



Stories from the
Lives of Saints and Martyrs
of the Church

TOLD IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE

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"Les Français en Voyage," "No Place for Him," etc., etc.*

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Dedicated

with Affection and Esteem
to

THE LADY MARY HERBERT
and her daughters MAGDALEN AND MARGARENT

"The heart unaltered in its mood,
That joys alone in doing good."

PREFACE

In writing these simple stories from the lives of some of the Saints and Martyrs of the Church, I have tried to choose such as would be of most interest to children. I have tried also to word them so simply as to make the little book one to be put into a child's own hands.

In looking back upon my own childhood I remember the intense pleasure with which I learnt to "read to myself;" and in thinking over the influences of my early life, I can recall none so powerful as that exercised upon me from a very tender age by the persons and characters with which my imagination was thus peopled.

At first it was the same few books read over and over again, so that even now, at a distance of more than a quarter of a century, every character therein described is distinct and clear in its own individuality in my mind. Then came the taste for ever new children's stories and the delight of the weekly or monthly magazine. The world of reading in which I lived was as real and important a one as the actual world of my friends and childish companions, and its influence of even greater weight. If I heard rude or intemperate language, saw a wrong action, or came in contact with any kind of bad example, at once my childish reasoning would say, *So-and-so* (the hero or heroine of the tales I read) would not have acted or spoken thus. In the difficulties of my own little sphere, in the temptations and trials of childhood—very real indeed as such trials always are to children—I asked myself, What would *So-and-so* have done in my case? And in the *real* life of the child the *ideal* would be all-powerful to impel towards the right.

These are the days of agnosticism and unbelief, but among the earnest and serious "questioners" of our time none dare for a moment to impugn the high standard of the ethics of the Gospel,—deny the striking beauty of the teaching of JESUS and His Apostles. Neither will they deny the need of a high *ideal* to put before youth.

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man."

But the ideal of the agnostic is purely theoretic—philosophical—a creation of the brain of man, a thing that has no existence in practice: of what use then is it? We want the actual life of real men and women; we as human beings must see what other human beings have done—have been capable of; such ideals alone will have force and influence.

We believe that JESUS CHRIST came to live upon earth not *only* to be "a Sacrifice for sin," but *also* an Example of godly life." To give us an *ideal* the SON of GOD became also Perfect Man.

In trying to picture for the minds of children the beautiful and noble lives of some of the saints, I have striven to show what can be done through the love of Him our great Example; and I offer these simple records to the rich world of children's literature, not merely as a source of knowledge in regard to the history of the Church, but in the hope that each child that reads may be helped onwards in his own sphere to victory over sin, and to the leading of a noble Christian life.

THE AUTHOR

INTRODUCTION

The apology for this little book is, that it attempts to give only glances over a wide and ancient field of knowledge.

The selections and method must rest on the credit of the taste of the author, because of her acquaintance with the minds of highly educated young people. There are histories that go further into the careers of saints of the earlier Christian ages. Archdeacon Evans' *Biography of the Early Church* is an example; but he takes the known Fathers of the period with a view to a continuous history of the Church, and that well within the first three centuries. A book of this kind, he beautifully observes, "is a Westminster Abbey in the region of sacred literature, crowded with the memories of the worthies of former times."

The lives of Christian people differ from the lives of ordinary philosophers. All Christians, as Christians, have the *same* creed from age to age, founded on the original accounts in the New Testament of the crucified, risen, and reigning CHRIST. They have the same system to present to all minds, which are *naturally the same* in their spiritual needs. Their earnest and incessant teaching of this one Gospel brings them into converse with various ranks of society—kings and peasants, soldiers and ploughmen. Intercourse with pagans and unbelievers urges them on to bear witness to the truth of the fundamental articles of the faith, often so far as to entail tortures and death. Death, with the love of their Master, is chosen, rather than riches and freedom with the denial of the Divine LORD. Death under these circumstances, is now popularly called *martyrdom*. In brighter cases their teaching and their beautiful characters, taken together, lead to others accepting the Gospel and to the consequent enlargement of the Church of CHRIST.

Some of those holy men, women, and children, whose memorials are here briefly written, are named in *black* letters in the Calendar of the Church of England; their names were

kept there because their days were used as *dates* in old legal documents. Many, as St. George, the patron of England; St. Patrick, of Ireland; St. Crispin, of shoemakers; St. Swithun, of the weather; St. Valentine, of letter-writing; reviving, by associations, interesting memories to us of the United Kingdom. In some stories included in these pages, though details may be incredible, the fact that they have been handed down, expresses the general opinion at the time of the character of the persons to whom they refer; further, the anecdotes describe some particular virtue, or grace of the HOLY SPIRIT, showing what a Christian *can* be, and how GOD protects His own. Frequent mention, it will be noted, is made of monasteries and monks. Let it be borne in mind that in pagan and unfriendly districts the only safety of the disciples of JESUS from persecutions and robbery was found in their living together within a kind of college or home, a small chapel being often attached to it. These sacred houses were also places to which new believers might resort for protection and instruction; and in them alone, for the most part, the children of a country neighbourhood could obtain book learning.

May these brief sketches lead many a youthful reader onwards to the deeper study, not only of characters in Holy Scripture, but of other histories of the sons of GOD, as enshrined in the records, ancient and modern, of the Church of JESUS CHRIST, herself "the pillar and ground of the truth."

C. W. W.

CHAPTER HOUSE, MANCHESTER, *All Saints' Day*,
1889.

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CHAPTER I

ST. IGNATIUS (FEB. 1; A.D. 107)

"At the same time came the disciples unto JESUS, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And JESUS called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

This story has often been told to you. Perhaps you have also read it for yourselves in your Testament. Have you never thought that you would like to know what became of this little child, how he grew up, and what he did when a man?

We can never be quite sure about it, but from very early times it has been believed that a good and holy man named Ignatius Theophorus was that little child. Theophorus is a Greek word, and means one who bears GOD in his heart; and from all that is known of the life of the holy man, it does seem truly as if, from the time that JESUS laid His hands on him in Capernaum, and led him before the disciples as an example of innocence, the Spirit of CHRIST had always dwelt with him. He was brought up among the Apostles, and the blessed St. John, the Apostle of Divine love, took chief charge of him.

It is most likely that Ignatius went about with St. John until he was more than thirty years of age. Then he was sent to a church at Antioch to care for and govern it. It was at Antioch, you know, that those who believed in CHRIST were first called Christians. This was then a nick-name—a name given in scorn.

The people of the city laughed and jeered at all who followed the teaching of our Saviour, and as they were fond of

giving people nick-names, they chose this—the name we are now most proud to bear—for the believers on JESUS CHRIST.

St. Ignatius ruled the Church he was set over with love and wisdom. He was always calm and gentle—full of love. He was very fond of music, and he taught the Christians to sing hymns in the services, and showed them how to chant the psalms in the way we now chant them in so many of our churches—antiphonally—that is, some of the singers standing on one side of the choir, some on the other, and each side singing a verse in turn.

Ignatius had been at Antioch for almost fifty years, and was quite an old man, when one day there was a great earthquake in the city. Its walls shook and toppled over, the houses fell, many people were killed, and all they had was destroyed.

There was fear on all sides. Then the pagans said the earthquake had been sent by their gods, who were angry that so many of the people here and everywhere had become Christians. And they said many false, cruel things about the Christians, and tried to make men believe that they were bad, wicked people who would do all the ill they could to those around them.

Now, Trajan, who was Emperor of Rome at this time, and who had power over lands in many parts of the world, had wished to be kind to the Christians, and had tried to let no harm come to them. But when his people came and told him of the great fear they were in through the earthquake, and how all men thought it had come upon them on account of this "new sect," as they called the followers of our Saviour, then he did not dare to go on being kind—he feared to make the people too much enraged against him.

Ignatius, who knew of all this, left Antioch, and went and stood before the great Emperor. He said he had come to prove how false was all that had been said about the Christians. Trajan was staying in the East at this time, and was

not very far from Antioch. He was seated upon a grand chair of state, and had soldiers and officers of his court around him when St. Ignatius was brought in. Calm and firm the old man, with his gentle eyes and his pure, noble face, stood before the Emperor.

But Trajan looked at him in anger, called him an evil demon, and demanded who he was that he dared to go against his laws, and to cause his fellow-men to perish.

The Bishop gave his name, "Ignatius Theophorus." Names in those days always had some special meaning. Trajan at once asked why he was called "Theophorus."

"Theophorus is one who bears GOD in his heart," replied Ignatius.

"What dost thou mean by GOD?" cried the Emperor.

Then Ignatius spoke of JESUS, the crucified Saviour, and of the kingdom of GOD in the heart of man.

When the Emperor heard St. Ignatius speak thus, he fell into a great rage; for although he had not wished to be cruel to the Christians, he hated to think of JESUS as GOD . So he ordered the aged saint to be bound and carried to Rome, there to be torn to death by wild beasts at a great show that was held each year.

St. Ignatius was not at all sad when he heard this. He thought it a joy to die for the sake of CHRIST; he even helped to fasten on his own chains. Then some soldiers took charge of him, and he was sent on his way to Rome. But they did not take him by the most direct road. It has been thought that because Trajan was not really a cruel man at heart, he did try after all to save the old saint from so dreadful a death. He sent him by a long, round-about way to Rome, thinking, perhaps, that when the people saw the white-haired old man led in chains through their land, and about to be put to a cruel death in their midst, they might feel some pity, and save him at the last.

Poor old man! But he showed no sign of grief. Through his whole life, since the very day no doubt that CHRIST had laid His hands on him, he had kept his sweet joyous temper, and he did not change in the least now. Through all the journey his face was bright and glad.

He was kept some time at a place called Smyrna, in Asia Minor. Here there were Christian churches, and though St. Ignatius was closely guarded, and chained to the wrist of a soldier whenever he went out, he was allowed to go about a little, and to see the friends who could come to him here. A great many came. They loved him so truly as to be ready to risk much to go and comfort him in his trial. So they came in spite of the pagans who were in charge of the saint, and who were full of hatred for them and him.

While he was kept thus at Smyrna, St. Ignatius wrote many letters or epistles to the Churches of Asia. These letters have always been kept with great care by the Church, and so they have come down to our own day, and we can read now the very words the good old saint wrote to the Christian people of those times. They are beautiful letters, very like the epistles which we have in the New Testament from St. Paul and St. John.

After a while an order came that Ignatius must go on to Rome. The guards then took him on board ship again. They sailed away, but still they did not travel very fast, and they stopped at two or three places as they came to them. Everywhere those who had known and loved St. Ignatius came out to greet him.

Many prayed him to let them go to the Emperor and beg that his life might be spared. But the old man would not hear of this. To die for the faith of CHRIST was to him the highest honour.

The great feast and fair was already going on in Rome when Ignatius reached the city. The streets were full of people, shouting, dancing, joking, and looking at shows and sports.

But they were still waiting for what they thought would be the finest sport of all—the death of the Christian saint.

In a great round building called an amphitheatre were rows of seats, one row raised behind the other, making a circle round a large open space, where wild beasts were in those days set to fight with each other and with men.

Here Ignatius was to be led to meet his death. Friends had come with him for the last few miles of his journey; their love had been his comfort: his blessing, the last blessing of their beloved and holy Bishop, was now to comfort them. Then they took their leave, and he was led under one of the low, dark archways into the amphitheatre.

The open space in which these fearful combats took place was always strewn over with sand; it was called the "arena," which means "sand-covered."

Many were the horrible fights which took place here between men and beasts, but the sight was looked on in those days as fine sport. Men fought with the wild beasts till their strength was spent; then an appeal would be made to the people seated around. If they wished the lives of the men to be spared, they would raise their thumbs—this was the sign of mercy; if no sign were made, the fight was to go on till death. Such was the custom for those trained on purpose for these combats—the men called "gladiators." St. Ignatius was not a gladiator, but a victim, a Christian led to martyrdom, for him there was to be no thought of mercy or pity.

Fresh sand had been strewn in the arena, and as the old man was led there he heard the roaring of the lions in the dens below. A moment more and they were out upon him—two fierce lions. In a few seconds all that was left in this world of the noble old man was a handful of bones: "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of GOD; there shall no torment touch them." (Wisd. iii. 1.)

CHAPTER II

ST. POLYCARP

JAN. 26; A.D. 166

There is another "Father of the Church" who is thought also to have been taught by St. John. His name was Polycarp, which means "much fruit." He did truly bear much and precious fruit for the Church of CHRIST.

It is said that Polycarp was at first a slave, and that a good Greek lady, called Callista, took him to live in her house, had him taught, and then gave him his freedom. He showed great talent, and ceased not to study and to work. By-and-by he was made a Deacon, and worked for some years under the Bishop of Smyrna. Then, many years later, about the time that St. Ignatius was put to death, Polycarp became himself Bishop of Smyrna.

