and the endeavour to appease certain evil influences. They had, for example, *Wodan* (or Odin), the Supreme Ruler, the All-father, the god of victory, who dwelt in Walhalla, presiding over his countless armies of heroes, all drinking mead, feasting on bear's flesh, and continuing in this heavenly place the heroic battles in which their souls took delight during life on earth. Then there were *Zio*, the god of war; *Thor*, the god of thunder and weather; *Freyr*, the sun, who rode on a golden bear; *Freia*, the moon, and the goddess of love; *Hertha*, the goddess of earth, Mother-earth; and *Tuisco*, the earth-born god. They believed in demons, dwarfs, in black and white elves, and in goblins, all of them regarded as supernatural beings of a kind, and all of them believed to be capable of helping or injuring them. Worship was performed in consecrated groves, in the recesses of dense forests, and under large sacred trees; and in these places, fit enough to create as well as to harbour superstition, they sent up their prayers, and offered up their sacrifices of human beings and animals. Their religion was cruel in its rites and intense in its superstitions. It enslaved men's minds under a yoke of abject dread of evil consequences falling upon them in this world, while it nerved them to do

prodigies of valour on the battlefield, in the hope of being received and rewarded as heroes in the Walhalla of the world to come by no less a person than Wodan himself.

It is no wonder that the English Saxons themselves, freshly led from such a cruel and dark idolatry into the liberty and light of Christianity, should be eager to convert their kinsmen. But their kinsmen held fast to their own religion. Through the Franks an endeavour had been made to propagate Christianity among them, but, by an error which is repeated till our day, it came to them so mixed with the pioneering efforts of political enterprise, that it was hated and repelled as the first sign of approaching trouble. It is a sad thing when nations are taught to regard the religion of peace as the precursor of war and loss of freedom.

It was under the later Merovingian kings that the form of sovereignty was established over the Saxons. They were on the northern limit of the Frankish empire and more than troublesome to keep in control; and although the mayors of the palace contrived to enforce a tribute from them, these unruly people were the cause of continual warfare. And so things went on in strife and turmoil, with intervals of temporary subjection. At last the feeble and dissolute reigns of the Rois Fainéants, under the later part of the dynasty, saw rebellions and civil wars shake the empire of the

Merovingian Franks to its foundations. At the battle of Testry, in 687, the preponderance of the Austrasian Franks over the Neustrian Franks was effected under Pepin of Heristal, and the irremediable fall of the kings of the first race of the Neustrian Franks brought to pass. From this time, until the last of the race was deposed, the Merovingian kingship was a name and not a power, and the great Frankish empire was disintegrating. On the outskirts of the empire the restless German tribes, notably the Frisians, had practically shaken off their dependence and regained their liberty. Their reconquest required the military energy of a great leader. By vigorous action Pepin of Heristal succeeded in bringing most of them into subjection again. It was ten years after the battle of Testry before the Frisians under their king Radbod were subdued.

It was just at this time that a real foothold was obtained in Friesland by St. Willibrord, whose missionary labours there, it will be remembered, had first fired the enthusiasm of Winfrith. We must, in a few words, gather up something of the history of Willibrord. Like Winfrith he also was an Englishman, but about five-and-twenty years Winfrith's senior. A native of Northumbria, he was trained in the monastery of Ripon under its founder, St. Wilfrid of York. His life between twenty and thirty was spent in Ireland; but when

about thirty-one he obtained permission to try and re-establish an abortive attempt of Egbert's to carry on missionary work in Friesland and Lower Germany. Landing with a small following of monks near the mouth of the Rhine[1], he actively set to work, favoured and protected by Pepin of Heristal. With the exception of a brief stay in Rome, where Pope Sergius consecrated him Archbishop of the Frisons, he devoted himself arduously to his labours and reaped great success. As Pepin reconquered the provinces in that part of the shattered empire[2], he not only commanded the civil governors of them to promote the work of the missionaries by every peaceful means in their power, but he held them responsible for the missionaries' lives. Willibrord established his episcopal see at Utrecht, of which he was the first bishop. The safety and success of the enterprise seemed now assured, and Willibrord's peculiar fitness in virtue of his tact and temperament added an individuality that was an inspiration to the mission. Stirring accounts were reaching England and stimulating sympathetic souls there. As we have seen, Winfrith's heart vibrated in harmony with them. Unfortunately, events in the Frankish empire became again acutely disturbed. Pepin of Heristal died in 714. By his strong hand and his impulsive and masterly mind he had been able

[1] Said to have been at Catwic; Butler's *Lives*.

[2] Perry's *History of the Franks*, p. 236.

to subdue into something like order the rebellious provinces of the empire. But at best it was only a repression, for at his death they struck out for independence again, and disorder reigned in his stead.

Now although we talk of Pepin as reigning, it will not be understood that he did so in the sense of being king. He was mayor of the palace to the Merovingian king, who, in those degenerate days, lived the existence of a puppet and left all true governing and military action in the hands of his mayor. The puppet king of the day was Dagobert III.

By his first wife, Plectrude, Pepin had two sons, Drogo and Grimoald[1], but neither survived him, though Grimoald left a son named Theudoald. By a second wife, Alpais, Pepin had a son Carl, afterwards the famous Carl Martel.

Now when Pepin died, Plectrude, in the eastern part of the empire, captured Carl and endeavoured to secure the succession to the mayoralty of the palace for Theudoald. The western part of the empire opposed her and endeavoured to persuade the puppet king Dagobert to appoint one Raginfried. Civil war was the result, and the battle of Compiegne saw the defeat of Theudoald. Meanwhile Carl had escaped from captivity, and, throwing over Plectrude and Theudoald, the eastern empire rallied round him. At this juncture Dagobert III

[1] Perry's *History of the Franks*, p. 242.

died, and those of the west, or the Neustrians, brought forward as the new sovereign Chilperic II. Chilperic, with his mayor Raginfried and his army of Neustrians, now marched against Carl and his army of the east, or Austrasians. On the north were the revolted German races, notably the Frisians and their king Radbod. Radbod threw in his interest with Chilperic and the Neustrians, and sailed from Frisia up the Rhine to join the Neustrians in an attack upon Cologne. This was in the year 716.

At this point we turn our minds away from these stirring events and glance back for a moment to Nutscelle. Our eye falls upon a little company saying farewell to the monastery. It is Winfrith and two or three others who are setting out for London on their way to Friesland. It thus happens that as King Radbod is leaving his country on an errand of war Winfrith is starting for it on a mission of peace. Steadily the little English party continues its journey till Lundenwich, as London was then called, is reached[1]. There they take passage in a vessel which at last lands them at Dorstet or Dorstadt, a place near Utrecht, and within the confines of Frisia[2], which included parts of Holland and Hanover.

Once in the longed-for country and ready to put

[1] Willibald's *Life.*

[2] W. Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (Boniface).

his hand to the plough, his enthusiasm would indeed have had to burn high if it was not to be damped by the disturbed state of the political atmosphere. The times were ill-fitted for commencing new missionary enterprise. Willibrord himself must have felt many a doubt about the stability of the mission he thought he had so well founded. Pepin's protecting hand was gone, the tribes were in revolt, and a dangerous gap had to be weathered before the continuity of authority was rearranged. But, according to their opportunities, Winfrith and his companions attempted to prosecute their work, though, as may be imagined, not with any great success. The Frisians had their minds absorbed with hopes of preserving their recently-recovered independence, as well as with anxiety, in relation to that liberty, over the foreign expedition on which their king had just left home.

Radbod was conducting his forces up the Rhine, intending to effect a junction at Cologne with Chilperic and the Neustrians, who were advancing in that direction through the Ardennes. After an indecisive action with the Frisians alone, Carl attacked the combined forces at Ambleve in the Ardennes and inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. This battle was in the year 716, but it was followed next year by others which completely established the cause of Carl, and to which reference may be made later. Radbod was on the losing side, and

in defeat he would realize that in the future there would have to be a reckoning with the military spirit of Carl, the son of his old conqueror Pepin.

The effect of all this upon the Frisians in Friesland was demoralizing. In the disorder that prevailed a persecution of the Christians began. All that could be hoped for in such a turmoil was that those who had already accomplished something for the Christian religion in these desert places might be able to maintain their ground. Fresh seed sown under existing conditions would yield no fruit. Winfrith's practical sense showed him that this was so, and he wisely resolved not to give up his enterprise but, as others had had to do before him, to postpone it.

Accordingly, in a little while we find him back in England again, in his cell at Nutscelle, only disappointed, not deterred. His expedition had at least given him some personal knowledge of the work and of the scene of his intended labours. For he was bent upon returning. From this intention he never seems to have swerved in the least degree. Had he been disposed to give it up, there was not wanting an inducement, since there occurred the opportunity of promotion at the monastery if he would only consent to accept it. Soon after Winfrith returned from Frisia old Abbot Winberct died at Nutscelle. The chapter of the monastery selected, and indeed implored, Winfrith to succeed

him. Tenacious of his original purpose, all the reply he had for them was a firm refusal. Yet he was naturally interested in the continued welfare of his Alma Mater at Nutscelle. In their difficulty the monks appealed to their bishop, Daniel of Winchester. Now Daniel had endeavoured to dissuade Winfrith from his missionary expedition to Frisia. Perhaps the sight of Winfrith's enforced return to Nutscelle, yet inflexible purpose to resume his work in Frisia, inclined Daniel to be more favourable to his views. The bishop dispensed Winfrith from his election and in his stead sent Stephen to succeed Winberct as abbot of Nutscelle.

During the time Winfrith continued to remain at Nutscelle awaiting the tide of events in Germany he determined when he next set out to proceed in a totally different manner. Instead of going straight from England into the country, more or less as a volunteer, he formed the plan of travelling first to Rome. Having taken his mission there direct from the hands of the Pope he would work with authority. In this arrangement he was, perhaps, following to some extent the example, possibly the advice, of Willibrord. But we see in it a foreshadowing of that great ruling principle which afterwards characterized him, of bringing all forms of church work under the control and subjection of the papacy. Having obtained his commission from the Pope, it was his intention to enter Frisian

territory from the German side. As it happened, this would bring him into the land of his desire in the wake of a conquering army, a fact that may have weighed with him. For over and above his resolve to link himself with the papal chair, it would be in his recollection that such religious work as had been already accomplished in Frisia had been performed under the sanction and support of Pepin. Naturally Winfrith's labours would be best undertaken under the continuance of the same rule, if, as Carl's successes indicated, its power and objects could be maintained. Bishop Daniel must have favoured Winfrith's plans, for he prepared the necessary letters for him to take to the Pope; and, no doubt, when Daniel visited Rome personally three years later[1], he would still further endeavour to press the merits of his young priest upon the papal mind.

As this preliminary visit to Rome would occupy several months, there was no longer any reason why Winfrith should remain biding his time in England. Besides this, now it was decided upon, it would be prudent to be well on the road before winter set in. Impressed, no doubt, by the magnitude of the task to which he was putting his hand, he was eager to begin carrying it into execution. He accordingly set himself to select his companions and to make his final preparations.

[1] A. D. 721; Bede, p. 334.

IV

It was far into the year 718 when Winfrith bade farewell for the second and last time to Nutscelle and to his native country. Bishop Daniel of Winchester had given him his commendatory letters to the Pope, and he now set out upon the first stage of his long journey to Rome. Arriving safely again in London, he followed the customary route taken by English pilgrims to Rome, and embarked for a port in the north of France. Rounding the North Foreland he passed the place in Pegwell Bay where St. Augustine had set foot on English ground a hundred and twenty years before, and from the *genius loci* Winfrith no doubt received a fresh and sympathetic impetus in his own undertaking. Continuing his course through the Straits of Dover, past Cape Grisnez, the ship soon lay off the mouth of the river Cauche, the Cuent as it was then called; and, entering the port, he landed at once at Cuentawich, close to the ancient town of Etaples. Etaples, which is about twenty miles south of Boulogne, is now nothing but a decayed fishing-place, separated from the sea by a dreary stretch of sand, formerly styled the Mar-

quenterre[1]. In olden times it was a port of entry into France, and used as such by the Romans.

At Cuentawich, near Etaples, then, Winfrith made his landing, and in the neighbourhood of Etaples he spent several weeks. It was a trysting place where he and his companions on the journey were to assemble, and where some final preparations that had to be made caused some delay. His enterprise attracted attention, and ensured him hospitality; and everything was done by prayers and the performance of religious duties to consecrate and encourage the mission.

It was well on into the autumn before everything was ready, but at last the journey across Europe was begun. They hastened through France[2], for it was important to cross the Alps before winter commenced. This safely done, there was the kingdom of Lombardy lying between them and Rome. Though Lombardy was at that time under the most enlightened, virtuous, and humane of its sovereigns[3], Luitprand, the king was ambitious of conquering fresh territory in Italy, and kept his country in a disturbed state. The relations between the Lombard king and the Pope being far from cordial, the pilgrims had some fear that in traversing the country they might be detained or in some

[1] Bradshaw's *France.*

[2] Willibald gives no itinerary of the route across France.

[3] *Univ. History.*

way interfered with. These apprehensions turned out to be groundless. Before long Winfrith and his companions found themselves safely in Rome, offering up their thankful prayers in the churches, and ready to show veneration and pledge their obedience to St. Peter and his successors.