He dwelt there for many years, preaching and teaching, carrying out with faithfulness and love all the duties of his office. During all this time he wrote to the other Churches of Asia letters full of devoted affection and earnest, helpful thought. He believed he should die a martyr; he fain would follow in the path of the Apostles, and he counted it a glory to give up his life for his faith. But he grew to old age, and it was a time of peace for the Christians.

Then all at once things changed. Famine, war, plague came upon the empire of Rome, and again men said it was on account of the Christians that the land was so greatly troubled. The fury of the people was allowed to burst out upon them; many were taken and brought before the tribunal. When they refused to give up their faith, they were put to death with horrible cruelty. The friends of Polycarp begged him to go away from the city, and hide from the anger of the people, in a

little country place within reach. He knew it was not right to seek death, though he felt sure he would soon be called upon to give up his life for CHRIST. So he went away to the secluded village. But the direction he had taken was found out, and in order to discover exactly where the Christian Bishop lay hidden, the persecutors got hold of two children from the village. They beat the poor little boys, and tried to frighten them into saying where they must look to come upon St. Polycarp. One child was strong and firm; he bravely bore the beating; he was ready to die under the cruel blows rather than betray the Bishop. The other could not hold out. So when the searchers knew where to find their prey they sent a body of horsemen, who placed themselves round the Bishop's dwelling. "The LORD'S will be done," said the old man, as he gave himself up. They mounted him upon an ass, and early in the morning set out for the city.

Some of the great men of the place begged him to give in—to bow down before the gods of the heathen. At first Polycarp would not even answer such a proposition; but when they went on pressing him, he said firmly, "I shall never do what you ask." At this they were very angry, and pushed rudely by him, so that he fell and hurt his leg.

He was led into the great amphitheatre: it was full of people. When the judge saw the fine old man stand there, quite calm and gentle, unmoved before the mass of gaping lookers on, he was much struck, and was sorry to think he would have to give him up to death. So he, too, began to beg St. Polycarp to deny CHRIST.

"Eighty and six years. have I served Him," Polycarp replied; "nor hath He ever done me wrong. Why, then, should I deny my King and Saviour?"

"Knowest thou not," said the judge, "that I have beasts to which I will cast thee if thou yieldest not?"

"Let them come," said Polycarp. I will not turn from good to evil, but from evil to good it is well to pass."

"If thou carest not for the beasts, thou shalt be burnt with fire," cried the judge.

"Thou dost threaten me with a flame that is soon burnt out," said Polycarp. "Delay not, bring whatever thou wilt."

Then the people cried out, "Away with him! the beasts for Polycarp!"

But the beast shows were over. They cried, "Fire," and men hurried off to bring fagots. A stake was piled, and the aged saint was placed upon it. It was the custom at Smyrna to fasten victims to the stake with nails. Polycarp would not let this be done for him.

Leave me alone," he said, "He Who gives me strength to endure the flames, will enable me to stand firm on the pile of fagots." So they only tied his hands behind.

As the fire was set light to, Polycarp began to sing words of praise to GOD . We have the very words of this hymn still; it is one of the oldest hymns which have come down to us. Thus singing, the noble old man stood among the flames. But they did not touch him. A strong wind had risen; the tongues of fire were blown outwards, and made a sort of arch all round the saint, leaving him unharmed in their midst. At this sight the people only grew the more enraged, and called out to one who was near to kill the old man at once. A moment later a short sword was plunged into his left side. Then the boy was ordered to be burnt—the brave child who had stood so firm under torture, who had been ready to bear any pain rather than betray the Christian Bishop to his enemies: "Baptized in blood for JESUS' sake."

It was Easter Eve, April 25th, 166. At night some of the Christians crept back to the blackened pile and took away what they could find of the bones of their beloved Bishop. They buried them on the hill-side near, and there stands to this day a small Christian church over the spot.

CHAPTER III

ST. IRENAEUS

JUNE 28; A.D. 202

There is yet one other great and noble Greek Father of the Church about whom I must tell you something. His name was Irenaeus, which means "peaceful; "and I think through all the storms and trials of his life he must indeed have kept the peace of GOD in his heart.

He was a very learned man, and was sent by the Church in Asia to preach and work in Gaul. He could at first speak no language but Greek, but in order to be able to teach the faith of CHRIST to the people of Gaul he worked hard till he could speak Celtic quite well, and so talk to the Gauls and teach them in their own tongue.

This was a very brave thing to do, for it must have given him much trouble and taken up a great deal of his time. But it won for him the love of the people of the land: they were proud that the Christian Priest should care to learn their language, instead of thinking they ought to learn to understand his, which was what many others thought at that time. Among the richer classes in Gaul, Latin and Greek were very commonly spoken; Irenaeus might have considered he was doing his duty in preaching to those alone who could understand the language he was used to speak: that he should stoop to learn the speech of the poor and lowly touched all hearts.

He did a great work in Gaul, and it was through him that the town of Lyons, in the south of France, became a Christian city.

But suddenly there came a terrible end to all the saint's missionary labours. It was a time of cruel persecution. Men

were paid to hunt out the Christians and kill them wherever they were to be found. There were very many now in Lyons; without mercy the Roman hirelings fell 'upon them, killing right and left. Thousands were slain—there was not a single Christian spared. The Priest perished among his people.

There is an old church at Lyons, called the Church of St. Irenaeus, where is to be seen an ancient Roman pavement on which are inscribed some Latin verses, saying that 19,000 Christians were killed at the time of this slaughter.

"This is the dawn of infant faith;
The day will follow soon,
When hope shall breathe with fuller breath,
And morn be lost in noon.

"For to the seed that's sown to-day
A harvest-time is given,
When charity with faith to stay
Shall make on earth a heaven."

Breviary.

CHAPTER IV

ST. SYMPHORIAN

AUG. 22; A.D. 179

There were many more brave men and women who suffered death for their faith about this time. Wherever there was a Christian Church—in Italy, Gaul, Greece, or Britain, it was all the same—men were called on to deny or suffer. To one young man, named Symphorian, of high birth, great things were promised, if only he would worship the Roman gods. But he was firm: he scorned the temptation. Then the judge said he must be beheaded. As he walked along outside the city, led by soldiers to his death, there was heard a cry from the walls, "My son!"

The soldiers stopped. Looking up, they saw the mother of the young man gazing down upon him. What a moment! But no, it was not in weak sorrow that the mother called her boy. Listen to the words she spoke:

"My son, remember the living GOD, and stand fast to the end. Lift up thy heart, and look to Him Who is King in the heavens. Fear not; they will not take thy life this day, they will but change it for the better one."

Were not these grand last words to hear from his mother?

Bravely then the young man knelt, and bowed his head to the stroke of the sword. He was buried near the spot where he died, and in after times a church was built over the place where he was believed to lie.

CHAPTER V

ST. PATRICK

MARCH 17; A.D. 475

Most of you have heard of St. Patrick. I dare say you know also that he is called the "Patron Saint" of Ireland—that St. Patrick's Day is a great feast day for all Irish people wherever they may be.

But there are many people who know just as much as this, and not a word more about St. Patrick, save perhaps the old legend which says that he sent away from his country for ever all the creatures we call reptiles, that is, those which crept along the ground like snakes and adder. So they have learnt to think of this saint as a sort of wizard, or one who used magic arts, or even to believe that such a man never really lived at all.

But St. Patrick did live, and was indeed a great and good man. It is a grand thing that the land he lived and worked in so many hundred years ago should still so greatly honour him.

Patrick is now the most common name to be met with in Ireland or among Irish people; and this has come about simply because of the love and respect borne in Ireland to the good Priest of long-past days.

In those days *Patricius*, from which the name Patrick comes, meant a Roman of noble birth. All Britain was under Roman rule at the time of St. Patrick's birth; and Roman families had come and settled in the land, just as in later times the Normans came with William the Conqueror. We cannot be quite sure in what part of Britain St. Patrick was born. We know that his father held office under the state, and there is a good deal of reason to think that his birthplace was Dumbarton

in Scotland, and that there he grew up till he was about sixteen years old.

As a boy he was like most other boys of his age, very fond of play, and loving above all things to have his own way. From some writings of his which have come down to us, it seems as if he were even rather a naughty boy—that he cared little to please his masters. But when he was sixteen a dreadful thing happened. A band of robbers or pirates, as they were called, fell upon the place where Patrick lived. They wounded his father, carried off his sister and sold her to be a slave, and took Patrick and a number of other boys and men, put them on board ship, and sailed with them across the sea to the coast on the other side, which was the county of Antrim in Ireland. Here Patrick was sold to be a slave to a rich man named Milchu, and set to tend cattle on the hills. During six long years he spent most of his time alone among the woods and fields. He thought over his past life, and felt that he had done much that was wrong—that he had cared little to do what was right, or to serve GOD or man through his early years. He believed GOD had let him be carried away from his home and sold as a slave because he had been so idle and careless, and that he might be led to a better life. He turned to GOD in earnest prayer. Out upon the hills in time of frost and snow, heat and cold—alone amid the thick woods and the green slopes beneath the clear bright sky, he gave up his whole soul to his FATHER in heaven. And by-and-by he felt that the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD came and dwelt in his heart, and made him burn with the wish to lead a good and noble life. Then one night he heard in a dream a voice saying to him, "Thy fasting is well; thou shalt soon return to thine own land."

His heart was full of hope and gladness, but he could only go on quietly with his work of tending the cattle, till after a little time he again had a dream. He thought he heard the same voice, and that it told him the ship was ready to take him away, but that it was two hundred miles off. At once he left the

cattle, and fled towards the sea coast. He reached it, found indeed a ship, and got over to France.

How great must have been Patrick's joy to find himself a free man after all those years. And not only did he find himself free, but in the midst of his own friends. For his parents had settled in France, and they were indeed happy to see back once more their long-lost son. But the heart that had been so truly drawn to GOD could not now rest content with a life of ease.

Once more St. Patrick had a dream. He saw in the midst of the night a man who came from Ireland, whose name was Victor. He had many letters, one of which he gave to the saint. It began: "The voice of the Irish; "and as he read aloud he thought he heard the voice of those who were near the wood of TochIut, which is near the Western sea, crying out, "We entreat the holy youth to come and walk still among us."

So about the year A.D. 432 St. Patrick took a few men, and sailed across to Ireland. He landed first at the mouth of a river just where the town of Wicklow now stands. But he did not stay here: he wanted to go to the part where he had been kept so long captive, to teach the people there the good news of JESUS CHRIST.

He went on round the coast till he came to Strangford Lough. Here he and his men left their boats, and set out to explore the land. Before they had gone far they met a swineherd, who thought this band of strangers must surely be pirates; so he ran off fast to call his master, a great Irish chief named Dichu, the son of a king.

Dichu came out sword in hand. But he was so struck by the calm and holy face of St. Patrick that he laid down his sword, took him to his house, and showed him great kindness. By-and-by Dichu became a believer in JESUS CHRIST—the first person in Ireland whom St. Patrick led to the Saviour. He was very earnest, too, in his faith. He gave over to St. Patrick a piece of ground to build a church, which was called Sabhall

Padbrig, meaning Patrick's barn. Very likely a barn had stood before where St. Patrick now built his church. Or perhaps it was called St. Patrick's barn because, as it was the first church he built in Ireland, it was very simple and plain, and, like all the early churches of those days, had a flat square roof and no tower. The word "Padbrig" became later "Saul," and there stands to this day a Christian Church on the spot; it is the oldest parish in all Ireland.

St. Patrick would not stay very long at Saul. He wished so much to get on to the place where he had passed those six years of his life as a slave. So he gave Dichu his boats to take care of, and went on to Dalaradia, in Antrim, now know as "The Route."

If you ever go to this part of Ireland you must note it well, and try to think how St. Patrick, though of noble birth, lived here a poor slave, and tried to do his duty as a faithful servant; how he strove to know GOD and to lead a pure life, and to fit himself by prayer among those woods and hills to serve GOD truly and nobly whenever he should be set free.

When Milchu, who had been Patrick's master, heard of his coming he was full of fear. He could not think that a man whom he had owned as a slave could have become powerful except by magic arts, and thought he in his turn would be made a slave by the man whom he had used hardly in past days. But he said to himself that this should never be. So he piled up in his house all his goods and his riches, and placed himself on the top of the great heap he had made. Then he set fire to the house, and thus was burnt to death, he and all he had.

How great must have been the horror of St. Patrick as he drew near to this burning mass!

He set out next day for a place called the Hill of Tara, where lived most of the great lords and chiefs of Ireland. It was a grand old place. Ruins of its fine halls are still to be

seen, and also great mounds beneath which many of the Irish kings and chiefs of those days were buried.

Before St. Patrick had got quite as far as the Hill of Tara he made a halt. It was just Easter-tide, and he wanted to keep this great feast as fitly as he could. So he set up his tent on the Hill of Slane, a little way from the Hill of Tara, and on Easter Eve he made what in those old days was known as the "Easter fire." This was done by setting light to a number of tapers and candles, which made a great blaze that shone out through the dark night, till it was almost as bright as day.

But just at this very time the Irish king at Tara was keeping one of his pagan feasts. He had made it a law that no light or fire was to be seen anywhere over the whole land before the beacon-light shone out from his palace. By this law any one who made a light or fire before that of the king was seen must be put to death.

And now, behold, the king and all the princes and nobles at Tara saw the great blaze of St. Patrick's blessed Easter fire.

The king in a rage called his chief Druids to him, and asked them the meaning of the light he saw.

Then the Druids cried, "O king, live for ever! This fire which has been lighted before the royal fire will never be put out if it be not put out this night. It will conquer our fires, and he who has lit it will conquer us all."

The king in great anger took some of his chief men and went out at once to attack St. Patrick. As they drew near one of the king's wise men begged him not to go too close to the Christian fires lest they might have some strange power over him. So he sent for St. Patrick to come out to him, and gave command that none of his people should rise as he drew near.

When the saint saw the king and his horses and cars he began to sing in the words of the psalm, "Some put their trust

in horses and some in chariots, but we trust in the Name of the LORD our GOD ."

No one rose as he approached except a lad named Erc, one of the king's pages. He became a Christian later, was ordained Priest, and was made in after years Bishop of Slane—of that very part where he had thus first seen St. Patrick, and where, in spite of the king's order, he had risen to greet him. A small chapel, called after his name, still stands on the spot on the banks of the river Boyne.

One of the Druids who was with the king began to blaspheme—that is, to use impious words, and take the Name of the LORD GOD in vain. In an instant he was struck down dead. Then the king ordered St. Patrick to be seized, but at that moment a strange darkness came over the land, and there was a great earthquake. The guards fled in fear, and the king and queen were left alone with the saint. The queen went up to him and begged him not to slay the king. The king himself also bent low, and said he was ready to worship St. Patrick's GOD . He did not really mean this, and from the moment he felt free from danger he again tried to kill St. Patrick. But this he could not do. Then, after some time, he asked to be baptized, and he gave St. Patrick royal leave to pass on through Ireland. The king was never really a Christian. Fear alone, and the wish of the great lords of his court had led him to accept Baptism. He died a pagan at heart. But after a time many of his relations learnt from St. Patrick to believe in the Saviour.

He went on next to Connaught, and through the whole country one may still see traces of the many churches he founded.

Let me tell you a beautiful story of two young girls whom he met and taught to know JESUS CHRIST.

In his travels he came once to a wide plain, where stood a palace and a sort of Druid college, in which young girls were brought up and taught. The king about whom you have just heard so much had sent his two daughters here. They

were both very handsome; the one was called Ethne the Fair, the other Feidelen the Ruddy.

The two girls used to rise very early in the morning and go out to bathe in a well which was near the palace. One morning, what was their surprise to find close to this well a number of grave Priests sitting with books in their hands.

The maidens said to them, "Who are ye, and whence do ye come?"

St. Patrick said, "It were better for you to learn to know the true GOD than to ask about our race."

Then one of the maidens asked, "Who is GOD, and where is GOD ?"

So St. Patrick began to teach them, and they believed with all their hearts. But they wished to see the face of CHRIST. St. Patrick told them that it was only through death that they could come to see the face of the Saviour. Yet they desired much to see CHRIST. Then they received from St. Patrick the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and a very little while afterwards they died, both about the same time, in the freshness of their youth and of their faith.

On the spot where their bodies were laid, close to the well, St. Patrick built a church.

There is a well still at the very same place. Perhaps one day you will visit it, and then you will think of the two maidens who used to rise early to go there to bathe, and thus met the Christian Priests and were led to CHRIST.

St. Patrick preached in Ulster next, and spent much time among his old friends in the county of Antrim, teaching and preaching. He built a great church at Armagh, on a long ridge of ground which a chief named Daire gave to him, and he placed a Bishop there. This was in the year 445 A.D. It was not till one hundred and fifty years later that there was a Bishop at our great English Cathedral of Canterbury. And

there is still a "S. Patrick's Church "on the same spot at Armagh.

Then St. Patrick went to Munster, and so in the course of his life preached and taught through the whole of Ireland.

When at last he felt that he had grown old, and knew that he soon would die, he made his way back to the place where he had done his first Christian work. He died at Saul, that place, you remember, which had been given to him by Dichu for the site of his first church.

The monks, who had all loved him so dearly, could not agree as to where he was to be laid in his last long rest. The men of Armagh wished to have him in their midst; the men of Down wanted to keep him near them. At last they said they would settle the dispute by a sign. So the monks of Saul took two oxen which had never been tamed, yoked them to the cart which bore the body of their beloved master, left them quite without guide, and watched to see which way they would turn. The oxen went on till they came to that spot where stands now the Cathedral of Downpatrick. There they stopped and stood still.

It is believed that the bones of St. Patrick still lie beneath this cathedral.

CHAPTER VI

ST. COLUMBA

JUNE 9; A.D. 597

St. Columba was an Irishman—Irish by birth, descent, and education. His native place was Gartan, a wild part of Donegal, where the great clan to which he belonged still exists. His family was of high rank, closely related to one of the Irish royal families of those days. You will not forget his name when I tell you that it means a dove. It is a Latin name, and from it has come the French word for a dove, *columbe*.

Christianity had already been taken to Ireland; there had been Roman Priests, teachers, and scholars in the island for two or three hundred years before St. Columba's birth, so it is not strange to find many of the educated Irish bearing Roman names.

Columba was a man of great learning. From boyhood he had loved work, and at the large college or school for monks at Clonard where he was brought up, he studied under great men, and worked very hard. Very hard he worked all his life long—first as a young student, then as a Priest, and later as a Bishop. St. Columba was always busy. Studying, teaching, preaching, or writing, his was an activity that never flagged.

He was one of the greatest scribes or writers of the day. Printing had not yet been invented, many of the "books" of those early times, and indeed of much later ones, were rolls of parchment, a very strong kind of paper made from the skins of sheep and goats. Upon this men copied out by hand the holy Gospels, the books of prayer, the writings of the Fathers, besides works of history, medicine, science, and whatever else they had of literature in those days.

This copying was one of the chief occupations of every monastery, and not only time but a great deal of care was given to such work, especially to all the sacred writings. They were copied out in beautiful coloured letters, and were done so well that even to this day the colours remain bright and unfaded. You may see many of these old "books" in our great libraries, and among the belongings of our old cathedrals and churches.

One day a friend lent St. Columba a fine manuscript of the Psalms, which he cared for so much that he thought he would make a copy for himself just like it. But when the friend saw this copy made by St. Columba, he said that as it was written from his book it must belong to him. This seemed to St. Columba very unjust, and he refused to give up what he had written out. Then the friend was very angry, and had the matter tried before the king of the county. It seems very strange to us, but the king said St. Columba was in the wrong, and that the copy he had written belonged by right to the owner of the manuscript he had made it from.

It was now Columba's turn to be angry. He called all his friends to him, and there was a great fight between the counties of Ulster, where lived Columba, and Meath, the land of the king who had judged against him. The party of Columba won, and many of the Meathmen were slain.

But to be thus the cause of a great fight was a terrible sin in a man who was a Priest of GOD, and when it was over Columba himself was the first to see how wrong he had been, and to submit to punishment. He was ordered to leave his own land, his home, and all that he loved, and to go to the country of the Picts—Pictland, as Scotland was then termed—there to spend his life in trying to turn the people to Christianity.

So he sailed away with twelve monks, and landed first at a small island. He set himself to explore the land, and climbed to the top of one of the hills. From this point he saw, far, far away, the cliffs of his own country. Tears must have filled his eyes at that sight, for he had been ordered never to

look on Ireland again. And as he gazed now he thought, "No; it cannot be right for me to stay here, where I may look any day upon my beloved land. I must sail farther."

He took to his boat again, and went on till he came to Iona, from which no trace of Erin could be seen.

Here he worked with vigour for many years. He first set himself to learn the language of the Picts. He had with him two Priests who were Picts by birth, and with them he studied till he was quite able to speak and teach the people in their own tongue. There was a prince reigning in the country named Brude; he was very strong and powerful. Columba thought how great a thing it would be for the land and the people, if the king could be won to CHRIST. It was a bold act for the poor stranger Christian Priest to go to the palace of the great prince, but Columba did not hesitate. He went to Brude, and soon both the king and many of the great lords of his court received the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Druids tried hard to upset his work; many were the trials and troubles he was called on to endure, but he struggled on valiantly through them all, and in the end he gained great power in the land. Everywhere he founded monasteries and churches.

Then after many years he went back to his beloved Ireland, but not for his own pleasure. A decree had been sent out by the Parliament of the country—in those days only an assembly of great chiefs—that the bards must be banished from the land. These bards were minstrels or poets who went about from one great castle to another, singing and reciting their poems. The country was in a disturbed state. Instead of one king over the whole land, there were a number of petty rulers in the different parts of the island, and it was feared the bards, by singing first in honour of one, then of another of these wild chiefs, helped to stir up strife and discontent among their people. But when St. Columba heard of this decree it seemed to him to be very unjust, and he at once went before the assembly of chiefs and so well urged the cause of the poor

minstrels that the law against them was put aside, and they were allowed to remain in their land. The bards were very grateful to the saint, and the chief among them, the poet laureate of the island, wrote a poem in his honour.

He stayed some time in Ireland, but when he felt old age upon him he went back to Iona, there to pass his last days. After four years the end came. It was Saturday morning. The old saint rose as usual, and went out into the fields to see the monks at their labour, and to bless them in their work. Then he visited the barn, where was stored the grain and hay. All was in order, there was provender enough to last till the next harvest time. He turned homewards. When about half way he met the old horse which for years past had day by day carried the milk from the dairy to the monastery. The animal came up and laid his head on the master's shoulder, as if to take leave. There was a sad look in the eyes of the aged beast, as if he knew the parting was at hand.

The monks who were with him would have driven away the animal, but St. Columba forbade them. "The horse loves me," he said, "leave him alone, leave him with me; let the poor beast weep for my departure; the Creator has revealed to this poor beast what is hidden from man," and he spread out his hands and blessed the dumb animal.

He went on home, and, entering his cell, sat down to work at a copy of the psalms. When he came to Psalm xxxiv. II, he laid aside his pen. "I must stop here," he said, "Bathene will finish the rest."

He then sent a last message to his disciples and followers, begging them to live always in peace and charity. This was the 9th of June, 597.

When the midnight bell rang for the Matins of Sunday, St. Columba rose from His couch, and ran to church before the other monks. Hastily the attendants followed him. They found him lying before the altar. He opened his eyes, and turned them upon his brethren, with a look of serene and holy joy. He

raised his right hand to bless; then he passed away, his face calm and sweet like one who in his sleep had seen a vision of heaven.

CHAPTER VII

ST. COLUMBANUS

Nov. 21; A.D. 615.

St. Columbanus was born in Leinster in the year A.D. 543. He was brought up on one of the islands of Lough Erne. Like St. Columba he was fond of study, and in order to go on with his reading he went, when already grown up, to a college at Bangor, where he spent some years. Then he was seized with a great wish to preach the Gospel. He had heard of all that St. Columba was doing in Scotland. Surely, he thought, he, too, might do something to spread abroad the faith of CHRIST. So he chose out a little band of friends, twelve in all, and crossed the sea to France, there to teach and preach.

France at this time was in a very bad state. It was not then one entire kingdom, as it became later; the larger provinces were under separate rulers, who were often at war with one another, and its kings, queens, and princes almost all lived evil lives. There was little order or sense of duty in any of the petty courts, no one seemed to think of any other rule of life than that of his own will.

St. Columbanus and his friends went on their way through France, taking every chance of preaching to the people as they journeyed. At last they came to the kingdom of Burgundy. There was a king here named Gontran, who was a better man than most of the other Frankish princes of the day, and he seemed glad to see St. Columbanus. He welcomed him at his court, and wished to give him great riches, and to make him stay always near him. But the Christian missionary did not wish for riches or the life of a court. He accepted gladly the old Roman castle which the king gave him to live in, and he made it his first monastery. He lived here a life of stern self-

denial; his fare was dry bread, herbs, and wild fruit. He would allow himself no bodily comforts, and he spent his days in hard work. Soon the people of the country came in crowds to hear him preach; and as he became known, the great nobles sent their children to him to be taught.

He was doing a great work in the land where he had come to bring the good news of JESUS, and he made himself beloved on every side. Even the birds of the woods and forests around his home loved him, and would come at his call, to let the good monk pet them, and to eat out of his hand. It is said that one day while he was walking in the forest a band of wolves rushed out upon him. St. Columbanus did not try to run away. He stood quite still, and repeated three times over the words, "GOD is our help." The wolves, says the story, began to tear at his cloak; but when they saw the man before them stand so calm and fearless, looking down upon them with steady, unmoved gaze, they all turned away without doing him the least harm.