The Pope was Gregory II, who had succeeded to the pontificate three years previously. He was a far-seeing, capable man, and let no chance slip by of associating with himself men fitted by political or ecclesiastical force to advance and establish the position and influence of the Bishopric of Rome. The sixteen years of his reign (715–731) covered part of a remarkably difficult and changeful epoch. Events of the utmost importance were rapidly opening up with the times, and it would be speedily seen whether they were to bring with them a first and sovereign place to the Church in Rome, or to leave her comparatively stranded as merely a bishop's see among the churches of Christianity. Even at this earlier period of Gregory's pontificate there was required in the papal chair a skilful hand to guide the temporal interests of the Romish Church, and a wise judgement for the selection of men able and willing to forward her objects. The men she specially needed at this time were those who would show strength in elevating her claims and afford a loyal support in consolidating her views upon the dispensation of church government. A

man of this sort now presented himself before Gregory in the person of Winfrith. Barely a hundred and twenty years before this the eyes of Gregory I had fallen in pity upon a group of young pagan Anglo-Saxon captives in the slave market at Rome, and the sight had inspired him with the longing to bring such a fine race within the Christian fold. And now, in the presence of the next Pope to bear the name of Gregory, there stood a man who came from the same land as the poor captives in the market. No benighted heathen, this man, but a sincere and ardent Christian; no slave, but a leader of men. Gregory II must have recalled the pious work of Gregory I, and felt his interest in Winfrith in no way lessened by it.

It must not be thought, however, that the sight of an Anglo-Saxon was at all unusual in the streets of Rome. Quite the reverse. Following the example first set by Wilfrid of York, troops of bishops, monks, and religious enthusiasts began to wend their way there. And no sooner had an Anglo-Saxon king resorted thither in the person of Kedwall than princes began to make a similar pilgrimage from this country. As Milton says, 'Many in the days of Ina, clerks and laics, men and women, hasting to Rome in herds, thought themselves nowhere sure of eternal life till they were cloistered there[1].' Indeed the very road taken

[1] Milton's Prose Works, vol. v, p. 294.

by Winfrith across France, over the Alps, and through Lombardy, was yearly becoming a highway for Anglo-Saxon pilgrims, eager to pay their devotions to Christianity as it was to be found in the Eternal City.

Winfrith spent several months in Rome, no doubt greatly increasing his own ecclesiastical knowledge and the fervour of his self-consecration to his work. Brought also to the Pope's notice by Bishop Daniel's introduction, this time allowed of Gregory's investigating and proving the faith held by Winfrith, as well as of judging what stamp of man he was.

Meanwhile Rome offered more than a sufficiency of interests to occupy Winfrith. There were the churches which would inflame his devotion. There were the ancient monuments of history that would fill him with veneration. And coming close to his own time and nation, he would be sure to visit the tomb of King Kedwall in one of the basilicas erected over the ancient catacombs, where he would read the 'large epitaph' mentioned by Milton[1].

What may seem strange to us is the fact that he seems to have spent no small part of the time he was in Rome in gathering relics. To understand this question of relics we must remember that in the fourth century it began to be a fashion to build churches over the martyrs' tombs, out of reverence for their remains. It was but a step from extreme

[1] Milton's Prose Works, part i, p. 15.

reverence to superstition and to a superstitious belief that in these remains there was some miraculous efficacy. When martyrs' tombs, as sites, became scarce, the next best thing seemed to be to build a church and to place relics in it, on the altar, and in the porch where they could be kissed by those who entered[1]. Unobjectionable, therefore, in its origin, the practice distinctly opened the door to superstition, which is the enemy of religious truth. Yet relics are believed in to this day by thousands who are probably not one whit less sincere than Winfrith in giving credit to their miraculous power. All we can do is to remember that they were Christians full of fervent zeal, and based their hopes of eternal life upon their Christian faith.

The winter in Rome wore on, and the spring of 719 came. With it came signs of Gregory's approval. Winfrith found all his wishes sanctioned; and Gregory had the satisfaction of binding to the papal chair a man whose personal desire to serve Rome and bring others into subjection to it he could see, but of whose future usefulness and faithfulness he could as then form no conception. On May 15 Winfrith received the Pope's letters empowering him, as legate, to go and preach the Gospel to the heathen, a kind of general authority which allowed him to carry on his mission in any part of Germany, and direct from the Pope. And

[1] Withrow, *Catacombs of Rome.*

so, with Gregory's blessing on himself and his errand, he gathered his companions together and left Rome on his journey northwards.

Crossing the Apennines, they found themselves once more in the kingdom of Lombardy, and under the protection of King Luitprand. If he had not had his original intentions firmly fixed in his mind Winfrith could have easily found work ready to his hand here. Lombardy was not then an ancient kingdom. It had only been established where it then ruled for about 150 years. The nation was still too young for the diverse tribes that comprised it to have become thoroughly assimilated. Believed to have been originally a Scandinavian race, the Lombards had settled themselves in that part of Germany immediately to the south-west of Hamburg, round about Lüneburg. Later on they migrated further south till, just before they seized upon the country held by them at the time we are dealing with, they had dwelt on the immediate confines of the Roman empire. Many tribes from various parts of Germany were then included among the Lombards, and they still retained several of their individual characteristics, including especially their differences in religion. Not a few were heathen. Such as were Christian were nearly all Arians[1].

[1] 'Arians are followers of Arius, who was a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria about the year 315. He maintained that the

Shortly before the time which we are considering, the Church of Rome had begun to work zealously, though carefully, amongst the Lombards, and, at the very moment when Winfrith was passing through the country, great hopes were arising that Luitprand would be brought to abandon his heresies and conform to the Romish faith. Ten years later those hopes were realized; but in the meantime Gregory had no great political faith in Luitprand, and it must be confessed that subsequent events served to warrant some of his suspicions. The position of Winfrith in Lombardy, as an emissary of the Pope, must therefore have been a delicate one, requiring tact and caution; and although Luitprand gave him a hospitable reception, Winfrith was no doubt far from sorry that his occupation lay elsewhere.

Crossing the Alps, Winfrith and his companions passed quickly through Bavaria, across the Danube, and, making their way steadily northwards, entered Thuringia. Their thoughts and wishes were bent upon Frisia, but as yet Radbod was still alive, and his country was closed to them. But in Thuringia they found work in plenty, work not only amongst actual pagans, but also among Christians who were

Son of God is totally and essentially distinct from the Father: that He was the first and noblest of those beings whom God had created, the instrument by whose subordinate operation He formed the Universe, and therefore inferior to the Father both in nature and dignity: also that the Holy Ghost was not God but created by the Son.'—*Ency. Brit.*

falling away from the faith. It will be remembered that when the Irish St. Columbanus went over to these regions towards the end of the sixth century, he found that the Christian faith existed, but that, in the neglect or absence of ecclesiastical discipline and the turmoil of wars, it was at a low ebb[1]. By his own exertions, and those of the twelve monks who accompanied him, an immense revival was begun, and in spite of the interruptions caused by events in his life, was continued for many years. But before his death (615) Columbanus had the grief of seeing the people again wavering in their faith, and relapsing into druidical and other idolatries. Under feeble and ignorant priests, themselves very lax and indifferent about their allegiance and obedience to Rome, matters drifted into a still worse condition. Thus when Winfrith visited the country in 719, he found just the very work to call out his enthusiasm—the correction of doctrine, the nurture and extension of the true faith, and the revival of church discipline. This was a labour demanding time as well as effort, and the fact that Winfrith does not seem to have accomplished any great success may have been due to that; for he could not have been many months there when, in the same year, 719, the death of Radbod of Frisia removed his difficulty in effecting an entrance into his longed-for sphere of labour.

[1] Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, vol. ii, p. 400.

Radbod's long reign covered an important epoch in the history of the Frisians. As for the Frisians themselves, they were from very ancient times a powerful race. They had lived upon friendly terms with the Romans till the latter were attacked and defeated by the Frisians for having endeavoured to tax them. Living in strength in their own territory, they were, as we have seen, part of the Frankish empire till the weakness of the Merovingian rule gave them the chance of revolting under their king Radbod. Their brave defence of their independence did not prevent them receiving a severe lesson in defeat from Pepin in 697. Later came the severe humbling at the battle of Amblève in 716, which Radbod only survived for three years. As for Radbod, he seems to have been, for the missionary's purpose, simply as impossible as he was for the politician's implacable. He remained a heathen of the heathen in spite of arguments with Willibrord, and, not long before the battle of Amblève, had caused St. Wigbert to be put to death for having slaughtered some sacred oxen[1]. From Wolfran, Bishop of Sens, he tolerated a great deal of interference, and was indeed at one time upon the point of giving way to the bishop. It is related that Radbod, being persuaded by Wolfran to be baptized, 'having dipped one foot in the laver, drew back the other and demanded whether

[1] Menzel's *History of Germany*, vol. i, p. 222.

there were more of his predecessors in paradise or in hell. On hearing that there were more in hell, he drew back the other foot and said "It is better, then, to follow the many than the few[1]."'

Radbod's death was immediately made the opportunity by Carl Martel to advance into the country, and if he did not permanently subjugate it, he at least did so as far as was possible in the case of a brave, turbulent, and hitherto imperfectly conquered race.

Although Poppo, who succeeded Radbod, was also such a heathen that he ultimately died in battle opposing the Christians, Carl Martel's action enabled Winfrith to proceed at last with his long-cherished enterprise. Without loss of time he joined Willibrord[2] of Utrecht, who had now been in the missionary field for twenty-three years. Together they laboured with great success and in great harmony for the next three years, and Willibrord, who was past sixty years old[3], must have felt great help and satisfaction in Winfrith's assistance, for he formed the plan of making Winfrith his colleague and successor. Anxious to avoid such a limitation of his sphere, Winfrith made haste to leave the mission, excusing himself on the ground that his orders were to preach the Gospel throughout Germany.

[1] Roger of Wendover's *Chronicles*, p. 135; also Menzel's *Germany*, vol. i, p. 222.

[2] See p. 42.

[3] A.D. 658–739.

He now betook himself to Hesse and Saxony [1], and threw himself with great ardour into the conversion of the tribes inhabiting that district. Great success attended his labours, and, protected by two native chiefs who were converted by his preaching [2], he was able to found a monastery at Amöneburg.

Time had gone on. It was four years since Winfrith had left Rome, and, gratified with his success, he resolved to report the results of his work to the Pope, who, in reply, at once requested his attendance in Rome. On his arrival Gregory II received him with a warm and distinguished welcome. The Pope saw that in Winfrith he had not mistaken his man, and he perceived in him zeal and character and talents which in the future might be of still further use to the Church. Presently marks of special favour were bestowed, and Winfrith was consecrated in St. Peter's, on November 30, 723, a Regionarius or Regionary Bishop, that is to say, a bishop unattached to any specified diocese. And, as if to affiliate him for ever to the mother Church as well as bind him more strongly to the service of the Pope as his Father in God, the old home-name of Winfrith, apparently the last link that was left with his parents in the flesh, was dropped for ever, and he was renamed Boniface. It is said that for some little time past he had been adopting this Latin

[1] Butler's *History of Saints*, vol. i, p. 739.

[2] Maclear, *Apost. Med. Europe*, p. 113.

name, and even calling himself by the two combined —Winfrith-Boniface. But it seems quite certain that whatever personal wishes existed, Pope Gregory sanctioned the change of name, if, indeed, he did not actually suggest it; and from the time of this second visit to Rome Winfrith is always spoken of as Boniface.

Keenly alive as Gregory II was to the condition of the times and their influence on the political future of the Church of Rome, this visit showed him that Boniface's work had in it a value over and above that of the mere missionary. And when, after receiving a confession of faith, he called on Boniface to swear afresh his loyalty to the papal chair, Gregory must have felt he was dispatching on a highly important errand a man from whom much was to be hoped, trustworthy because, in a worldly sense, not personally ambitious, enthusiastic in the work of conversion, yet completely loyal to the faith of Rome.

The following was the oath to which Boniface was called on to subscribe[1]:—'I, Boniface, bishop, by the grace of God, promise to thee, Blessed St. Peter, chief of the Apostles, and to thy blessed representative Pope Gregory, and to his successors, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

[1] It is right to note that this oath is said by Guizot to have been administered by Gregory III to Boniface in 738; vide Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 175.

the undivided Trinity, and by this thy most sacred body, never to do anything in any way against the unity of the general and universal Church, and to observe fidelity and purity and fellowship in the interests of thy Church and towards thee, to whom the Lord God hath given the power of binding and of loosing, and to thy aforesaid representative and to his successors. And if I shall see any priests altering anything contrary to the institutions of the Holy Fathers, I will hold no communion or fellowship with them, but will rather, if possible, prevent them: but if not I will faithfully and immediately report such persons to my apostolical lord. And if (which God forbid) I ever, by will or occasion, do anything against these my promises, let me be found guilty at the eternal judgement, let me incur the chastisement of Ananias and Sapphira, who dared to lie unto you and despoil you of part of their property. I, Boniface, a humble bishop, have with my own hand written this attestation of oath, and depositing it on the most sacred body of the sacred Peter, I have, as it is prescribed, taking God to judge and witness, made the oath which I promise to keep[1].'

Truly a document with all the wordy length of a legal parchment!

[1] Perry, *Franks*, p. 491, and Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 176.