By-and by a wicked queen turned against St. Columbanus, because he told her plainly of her sins. He was taken and thrown into prison. After a time he was able to make his escape from this prison, and he fled to a monastery he had founded. He did not try to hide there, but went on with his work, fearless of what might happen to him. Soon the queen's soldiers traced him. They came upon him as he was chanting the service in the chapel of his monastery. He was taken and put on board a ship bound for Ireland. The bad queen thought now she was surely free from her foe—for as such she looked upon the Christian saint, who had been brave enough to tell her of her sins, and to try to show her how she might live a better life. She did not know that he was in reality her truest friend. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

The ship in which the soldiers had sailed away with St. Columbanus had a very bad passage. She was tossed about on the sands at the mouth of the river Loire. An idea came into

the captain's head that the Irish monks he had on board had brought him ill-luck; he thought it must be due to their presence that his ship did not sail well, so he landed St. Columbanus and his friends on the shores of France, and there left them. They were now free to go wherever they liked; only they dared not again venture near the lands of the bad queen or of her son, who was now king, for fear they should once more be taken prisoners. They went to the court of a king named Clotaire. Clotaire was not a good man, but he was too wise to be angry when St. Columbanus rebuked him for his wrongdoing. He even said he would try and mend his ways, and lead a better life, but he never did.

Then St. Columbanus thought he would like to go to the lands which lay on the other side of the Alps—on the other side of that great mountain range which, as you know, separates France from Italy and Switzerland.

So in the long narrow boats which were used in those days for sailing upon lakes and rivers, St. Columbanus and his friends worked their way up the Rhine till they came to Lake Constance. There they stopped and founded a monastery, which they named St. Gall, after one of the chief monks of the party. You have, perhaps, heard of the Canton or division of Switzerland called St. Gall—it was so named after this early monastery.

The little band of Christian missionaries met with no few trials here. The country was full of pagans. St. Columbanus broke their images and burnt their temples; for it was no true worship, even after a pagan fashion, which the people were used to carry on. The temples were often scenes of riot and wickedness, and the images they bowed down to were vile and monstrous. The Irish missionary had a strong, brave spirit, and he could never overlook real sin. In return he and his monks were often driven from place to place, and left to go hungry, for no one was willing to give them food. But they were very brave. They built for themselves huts of wood, planted gardens, caught wild fowl in the fields, and fish in the

lake. St. Columbanus made the nets, and St. Gall was very good at catching the fish. So they managed to get along without help from others.

But as time went on the people around became too cruel. They stole the poor saint's cows, and slew his monks. Also it had come about that the very land where he was now settled had fallen under the rule of the son of the wicked French queen who was his great enemy. So he was forced to leave Switzerland. He took one faithful friend, and they travelled across the Alps down into the plains of Northern Italy. He went to the court of Agilulf, King of the Lombards.

Agilulf was a good man, and he received the Christian monk with great respect. He gave him some land, and an old church at Bobbio, in a valley between Genoa and Milan.

The saint was now getting very old. But in spite of his age, he set to work with his own hands to help his men to restore the church, and add a monastery. This still stands—the old church at Bobbio—at which the hands of the brave and aged St. Columbanus worked, and where he afterwards for a time preached and taught. It serves even now as a parish church.

For his last days the old man sought out a quieter, lonelier spot. On the shore, just across the bay, there was a cavern in the rocks. He made it into a little chapel where, too feeble at last to keep up his wonderful activity, the faithful old saint would pass many hours in prayer and quiet thought. When he felt that his end was at hand he would not quit his retreat, and here, on the 21st of November, A.D. 615 his spirit passed away—

"His prayers and struggles o'er, his task all praise and joy."

CHAPTER VIII
ST. CHRISTOPHER
JULY 25; A.D. 254

In old Gothic churches there is often seen among the carved stonework the figure of a man of great height, bearing upon his shoulders the Infant Saviour: it is the statue of St. Christopher—the CHRIST-bearer. His name is not in our calendar, but the story or legend of his life is very beautiful.

St. Christopher was at first a pagan, but he had always a good, kind heart, and as he was very big and strong—much bigger than most other men—he gave up his time to helping passengers across a ferry which was deep and dangerous.

One day as he lay asleep in his lodge by the river side, he thought he heard the voice of a child begging him to bear him across the stream. He rose at once, lifted the child upon his shoulder, and stepped into the river. But, lo, the water rose and swelled, becoming every moment higher and harder to pass through, while at the same time the child seemed to grow heavier and heavier, as St. Christopher went farther into the stream. The man stooped in pain under the weight, and he was full of fear lest both he and the child should be drowned. But he struggled on, and the other side was reached. Then the child told him He was JESUS CHRIST the King, and the next morning when Christopher arose, he found the staff he had leant upon as he passed through the waters had blossomed like a palm, and was covered with leaves, flowers, and fruit.

He prepared without delay for Baptism, became a sincere Christian, and before long gave up his life for his faith. This is the story. Much of it is what we call an allegory, that is, a story meant to show some great truth. The stream swollen and hard to pass through represents earthly life—life full of

trial and temptation as it must always be for the earnest Christian. But bravely bearing JESUS in their hearts and His Cross upon their shoulders, those who are faithful and strong reach at length the shores of heaven, there to reap the fruit of their good works, and to find that "inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these little ones, ye have done it unto Me."

CHAPTER IX

ST. ALBAN

JUNE 17; A.D. 283

St. Alban is called the Proto-Martyr, that is, the chief or most notable martyr, of England. He might also be called pro-martyr, because he suffered in the place of some one else—a glorious fate! By his death he saved the life of another; he died for his friend. He was also the first of our English "army of martyrs." Let me tell you the story.

At the time of St. Alban's birth, and for nearly two hundred years afterwards, Britain was governed by the Romans. It was regarded as one of the many Roman provinces of the time. For the Romans conquered lands far and near, and were the most powerful people in Europe for several hundred years.

It was on the banks of the river Ver—called now the Ware—that Alban lived. The town was called *Verulam*; it bears in these days the name of the noble saint who suffered there, and the cathedral, St. Alban's, stands on the spot where he was martyred.

The young Alban was the heir of a very rich Roman house, and he was sent to Rome to be educated. When he came back to live at his British home, he found his chief pleasure in holding open house; strangers of every sort were welcomed at his table. In his kindness of heart he loved above all things to make others happy, and so it came about that he entertained one day the stranger who became to him the angel received and welcomed "unawares."

The Diocletian persecution, under which the brave St. George and so many other Christians in Rome suffered, spread

even to Britain, as a province of the empire, and the believers in CHRIST and their teachers were hunted out everywhere. One day a poor Christian Priest of Wales came flying from before his persecutors; he found refuge in the home of the rich and kind Alban, who, though not yet a Christian, was always ready to help those in trouble. For many days the Priest lay hidden there. His young host meanwhile noticed that he used to spend much time alone in prayer, and was of singular gentleness and piety. He asked the Priest to explain to him his way of worship. Rejoiced at this chance of winning the good young Roman to CHRIST, the Priest spoke of the SON of GOD, of GOD made Man, of the birth of the Saviour. But he also warned Alban of the danger he would be in if he openly followed CHRIST. "These are cruel days for the Christians," he said, "if you believe and are baptized, you may ere long be called upon to die for your faith."

That night the young man had a strange dream. When he rose in the morning, he went at once to his guest, and said, "If what thou sayest is true, tell me the meaning of this my dream. I saw a man come down from heaven; but, behold, he was at once seized by a rude crowd of soldiers, who bound him with cords, and smote him with rods.

Then they nailed him to a tree, and pierced his side, till there flowed forth blood and water."

It was the story of the Crucifixion. After a few more days of converse with the Christian teacher, St. Alban was baptized. Then there came to the place soldiers in search of the Priest. When St. Alban found them in his house, ready to pounce upon the hiding-place of his guest, he insisted upon changing clothes with him. The Priest resisted at first.

"Why do you do this?" he cried. I am found—my time is come—let me give myself up.

"No!" was the reply; "stay where thou art. Quick, give me thy cloak! Ah, here they are upon us!"

St. Alban went boldly to meet the searchers, wrapped in the teacher's mantle. He was taken and dragged before the judge.

"Of what family and race are you?" was the stern demand.

"I am a Christian," answered St. Alban, firmly.

They tried to induce him to give up his faith and sacrifice to the Roman gods. The noble-hearted young man refused coldly and proudly. He was laid upon the rack and cruelly tortured. All of no use. Alban had declared himself a Christian—nothing could shake him now.

So he was led out to die. The place of execution was beyond the river. The bridge over the stream was filled with eager, and, no doubt, in many cases, grieved lookers-on, for the young man was beloved by all who knew him and his kindness. There was no room for him and his guard to pass, so he was led through the cold stream; but the legend tells us the waters parted as he stepped in, and that he went through on dry ground. It is likely that GOD had directed the steps of the soldiers to a part of the river which was much less deep than people thought, and so, instead of being up to his neck in water, his feet only were covered. Then he was led across the hill, on to the other side of the stream, to the place set apart for the death-blow. But the soldier whose place it was to strike, was so touched by the noble firmness of the martyr, that he shrank from his duty, and finally refused to deal the blow. He was urged to do the work given him. Nothing could move him to obey. So they said he, too, must die, and the soldier and the saint were beheaded together.

"One presses on and welcomes death,
One calmly yields his willing breath,
Nor slow nor hurrying, but in faith
Content to live or die"

Christian Year

CHAPTER X

STS. CRISPIN AND CRISPIAN

OCT. 25; A.D. 288

There lived once at the town of Soissons in France two brothers, who went by the names of Crispin and Crispian. They were by birth Romans, of noble family, and were men of great culture. But they had learned to know the Saviour, and had been baptized Christians, just at the time of the Diocletian persecution, of which you have already heard; and when they found themselves obliged to give up their wealth and their position on account of their faith, they cheerfully put themselves to learn a trade, and in a little while set up in the city as simple shoemakers.

The brothers worked away at their cobbler's bench, never missing a chance of sowing the good seed of the faith of CHRIST, while they made, we may be sure, good and worthy shoes for the citizens of Soissons—shoes worthy not of the wearers but of the makers—of these earnest, high-minded men who toiled so gladly at a lowly trade, if thereby they might serve their Master, and show themselves His faithful followers.

But they were not left at peace, even to work as simple cobblers. The persecutors fell upon them before long. Their family was very highly thought of in Rome, and great riches and honours were promised to the brothers if they would give up Christianity and sacrifice to the Roman gods. On the other hand, torment, torture, every ill was threatened if they persisted in their faith.

The brave men, who had already done so much to show the strength of their belief in JESUS, were not likely to waver even for a moment now. They were thrown into prison.

Then came the rack and the irons. When all that the wicked persecutors could think of to torture them was shown to be useless, the brothers were beheaded.

St. Crispin's Day is known in England as the shoemakers' fete, or feast-day. St. Crispin is said to be their patron saint.

In France a good monk founded an order which he named "Les Freres Cordonniers"—meaning "the shoemaker brothers." The people who joined this order were not expected to be shoemakers, but simply to show themselves willing to do any kind of work, the simplest, the lowliest, whatever came before them, as to GOD, "not with eye-service as men-pleasers." The society was meant for the hallowing of all work; its members were to be ready, like SS. Crispin and Crispian, whatever their rank or education, to turn their hands to the humblest trade, or stoop to the meanest duty, from the moment they could serve GOD thereby.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, in the grave, whither thou goest."

CHAPTER XI

ST. VALENTINE

FEB. 14; A.D. 268

Wheatly writes of St. Valentine, "He was so famous for his love and charity that the custom of choosing valentines upon his festival, which is still practised, took its rise from thence." But we cannot be at all sure that it was really in this way the custom came about. The 14th of February has been a festival from very old times, from before the days of Christianity. It was kept as a feast by the heathens, in honour probably of some of their gods. Then, when the Christian Priest, St. Valentine, so nobly suffered for his faith and for the deeds of love and charity in which he had spent his life, the Church ordered that the 14th of February, till then a pagan holiday, should be observed by Christians in remembrance of the brave martyr. Perhaps it was the day of his birth, perhaps that of his death, we do not know. It may be that it was only a day near to one of these dates, which the people were accustomed to keep as a holiday, and which the Church was glad to dedicate to a Christian martyr, and forget that those around them kept it in honour of the idols they worshipped. The pagans, it is said, were used to write each other's names upon shells or small pieces of wood, and then to draw for partners for their dances on this day. The Christians, instead, in keeping their festival, wrote down the names of special saints, and sent words of loving Christian greeting to each other; and probably thinking of all the loving words and deeds of the martyred Priest, called their missives "valentines."

St. Valentine lived at Rome in the time of the Emperor Claudius II. He was a Priest, and his life was one of constant self-devotion and Christian love. He spent all his time in doing deeds of mercy and charity, and in giving help and refuge to

the poor persecuted followers of the faith of JESUS, for those were evil days for all Christian people.

The Emperor heard of him and commanded that Valentine should be brought into his presence.

"Why dost thou not worship as we do?" he asked. "Why dost thou refuse to bow before the gods of the Romans?"

The Christian Priest looked calmly and without fear upon the Emperor—upon the man who had power to condemn him to immediate death, to have him torn to pieces by the wild beasts or burnt to cinders at the stake. Unflinching, St. Valentine stood there before Claudius, and speaking out boldly and bravely gave reasons for his faith.

The Emperor listened. He was struck by the Priest's bold words, and by his clear reasoning. It was the story of St. Paul and Agrippa repeated: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

"Might not this Christian Priest be right after all?" Claudius asked himself. "Was it not possible that what he and the Romans were used to call gods were indeed but low, vile creations of man?"

But he feared to say openly what he thought; only instead of ordering St. Valentine to be tortured or put to death, he gave him into the charge of a judge named Asterius, with whom he was to live, shut up, indeed, but not harshly treated.

Now the Priest could no longer continue his works of mercy, but he could still pray. Day and night he entreated GOD for the poor Christians from whom he was parted, and also for the Emperor and all those who were still in the darkness of heathenism, beseeching the FATHER that they might learn to know the True Light, JESUS CHRIST, His SON.

One day the judge Asterius heard him thus praying. "What is this thou sayest?" he asked. "What meanest thou by the words, 'JESUS CHRIST made Man,' and 'the True Light?'"

"I mean that JESUS, the SON of GOD the FATHER Almighty, became Man for our sake; and not only is He the True Light, but the only Light. He lighteth every one that cometh into the world."

"I will test thy words," replied Asterius. "I have a little daughter who has been blind for two years. If by thy GOD thou canst make her darkness light and cure her blindness, I will at once believe that JESUSCHRIST is the Light of the World—that He Whom thou dost worship is GOD alone."

The legend tells us that GOD enabled Valentine to cure the young girl. He laid his hands on her, and prayed; perhaps he had some special skill which he was allowed to use. However this may be, in a short time, we are told, the child had her sight restored, and saw clearly.

Then Asterius and his wife threw themselves, overjoyed, at the feet of the saint, and cried, "We believe, we believe! what must we do to be saved?"

St. Valentine told them to break in pieces the images of their false gods, to abstain for a time from worldly pleasures and rich living, to forgive all those they looked on as their enemies, and then to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

Not only the father and mother of the maiden, but the whole household of Asterius followed the counsels of St. Valentine. They became known as a Christian family. Then they were called upon to suffer for their faith. Willingly they gave up their lives, as so many Christians had done before them.

St. Valentine suffered, too, in a very short time.

Some years later, when the fierceness of persecution had ceased, and the "noble army of martyrs" in heaven were rejoicing over the comparative peace on earth, a church was built at Rome in remembrance of his good and holy Christian life.

CHAPTER XII

ST. PRISCA AND ST. FAITH

JAN. 18; A.D. 270. OCT. 6; A.D. 290

I am going to tell you about two children whose names are found among the saints of our Prayer Book.

January 18 is marked "S. Prisca." Prisca was the daughter of Roman parents of high rank. She was a very beautiful child, and very good. Both her father and her mother were Christians, and they had taught their little girl to know and love JESUS CHRIST. But the Emperor of Rome, Claudius, was enraged against all who would not bow the knee before the pagan gods, and one day, when she was about thirteen years of age, he commanded the young girl Prisca to come into the heathen temple, and there to offer incense. He thought it would be easy to turn so young and gentle a girl from her faith.

But though Prisca was so gentle and so young, she was brave and firm.

"No!" she said, "I bend my knee before none but Him Who hath made heaven and earth, GOD the FATHER Almighty, and His Blessed SON, JESUS CHRIST Our LORD."

At this the Emperor was very angry, and ordered the child to be beaten. They beat her till even the heathen who looked on were touched with pity. But she bore it all with calm fortitude. She was then sent back to prison. By-and-by the Emperor ordered her to be brought into the great amphitheatre, where a lion was led out to attack her. There the young girl stood, brave and firm still—upheld by a strength from on high. Her face glowed with a heavenly brightness; she had no fear of death—she was ready to be torn in pieces.

But behold! the lion forgot his savage nature—he would not touch the child; instead of rushing upon her, he fawned at her feet, gentle as a lamb.

They tried other cruelties. They shut her up for a long time in one of the temples of the pagan gods. All was vain. Prisca would not give way. Then at last they killed her by cutting off her head.

There is a story that an eagle flew down to watch over her dead body until the Christians were able to come and bury it.

We have old pictures of St. Prisca: in some she is shown with a lion crouching by her side, in others an eagle is keeping watch over her martyred form.

The other child-martyr is St. Faith. Her day is kept on October 6. She, too, was of high birth, and was a very beautiful girl. Her home was in France, at a place called Agen.

It was a time of great trial to the Christians of those parts. A bad man, named Dacian, had come there to govern. He hated the Christians, and calling many of them together, he showed them the horrible irons he would use in torture if they would not worship the false pagan gods.

Many fled in fear to hide in the caves and rocks of a great hill near at hand. But little Faith was left in the city, and very soon she was called to stand before Dacian.

What is thy name?" asked Dacian.

"My name is Faith," she answered.

"Who is the GOD thou dost worship?"

"I am a Christian; I try to serve the LORD JESUS CHRIST with all my heart and soul."

"It is to our gods thou must bow down, child," cried Dacian. "Bow down before them, or thou shalt die under the torture."

But St. Faith heard these words without a sign of fear. She only looked up to heaven and said, "I am ready to suffer."

Then they laid her on the rack. But it was too dreadful a sight, that of the young and noble maiden stretched there upon the cruel irons. The people could not bear to look upon it, and they began to cry out, "Shame! she has done nothing amiss. Let her alone; she has never spoken an evil word, she does but adore her GOD."

The great courage of the young girl had so much effect on the people, that they began to wish to know the GOD of the Christians, and many believed and turned to JESUS.

Then the Christian Bishop of the city who had fled with those of his people that had gone off to hide in the rocks, had a dream in which he seemed to see the young girl suffering. He felt that he ought to leave his refuge and go to her. The Bishop had a good mother, who was full of joy when she heard that her son was about to return to his post of duty in the city. She knew that the Christian soldiers and leaders, like the soldiers and leaders in an earthly army, must never shrink from danger; and though she saw that he might be going forth to meet his death, she urged him to make no delay,

St. Faith was firm to the end. When the wicked Dacian found that no torture would lead her to swerve one inch from the path of truth, he ordered her head to be struck off. Rightly had she been named Faith—she was "faithful unto death."

The Bishop was soon called on to suffer, too, with many more brave believers in the Saviour.

The example of the holy child was like a bright star which cast its beams of light around, and led her fellow Christians to follow in its track. She was held in honour in England, as well as all over her own land of France for ages, and the quiet old chapel called "S. Faith's under St. Paul's," in our cathedral in London, was so named in memory of this brave young girl.

CHAPTER XIII

ST. GEORGE—PATRON OF ENGLAND

APRIL 23; A.D. 303

A grand patron—brave, strong, pure, a true soldier, a soldier of CHRIST as he was also a defender of his country, and of all who were in need of help or succour—is St. George of England.

The common phrase among us is, "S. George and the Dragon." I will tell you later on how this came to be; I must now begin with his early history.

St. George was born in Palestine of Christian parents. His father was an officer in the service of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian, and was rarely at home, so the boy was brought up chiefly by his mother. It was from her, no doubt, that he learned to be so gentle and kind and courteous, while at the same time he was always so brave and fearless. It is known that almost all our greatest men have had good mothers, whose counsels they have listened to, and whom they have loved to obey.

George was still young when his father died; following in his steps the boy became a soldier. He soon came to be looked upon as one of the bravest knights of the day, and he was made what is termed a "military tribune," and was thus placed in a position in the State which gave him some power in the government of his country. Then came a dreadful time of persecution for the Christians. It is known in history as the Diocletian persecution, as Diocletian was the Emperor under whom it was carried on.

There is a story that the Emperor was one day in a cave consulting the Roman god Apollo. The god, of course, did not

really exist, but as the Emperor stood before his statue, he believed not only that he was there listening to him, but that he was able to tell him what was likely to happen, and what he ought to do about peace and war, and other matters in the State. All this time a pagan priest stood by, inventing the answers supposed to be given by the god. Then the Emperor thought he heard a voice from the cave, saying, "The just who are on the earth prevent me from telling the truth."

"Who are these just ones?" demanded the Emperor.

"They are the Christians," was the answer.

Diocletian was enraged. He really believed it was the voice of a god, of a being who was all-powerful for good or evil, that spoke to him from the cave, and the idea that the Christians—"that new sect"—should stand in the way of his gods, was unbearable to him.

Now followed the terrible "Diocletian persecution." It was a fearful time. The Christians were hunted out of home and land, brought before the Roman judges, put to the most frightful tortures in the hope of leading them to give up their faith—beaten, burnt, put to death in the most horrible ways.

Then the knightly spirit of St. George was stirred within him. He took up the cause of the oppressed. Friends urged him to be prudent. "Your whole career is at stake," they said; "think a little of yourself, of your family; while you remain quiet, no harm will come to you. You are beloved by the Emperor; he trusts you, and will overlook your own Christianity, but beware how you give help to others."

Their words were spoken in vain. St. George knew well his own danger. What was that to him while there were distressed men and women needing his aid, while there was cruelty and injustice going on which he might perchance help to redress? Not only did the young man give all possible aid to those in trouble, he boldly went before the Emperor and pleaded the cause of the Christians.

But Diocletian was stern and cold. "Young man, think of thine own future," was all he would say, and before St. George could reply, he was seized by a body of guards and carried off to prison. Then he, too, was tortured. They threw him roughly upon the bare stone floor, made his feet fast in the stocks, and laid a heavy stone upon his chest. He did not flinch, nor did he once waver either in his own faith, or in his will to help the persecuted, should he ever again have the chance. The next day they stretched him on a wheel with sharp spokes, when it seemed to him as if he heard a voice from heaven, which said, "Fear nothing, I the LORD am with thee; "and he thought he saw near him the form of a Man clothed in white.

The Emperor himself came to beg St. George to give way; he did not answer, but asked to be taken to the temple to see the gods Diocletian worshipped. The Emperor thought the Christian knight was now at last overcome, and was about publicly to renounce his faith.

He gave orders that the Senate and all the people of Rome should come to the temple and be present at the great sacrifice which he believed St. George was about to make to the gods. Surrounded by his guards, the young man was led into the crowded building. All eyes fixed upon him, he went straight up to the figure of the god Apollo. He looked up at the image, beautiful indeed as a work of art, its lines all finely carved and moulded, its substance of the rarest marble. But as his eyes rested upon the cold, hard limbs of the figure, the scorn of his soul gleamed from them, and through the vast building rang a loud, clear, startling voice, with the words, "Thou art not GOD !" The crowd of lookers-on seemed to surge like a great wave, and suddenly the idol was seen to totter on its pedestal, and fall to the ground, crumbling into a thousand pieces.

There was a cry that St. George was a magician, a wizard, a man in league with the spirit of evil. The priests of the temple pressed the Emperor to rid himself of the "Christian

knight," and the next day, on the 23rd of April, A.D. 303, he was led out to meet his death.

There are many stories that have been told, stored up, and handed down from father to son, from one family to another, about our grand old knight. I will only tell you one here: the story of "St. George and the Dragon."

St. George was on his way to a certain city in Libya. As he journeyed, he came one day upon a maiden who was weeping bitterly, and slowly walking all alone towards the hills beyond the city gates. He stopped and asked her why she wept, and why she was thus alone without the city, for he saw at once that she was no common maiden, but a young girl of high rank.

Then she told him that there lived in the hills before them a strange and monstrous beast, which came down each day into their town seeking food. Full of fear the people had given him sheep, two each day; but when after a while there were no more sheep left among them, they had been forced to give up their children, two at a time, to stay the hungry rage of the terrible creature, and save the lives of the rest of the people. Children under fifteen years of age, said the young girl, had been taken by lot, rich and poor alike, and at last the lot had fallen upon the only daughter of the king, that was herself.

At first, said she, her father would not give up his child, but the people were angry and mad with terror; they cried out that unless the king yielded his daughter, as they had given up so many of theirs, they would set fire to his palace and burn him and his family within it. He had been forced to give way, and she had come forth ready to die for her people; she had been put without the city walls, the town resounding with cries and groans as the great gates had closed upon her. Now she was walking towards her death—towards the cave of the fearful beast.