V

GREGORY'S next duty was to take care that Boniface was put on the best possible footing with the governing power in the country to which he was returning. To this end he gave him letters of introduction to Carl Martel, requesting personal protection and assistance for the mission.

Since we last heard of him, Carl Martel had steadily been becoming not merely a great power in the Frankish kingdom, but a person of striking importance in Europe. Nearly ten years had now passed since the death of his father, Pepin of Heristal, and this, the youngest son of Pepin, was stepping prominently to the front to support and extend his father's work. We have seen how he defeated Chilperic and Radbod at Amblève in 716, and also how on Radbod's death in 719 he had promptly made his way into Frisia and brought the troublesome inhabitants into something approaching to subjection. Nor had the four years between then and the year of which we are writing been idly spent: the amount of work waiting to be done made it impossible for him to be inactive. He resolutely applied himself to the gradual crushing of his per-

sonal opponents, and set himself by reconquest to bring back some of those turbulent tribes who had escaped from under the rule of the Frankish empire. Though so much still remained to be done, Carl Martel had already begun to build up for himself something of that great military renown and that reputation of being a champion of Christendom which in years shortly to follow made him such a mighty power.

Just as the Anglo-Saxon kings had been finding it in England, so Pepin and Carl Martel experienced too that their efforts to bring the people under the influence of good and lawful government were greatly forwarded by those who were at work replacing heathenism by Christianity. It certainly is an admirable trait in these grand old early missionaries that they did not run counter to the political forces of the country in which they laboured. They taught men that among other duties was the duty of rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, while at the same time they softened, civilized, christianized Caesar himself. So far was this the fact that the Cross was the sign of those Germans beyond the Rhine who admitted the Frankish supremacy, while paganism was the symbol of those who rejected it.

As was to be expected, therefore, Carl Martel received Boniface willingly, and not only did he consent to the prosecution of the missionary's work,

but he did all he could to assist it. A link was thus formed between these two men which became stronger as events threw them more together. Not far apart in age—Carl Martel being born in 689 gives Boniface a little seniority—there is no doubt that the direct influence of the latter did a great deal to influence the character of Carl Martel and the reputation he bears in history. The link became not only a powerful factor in erecting the Carlovingian dynasty in its proud place, but it acquired for the first time in history a firm footing for the temporal power of the Church of Rome.

Carl gave Boniface a letter commending him to the consideration of all with whom he came into contact in the country. It was entitled 'Carol. Maj. Dom: Epistola Generalis,' that is to say, a 'general epistle' from Charles, mayor of the palace. It runs: 'Dominus sanctis et Apostolicis in Christo patribus, Episcopis, Ducibus, Comitibus, Vicariis, Domesticis, seu omnibus agentibus, Iunioribus nostris seu Missis decurrentibus et amicis nostris. Cognoscatis qualiter Apostolicus Vir . . . Bonifacius Episcopus ad nos venit et nobis suggessit, quod sub nostro mundeburdo recipere deberemus.'

Boniface now set out on his work more fully equipped than he had ever been before, specially commissioned by the Pope, and sanctioned and protected by the governing powers of the country in which his work lay. There was no temptation to

put off time by remaining in Carl Martel's palace, where the immorality and whole mode of life were only what he could condemn. Once more, therefore, he made his way into Hesse and Thuringia.

Resuming his labours where he had laid them down when he went to Rome, all his previous experience now came to his aid. His work was planned out with care, and every preparation made to carry it on with energy and spirit. Fervent preaching was followed by great success, and large numbers were baptized into the Christian faith. The need of more assistance soon made itself apparent, and Boniface asked for fresh helpers from his old bishop, Daniel of Winchester. Ever since he had left Nutscelle Boniface had retained his reverence for his old director, and a correspondence had been kept up between them. Boniface sought advice, and Daniel gave it as only one who knew the temperament and capacity of the missionary could do. Here is one of Daniel's letters by way of example:—

'You must not raise your voice against the genealogies of their false divinities. Rather let them declare to you how their gods were born one from another by carnal copulation; then you can readily show that gods and goddesses of this human origin can be no other than human beings, and that as they have once begun to exist they cannot contrive to exist for ever. Thence proceed to ask

them whether the world has had a commencement, or whether it is eternal, and if it has commenced who has created it? Again, ask them where did these deities who have been born reside before the creation of the world? If they say that the world is eternal, who was it that governed it before the birth of the gods? How did they bring the world under subjection to their laws, seeing that the world had no need of them? Whence came the firstborn among themselves, and by whom was he generated from whom all the rest are descended? And further ask them whether they think the gods ought to be honoured for the sake of temporal and present happiness, or of the future and eternal? If they say for temporal happiness, then let them show in what way are the pagans better off than the Christians. You shall address them with these and suchlike objections, not by way of provocation and insult, but with the greatest moderation and mildness. And from time to time you shall compare their superstitions with the Christian dogmas, touching them lightly indeed, so that the pagans may remain confounded rather than exasperated, that they may blush at the absurdity of their prejudices, and not suppose that we are ignorant of their false opinions and sinful practices. Further, you shall present to them the greatness of the Christian world, compared with which they are themselves so insignificant. And to prevent them boasting the

immemorial sovereignty of their idols, take heed to teach them that idols were indeed adored through the whole world until the time when the world was reconciled to God by the grace of Jesus Christ[1].'

Such a letter savours of the mild manner of the gentle student. Perhaps that mild colouring and reasonable argument were put into it purposely, in the hope that thereby a drag might to some extent be placed upon the impulsive and demonstrative methods Boniface was adopting. If that were so, they had no restraining influence. Boniface found it more congenial to his own impulses, and almost essential to a successful dealing with a vigorous and superstitious race, to oppose by bold and emphatic means a heathen people, turbulent and independent, who regarded the missionaries as the sure pioneers of the Frankish thraldom. He therefore continued not only to preach the Gospel, but he began openly to assume the offensive towards the rites and superstitions of these pagans.

We have already seen[2] what a cruel religion it was in exchange for which Boniface was offering the people the simple and peaceful Gospel of Christianity. It was the sacred places where these fierce and warlike heathen practised their faith that Boniface now determined with his own hands to demolish.

[1] Merivale, pp. 98, 99. Ozanam, 'Études germaniques,' vol. ii, p. 180, from the *Epistola Bonifacii.* [2] pp. 38–40.

Near Geismar, in Upper Hesse, there stood a very ancient oak, the great *Donnereiche* or 'oak of thunder.' For ages it had been held in the highest veneration. In size and height it stood out as a true monarch of the forest, and it was held sacred to the god Thor. Anxious by some imposing stroke to make a deep impression on the heathen mind, Boniface and a few attendants approached this oak, and determined to fell it to the ground. The superstitious and angry multitude surrounded the missionary party, bent upon slaying any who should so impiously defy their deity. Boniface himself, axe in hand, struck the first blows at the tree. While still engaged at his work, a mighty wind is said to have suddenly swept over the forest and completed his task for him. The great Thor's oak lay upon the ground, broken into four pieces. The failure of their god to make any interposition or to avenge the insult affected the people's minds very much as the silence of Baal to the appeals of Ahab and the priests influenced the idolatrous Israelites. The sudden intervention of the wind turned the balance definitely in favour of the Christians' God, and so immediately and deeply were they impressed that they offered no opposition to Boniface and his attendants carrying off the pieces of the fallen tree to build an oratory to St. Peter.

At Eichstädt there was a local god named Stuffo

whom the people made much of. Boniface boldly exorcized Stuffo, and the god is said to have fled and hid himself in a cave, known afterwards as Stuffensloch or Stuffo's hole.

And so the work went on. The barbarians, amazed at seeing their sacred groves and trees cut down and their gods insulted and defied with impunity, at length admitted the inefficacy of their idolatry and the superiority of Christianity. They were baptized in thousands. In renouncing their heathen customs and superstitions the German pagans took oath as follows: 'Ek forsacho diabole end allum diabol gelde end allum diaboles werkum end wordum, Thunaer ende Woden ende Saxnote end allum them unholdum, the hira genotas sint[1].'

So greatly were his missionary labours now prospering that Boniface urgently felt the need of more labourers. He naturally turned once again to his own native country, and, in answer to his appeal, his old bishop Daniel sent further help, this time monks and nuns and books. With such aid enormous progress was made, and its extent soon entitled Boniface to be called the Apostle of Germany. He now began to found regular churches, feeling certain, with such a band of helpers, of being able to maintain ecclesiastical

[1] Menzel's *Germany*, Bohn's edition, vol. i, p. 228, footnote. N. B.—This, however, seems to have been drawn up at the Synod of Lessines in 743.

services. This was a great advance, for such churches—notably those at Erfurt, Frizlar, Ohrdruff, and Altenberg—became permanent centres of activity and gave stability to the mission.

But Boniface by no means confined himself to the work of conversion; he set himself earnestly to that of edification and consolidation. It has already been said that there remained from the work of St. Columban some half-relapsed Christians of doubtful faith and of lukewarm allegiance to Rome. It was part of the creed of Boniface to allow no divergences of belief. And, indeed, granting fully the wisdom of allowing toleration of various denominations of Christians in countries where the Christian religion has been long and firmly established, it is quite certain that the difficulties of converting the heathen are immensely and most unfairly increased when Christians of different creeds, only too often quarrelling openly over minor doctrinal differences, enter the same missionary field together. When Christ was told that one who was not following in His train was nevertheless doing miracles in His Name, He declined to forbid him on the ground that 'he who is not against us is on our part.' With all their enthusiasm, too, many of Christ's followers have been able to breathe out the same liberality as their Master. What we find in the attitude between St. Augustine and Dinooth, we find again in the case of Boniface and the

remnant of St. Columban's mission. Things are no better in our own day, as one may see by reading how the Roman Catholics conducted themselves towards Mackay before King Mwanga in Uganda. Before the heathen, Christians should show that they are at least one in Christ. This is what Boniface strove to bring about, remembering, no doubt, how troublesome such dissensions had been in his old home in Wessex. He laboured to bring the offspring of the Celtic mission into harmony with his own work, consolidating Christianity, uniting all under the one jurisdiction of Rome, believing that in St. Peter was the 'rock' on which Christ had said His Church should be built.

While doing all this with immense energy and earnestness, Boniface framed his teaching upon simple truths, what Merivale calls 'the plainest doctrines of Scripture and the fundamental rules of universal morality.' Several of his homilies have been preserved. The titles of fifteen of them have been taken from Migne's work[1], and are as follows:—

1. De fide recta.
2. De origine humanae conditionis.
3. De gemina iustitiae operatione.
4. De octo beatitudinibus evangelicis.
5. De fide et operibus dilectionis.
6. De capitalibus peccatis et praecipuis Dei preceptis.

[1] Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, tom. 88, 89.

7. De fide et charitate.

8. Qualiter hic vivatur, qualiter in futurum vivendum sit.

9. Qui actus sint omni studio evitandi, et qui tota virum instantia sectandi.

10. De Incarnatione Filii Dei et humani generis reparatione.

11. De duobus regnis a Deo statutis.

12. Exhortatio de ieiuniis Quadragesimae.

13. Quare ieiunia Quadragesimae magis aliis ieiuniis veneranda sint.

14. In die solemnitatis paschalis.

15. De abrenuntiatione in baptismate.

It is quite clear from these titles that Boniface was not contented with anything short of a deep and real belief in Christianity. The sermons dealt practically with their subjects, and that, for instance, which is an address to neophytes on their baptism is an excellent exhortation with which no Christian would disagree.

All through his work Boniface was aided and encouraged by frequent correspondence with Pope Gregory, in whose vigorous and outspoken mind Boniface found that kindred and decisive spirit which his own needs sought and required. This led to the settlement of many questions which were sure to keep rising up in such a new and extensive work as he was engaged in.

But in 731 Pope Gregory II died. On being

elected to the pontificate he had brought to the office three important qualifications: he was a Roman by birth, he had been educated under the special supervision of Popes Sergius and Constantine, and he was possessed of remarkable personal energy. Gibbon calls him the founder of the papal monarchy; and one willingly concedes him the title in view of the events which crowded the sixteen years of his reign, especially the last three of them, which nearly covered that great Iconoclast controversy with Leo the Emperor of the West. As a Roman, Gregory perhaps espoused Rome's side with more than clerical heat, and in no way regretted that the rupture with Leo became a revolution, and that Rome, detached from the rule of the eastern empire, set up as a republic, so long as the Pope was its head. Nor must we altogether frame our ideas of Gregory personally from the outrageous tone of his well-known letters to Leo, where he announces in one breath that 'the eyes of the nations are fixed on our humility,' and in the next one tells Leo that he implores Christ to 'send unto you a devil, for the destruction of your body and the salvation of your soul.' Gregory was made of better stuff than this would make us suppose.

His successor was Gregory III, and Boniface lost no time in bringing himself into communication with him, anxious, no doubt, to set an example of prompt submission and loyalty to the new Pontiff.

Boniface selected messengers whom he sent to Rome, ostensibly to consult the Pope upon special difficulties. These messengers Gregory received with great marks of respect, and on their return they brought Boniface the pallium, and the title of archbishop, without attachment to any particular see, but establishing him as Primate of All Germany and Apostolic Vicar. These honours carried with them the power of founding such new episcopal sees as he thought were needed, and of consecrating bishops to them. We shall see later that this power was made use of. Meanwhile we may mention the founding of many new churches and, especially, the establishment of a monastery at Orfordt.