St. George listened horror-struck to the young girl's tale. When it was ended, he said quietly, Fear not, I will deliver you."

The maiden could not believe this to be within his power, or the power of any man, and she urged him to leave her to her fate, and save himself from danger.

"Fly, O noble youth! tarry not, I pray thee. Fly, fly!" she cried.

But St. George had no thought of flying. "I will save you through the might of JESUS CHRIST," he said, firmly.

And then the dragon was seen slowly crawling out from its hiding-place in the hills, and coming towards them.

"Fly, I beseech you! fly, brave knight," cried the maid once more. "I am ready to die—leave me."

But the brave St. George bade the girl give him her girdle, which was long and of fine strong silken cord, and then to stand back. Then he sprang upon the creature. There was a fierce struggle, but the knight mastered the beast, and bound him with the princess's girdle.

He went into the city and showed the people what he had done. They fell on their knees before him; tears of joy streamed from the eyes of the women and children, while the men were ready to worship him as a god. The king clasped his rescued daughter to his heart, and stood mute and breathless with emotion.

But the dragon was not yet dead, only tightly bound. St. George stood before the people and said, "It is through the grace and power of Almighty GOD, through the love of His Blessed SON JESUS CHRIST, the Saviour of mankind, that I have been enabled to do this deed. Believe now in CHRIST and be baptized, and I will slay the monster before your eyes."

Twenty thousand people became Christians in one day. They felt that the faith which could give such power and

courage, and such kindness of heart to the man who had saved them, must be of GOD, must come from the true FATHER and Creator. They felt that there was nothing in all their own vain religion to equal the love which had made the young man before them ready to sacrifice himself, if need be, for the good of a people all unknown to him. They felt that the strength by which he had overcome the beast was more than human, was given by a higher power. They bowed their heads and asked to be taught to know the GOD of St. George.

The king of the city offered the young knight great riches. He took what was given him, not for himself, but for the poor oppressed Christians of his own land. Nor would he stay at the court of the king, though much pressed to do so. He went forth on his way to Palestine. How he afterwards returned again to Rome, and there so nobly suffered martyrdom, you have already read.

CHAPTER XIV

ST. MARGARET

JULY 20; A.D. 306

Some—perhaps many—of you who will read this book have been christened Margaret. It is a good old name, and not in England alone, but in almost every country of Europe; in France, Italy, Germany, one meets with many Margarets. The sound of the name is very little changed in the different lands. Margaret, Margherita, Marguerite, all are much alike. The word has also a very beautiful meaning, or rather two meanings—pearl and daisy. One ought always to strive to be worthy of the name one bears, and those who have been christened Margaret should try to be precious, through good deeds and acts of kindness to those among whom they live, and pure, like the pearl, and sweet and simple like the daisy.

But better than even the thoughts of these beautiful meanings of the name is the remembrance of the holy life and noble martyrdom of one of the first maidens who was called Margaret. It was in fact from the time of her death that the name became so general; Christian people liked to baptize their little ones after a maiden who had given so grand an example of faith and steadfastness. In England alone more than two hundred churches are named in honour of St. Margaret.

She was born about the year 289, and was the daughter of an old pagan priest, a Greek. He was a man of good birth and great learning, and people thought Margaret had reason to be proud to call herself his child. But while still very young she lost her mother, and the little girl, who was not at all strong, was sent away to the country. She was given into the care of a woman known to be very good and likely to take

great care of the motherless little one. This woman was a Christian, and as Margaret grew up with her, and learned to love her as a mother, she learned also to know and love the Saviour.

By-and-by she went back to her father, but when he found that she had become a Christian he was very angry. He said she must give up Christianity or else leave his house, and be to him thenceforth an outcast and a stranger.

It must have been a dreadful trial to poor Margaret to find that the father whom she wished to love and honour, and whose home she was now old enough to take care of and make happy for him, turned from her because of her love for JESUS CHRIST. But she could not give up her faith. She went quietly back to the humble cottage of her nurse, and begged to be allowed to work for her, and so earn her daily bread.

Except that she must have grieved at the loss of her father's love, Margaret lived very happily now. She was content to be poor and lowly, and used to go out upon the hills to tend the sheep, or do gladly whatever other work she could for her foster-mother, who was quite a poor woman.

One day it happened that a rich pagan governor passed through the country, and saw Margaret watching her sheep in the fields. He thought he had never seen any one so fair, and he sent at once to ask if she were really a poor slave, as it would seem from the work she was doing, or if she were free-born. He wanted to make her his wife, and he bade his men bring her in to speak with him.

The young girl dared not refuse to go with the men, and she was led in before the governor, who spoke to her in a gentle tone, and told her she must not be afraid of him. "Tell me," he said, "art thou slave or free-born?"

"My family is no unknown one," she answered, coldly, "nor my house of low degree. But since thou speakest of freedom, know that I depend on no man, I am a servant of the LORD JESUS CHRIST."

"What is thy name?" asked the prefect.

"Men call me Margaret. But by Baptism I have received a nobler name: I am a Christian."

At this answer the prefect was very angry. Never did the young maiden look more lovely than as she stood before him and proudly owned her faith. She knew he wanted to make her his wife: she knew she had only to give way a little, to hide the warmth of her belief in JESUS, and a life of ease would be hers. No more need would there be to tend sheep upon the hills, to lead a hard, spare life without any of the state or comfort to which she had been born. But truth and the love of CHRIST were all in all to Margaret.

The prefect thought that if she were put under torture she would surely give in. He fixed a day for the cruel trial; it was to take place before all the people of the city.

Margaret bore up bravely through all the frightful torments. She was then cast into a dark dungeon. But she would not yield. We read that when she was in the dungeon the devil came to her, looking like a huge dragon, and that the young girl held up the cross to him, when he at once vanished.

By this is meant that she was indeed assailed by strong temptation, that in spirit the devil did really come to her in the dark prison, tempting her to give way, as he so often comes to us now-a-days. Just one word, and Margaret would have been free and rich, and honoured by the great of the land. Never would she speak that word. She spoke, instead, of her faith in JESUS CHRIST. Through all her tortures she tried to tell the people who looked on of the Saviour's love.

Like St. Agnes, she was beheaded at last. They took her outside the walls of the city; there she knelt and said her last prayer. Then with one blow of the axe the brave and faithful maiden was put to death. Her body was consigned to dust; her pure and noble soul returned to GOD Who gave it.

CHAPTER XV

ST. CATHARINE OF ALEXANDRIA

NOV. 25; A.D. 307

There were several brave Christian women who bore the name Catharine, and who in their lives and by their death showed themselves worthy to be counted among the saints of the Church. The Catharine I am going to tell you about was a princess of the ancient town Alexandria, at the mouth of the river Nile, in the north of Egypt.

You all know what is called a "catharine wheel." When you see a show of fireworks you notice this as one of the brightest and prettiest among them—one of your favourites. You little thought when first you saw it flashing round that it gained its name from the wheel, surrounded by sharp spokes, which was invented to put a Christian woman to death. Hear the story.

Catharine was the daughter of a king. She was beautiful and clever, and very fond of study. Her father built her a high tower with rooms full of books and everything that was needed for reading and for the study of the stars, a study in which she, like the philosophers of Egypt, took great delight. But when she was only fourteen years of age both her parents died, and she became queen over her father's lands.

Young as she was, Catharine was very wise. She governed well, but she liked to live simply and quietly, she hated pomp and show and fine dress, and all the state by which as a queen she was surrounded.

By-and-by it was thought right that she should marry. Catharine herself did not wish this. She was entreated to give way for the good of the State, and in order that there might be

some one to lead out the armies in time of war. So she said if a very good and wise man could be found for her, hint she would wed.

The night after she had given this answer to her ministers she had a strange dream. She believed it was a vision. An old man seemed to come before her and give into her hands a picture of the Saviour. Catharine was not yet a Christian, though she had learned the history of JESUS, and had dwelt much upon it. But from this night her faith, before uncertain, became firm and unwavering, and she did not rest till she had received the Sacrament of Baptism. At the same time she said she could not now think of marriage.

It was no easy time at which to take up the Cross of CHRIST. The Emperor of Rome was hunting out and persecuting the Christians wherever they were to be found, and the tyrant Maximin came to Egypt, laying waste the country and calling upon all men to make sacrifice to the pagan gods.

Taking her people under her protection, the young Queen Catharine went before the tyrant, and asked to be allowed to plead for her GOD and for the Christian Faith. A great meeting was called. The most learned men were bidden come together to discuss. The heathen priests and doctors were to speak for the gods they worshipped, Catharine to plead the cause of CHRIST the LORD.

By prayer and fasting she prepared herself for the trial day. When it came, she spoke so well that more than fifty men among the heathen there were overcome by her words, and said they could no longer argue on the side of the Roman gods.

Maximin was furious. He ordered that every one who would not bow to the gods he adored should be slain. Against St. Catharine he was especially enraged, for when he had first come into Egypt, struck by her great beauty, he had wished to make her his friend. But besides being a heathen and a tyrant, Maximin was in every way a bad, wicked man. When

Catharine would have nothing to do with him he tried all the means in his power to harm her, and now he thought of how he could most cruelly have her put to death.

So the dreadful wheel was invented—a great huge wheel with sharp spokes all round, to which she was to be fastened, and then the wheel set in motion. But when everything was ready, and the cruel machine about to be turned, the cords broke.

The people cried out that the GOD of the Christians had worked a miracle to save His faithful servant. At this the agents of the Emperor were only the more enraged, and by their order a soldier, quickly seizing a spear, cut off her head.

There are many beautiful old pictures of St. Catharine. Some of the most famous artists, touched by the beauty of her life, have made her the subject of their work. She is painted with a broken wheel near her, and sometimes also a spear.

St. Catharine was chosen in early times as the patron of Christian learning in schools.

CHAPTER XVI

ST. AGNES (JAN. 21; A.D. 304)

One of the most honoured names among the Saints of the Church is that of St. Agnes. She was born at Rome about the year A.D. 290. Her parents were rich and of high rank; they were Christians, and while still a little child Agnes learnt to love and serve JESUS. She grew up a beautiful, good and modest maiden, and before she was quite fourteen years of age the son of the Governor of Rome, who thought he had never seen any one so good and so lovely as she was, asked her parents to give him their daughter to be his wife.

But Agnes had made up her mind never to marry; she wished to devote herself and her whole life to GOD, to have no thought of care or love but for the Saviour and His poor. She knew that if she married she would be obliged to lead a gay and worldly life, to have her mind full of earthly cares.

Besides, the son of the Roman governor was not a Christian, and whatever happened Agnes could never give up her faith. So very firmly, though gently, she said, No; she could not wed the young man, "my heart is bound to One by Whose Love alone I live," she said.

When the governor knew that she was so firm a Christian he was very angry. Insults were heaped upon the poor girl. "Surely in the end she will give way," thought the pagans. And they set bad people about her, who tried first to persuade, then to force her to marry their friend, the son of the governor. But when they were rough and rude to the maiden, a shield of heavenly light seemed to wrap itself around her, and her face would shine with such noble purity that the bad men slunk away ashamed.

All this only made the 'son of the prefect wish more than ever that she should become his wife, and he tried to

carry her off and wed her by force. But suddenly he was seized with a dreadful fit, and fell down before the young girl stiff and cold as if he were dead

His father was mad with grief and anger. He cried out that Agnes was a witch, that she had killed his son. The poor girl was full of sorrow. She tried to make the father see that she could not have had anything to do with what they thought was the death of his son.; he would not listen to her.

Then she knelt down and prayed earnestly to GOD for the life of the young man. In a little while he began to move, and soon rose and stood alive and well before her. The father thought Agnes had worked a miracle. Overjoyed, he at once took her part against the angry crowd that stood around, ready to put her to death. He tried his best to save her, but it was too late. The pagans were in a fury against the Christian maiden. A pile of fagots had been raised; it was set light to, and the maiden seized and placed upon it.

There was a strong wind blowing. The flames were not steady; instead of touching St. Agnes, they spread outwards and burnt to death those who stood near, and who had set the pile on fire. It seemed as if a miracle had been worked to save her life. But the fury of the pagan mob was still so great that not even now would they spare the Christian girl. They bade the headsman mount the pyre. The maiden knelt down, gathered her white robe round her, and bent her head to the blow of the axe.

A chapel stands over the spot where she was martyred, just outside the walls of the city of Rome, and there every year a pair of lambs are taken to be blessed. Then their wool is cut and made into the cloak or pallium that is worn by the Archbishop.

In old pictures St. Agnes is always shown with a spotless white lamb by her side; and in the Christian Church she has been honoured from the time of her death as a type of purity.

CHAPTER XVII

ST. NICHOLAS

DEC. 6; A. D. 343

There never lived a Christian Bishop more honoured and beloved than the good St. Nicholas; never one kinder of heart, or more helpful to all persons who were poor or in trouble. His parents had been very rich, and he was still quite a boy when both his father and mother died, leaving to him all their wealth. But even at that early age Nicholas was decided to "sell all he had and give to the poor." He said he wanted little for his own life, and when, by-and-by, he became a Priest, he would go about barefoot, sleep on a plank of wood for a bed, and neither eat meat nor drink wine. He said he was able to do without the good things of earth, and was happy if he could save their cost in order to give the more to those that were in need. But in all that he did Nicholas showed himself to be wise as well as kind, and he would never give to mere beggars, or to people who were lazy and did not try to work. He would take great pains to find out who were in real want; then he gave all the help he could.

One day Nicholas heard of a man, once rich, who had lost all his money and fallen into great distress. This man had three daughters, all very beautiful. But they had never learnt to work, and now their poor father feared they would have to beg their bread in the streets, and he was quite heart-broken.

One night it happened that the three girls were sleeping, and the poor father sitting near the open window of his house weeping bitter tears. Suddenly a bag of gold was thrown in. As soon as the father had overcome his surprise, he rushed out to see who could have done this. But there was no one anywhere to be found. The next night another bag was

thrown through the window. The father heard no sound, and though he rushed out at once this time, he could see no one near. The third night the father sat again at his window; he had quite made up his mind that if another bag of money were thrown in, he would find out who threw it. He strained his eyes through the darkness, and yes, in a little while there he saw a man coming on tip-toe under the shadow of the wall. He darted out and threw himself upon his knees before St. Nicholas.

When St. Nicholas had known of the poor man's trouble, he had taken a sum of money and divided it into three portions, to be the dowry of the three daughters. He knew their father would put the money by and arrange it in such a way for his girls, as that they would each always have a little to live on, and be spared the shame of beggary. But he was sorry to be found out in his good deed. He loved rather to "do his alms in secret" and to be rewarded only "of His FATHER in heaven," not by the praise of men.

At one time St. Nicholas wished to go and live in a desert so as to be away from the world with its trials and temptations. But he had a dream in which he thought he heard a voice telling him to stay among the people, and continue to do good in the world.

There are many stories of all he did. Once, we are told, he saved a number of little children from death in a time of war and famine, when a cruel inn-keeper was about to slay them and offer their flesh as meat to the starving people.

At another time he was in a great storm on the sea. No one thought the ship could be saved. But St. Nicholas remained calm and fearless, and prayed earnestly to GOD. The wind went down, the sea grew quiet. Every one said the calm was sent in reply to the prayers of the good Christian Priest, and from that day he was looked upon as a patron saint of sailors.

So through his whole life he went about doing good and helping others; and so he is said to come to you children at Christmas-time, and make you happy for that joyous season. For the Santa Claus who is supposed to steal down the chimney on the night of JESUS' birth, and fill your stockings with just what you happen to want or like best, was once a real living man, who spent his life and wealth, not exactly in filling the stockings! but in giving what they most needed to people in distress, and giving it whenever he could in secret.

"Santa" means saint, as no doubt you know; "Claus" is the short for Nicolaus, which is the German way of writing Nicholas. He conquered by his generous character.

The special friend of little children, of maidens in distress, of sailors tossing on the sea, the supposed donor of all our Christmas presents, good Santa Claus will live in our hearts and in the hearts of our children to all time, as, in his own day, he lived in the hearts of those who knew him or his good deeds. He will live to all time in the memory of man on earth below, to all eternity in heaven with the GOD he so faithfully served.

CHAPTER XVIII

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN

APRIL 4; A.D. 397

St. Ambrose was the youngest of the three children of Ambrosius, Prefect of Treves under the Gauls. Theirs was a Christian family, and from the days of their earliest childhood till parted by death, the two brothers and the sister remained tenderly attached to each other.

It happened one summer day that the little child Ambrose was lying asleep in his cot in the court of his father's palace, when a swarm of bees came towards him, settled on the face of the ruddy baby boy, and flew in and out of the child's open mouth. The nurse in a panic of fear was about to make war upon the bees, but just at that moment the father, mother, and little ten years old sister came by.

"Do not touch them!" cried the father. He knew, no doubt, that if the bees were made angry they would be sure to sting the child very badly. Also there was a common notion that the swarming of bees in a house or on a person was a good omen. Anxiously the parents stood by the cradle of their still sleeping boy, but the father forbade any movement that might disturb the swarm. Very soon the bees flew up high in the air, so that they were no longer to be seen; the child was unhurt, and the father said, "My boy will be something great."

The little Marcellina heard the words, and they took deep root in her young sisterly heart. Their father died while the children were still young, and we read of Marcellina helping her mother in the care of her little brothers, who were both some years younger than she was; and as Ambrose grew up she never ceased to hold before him the high ideal she had formed of what he should one day become. Later the young

girl took the veil as a Sister of Mercy, devoting herself to acts of charity in the service of GOD; but for some years all four, the two brothers, Marcellina, and their mother, lived together at Rome, where they went after the father's death, and where the boys carried on their studies.

They were a happy and united Christian family. Ambrose always looked up to Marcellina, and called her his "holy, venerable sister." At Rome they met with people of all kinds. The city was still in great part pagan; temples for the worship of the gods were on every side, and among their friends the family of St. Ambrose counted many who were not Christians. But they kept firm in their own faith, and they were always held in high esteem in Rome and throughout all Italy.

By-and-by an office under government was given to Ambrose. The Emperors lived at Milan at this time, and there affairs of State were carried on; so quite early in his life Ambrose was sent to that city, which to this day honours him as the patron saint of the town and of all the country near. In the grand old city itself and in the little villages for miles round, St. Ambrose of Milan is spoken of with pride—"Our St. Ambrose."

"Go," said the Prefect Probus, who sent him thither, "and act not merely as an officer of the law, but as a Bishop." By this he meant that Ambrose was to have a fatherly care for the city, to be wise and kind as well as just; but the words "as a Bishop" were to come true to their very letter.

There were great disputes going on in Milan at this time. The Bishop of the city, who had been a bad man, and had held wrong ideas about the Godhead of CHRIST, had just died. A meeting was called to elect a new one. In the nave of the old cathedral, or basilica as it was then called, were the people; a curtain separated them from the clergy in the choir. Affairs were in disorder, and the people in an uproar. Ambrose went into the building and began to speak to the crowd.

There was a moment's silence as the words of the young stranger fell upon their ears. In the midst of the lull the voice of a child was heard crying, "Ambrose is Bishop! Ambrose is Bishop!" The young prefect drew back. He had not yet even received the Sacrament of Baptism, for it was the custom in his day, in many Christian families, that Baptism should take place after long preparation at a mature age. But the people had taken up the cry. As they looked upon the noble form of the young man, and heard his clear frank voice, it seemed to them that no better person could be found to govern them and their Church, for the Bishop at this time had much to do with the ordinary affairs of the city. Surely, they thought, the voice of the child was the voice of GOD directing their choice. So, after much resistance, he was forced at last to yield. In a few days he was baptized by what is termed "immersion," or going bodily into the water, like our Saviour. Then a week later he was ordained Priest, and consecrated Bishop.

With earnestness and faith he gave himself up to the work of his new and sacred office. His brother Satyrus went to join him at Milan, and was of great help to him. His sister, the devoted Marcellina, also came at times, nursed him when he was sick, and set in order the affairs of his household. When not together the brothers and sister wrote to each other, and their letters remain to this day a record of pure devoted lives and true family affection.

But soon a great grief came to them. Their brother Satyrus was shipwrecked in a journey to Africa. He threw himself into the sea and swam to shore, but an illness followed from which he did not recover. For a few days St. Ambrose was prostrate with sorrow, but he roused himself to preach at the funeral, and the sermon still exists.

So devoted and noble was the daily life of the saint, so full of power his preaching, that he gained unusual influence over the rest of the clergy, and indeed over all men. Everywhere he was looked up to as a great leader: it was said

to be his voice that guided the whole of Italy in the right way. He lived through the reigns of four Emperors of Rome, and it can never be known how great was the power for good which St. Ambrose in his wisdom had over them. It was a power which made itself the more felt because the saint was always so personally humble and simple, while at the same time so brave and fearless when he saw rebuke needful. Never would he give consent to a deed that he thought wrong or unjust, however urgently king or Emperor might press it on him, however great his own danger in refusing to bend to the will of those in power.

He had many troubles. Once he was in great peril of losing his life. There were tumults in Milan. Justina, the widow of the Emperor Valentinian I., was what is termed an Arian—that is, one who denies that JESUS CHRIST as the SON of the FATHER is Himself really GOD . It was on account of this heresy in the Church that the Creed of St. Athanasius was drawn up, in which, you know, we say clearly we believe JESUS to be perfect Man and perfect GOD . Justina wished to turn one of the chief Christian churches in the city into a temple for her own way of worship. Her son, Valentinian II., took her part.

St. Ambrose strove indeed to teach Christians to be just to all who did not think as they did, but give up the House of GOD for false worship, that he would never do.

It was in the Lent of the year 385. On Palm Sunday, just as St. Ambrose had ended his sermon and was about to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, news was brought him that agents of the Emperor were storming the church for the Arians. A few moments later he was told that an Arian Priest had been taken prisoner.

"Molest no one," was his order. "Touch no man; only guard the sacred building." And he at once sent some of his clergy to set free the captive.

Then came officers of Valentinian demanding whether he would not now give up the church.

"Never!" was his reply. "Take all I have, though indeed I have nothing; my goods are only in keeping for the use of the poor. But take all, rob GOD'S poor if you will, and take my life. I am ready to give it to save the altar of the LORD."

Holy Week was truly a time of suffering for the faithful Bishop. But the citizens of Milan were devoted to him. They did not wish to use arms against the Emperor, but never would they desert their Bishop. They went in bands, some to protect the church against the Arians, some to listen to the preaching of St. Ambrose, and to defend him if attacked.

Valentinian, who was not bad at heart, saw that he would do well to yield, and before Easter Day he withdrew the order he had given to take the Christian church.

It was indeed with joy that the Feast of Easter was kept in the city of Milan in the year of our LORD 385.

But the young Emperor could not repress a feeling of jealousy at the love shown by the people to St. Ambrose, and at their courage in his behalf.

You would give me up bound hand and foot to your Bishop if he but said the word!" he cried in anger. Then one of the chief officers of the State, wishing to gain favour in the eyes of his master, swore he would take the life of the saint. He gave secret orders for his murder, and it is said that one night an assassin made his way to the bed where St. Ambrose lay sleeping, but that at the moment when he was about to raise his hand, it fell useless, stricken by the terrible malady of paralysis.

The next year the Arians tried again to get the church for their temple. The Bishop was threatened with exile; but again the people of Milan kept true to him, and he was protected against his foes. Then the Emperor gave way entirely, and himself came under the influence of the saint.

It was at this time that St. Augustine of Hippo was turned to CHRIST. The story of his conversion is very striking.

Augustine was a highly educated young Roman, clever, excitable, and quick-spirited. He had been brought up as a Christian, though not baptized; but on going to college he had let himself be led away from all the good he had been taught at home, and for some years he lived a very wild, evil life. Augustine had a mother named Monica—S. Monica, as she is called in the Roman calendar—she was a good and holy Christian woman, and she ceased not day and night to pray for her son, whom she loved very dearly. He had come to live at Milan, and here he met St. Ambrose. Augustine was so struck by the life and bearing of the saint that, unbeliever though he was, he would often go to hear him preach, and he loved nothing better than to take every chance of talking with the Bishop. But still he kept his evil way of life and his unbelief.

When Monica saw the respect which her son felt for St. Ambrose, she went one day and begged to speak with him. As she was led into his room, the mother, overcome by her feelings, burst into tears. Then, weeping still, she spoke and implored the Bishop to talk to her son, and urge him by every means in his power to change his life and become a Christian.

Ambrose did not say much in reply; he had already marked the young man, he had also taken note of his character, and he knew that if he were to gain over him the power the mother wished, he must work very slowly and gently, and must not be hasty in urging him to take up the cross. So he would not promise what Monica asked, but only bade her be patient.

At this the poor mother's tears flowed afresh. She told St. Ambrose how she ceased not to pray for her son; "and now, my lord, I beg but this one thing—hear the pleadings of a mother, and speak to my child." Still all the Bishop could say was, Patience!"

Weeping, Monica turned away. Then Ambrose called her back. Be comforted," he said, "the child of those tears can never perish."

And now in the spring of the year 386 the mother's tears were changed into smiles of eternal thankfulness. It was during the few days that the Bishop, guarded by his faithful flock, was kept shut up in his basilica at the second attempt to set up Arian worship in the city, that St. Augustine was fully gained to the faith of CHRIST. St. Ambrose spent the time in teaching and preaching, and Augustine was among the throng that listened. The services he held were bright, for the Bishop was very musical, and he taught the people to sing psalms and hymns. He also composed many beautiful prayers for them, which remain to this day, some of which indeed we use among the collects of our Prayer Book.