Now while Boniface was thus ardently engaged, in this particular portion of Europe, in uprooting heathenism and replacing it by Christianity, an event of the very first historical importance was in progress—an event so grave that we must turn aside to give it attention. Forces were at work which were threatening the very existence of Christianity on the continent of Europe. Europe, though it remains without the honour of having been the actual cradle of Christianity, has at any rate been its chief nursery and stronghold; but, at the very time of which we are writing, the followers of Mohammed had invaded it, and the Cross and the Crescent came face to face in bitter and implacable conflict for the mastery.

It was only a hundred years before this time that Mohammed himself had died[1]. In spite of the two parties under which his followers ranged themselves after his death[2], Islamism had spread. The Saracenic empire which he founded among the Arabians rapidly extended, and spread the religion far and wide at the point of the sword. The tide flowed ever onwards. Five years after the false prophet's death the city of Jerusalem was conquered by the Arabs: then Palestine, Egypt, Arabia, Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, parts of India, and the whole of the north coast of Africa, were submerged beneath the religion of Islam. Race after race had yielded in terror of extermination, for Mohammed's doctrines directed the propagation of the faith by eternal warfare and unlimited slaughter of those who opposed it; and, having yielded, they came to view their creed with fanaticism, and joined in spreading it by the same terrible methods.

We have seen that the Saracens had penetrated along the North African coast. In the year 710 they crossed the narrow arm of the Mediterranean that separated them from the southernmost Spanish coast, and effected a small landing, under Tarik, at the place now called Gibraltar, literally Gebel-al-Tarik. Next year a larger body followed, and by the aid of still stronger reinforcements they succeeded in firmly planting themselves in Spain.

[1] A.D. 571–632. [2] Ali and Abubeker.

Spain, at that period, was under the degenerate rule of the Visigothic king Roderic. The Saracens ultimately succeeded in bringing this king to battle at Xeres, and completely overthrew him and his dynasty. The defeat at Xeres, which was in 712, allowed the Crescent to prevail over the whole Spanish peninsula as far north as the Pyrenees; and the completeness of the conquest is realized when it is remembered that Mohammedans were not driven entirely out of Spain again till Granada was reconquered from the Moors about eight hundred years afterwards.

Firmly seated in Spain, the Saracens in a year or two began to long for the fertile Burgundian provinces across the Pyrenees, and in 718 they made their first attempt at invasion. No great progress was made till some years later, when, in 731 or 732, a lieutenant or viceroy of the Caliph Yesid, named Abderrahman, appeared with an immense army and pushed the conquest as far as Tours on the banks of the Loire. No one seemed to have been able to stay his progress, and Europe appeared to be giving way before the advance of Islam. There was only one great military spirit in Christian Europe capable of rendering help at such a crisis, and this was no other than Carl Martel. He was mentioned last as assisting Boniface, then returning from his visit to Rome in 723, by letters of recommendation to

the civil powers of the empire. The interval between that time and the year 732 which we are considering had been spent by Carl in warlike expeditions successively against the Frisians, the Swabians, the Bavarians, and, again, the Saxons. Though impelled to these expeditions by political reasons, he was also in a sense the defender of Christianity, for these wars were against forces of heathenism that were filled with a hatred of the Christian religion. And now Christian Europe, terror-stricken, turned to him for help not only against the heathen on the north but against the fanatical and merciless Mohammedan on the south. Fortunately, political considerations of themselves obliged Carl to move, for in penetrating as far as Poitiers and Tours, the very centre of modern France, Abderrahman had invaded Neustria.

Carl was no stranger to the ground. Only the previous year (731) he had been in Aquitaine quelling a rebellion. He now lost no time in making his way south again, resolutely bent on barring the progress of the Mohammedans. The two immense armies came face to face on the plains between Tours and Poitiers. Carl and Abderrahman were not men to be satisfied with anything short of a decisive result. For Europe it was to be the religion of Christ or that of Mohammed, an issue that justifies such a battle as that of Tours being called one of the great decisive battles of the world.

The conflict lasted more or less for three days, and the slaughter was terrible. In the end the Saracens were put to flight, leaving Abderrahman among the thousands of slain, and the victory of the Franks was complete. For Carl, ever afterwards known as Martel, the Hammer, the triumph was a glorious one. For the Christian religion in Europe it was salvation, and Carl was proclaimed its champion.

Though political reasons were sufficient to have roused this great warrior to the destruction of the conquering Saracens, it would be unfair not to credit him with having had his arm still further strengthened for the conflict by the knowledge Boniface had had plenty of opportunities of imparting to him; and he would at least believe that in going forth to war against the enemies of Christ's Church he was fighting the cause of the God of Battles.

When, after punishing some rebels in Burgundy, Carl turned northwards, we can imagine the exultation with which Boniface would meet one who, protecting him in the early part of his own mission, was now the military champion of the faith. In 734 Carl Martel applied himself once more to effect the subjection of the troublesome Frisians and their heathen Duke Poppo, successor to Radbod; and the sword of Carl and the preaching of Boniface went forward together in the work of conquest, civilization, and conversion. They were stirring years, and each of these great men had his hands

full. It was not long before Carl had to come south once more to adjust domestic difficulties in Aquitaine, as well as to attend to a renewed attempt of the Saracens to enter Gaul in 737. We need not follow him in these.

As for Boniface, he began to prepare for a personal visit to Rome, which he had not paid since Gregory III succeeded to the pontificate (732); and in 738 he set out upon his journey. It will be remembered that Gregory III had created him Archbishop and Primate of All Germany. Boniface, therefore, had, as an object in his visit, the bringing of himself into personal conference with the new Pope, and the reporting upon the work he had been carrying out, especially in regard to the founding of new churches.

Gregory received him with every possible mark of esteem, and, as the old chroniclers say, as a living saint. Rome, at any rate, had had no truer, harder-working son, and Gregory might well show Boniface all the marks of reverence to which his personal character and his labours on behalf of the Church entitled him. What he had to bring with him as the harvest of his work was the account of the churches he had founded and which he wished brought regularly into disciplinary relations with Christianity, as it existed under the Church in Rome and under the Pope, as its sole head and chief.

As a mark of special honour Gregory appointed Boniface Legate of the Apostolic See in Germany, and thus placed him in a position of high authority[1]. There are some legates whose office is merely an appendage to an ecclesiastical office. These are of inferior grade to those specially constituted, and who are endowed with authority not only for purposes of church discipline but as ambassadors to sovereign princes. We shall see that Boniface's future relations with the Carlovingian dynasty made this position one of political as well as ecclesiastical importance to him, to the Pope, and to the princes.

[1] *Ency. Brit.*, art. 'Legates.'

VI

BONIFACE's visit to Rome in 738 was not a long one. There was too much active work on hand for time to be spent upon needless delays. Boniface himself was eager to return to his labours, while Gregory may have felt it as well to have his influence not too long removed from Carl Martel, considering the serious way in which political perplexities were accumulating. Gregory's hands were full, dealing with the difficulties of the situation and the outlook.

It will be remembered that his predecessor in the papacy, Gregory II, had been moved to ire and rebellion by the promulgation of the Emperor Leo's orders against images. Rome had for some time been developing a feeling of independence of the rule of Constantinople, and this asserted itself under Leo's action in the shape of a throwing off of the allegiance. For a moment, till self-interest showed it its mistake, Rome actually joined itself to the greatest enemies the Greek emperor had in Italy. These were the Langobards.

After their first inroad into Italy, the energy of the Langobards was completely prejudiced by their mode of government: they divided their lands into

provinces, each of which was under a separate and independent duke. But having reunited under one king, they now again began to extend their forces further into Italy, and threatened to deprive the Greek emperor of all his remaining possessions in that country. Gregory II soon saw that Rome was in danger of being absorbed and degraded into the position of a mere metropolitan bishopric. He therefore considered the danger most urgent, and it was in this critical situation that things stood at his death in 731. But Gregory III was equally alive to the position. Unfortunately his methods irritated Luitprand, the Langobard king; and when the Pope gave asylum to one of Luitprand's rebellious dukes, Luitprand, disregarding his personal reverence for the spiritual side of Rome's claims, determined to possess himself of the whole of Italy. The Langobards pushed forward to the gates of Rome, and in 739 Gregory III was obliged to turn elsewhere for help. He sought his aid from Carl Martel, addressing his petition 'to the most excellent lord, son Charles, sub-king.' Although Carl was at the very least as good a Christian as his clerical biographers care to admit, Rome no doubt reaped a great advantage from having such an influence as Boniface's at work upon him. Gregory must have built some hopes upon it as he anxiously awaited the response. For he knew that Carl Martel was on excellent terms with Luitprand. To make

a request to Carl for help against Luitprand was therefore not without danger, and he had been slow to make it. His fear was that an alliance between the two might end in Luitprand effecting his purpose and the shattering of Rome's prospects.

But Carl did not come. Barely fifty years old, he seems to have begun feeling the inevitable effects of his past arduous life. Wearied with his own wars and difficulties, anxious too, no doubt, to avoid hostility with Luitprand, yet attached to the chair of St. Peter, he contented himself with persuading Luitprand to withdraw his forces on condition of Gregory not further interfering between him and his vassals on secular matters. Gregory had been wrong, and the lesson was good. Well would it have been for the Christian religion if 'the Church' in all succeeding ages had not often needed such a lesson, and if some of its worldly and haughty princes had only recalled to their minds the warning that the Kingdom of the Christ is not of this world.

When Boniface left Rome in the previous year, 738, he went straight to Bavaria. That country was inhabited by a Celtic population who were formerly subject to the Romans, but, having been conquered a century before by the Frankish kings, were ruled by governors. The duke of the day was Odilo, a man who not long afterwards provoked some trouble by marrying the runaway daughter[1]

[1] Hiltrude.

of Carl Martel. Duke Odilo asked Boniface to visit the country and reform certain clerical abuses.

In 738 Bavaria had only one bishopric—Passau; and it had not long had even that. At the beginning of the eighth century Passau[1] had begun to rise again from the desolation that barbarism had inflicted upon the surrounding country for a couple of centuries; and under the help of one Theodore it became a centre of spiritual guidance to the outlying populations. From its antiquity, and also from its commanding situation at the junction of the Inn with the Danube, it was well entitled to be such a centre. When the eighth century grew a little older, this single bishopric was not sufficient, as Boniface promptly discovered when he went to visit Bavaria. He therefore divided the country into four bishoprics by founding the three new sees of Ratisbon, Saltzburg, and Freisinghein; and these sees, as well as the bishops appointed to them, were duly confirmed by the Pope. Among the names of the bishops there remains to us that of Wiwilo, formerly Bishop of Lorch, who was now installed at Passau.

Continuing his journeys with a view to the further establishment of church discipline and organization, Boniface erected bishoprics at Erfurt for Thuringia, at Baraburg (afterwards translated to Paderborn) for Hesse, and at Wurtzburg for Franconia; while

[1] *The Danube Illustrated*, by Wm. Beattie, M.D., p. 74.

a return visit to Bavaria indicated to him the desirability of yet another bishop's see there, and this he placed at Achstadt.

Boniface hoped, by planting his lieutenants in these ecclesiastical seats, to obtain a firmer control over a clerical indifference to the law and the authority of the Romish Church, which had prevailed to a disturbing degree. Making all allowance for certain statements against Carl Martel, to which we shall recur presently, the civil powers seem to have left Boniface to carry out his arrangements practically according to his own judgement.

We must now return to the old difficulties at Rome between the Langobards and the Pope. In 740 the troubles came to the front again. The agreement that Carl had brought about only the year before did not last long, for both parties seem to have broken through the conditions. Luitprand appeared outside the very gates of the city, and Gregory was placed between terror and perplexity. Think of what was at stake. The Pope of Rome was succeeding in making his see paramount over the Christian Church: so much for spiritual matters. He had just detached himself in rebellion from his emperor, but as yet had not ventured to take independent political action: so much for temporal matters. The Rome he hoped for, the Rome as it came to be, was in the act of being born. To Gregory it appeared as if Luitprand would destroy

it at its birth. In effect, however, it proved that the very opposing forces of the Langobards compelled Gregory to perform such decisive acts as in the end helped to achieve for Rome what he wished. We can understand that Gregory's attitude with regard to the Emperor Leo and the Byzantine empire, and his experience of the previous year that Carl's friendship for Luitprand weighed strongly with him, constituted a predicament in which the Pope could not but hesitate anxiously before moving. But the terror of the Langobards' near presence produced a panic that soon overcame all else.

Carl Martel was implored to give his powerful help. The appeal was a remarkable one: it came from Rome as from Church and State combined. It was a noteworthy step, amounting to a declaration, on the part of Rome[1]. As head of the Church, Gregory offered to Carl by his messengers the keys of the sepulchre of St. Peter. As the ruler of a state, Gregory conferred on Carl the Roman title of Patricius[2]. With all its ambitions, some treasured for the future, others claimed at the moment, pontifical Rome was yet but in its earliest infancy and sought protection in Carl Martel.

Considering the pronounced and implacable ideas held by Boniface in favour of papal power and supremacy, and bearing in mind his influence with

[1] Perry, pp. 277, 278.

[2] *Consul* or *Senator*, Hallam's *Middle Ages*, supplem. vol., p. 26.

Carl and his position in Germany, one can well believe that when Bishop Anastasius and Presbyter Sergius brought their message from Pope Gregory, Boniface may have had something to do with paving the way for the marked consideration with which their mission was received.

Carl gave Gregory's messengers his assurances of help, and bestowing costly gifts upon them[1], sent two messengers of his own to accompany them to Rome and to deliver his reply. He again exerted his friendly offices with Luitprand. This time it was with better effect, for Luitprand was, after all, a friend of peace, a man of great wisdom, and one to whom the historian of the Langobards gives a high reputation[2]. For a short space of time all was now quiet between Rome and the Langobards.

Events, like everything else, move on, and great changes were just at hand. Death made great inroads, and in the year 741 three leading and remarkable figures passed from before the eyes of the world, namely, the Emperor Leo III, Pope Gregory III, and Carl Martel.

Leo III was, as may be supposed, the last of the emperors of the East to whom a Pope ever applied for confirmation of his election to the papacy. When 741 brought a new Pope and a new Byzan-

[1] Perry, pp. 277, 278.

[2] *Paul. Diacon. Hist. Langobard.*, lib. vi, cap. 58, quoted by Perry, p. 276.

tine emperor, matters between them were on a very different ecclesiastical and political footing from what they were ten years before, when Gregory III ascended the papal chair.

Gregory III's death in November, 741, brought to an end a short but vigorous rule. He was succeeded by Zachary, to whom Boniface, always prompt to show his devotion and respect for the authority of the Pope, reported upon his mission in Germany. Zachary readily confirmed Boniface in his work and position.

Carl Martel died in October, 741, at his palace in Chiersey on the Oise, and was buried in the church of St. Denis. Placed as Boniface had been, the loss of such a great and powerful supporter in the state must have been almost more severe a trial than the death of the Pope himself. Carl was not immaculate, but when we reflect how outspoken and unsparing Boniface was in his letters and appeals to erring kings, we may assume that Boniface must have in a manner condoned some of Carl's proceedings on the ground of the necessities of the times. It seems that in order to reward his soldiers for some of their campaigns on behalf of Christendom Carl took certain treasures and lands which belonged to that Church whose interest he had been labouring to defend[1], thus making the Church, which

[1] Duruy's *History of France*, vol. i, p. 146; Perry's *Franks*; Hallam, &c.

did not pay the ordinary taxations to the state, at any rate contribute out of its own means to the expenses of its own safeguarding. Unfortunately the only chroniclers of those times were clerics, and many a year after his death jealous priests, nursing a rancour for this act, but willing to forget how this conqueror had saved Christianity itself in Europe, have soiled their pens by malignity when they might have written glorious things in charity. Carl at least had been one of the great historical saviours of Christendom, and a saviour of Rome in particular. His arm had been mighty and prevailing, and he had never shown any opposing spirit to the progress of religion.

Now the structure of Boniface's ecclesiastical organization in Germany had been so recently founded that its fate would evidently for the time depend upon the character and good-will of Carl's successors in the mayoralty. Indeed the state of the empire soon showed not only the necessity of Carl's successors being well disposed towards Christianity, but also possessed of firm and powerful hands for government and war. Carl Martel had not been long dead when, in the hope of recovering independency, a revolt occurred in the province of Bavaria and in that of Thuringia to the north of it —provinces where Boniface's labours had been greatest.

It is necessary here that we should carry forward

our historical points. First of all it must be explained that Carl left three sons. Two of these, Carloman and Pepin le Bref, were by his first wife; the other, named Gripho, was by his second. The dynasty under which they lived was that of the Merovingian kings. Carl himself had lived and died as mayor of the palace to this dynasty, though in the effete state of that monarchy he was practically the ruler of the state. It had been Carl's wish that each of his sons should govern a portion of the empire. Although they were dukes of France, they would still have no titular dignity greater than their father's; and, however much they may have despised the reigning dynasty in its feeble impotence, they were technically subservient to it. Accordingly they adhered to custom, and placed on the Merovingian throne, which happened to be vacant, one who was destined to be the last of his race, Childeric III. The form was complied with: the actual government remained in their own hands as it had done in their father's.

When Carl's last wishes were carried out the arrangement proved displeasing to that division of country which fell to the share of Gripho. Perhaps in those days of government by constant military repression that might not have counted for much if a family feud had not been imported into the matter. This came through Duke Odilo of Bavaria, who had, it is remembered, invited Boniface

to work in his country in 738. Odilo had married Carl Martel's runaway daughter Hiltrude, to the vexation of her brothers Carloman and Pepin. Gripho, the other brother, sided with Hiltrude, and in return for his pains soon found himself a close prisoner in the castle of Neufchâteau [1] in the forest of the Ardennes. To the satisfaction of the dissatisfied population placed under him, his territory was reunited with the rest of the empire; and Pepin [2], to whom had been assigned Neustria and Burgundy, and Carloman, who had Austrasia and the land beyond the Rhine, ruled together in harmony. It was well they were worthy sons of their father, for they soon had their hands full with revolted tribes in Bavaria, Thuringia, and Swabia.

Now disturbed as the country was by revolutions for a short time after Carl Martel's death, Boniface and his mission continued to find sympathy and help from the governing powers. Indeed, it seems as if his work received even an increase of attention and added to its influence.

On April 21, 742, a great state council was convened by Carloman and Pepin. It is not known precisely where it was held: some say it was at Frankfort [3]; others name Saltz [4], Ratisbon [5], and

[1] Eginhard, *Annal. an.* 741, quoted by Perry, p. 287.
[2] Duruy's *Hist. of France*, vol. i, p. 146.
[3] Hallam's *Middle Ages*, vol. i, p. 522.
[4] Perry's *Franks*, p. 300. [5] Ibid., p. 477.

Augsburg[1]. The council, at any rate, met at some place in Germany, and was composed of the chief temporal and spiritual leaders. It was opened under a decree commencing[2]: 'I, Carloman, duke and prince of the Franks, with the counsel of the servants of God and our great men, have convoked the bishops of my kingdom, and Boniface, who is sent from St. Peter, that they may give me counsel, &c.' Boniface, as legate of Pope Zachary, presided[3], and rejoiced he must have been to see matters in such progress, since the special object of the council was to definitely put down all the confusion and clerical irregularities which had been permitted under previous rulers. Writing afterwards to Zachary, Boniface said[4] that 'For more than eighty years the Franks have neither held a synod nor appointed an archbishop, nor enacted or renewed their canons; but most of the bishoprics are given to rapacious lawyers or dissolute and avaricious priests for their own use; and though some of these profess to be chaste, yet they are either drunkards or followers of the chase, or they go armed into battle, and shed with their own hands the blood of Christians as well as heathens.'

Certain definite questions were raised at this

[1] Perry's *Franks*, p. 477.

[2] Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 333.

[3] Ibid., p. 176.

[4] *Bonifac. Epist.* (ed. Würdtweim, Ep. 51) *ad Zach., ann.* 742.

council or synod by Boniface, some of which, by Carloman's help, were carried there and then, while others were held over to the synod which was held in the ensuing year. The points that were decided were, briefly stated, as follows: (1) That annual synods should be held in future. (2) That the property of which the churches and monasteries had been violently deprived should be restored. (3) That the counts and bishops, in their respective jurisdictions, should put down all heathen practices. (4) That the rule of St. Benedict should be reintroduced into the monasteries. (5) That the clergy should be prohibited from war, the chase, marriage, and the use of military accoutrements.

This synod was of such importance in the history of the Romish Church in Germany that there is good reason why, even at the risk of seeming to dwell upon it too much, we should give some further account of it in Boniface's own words taken from one of his letters[1]: 'In our synodal meeting we have declared and decreed that to the end of our life we desire to hold the Catholic faith and unity, and submission to the Roman Church, Saint Peter, and his vicar; that we will every year assemble the synod; that the metropolitans shall demand the pallium from the see of Rome, and that we will canonically follow all the precepts of Saint Peter, to the end that

[1] *Bonifac. Epist.*, Ep. 118, taken (translated) from Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 176.

we may be reckoned among the number of his sheep, and we have consented and subscribed to this profession. I have sent it to the body of Saint Peter, prince of the Apostles, and the clergy and the pontiff have joyfully received it. If any bishop can correct or reform anything in his diocese let him propose the reformation in the synod before the archbishops and all there present, even as we ourselves have promised with oath to the Roman Church. Should we see the priests and people breaking the law of God, and we are unable to correct them, we will faithfully inform the apostolic see and the vicar of Saint Peter in order to accomplish the said reform. It is thus, if I do not deceive myself, that all bishops should render an account to the metropolitan, and he to the pontiff of Rome, of that which they do not succeed in reforming among the people, and thus they will not have the blood of lost souls upon their heads.'

Hallam[1] points out the special force of the enactment in regard to all metropolitans requesting the pallium at the hands of the Pope and promising to obey his lawful commands, remarking in the same passage that this was construed by the popes into a promise of obedience before receiving the pallium, changed later by Gregory VII into an oath of fealty. And he speaks of this council of 742 as claiming 'a leading place as an epoch in the history of the papacy[2].'

[1] Hallam's *Middle Ages*, vol. ii, p. 522. [2] Ibid., p. 523.

It is not very evident whether it was at this synod, though it certainly was about this time, that Boniface had to consider how to deal with certain ecclesiastics and others who opposed him. The most prominent were Dortwin, Berthar, Taubrecht, and Hunred, who were active in Thuringia, and Ariowulf, Adelbert, and Clemens, who were much the same in Bavaria[1]. Adelbert was a French bishop, and, though the precise heresy of which he was accused is not very clear, it is believed that he laid claim to being inspired and inculcated the worship of angels. He made miracle-working one of his pretensions, and sold as relics the clippings of his own hair and the parings of his own finger-nails. As for Clement, he was a Scotchman who held heterodox opinions on predestination, and taught that Christ in His descent into hell delivered all the souls of the damned. Boniface stoutly condemned both Adelbert and Clement as heretics, and Carloman had them closely imprisoned—a sentence that was afterwards confirmed by Pope Zachary. The well-known case of Virgilius, Bishop of Saltzburg, should also be named. Virgilius had devoted himself to the study of science, more especially the science of astronomy; and the progress he had made in knowledge so far surpassed that of his associates as to lead to his being denounced as a sorcerer. Whatever we may think of Clement and his doctrines,

[1] Menzel's *Germany*, vol. i, p. 228.

Adelbert, the seller of relics from his own precious person, was nothing short of a dangerous vagrant, better and safer in prison than out of it. But the case was very different with Virgilius, who had not only done good missionary work among the Slavi of the mountains of Carinthia and Carinola[1], but has been called one of the most enlightened men of an age in which secular learning was being discountenanced. It is perhaps not to be expected that Boniface's work would be prosecuted on lines at all times parallel in every branch with the most enlightened knowledge of his time; but it is at least sad to see him, with the Pope of Rome at his back, either ignorantly or tyrannically condemning one who sought for truth in science. It is a narrow policy, which many have adopted since Boniface's day, always unwisely, because sure to raise an opposition inspired in the end by defiance, mockery, and contempt. It was when he was exasperated by Boniface's ignorant action into this spirit that Virgilius scornfully turned from his studies in science and asked him whether the senseless form made use of by a German priest, uneducated in the Latin tongue, was efficacious—'Baptizo te in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.' 'Yes,' was Boniface's answer, 'for faith ought to be blind[1].'

The only excuse we can accept for Boniface, who was a man of great learning and resource for

[1] Menzel's *Germany*, vol. i, p. 228.

his time, is his great wish to bring all into subservience to Rome, and his character, which was that of a strict disciplinarian. The great aims that possessed his soul, next to the conversion of the heathen, seem to have been the founding in unity of the Kingdom of God upon earth; the bringing of all men in universal brotherhood under the care of one shepherd, the Pope, Christ's vicar upon earth; and to overcome not only the opposition of individuals, but even the diversity of nations and languages, by rendering the Latin tongue the language of the Universal Church. Perhaps his scheme was a visionary and impossible one: it certainly scarcely seems as if the method of overriding the difficulties with which the scheme was beset was a workable one: but it was born of an enthusiasm which occasionally, as in the case of Virgilius, overflowed into the limits of what was regrettable, even should we allow it to have been excusable.

The next great event for Boniface was the Synod of Lessines held in the following year, 743. Lessines, formerly called Leptines, is on the left bank of the river Dender, in the province of Hennegau, about five miles north of Ath. At this town, chiefly known now for its breweries and its porphyry quarries, there was a palace of the Merovingian kings, easily accessible from Tournai, which lies twenty miles to the westward, and which was long the chief town of

the Salian Franks. At this palace in Lessines the synod of 743 was held under the presidency of Boniface[1], but under the authority of Pepin and Carloman. The regulation of the clergy and the arrival at a settled understanding in regard to the Church property 'secularized' by Carl Martel may be said to have been the objects of this synod. Pepin and Carloman gave the following order in reference to the latter subject[2]: 'We enact by the counsel of God's servants and of the Christian people, that in consideration of impending wars and the persecutions to which we are exposed from surrounding nations, we be allowed, by the indulgence of God, to retain for some time, *sub precario et censu*, a portion of the Church's property for the support of our army; on these conditions, that a sol[3] should be paid annually to the church or monastery for every estate, and that the church be reinvested with its property at the death of its present holder. Should, however, necessity compel or the prince ordain it, the *precarium* (or life-interest) must be renewed, and a new document drawn up; and, in every case, care must be taken that the churches and monasteries of which the property is *in precario* (granted for a single life)

[1] Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 477 (Bohn).

[2] Sismondis, *Concil. Gall.* (Paris, 1629), tom. i, p. 540, quoted by Perry, *Franks*, p. 302.

[3] A sol = *solidus*, a gold piece = 12 denarii.

suffer no want or poverty. But if poverty renders it necessary the whole property must be restored to the church or house of God.'

This was as far as could be got at present, a settlement of the old complaint that had descended from Carl Martel's day. It established ecclesiastical rights to property, the admission of which was of importance to the Church. Until such property was finally restored to the Church, Church and State had each to concede something to the other. Meanwhile, so dependent did the mission and the Church seem upon the sword of the government, it was but natural that Boniface should not at the moment be too exacting in regard to arrangements about temporal property.

The reform of the clergy was the other object of the Synod of Lessines[1]. The bishops, priests, and clerks were all required to promise to alter their habits and to conduct themselves according to the ancient canons. The monks accepted the rule of St. Benedict. Obedience to the Pope was promised. The metropolitan was to hold a yearly council in future, and every bishop must visit his diocese once a year. Bishops who could not correct or control their priests were to carry the matter to the archbishops.

Thus, mainly by the sagacity of Boniface, affairs were gradually passing from a state of chaos into

[1] Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 477.

one bordering upon discipline and stability, and the Synod of Lessines is notwithout historical importance, because it definitely marks a stage in this progress.

It is interesting at this juncture to look round and observe the singularly difficult and delicate course the tide of events was taking. The Church in Germany was being steadily brought under the shepherding of Rome, acknowledging Rome's ecclesiastical government and her supremacy. The civil powers were helping to establish this. Yet the Pope himself, struggling for his temporal existence, and with a sword of Damocles, in the shape of Luitprand and his Langobards, hanging ever over his head, was dependent on Pepin and Carloman for his preservation. The situation must have taxed all Boniface's diplomatic skill; but, leaving further developments to time, though keeping a watchful eye upon them, he quietly continued the administration of the ecclesiastical affairs for which he was responsible.

Hitherto Boniface, an archbishop as well as a legate, had been without a see. This was now no longer an arrangement likely to be of service. In 744, on the death of Bishop Reginfried, occasion was taken to appoint him to the see of Cologne. This appointment proved to be only a temporary one.

At Mayence the incumbent of the bishopric was one Gervilius or Gewlieb, a man very little after Boniface's mind. He had not been chosen on

account of any personal or ecclesiastical fitness for the office, but was much more interested in wild sport as a hunter. He had also been guilty of shedding man's blood in battle. It will be remembered that at the Germanic council of 742, the clergy were forbidden under the seal of Carloman and Pepin to engage in war or the chase. Gervilius was summoned before a council held in Germany, convoked by Carloman on the advice of Boniface[1]; and, having been found guilty, he was deposed.

As Boniface found that Mayence would be a better centre for his work than Cologne, he removed there and erected the see of Mayence into an archbishopric, thus placing himself officially at the head of the Church in Germany. This was in 745. Pope Zachary expressed his ready approval, and made Mayence the ruler over the sees of Tongres, Cologne, Worms, Spires, Utrecht, Strasburg, Augsburg, Constance, Coire, and all other bishoprics which Boniface established. A glance at the map of Germany will show what a large area this brought under his jurisdiction. We must note that this is the time at which the special link between Boniface and Mayence was formed, and that, although some other arch-episcopates were created within the district as time went on, the primacy that has always been allotted to Mayence dates from this period.

[1] Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 478 (table).

To many men the height that Boniface had now attained would have opened up a field amply satisfying to their worldly ambitions. He had in his reach wealth, honour, power, and the society and support of the powerful men of the land. It shows how pure and lofty were the motives guiding his life and aims when Boniface regarded all these things as of secondary value to the faithful prosecution of his mission. The old fiery zeal that drew him from Nutscelle and England was still his guiding star, and in following it still he remained not only true but single-hearted. We shall see that it carried him forward to the utmost earthly limit.

The years were slipping away—each one, however, leaving its work accomplished. We come now to the year 744, and Boniface has turned three-score without showing any falling-off of energy. The annual synod, which was held this time at Soissons [1], did not deal with matters of great importance, although the heresy of Adelbert, referred to at the Germanic council of 742 [2], was more definitely condemned. The matter need not detain us in view of a more interesting and personal matter connected with Boniface which took place in the same year. This was the foundation [3] of the

[1] Guizot's *History of Civilization*, vol. ii, p. 478. [2] p. 96.

[3] Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, p. 742, gives the year 746 as that of the foundation of Fulda; Benham's *Dictionary of Religion* gives the year as 744.

monastery of Fulda. Upon Fulda, destined in the not-far-distant end to receive his mortal remains, he bestowed great and devoted care.

The founding of Fulda was undertaken to satisfy the desire of a young priest whom Boniface had educated and afterwards attached to his own person. This priest, now known as St. Sturm, was placed under the guardianship of Boniface by his parents on an occasion when he visited Bavaria. Boniface had him educated in the monastery of St. Peter at Fritzlar, and after ordination kept him for three years engaged in assisting himself as a kind of bishop's chaplain. Sturm greatly preferred the retirement of the monastic life, and Boniface did not oppose him. After some time spent in exploration Sturm chose, as suitable for a monastery, a spot on the banks of the Fulda which we easily identify to this day as the town of Fulda, situated fifty-four miles south-east of Cassel. At that time the whole district was nothing more than a wild and extensive forest. There was no difficulty in obtaining a sufficient grant of land from Pepin. Encouraged and helped by Boniface, Sturm set to work to erect the monastery [1], and on its completion he was appointed abbot with seven monks under him. The foundation of this monastery, as has been said, seems to have excited Boniface's special interest, so much so that he made it exempt from any interference of reigning

[1] Founded March 12, 744 (Schneider's *Fulda*).

bishops, its abbot being responsible to the Pope alone. It will be necessary to come back to Fulda in connexion with the burial of Boniface, but it may be remarked here that Fulda rose to great importance in subsequent years. With the exception of a short break, Sturm ruled at Fulda till he died at an advanced age in 779 (710–779); and so greatly did the monastery prosper in his lifetime that, before his death, the number of monks rose to 400[1]. It held its importance until the Reformation[2].

During the next two years Boniface busied himself still further in founding monasteries, and to the year 746 are ascribed the foundations of Wurtzburg in Franconia, Buraburg in Hesse, and Erfurt in Thuringia. These were valuable additions to those previously established at Fritzlar, Ordofe, Hamenburg, and elsewhere. They were all placed under the same discipline of the Benedictine rule, as was the case in regard to all monasteries in the West, monks and nuns being thereby bound by the wholesome regulation not to be idle, but to work as well as pray.

The requirements for carrying on these new undertakings were considerable, and led Boniface to try and find fresh helpers. It was naturally to England that he turned once more, where, no doubt, his successes in his great mission continued to impress many willing and kindred souls. We

[1] Bishop Kettler. [2] Benham, *Dictionary of Religion.*

read of several who answered his call, and recognize many names that have not to shine by a borrowed light, but survive by their own lustre. Among the men were Witta, Wigbert, Wunnibald, Burchard (made Bishop of Wurtzburg), Willibald of Eichstädt, and Lullus; and among nuns there were Thecla, Walburge, Bertigita, Chunigrat, Chunigild, Contruda, and his own cousin Lioba.

The arrival of so many bright and fresh workers would be very refreshing to Boniface, and no doubt enabled him the better to bear a fresh loss which death now inflicted upon him. The old friend who had done so much to help him, at first personally as his bishop, and afterwards with advice as his friend, Daniel of Winchester, who had sent him books and assistance and much practical sympathy, died at this time. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Daniel had resigned his see in 744 to Hunferth, after holding it for forty-two years, and died in 745. Roger of Wendover gives the date of his death as the following year, 746. Apart from his relations with Boniface, Daniel remains an interesting personality in the history of Winchester, being the first bishop to rule over that diocese after the separation from it of the see of Sherburne.

So far, however, from the death of Daniel in any way lessening Boniface's interest in his native country and its concerns, we have at this very time vigorous evidence that he was not only watch-

ing affairs there, but ready to act in a very decided and disciplinary manner in regard to them. The proof of this is to be found in the well-known letter written by him about this very time to Ethelbald, King of the Mercians. Peaceful though Ethelbald's long reign was, there were several serious abuses against which Boniface raised his pen in a letter which it required faithfulness and courage to write to a reigning prince.

The letter is addressed[1] 'To Ethelbald, my dearest lord, and to be preferred to all other kings of the Angles, in the love of Christ, Boniface the archbishop, legate to Germany from the Church of Rome, wisheth perpetual health in Christ.' It is not necessary to quote the whole of this long epistle, which is full of loud remonstrances upon Ethelbald's immoral mode of life, and ends with a stirring exhortation to better things. It closes as follows: 'Wherefore, my beloved son, we entreat with paternal and fervent prayers that you would not despise the counsel of your fathers, who, for the love of God, anxiously appeal to your highness. For nothing is more salutary to a good king than the willing correction of such crimes when they are pointed out to him; since Solomon says, "Whoso loveth instruction, loveth wisdom." Wherefore, my dearest son, showing you good counsel, we call you to witness, and entreat you by the living God and

[1] *William of Malmesbury*, p. 73.

His Son Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, that you would recollect how fleeting is the present life, how short and momentary is the delight of the filthy flesh, and how ignominious for a person of transitory existence to leave a bad example to posterity. Begin, therefore, to regulate your life by better habits, and correct the past errors of your youth, that you may have praise before men here, and be blest with eternal glory hereafter.'

There is no mincing of matters here. It is improbable that the royalty of our century would be accessible to such a letter if it were called for, or if any one could be found to write it. Its words recall some of the spoken words of John Knox in more recent times for their boldness and plainness. But Ethelbald took it in good part. He found that Cuthbert, the Archbishop of Canterbury[1], had also received a strong letter in which Boniface threatened to report him to the Pope unless he restrained his clergy and nuns in the fineness and vanity of their dress; and lest he should be accused of interfering with what did not concern him, Boniface assured Cuthbert that Gregory III[2] had laid him under oath to keep him acquainted with ecclesiastical conduct among the nations in his vicinity. Ethelbald and Cuthbert accordingly called a synod for dealing with the matters referred to.

[1] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 336.
[2] *William of Malmesbury*, p. 76.

It was held at Cloveshou[1], and Ethelbald's sincerity was proved by his freeing monasteries and churches from most public taxes, and the granting of certain liberties and privileges to the clergy[2]. Boniface's work and influence were thus of value away from his own diocese and neighbourhood. Certainly the closing sentences of the letter we have seen he wrote to Cuthbert should have passed on an enthusiasm. 'Let us fight for the Lord in these days of bitterness and affliction,' he urged. 'If this be the will of God, let us die for the holy laws of our fathers, that we may arrive with them at the eternal inheritance. Let us not be dumb dogs, sleeping sentinels, hirelings that fly at the sight of the wolf; but watchful and diligent pastors, preaching to the great and small, to every age and condition, being instant in season and out of season.'

[1] A.D. 742. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 336.
[2] *William of Malmesbury*, p. 77.

VII

It amounts to an epoch when an European dynasty that has wielded the sceptre for three hundred years comes at last to its fall. Such an event would in any case be deeply impressed on the pages of history. Humanity would see to it that the depth of the record depended not only on the political importance of the fact, but quite as much upon whether men regarded the downfall with sadness, as of a loss, or with joy, as of a deliverance. Now the earliest Merovingians were mighty men of valour, men of strong, vigorous personality, to whom a nation could consent to concede its government. But the later sovereigns of the line had become utterly feeble and dissolute, mere degenerate and debauched puppets, an offence in the sight of God, and contemptible in the sight of man. No wonder, then, that their time had arrived, and that a powerful hand was being raised to sweep relentlessly away these cumberers of the ground. Pepin was to be the agent, but Boniface's relations to the circumstances, if not those of active and open assistance, were yet sufficiently close to give us an interest in now considering them.

It will be remembered that when affairs finally settled down after Carl Martel's death he was succeeded in the mayoralty by his sons Pepin and Carloman, and they brought forward Childeric III to occupy the vacant Merovingian throne in 742. The nation had long ceased to expect much from a sovereign of this line. Eginhard says: 'The Merovingians no longer showed anything illustrious but the title of king. The prince contented himself with wearing flowing locks and a long beard, and seating himself upon the throne to represent a monarch. He gave audience to ambassadors, and made them the replies which were taught or rather commanded to him. With the exception of an alimentary pension, not very certain, and regulated by the pleasure of the mayor of the palace, he only possessed a single house where he held his court, composed of a very small number of domestics. If it was necessary he should go anywhere, he travelled in a chariot drawn by oxen, which a driver conducted country fashion. It was thus that he went to the general assembly of the nation, which met once a year for national purposes.' Childeric III proved to be as effete as his immediate predecessors; he was despised for his sloth, and was surnamed 'the stupid.' The nation had begun to realize that its monarchs had passed beyond all toleration. On the other hand, a succession of powerful mayors of the palace, like Pepin of Heristal,

Carl Martel, and now Pepin le Bref and Carloman, had taught the Franks how great an advantage it would be to have energy and capacity at the head of the state.

In the year 747 Carloman expressed his wish to hand over his office to Pepin, and to enter upon a monastic life. Many reasons are assigned for Carloman's action. It is said that he had a mind naturally contemplative and much bent on religious meditation. He seems to have come under the special influence of Boniface, who helped him to wean his heart from worldly things, encouraging him to follow the example of certain English-Saxon kings who, having abandoned thrones, retired into the monasteries of Rome. Above all, Carloman had been touched by the simple and earnest purity of Boniface himself. Pepin does not seem to have opposed Carloman's wish, and the latter went to Rome, and was received there by Pope Zachary. We need not pursue further his career than merely to say that he embraced a Benedictine life, and died at Vienne in 755.

We come now to the fact that in 747 Pepin was left alone in the mayoralty with Childeric III on his hands, and with an empire ripe for a change of dynasty. But that empire was in many parts held loosely together, and perhaps this is why Pepin preferred strengthening his movements by imparting into them such moral or religious influence as he

could bring to bear. Accordingly his first step was to lay the situation before the Pope. It is thought by some[1] that Boniface was too timorous a man to mix himself actively up in such grave questions. This is possible enough, yet it is certain that such advice or guidance as he could give would have been in support of an appeal to Rome, and as one of the messengers eventually dispatched was his bishop and fellow countryman, Burchard of Wurtzburg, Boniface must have known what was in progress.

In 750 or 751, then, Pope Zachary received an embassy from Pepin, consisting of the Bishop of Wurtzburg, the Abbot of St. Denys, and Pepin's own chaplain. They submitted to him the now famous question: 'Is it expedient that one who was possessed of no authority in the land should continue to retain the name of king, or should it be transferred to him who really exercised the royal power?' Zachary was equal to the occasion, and with a shrewdness largely born of his fear of the hovering Langobards, and a trust that Pepin would bring him succour, he gave to the embassy the now celebrated answer: 'Melius esse illum vocari regem apud quem summa potestas consisteret'—that he who really governed should also bear the royal name.

There was very little time lost after the return

[1] Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, p. 742.

of the messengers from Rome. In the same year (750–751) a general state assembly was convened at Soissons [1], where the popular voice pronounced itself in favour of a change of dynasty. And so, with the consent of state and church, Childeric, the last of the long-haired race of Merovingian kings, was dethroned; his locks, the sign of his royalty, were shorn, and he was sent to the cloister of Sithieu [2], or of St. Bertin, near St. Omer, where he died three years afterwards. One might apply to the circumstances a passage from one of George Eliot's letters in reference to a recent king [3]: 'Certainly decayed monarchs should be pensioned off; we should have a hospital for them, or a sort of zoological garden, where these worn-out humbugs may be preserved. It is but justice that we should keep them since we have spoilt them for any honest trade. Let them sit on soft cushions and have their dinner regularly, but for Heaven's sake preserve me from sentimentalizing over a pampered old man when the earth has its millions of unfed souls and bodies [4].'

The Merovingian dynasty was gone for ever, and the Carlovingian now reigned in its stead. There has been some slight discussion about it, but historians very generally state that it was Boniface's

[1] Hallam says Frankfort, *Middle Ages*, vol. ii, p. 523.

[2] Duruy's *France*, vol. i, p. 48.

[3] Louis Philippe.

[4] *George Eliot's Life*, by J. W. Cross, her letter to J. Sibree, 1848.

hand that on this, the first occasion, crowned Pepin on behalf of the Pope.

What an impressive scene it must have been. Soissons, the chief stronghold of the Suessones in Caesar's time, had been made the capital of the Franks nearly three centuries previously[1] by Clovis, the founder of the Merovingian line, while he was yet a heathen king. It saw on this day the deposition of the last of his race, by a quiet revolution upheld by the Christian Church of the time, and the crowning of the succeeding monarch. Boniface's part in this ceremony has been freely commented upon by writers. His action, under the Pope, is noted strongly by Eginhard[2], who speaks of Childeric having been deposed 'iussu,' and Pepin crowned 'auctoritate Pontifices Romani.' His coronation of Pepin at all is reckoned as an epoch in the history of the interference of the Church in such affairs, for as Lanfrey says, 'ainsi fut donnée la première couronne que la main d'un pape ait posée sur le front d'un ambitieux'[3]. His use of the holy oil[4] in the act of coronation, which was an application of the ancient Hebrew custom, is dealt with by Gibbon[5] in sarcastic language: 'The royal unction of the kings of Israel was dexterously

[1] A.D. 486. [2] Eginhard in *Vita Caroli Magni.*
[3] Lanfrey, *Histoire des Papes*, p. 36.
[4] Duruy's *History of France*, vol. i, p. 150.
[5] Gibbon, *Rise and Fall*, vol. v, p. 118.

applied, the successor of St. Peter assumed the character of a divine ambassador; and a German chieftain was transformed into the Lord's anointed.' Be all this as it may, Boniface had much to congratulate himself upon, and as Carl Martel's friend, and as a guide and something of a director to Pepin, as well as from the aspect of Pope's Legate and representative, he had much cause for rejoicing. It was no small thing for him to be prominently concerned in planting on a throne this mighty man just at the time when the Pope's own seat was in danger, and likely to need the help of just such a powerful arm.

Boniface was well aware of the anxiety in Rome. Our old acquaintance Luitprand, whom Carl Martel had pacified towards the Pope, had been dead for some time. After a short seven-months' reign by Hildebrand, the Langobard throne was now occupied by Ratchis, who assumed the offensive towards Rome. Pope Zachary had an interview with Ratchis and smoothed things over; perhaps, indeed, his personal influence effected too much, for Ratchis was so struck with Zachary that he abdicated and turned monk. Haistulph, often called Astolphus, who followed him, only waited three years and then marched against Rome. Zachary was no better off than before, and he seems to have become heartbroken, for he died at this juncture[1] (March 14,

[1] J. C. S. de Sismondi, *Histoire des Français*, vol. ii, p. 183.

752), a few months after having authorized Boniface to crown Pepin[1]. He had for successor one whom some name Stephen II, others Stephen III[1], and this pontiff managed for the moment to stave off Haistulph by going to his court at Pavia. Not feeling secure, however, Stephen proceeded from Pavia by Mont St. Bernard, over the Alps[1] to Pontigne, where Pepin was living. It was now well into the winter of 753–4[1]. The Pope and his clergy abased themselves before Pepin and besought his aid. Finding the Franks very deferential, Stephen's hopes were raised, and when Pepin saw the respect which his people showed Stephen, he even thought it well to ask Stephen as a favour to crown him again with his own pontifical hand[1].

As regards help against Haistulph, none could be undertaken while the winter rendered the Alps impassable. Accordingly Stephen went into the monastery of St. Denis at Paris to await the spring.

This was Pepin's opportunity. What had been done in the first instance by Boniface was now again repeated throughout by Stephen, who poured over the heads of Pepin and his wife Bertrade[1] the blessed oil which was afterwards considered miraculous. The day was July 28, 754[2]. It is not apparent whether Boniface was present; probably it was not so, for from Paris to Mainz is a long distance. But

[1] J. C. S. de Sismondi, *Histoire des Français*, vol. ii, p. 183.

[2] Ibid., p. 186.

as far as he was able, by pen or otherwise, he was sure to urge Pepin to accept the aegis of the Pope's support, and, in return, to give him the help he required at Rome.

But Boniface had become possessed with other thoughts. He was now turned seventy years old, and as he felt his days shortening, his mind reverted to his early missionary intentions towards Frisia in particular, and his reflections seem to have filled him with doubts as to whether he had not allowed himself to be diverted from the people to whom he considered himself divinely called[1]. His enthusiasm was lit up again, and he resolved to betake himself to Frisia, there to preach, and, if need be, there to risk his life for Christianity.

While Zachary was still alive, Boniface applied to him for relief from some of his official burdens by having France placed under a special legate. To this Zachary was not favourable, and perhaps preferring that he who was to succeed Boniface should receive from Boniface some course of personal training, permission was given to select a successor. Boniface did not do so while Zachary still lived, but in 754, the very year that Pope Stephen was with Pepin, he fixed upon Lullus. Lullus was an Englishman, and had been brought up as a monk at Malmesbury before going out as one of Boniface's helpers; and he had proved himself a very faithful

[1] Othlone's *Life*, Migne, *Patrol. Curs. Comp.*, p. 659.

worker and preacher. Boniface wrote to Fuldrad, Abbot of St. Denis, and begged him to obtain Pepin's consent to the succession, taking also the opportunity to go rather fully into the circumstances of the time. 'Nearly all my companions,' said the letter, 'are strangers in this land. Some are priests distributed in various places to celebrate the offices of the Church and minister to the people. Some are monks living in different monasteries, and engaged in teaching the young. Some are aged men, who have long borne with me the heat and burden of the day. For all these I am full of anxiety lest, after my death, they should be scattered as sheep having no shepherd. Let them have a share of your countenance and protection, that they may not be dispersed abroad, and that the people dwelling on the heathen borders may not lose the law of Christ. Suffer also Lullus, my son and coadjutor, to preside over the churches, that both priests and people may find in him a teacher and a guide; and may God grant that he may prove a faithful pastor to the flock. I have many reasons for making these requests. My clergy on the heathen borders are in deep poverty. Bread they can obtain for themselves, but clothing they cannot find here unless they receive aid from some other quarter to enable them to persevere and endure their hardships. Let me know, either by the bearers of this letter, or under thine own hand, whether thou canst

promise the granting of my request, that, whether I live or die, I may have some assurance for the future[1].'

Pepin's consent to the appointment of Lullus, and the Pope's also, were duly granted to Boniface, and the aged archbishop at once proceeded to denude himself of the duties of his see, and to induct and ordain Lullus in his place[2]. 'For myself,' said he, 'I must start betimes, for the day of my departure is at hand. For this final departure I have long wished; get everything ready for me, and particularly take heed to place in the chest which holds my books the shroud in which my body shall presently be wrapped[3].'

Fulda, one might have thought, would have tempted him to a retirement into a life of quiet and repose, but his freedom had not been sought in order to spend his closing years in quiet meditation and preparation. He was setting out on a journey. But much as he loved Fulda, he contented himself with commending its completion and protection to Lullus, and exacting from him a promise

[1] Verbatim from *Apostles of Med. Europe*, p. 125, which quotes from Migne, *Script. Eccles.*, saec. viii, p. 779.

[2] Willibald's *Life* in Migne, *Pat. C. C.*, p. 626.

[3] 'Ego enim propositum pergendi iter complere cupio, ego me a desiderato proficiscendi itinere revocare non potero. Iam enim instat resolutionis meae dies, et tempus obitus mei appropinquat, iam enim, deposito corporis ergastulo, aeterne retributionis revertar ad bravium' (Willibald's *Life*, Migne, *Pat. C. C.*, p. 626).

that when the time should come it should receive his remains[1].

With these instructions as parting words, spoken to hearers whose eyes were streaming with tears, Boniface handed Mainz and all his episcopal responsibilities over to Lullus, and, this over, he hurried forward his preparations to enable him to start on his self-imposed mission in the briefest possible time. In a few days he had gathered together those selected for the journey, and they took ship and sailed away down the Rhine.

This was in the spring of 755, while Stephen and Pepin were arranging their enterprise for the military protection of Rome. Pepin had summoned a state council at a place named Bernacum (Braine), between Soissons and Cambrai[2], at which the Pope's 'injuries[3]' were exposed to a devout and warlike nation, and he repassed the Alps, not as a suppliant but as a conqueror, at the head of a French army which was led by the king in person. Haistulph took to flight, and was glad to make peace with the ambassadors who reached him. We need not pursue this historical situation further, for even up to the securing of this peace it was not granted to Boniface to be spared, and it is to be feared his last days were to some degree

[1] Willibald's *Life*, Migne, *Pat. C. C.*, p. 629.

[2] Perry's *Franks*, p. 321.

[3] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. v, chap. xlix, p. 116.

clouded by doubts and fears for the head of the Church.

As companions on his voyage Boniface had taken with him followers to the number of about fifty[1]. There were three priests[2], Wintrung, Walter, and Adelhere; certain deacons, including Hamunt, Strichald, and Bosa; Waccar, Gunderhar, Williker, and Hadolph, monks; with nearly forty laymen.

To how many of the thousands of Englishmen who sail over this historic river, flanked with the same hills and valleys, is it known that a great fellow countryman of theirs wound a dangerous course over the same Rhine on a missionary errand nearly twelve centuries ago? The grim ruins and bare castles that fascinate the eye to-day are half-way down the ages that have rolled by since the little expedition on which our minds are now engaged sped its way. The boats are piloted along and swept with the current onwards towards the sea, past forest-crowned hills and winding valleys, past the half-way distance where the Moselle joins the Rhine, onwards till the Rhine itself divides into what we now call the old Rhine and the Vecht. At this point, where stands as the modern Utrecht the ancient Traiectum ad Rhenum, they pause. For here they are to join Bishop Eoban, successor to old Bishop Willibrord, whose body lay resting in

[1] Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, p. 744.

[2] Othlone's *Life*, Migne, *Pat. C. C.*, p. 662.

peace at the monastery of Epternac. It was fitting that in his last missionary journey Boniface should receive from the cathedral of Utrecht a renewal of the zealous spirit which had first been infused into his early manhood by Willibrord's labours. We can imagine how all the old enthusiasm would return,

> 'And kindle like a fire new stirred
> At mention of his name.'

Welcoming Eoban to his company, the little band rapidly continued its way into the Frisian country. Nearly forty years before, his foot had first been set in this land in the turbulent days of Radbod. Now, under Pepin's rule and the restoration of some approach to ecclesiastical order, religious enterprise seemed to stand a better chance. To some extent this was true, but in a generation there is not time for traditions of the old and a hostile attitude to the new to be safely effaced. Nor could the peaceful Christian religion be accepted without the people feeling a constant apprehension of a return of the grip of that military power under whose protection its propagation had, in times gone by, been at all possible.

The labours of the mission began in East Frisia, and made good progress. The workers pushed on and came to the banks of a river not far from Leewarden, known then as the Bordne or Burdo. Here,

in the neighbourhood of a village named Dorkhum[1], the number of converts was very great, and tents were erected. A large number of these converts had been baptized, and it was arranged that on a certain day the neophytes should receive the rite of confirmation. This day was to be June 5, 755[2].

When the morning broke, a multitude was seen approaching the tents of the mission. As they came nearer and rushed onwards they were soon found to be far different from the peaceful and faithful company who were expected. Brandishing swords and spears, and dashing forward with warlike shouts, they proclaimed the bloodthirsty errand on which they came. Boniface, hearing the tumult, came out of his tent, and the little Christian band rallied round him, making ready to fight for their lives. But Boniface felt that the close of his work and his anticipated and desired end were at hand. The martyr's crown was about to be earned, and he was ready to be offered. His greatness and calmness shone out in the words he at once spoke to his encircling followers[3]: 'Cessate pueri a conflictu, pugnaeque deponite bellum; quoniam scripturae

[1] Dockinga, Migne, *Pat. C. C.*, p. 667.

[2] 756, Cox's *Life*; but Willibald (Migne, *Pat. C. C.*, p. 666) gives 755.

[3] From Willibald's *Life*, as given in Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae*, vol. ii, p. 350.

testimonio veraciter erudimur, et ne malum pro malo, sed etiam bonum pro malis reddamus. Iam enim diu optatus adest dies, et spontaneum resolutionis nostrae tempus inminet; confortamini igitur in Domino, et permissionis suae gratiam gratanter sufferte; sperate in eum, et liberabit animas vestras.' And having thus addressed the priests and deacons standing near him, and also the laymen, he again raised his voice and said: 'Viri fratres fores estote animi, et ne terreamini ab his qui occidunt corpus quoniam animam sine fine manentem necare non possunt; sed gaudete in Domino et spei vestrae anchoram in Deum defigite; quia exemplo perpetuae reddet vobis remunerationis mercedem et caelestis aulae sedem cum supernis angelorum civibus condonat. Nolite vos vanae huius mundi delectationi subiicere; nolite caducis gentilium adulationibus delectari; sed subitaneum hic subite constanter mortis articulum, ut regnare cum Christo possitis in aevum.'

Steadied, pacified, encouraged, his followers stood fast. With an elevated faith and a resolution not of this world only, they nerved themselves for the martyr's death. The infuriated pagans, whose rage was increased by a fanatical outburst at the overthrow of their ancient gods, swept over the little group and put them all to the sword. Boniface, holding over his head a large book, received through it a thrust from a sword, and fell with

a mortal wound. Not one of the Christian band escaped.

'Groans rise unheard; the dying cry,
And death and agony,
Are trodden under foot by yon mad throng
Who follow close[1].'

The murderers now commenced a work of pillage. Scattering upon the field the books and relics, they sought for gold and silver. This they failed to find, and coming only on the small store of sacramental wine, they were so maddened by it, and by their discomfiture, that they broke into two factions in their quarrelsomeness and furiously turned upon one another. Meanwhile the Christian neophytes expected for confirmation began to collect; and their courage increasing as they viewed the faction fight, they surrounded the pagans and dispatched the survivors.

The bodies of most of the martyred band were buried on the field of Dorkhum where they lay. Those of Boniface and some few others were reverently carried across the country and allowed to lie in state for some days at Utrecht.

The ground on which the martyrdom had taken place was carefully searched, and the books and other remnants of what the enemies had scattered to the winds were gathered together[2]. Three books

[1] Southey's *Curse of Kehama.*

[2] *Führer durch Fulda* (Schneider), p. 63.

are to be seen in the public library at Fulda, treasured as the most remarkable manuscripts of the library, and stated to have belonged to Boniface. One is a small one, a pocket copy of the Gospels, said to be in the handwriting of Boniface himself; another is the celebrated Harmony of the Gospels, known as the *Codex Fuldensis*, written in Anglo-Saxon; while the third, the largest of all, is alleged to be the identical volume with which, in the impulse of the moment, Boniface tried to protect his head against the pagan murderer. This book has numerous cuts, said to have been made by the sword, and there are brown stains on the pages shown as the blood of the saint.

It may well be imagined how great was the consternation that overspread Germany at the violent death inflicted by heathen Frisians upon a Christian mission with such a well-known ecclesiastical figure at its head. All could see that the fanatical perpetrators of the deed merely represented the spirit which still possessed a large number of the barbarous inhabitants of Frisia. A religious mission is always open to danger on political grounds, for the attitude of the natives is too often, even in our time, swayed by a dread that the mission, ostensibly one of religious peace and goodwill, is in reality the thin edge of a political enterprise which is intended to rob them of their

country and their independence. Indeed, when the leader of the mission is one whose name has figured in civil affairs, this fear is more than excusable, and the apprehensions that are aroused lead to the party being beset with jealous and hostile eyes — a smouldering fire. Behind all this, in the present instance, were the fanatical superstitions of an old religion, idolatrous, mystical, and cruel, its priests incensed by the preaching against their rites, and by Boniface's vigorous demolition of the objects of their worship. Political dread fanned by fanatical fury gave flame to the fire, and the result was the murder of the entire party.

The consternation spread beyond the limits of Germany, and gave a shock to the whole of western Christianity. It was especially felt in England, where the work of Willibrord and Boniface in Friesland had been followed with a lively interest. There were not wanting men ready at once to brave the dangers and continue the work, and in the person of Willihad of Northumbria, and many others, the chain of English missionaries was still further lengthened. One test of a great man is his power to excite in others an enthusiasm for his work; in Boniface we find another instance of this, for his life and example lit up the celestial fire in other souls who carried forward the lamp of life after the martyr's hand had laid it down.

When Lullus, the Archbishop of Mayence, heard that Boniface was dead, and that his remains were lying at Utrecht, he remembered the solemn promise Boniface had exacted from him, that Fulda should be his burying-place. Without loss of time Lullus sent messengers to bring the body to Mayence. This was not done without considerable opposition from Utrecht, the prefect of the city even forbidding it by an edict. The removal of this opposition is said to have been effected by certain miraculous signs, convenient for the purpose at any rate, and the departure having been permitted, the messengers arrived at Mayence with Boniface's body about a month after his death. A short rest followed, and then with due solemnity the body was taken in a boat across the Rhine on its way to the abbey of Fulda. Singing psalms and hymns, the whole river covered with a sympathetic procession of boats, Lullus and the clergy conveyed their burden to the opposite side of the river. From thence they commenced their journey of about eighty miles across the country. Wherever they rested on their pilgrimage, the place was marked with a cross. At last they received their welcome at Fulda, and completed their task by laying to rest there the remains of the martyred Boniface.

The date of the martyrdom of Boniface was June 5, 755. If, then, he was born in 684, his age

was seventy-one. Sometimes, as in Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, the age is given as seventy-five, but this difference is due to uncertainty whether Boniface was born in 680 or 684. It does not affect the year of his death. In later years Boniface was canonized at Rome, and although his saint's day is not now kept by the English Church, it still has its place in the English calendar.

If we go in search of memorials of Boniface and limit ourselves only to his birthplace, his metropolitan cathedral, and his burial-place, it is only at the first of these that we shall be disappointed. England, the great pioneer of missionary enterprises, has as yet shown herself too callous, too forgetful, or perhaps too narrow, to commemorate, even in his birthplace, one of her first and greatest missionaries. It is otherwise if we go to the land of Boniface's adoption. At Mayence, in the north aisle of the cathedral, there is to be seen an ancient memorial stone. It stands on the site of a still older one, and was placed there in 1829, having been brought to the cathedral from the church of St. John, where it had been erected in 1357 by Bishop Gerlach. It represents Boniface in his mitre and robes, and wearing the pallium. He has a closed book in his left hand, and his pastoral staff in his right. Above is an arch with finials and angels, and round the stone runs an

MEMORIAL TO ST. BONIFACE IN MAYENCE CATHEDRAL

inscription in Latin, referring to its first erection by Gerlachus.

But the greatest interest of all is obtained by a visit to Fulda. It is easily reached by a railway journey of sixty miles from Frankfort, on the Bebra line. This ancient little town, which dates its existence back to the founding of Sturm's Abbey there in 744, has nothing more ancient, and nothing more treasured, than the tomb in which Boniface was buried in 755. The monastery, which afterwards grew into great celebrity, is gone; and on its site stands the cathedral of Fulda. Among the many objects of interest to the stranger visiting the town, this is naturally one of the first. Making one's way to it, and with the single object of seeing what is to be seen relating to St. Boniface, the building is entered from the western end. Crossing the building, a spacious staircase is found on each side of the choir, leading down to the crypt or chapel of St. Boniface, which is beneath the choir. Under the altar of the crypt lie the remains of the saint. The altar itself is of black stone. Its front is a slab of alabaster on which is carved a full-length, life-sized figure of Boniface. He is in robes, wearing his mitre, semi-recumbent in his coffin, the lid of which is being raised by one cherub, while another is supporting the head and shoulders of the saint. Boniface is represented as an old man with a flowing beard. Above the tomb is an altar-

piece depicting the martyrdom; and both in it and in the large picture which overhangs one side of the staircase, Boniface is shown receiving his fatal wound from a sword driven into his temple.

It is impossible for an Englishman to stand at this tomb without being stirred by emotion and veneration. Here, centuries ago, reverent hands laid the remains of one whom his nation might well delight to honour. A scholar, who burst the bonds of a mere student's life, and applied his talents and acquirements for the salvation of his fellows. A statesman, in the least worldly sense of that word, but far more besides. A missionary, with a heart set on civilizing and christianizing the heathen of his fatherland. He may have been a strict disciplinarian, but the world needed it. He may have seemed to restrict men's liberty of thought by compelling all clerical agencies to acknowledge the one portal of Rome alone, but to him the times seemed to cry out that strength could only come of unity. Kindly and gentle by nature, firmness and unflinching resolution were born to him out of his overwhelming earnestness. The good of others rose above the thought of self; all thought of personal interest or advantage perished before his consuming desire that the truth should prevail. Germany acknowledges her everlasting gratitude to Boniface, and Christianity in Europe has been the better for his life.

Before leaving the cathedral, curiosity, at the least, leads the way to the treasury, where certain relics of Boniface may be seen. They show a piece of his skull, wrapped in lace, and adorned with a mitre. One of his arm-bones, too, is shown, and a piece of woven material, said to be a portion of his girdle, with stains upon it that are alleged to be stains of his blood. Boniface's pastoral staff is also produced—a long, heavy, ivory staff, yellow with antiquity. One other object of interest is here: a short iron blade, fixed in a bone haft, on which some words are rudely inscribed; and this you are told is the veritable sword with which the murderer slew Boniface.

The mission to Fulda would be incomplete for a traveller interested in Boniface unless he visited the public library of the town, closely adjacent to the cathedral. In a case there, preserved with great care, are the celebrated books of Boniface, books which he had with him when he was martyred at Dorkhum. There are three. One is a quarto in Latin manuscript, the leaves of which are cut in several places with clean incisions, and stained brown in places; and this is said to be the volume Boniface held over his head when he was attacked. Also a book on the Harmony of the Gospels, known under the name of the *Codex Fuldensis*, and a pocket copy of the Gospels, both of them smaller than the former, were found on the field.

It would not do to leave Fulda without seeing the fine statue erected to St. Boniface in the Schlossplatz in 1842. He stands an impressive erect figure, with long flowing hair and beard, the hand of his upraised right arm holding aloft a cross, while in his left hand he grasps an open Bible. On the pedestal are words which the soul of Boniface would have approved—

'Verbum Domini manet in aeternum.'

POPES DURING THE PERIOD

(HAYDN)

684. Benedict II.
685. John V.
686. Conon.
687. Sergius.
701. John VI.
705. John VII.
708. Sisinnius.
708. Constantine.
715. St. Gregory II.
731. Gregory III.
741. St. Zacharias.
752. Stephen II (died before consecration).
752. Stephen II or III.
757. Paul I.

EARLY ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY

(HAYDN)

602–605. St. Augustine.
605–619. St. Lawrence.
619–624. St. Mellitus.
624–630. Justus.
631–653. St. Honorius.
655–664. Deusdedit (Adeodatus) or Frithona.
668–690. Theodore of Tarsus.
693–731. Berctwald.
731–734. Tætwine.
735–741. Nothelm.
741–758. Cuthbert.

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