And now the soul of Augustine was touched and overcome. He felt that the GOD of St. Ambrose was GOD indeed, and he begged for Baptism. It is believed that our glorious psalm of praise, the *Te Deum*, was composed by SS. Ambrose and Augustine when the Baptism took place.

Augustine soon afterwards went to Africa, and he became one of the grandest and noblest saints and Bishops of the Church in after days.

One can picture the joy of St. Monica now. She did not live long after this. But she died truly, entirely happy. Her eyes had seen the salvation of the LORD, and her heart over-flowed with thanksgiving.

St. Ambrose was now left at peace. Theodosius became Emperor and was much attached to him, but the Bishop was as firm with him as with others when there was a question of right and wrong.

Once, after a rising up against him, Theodosius had caused numbers of the people to be put to death without even staying to see who among them were guilty, who innocent. Then, with the soldiers of his guard, he appeared before the

basilica, thinking to give thanks to GOD for his victory over the rebels. But St. Ambrose met him at the door and forbade him to enter. Firmly and plainly the Bishop spoke, showing the Emperor how wrong he had been, and bidding him return and repent of his hastiness, and make amends to the living for the dreadful slaughter of the dead. First be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gifts."

Theodosius listened, till, sorry and ashamed, he turned from the House of GOD to come back as a penitent—that is, one who goes openly to church to beg forgiveness for a particular sin.

Justly proud may be the city of Milan to have had such a Bishop, and proud his country of an Emperor who humbly bore the rebuke of the Priest of GOD, and in the eyes of his people confessed, saying, "I have done wrong."

The beautiful old Church of St. Ambrogio stands to remind us of this noble saint. Few travellers pass through Milan without visiting it. Every corner tells us something of the work, the life, the teaching of him whose name it bears. And in the centre of the choir, beneath the high altar is his tomb, where lights are still always kept burning.

He died in the year 397. He was not yet fifty years of age, but his strength was worn out. He had seen trouble in the Church in his day, but it was a time of peace and quiet for the Christians when the faithful servant was called to keep his Easter-tide in heaven. His arms crossed upon his breast, his lips moving in prayer, he passed from earth.

"Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

CHAPTER XIX

ST. MARTIN

NOV. 11; A.D. 397

Late in the autumn, towards the close of the year, there is a season which we call "Martinmas," or sometimes St. Martin's summer." A little earlier there is also what is termed "S. Luke's little summer," that is, a few bright, sunny days, falling warm and summer-like upon us before the setting in of winter.

Mass implies feast. *Christmas*, the feast of CHRIST. The feasts of the Church used always to last eight days, or as we say an octave; and the little season of the feast of St. Martin, coming between the first and the later chills of the fall of the year, is usually a very sweet and quiet week. The stillness of autumn is around; the trees of our parks and gardens, the woods of the hillside are all rich in colour, and glow in the sunlight of those few days. To the sense of rest which autumn always brings, the sunshine gives a feeling of hope, a feeling that earth's greenness is dying now only to burst out with new gladness in the spring of the next year. So the body of the saint dies only that his soul may live in the eternal spring of heaven, and the good deeds of his life bloom forth in the memory of men, helping those who follow after to be brave and faithful as he.

Martin was the child of pagan parents. His father was of an old Roman family and a soldier in the army of the Emperor. But while yet a child Martin heard much about JESUS, and what he heard touched his pure young heart. At the age of ten he became a catechumen, that is, one preparing for Baptism. His spirit was stirred by all he heard and learned of the lives of the noble Christian saints and Fathers of the

Church who had given themselves up to CHRIST, and his earnest wish now was to become a monk. But his father wished that he should be a soldier like himself. So at the age of seventeen he was enrolled in the army, and sent with the Roman legions to fight in Gaul. Ready to do his duty in whatever state of life he was placed, the young Martin threw his whole heart into his work, and made a good and brave soldier. But he had not yet been baptized. One bitter cold night he was riding out on the hillside near the town of Amiens. As he rode along, warmly wrapped in his soldier's cloak, he came upon a poor ragged man who was shivering with cold. His heart was filled with pity. He took his sword, cut his cloak in two, and gave half to the poor man, while he wrapped the other half as well as he could about his own shoulders. His companions were struck with wonder, some jeered, some looked with respect at the kind-hearted young man. But St. Martin did not ask what others thought of his act. All he cared for was to do what was right and kind. He went gaily on his way with his half-cloak, happy to forego a little warmth himself if he could give the more to others. But that night he had a strange dream. It seemed to him that he saw our LORD among His angels, clothed in the half-cloak he had put round the poor man. Then he thought the Saviour spoke, saying, "Know ye who has thus arrayed Me?"

My servant Martin, though not yet baptized, has done this."

St. Martin rose in the morning and went out at once to be baptized.

His wish to become a monk had not changed, but he did not hurry from his post of duty as a soldier. For fourteen years longer he continued to fight for his country, setting a noble example of pure and unselfish life all the time. But at last his desire to give himself entirely to CHRIST grew too strong, and he asked leave to withdraw from the army. It was the eve of a great battle. The Emperor had told his soldiers that he would grant to each one the favour he most desired. It came

to Martin's turn to make his request. I have but one wish, Sire," he said, "it is to quit the service. Through many years I have fought for my land and for you, I have gladly faced all dangers; now I wish to fight for CHRIST alone, and to become a Priest of GOD . This is the favour I would ask."

The Emperor was Julian, called the "Apostate," because, after having become a Christian, he gave up his faith, and turned again to paganism. It is said that when he was dying, slain in battle by his enemies, the whole force and truth of the faith he had denied came upon him, and that he died with the cry, "The Nazarene has conquered." At the time that St. Martin came to him and begged release from the army, Julian was already trying to stifle in his heart the faith he meant to abjure. So he pretended not to understand why Martin should wish to become a Priest, and said it was fear of the morrow's fight that made him ask this.

"Fear!" cried the Christian soldier. "If you think I know what is meant by fear, place me to-morrow in the very front of the battle: without armour, without arms, I will fight. The name of my Saviour alone shall defend me."

"It shall be as you propose," was the reply of the Emperor, and that night he had him placed under a strong guard lest he should attempt to escape.

But the soldier was spared such an ordeal. The next day, instead of advancing to battle, the enemy sent to beg for a treaty of peace.

Now St. Martin was free, and he went at once to St. Hilary of Poitiers to ask of him advice and counsel as to what he ought to do. St. Hilary told him his first duty was to go to those of his own family, and try to win them to Christianity. So he set out on his way to Italy. It was a long and toilsome journey in those days, and St. Martin met with many dangers. Once he fell among thieves. They were about to strike him down dead with the blow of an axe when some of the party thought, "No, it would be better simply to take him captive."

So they bound his hands behind him, and he was given in charge to one of the band. This man took him aside and asked him who he was. St. Martin gave the answer that had been given so often and so bravely by saints and martyrs before him, "I am a Christian."

The robber asked if he felt afraid. Afraid! nay, I was never more at ease," replied the saint. "I know that the LORDS mercy will be with me, and that He will be my Help in trial and temptation. Rather am I grieved for you who live by robbery and evil deeds."

The thief was struck by his words, and when St. Martin went on to tell him the story of the Saviour, and to beg him to change his bad way of life, he listened with respect, and by-and-by set the Christian saint safely on his way, begging his prayers.

He reached home and fulfilled his sacred mission. His mother and several other members of his family were turned to JESUS. But he was not able to remain in his native town; the people beat him out of the place with rods because he owned himself a Christian. Then he went to live at Milan, but, here, too, he was ill-treated and forced to leave the city. He took with him one faithful Priest, and lived hidden for some years in a small desert island not far from Genoa, trying by prayer and self-denial to make himself more fit for the sacred office he had undertaken.

By-and-by he went back to France to St. Hilary, to whom he always looked up with deep respect, and whose counsels he was careful to follow. Then, after long preparation, he entered upon active work and founded a monastery in a lonely part of Poitou. His life here was very spare and simple. He would allow himself nothing either in food or dress that he could possibly do without. As a Roman soldier he had learned to bear fatigue and hardship, and to think only of the duty before him. As a soldier of CHRIST he tried to show himself still braver and more ready to give up everything that could hinder him in his warfare. So simple and

poor was he in his dress and manner of life, that when the Christians of Tours asked him to become their Bishop, some among them thought he was not the fit person to place in such a post.

As Bishop, he was simple and austere as before, and kept to his strict monastic rules, though he was at the same time always gentle and kind and gracious in his manner. But he had a great dislike to visitors; he longed for quiet, and in order to live a life given up entirely to his duties, and undisturbed by the strangers who came constantly to visit the Bishop or Abbots who lived in the towns, he built a monastery two miles away from the city. Many brethren gathered round him here. They made their own cells, either of wood or hewn out of the rocks in the hillsides. None of them were idle. Manuscripts were copied, "books" made, the young taught; for St. Martin set up a great school, and he had often nearly a hundred scholars under training, most of them the sons of the great nobles of the land.

Often the Bishop would go through the country preaching. He loved chiefly to go to the poor, who heard him gladly, for they knew the kindness of his heart. But he went also to courts and boldly preached before the Emperor, rebuking him for his wrong-doing, and for the persecution of the Christians, which he allowed to go on.

He was active to the last. At the age of eighty he travelled to a distant part of his diocese to make peace between two of his clergy. His strength was failing, and the journey was too much for him. He was stricken with fever. When he felt that his end was at hand, he gathered his disciples round him and bade them lay him on a bed of ashes; so he passed away.

There is a beautiful story told of how one day St. Martin was celebrating the Holy Eucharist in his cathedral, when there entered a man so poor and wretched that he was almost naked.

The instant he saw him, the Bishop bade one of his Deacons go and fetch a cloak to clothe the poor beggar. But the Deacon was slow, he seemed to think there was no need for him to be disturbed in the middle of the service for such a pupose. St. Martin knew that a deed of charity was more worth than many prayers, and when he noticed the Deacon's delay, he at once threw off the cope in which he was celebrating, and cast it to the poor man. Then, without waiting for another to be brought to him, he proceeded with his service. The story goes on to say that the people who were in the church, looking upon their Bishop, seemed to see his bare arms covered with chains of gold and silver, hung there by angels.

CHAPTER XX

ST. BENEDICT

MARCH 21; A.D. 543

St. Benedict was born in Noricum, in the country of Nursia in Italy. He was of good family, and at the age of seven the boy was sent to Rome, under the care of an old and faithful nurse, to be educated.

The city at this time was very gay and very sinful; it was given up wholly to selfish pleasures, and somehow or other the young Benedict came to see a great deal of the evil that was going on. He was filled with horror, and at last, when he was about fourteen, feeling he must see no more of such wickedness, he left Rome and fled to a lonely place among the Sabine Hills.

Here he met a monk, by name Romanus. To him the lad poured out his heart. The monk spoke kind words of counsel, gave him a hair-shirt and a goat-skin cloak, and advised him to remain for a time among the hills away from men. So Benedict buried himself in a deep hollow between high rocks, from whence he could see nothing but the blue sky above. His food was a small portion from Romanus' own fare, thrown down to him at the end of a rope with a bell tied to it, which Benedict rang each time he wanted the rope pulled up. In this strange way the young man passed three years. Thorns and thick bushes grew around his hiding place. Now and then he would come up from his hollow, and walk about among the bushes, but all this time he saw no one save the monk Romanus or the poor peasants of the country near. The peasants thought at first that the being whose home was the hidden rock, his food the rudest herbs, his way of life so singular, must be some strange wild animal, half man, half

beast. But soon they saw that he was indeed a man like themselves, and that he had moreover a good kind human heart. They learned to love him first for the kind words he spoke whenever they met, and by-and-by for his good deeds and his teaching. For as St. Benedict felt himself growing stronger and more fit to contend with the evil of the world, he came out more often and began to teach others and to make himself known as a servant of GOD .

By-and-by some monks asked him to go and be at the head of their convent. But they soon found him too strict. St. Benedict in his mountain solitude had made himself able to bear what they were either unwilling or unable to endure. There must have been some very bad men among them, for one day they gave him a cup of poison. Perhaps the saint knew of their bad designs. At any rate he did not drink of the cup, but making the sign of the cross, shivered it into a thousand pieces. Then he left this monastery.

But men who, like St. Benedict, had felt the evil of the world too overpowering, or its temptations too strong for them, and who, longing to live a holy life, sought solitude, gathered round him, and he founded a number of monasteries, placing in each twelve monks. So he tried to help others and to serve GOD . But troubles and temptations still followed him, and at last he said he must travel away by himself, and live quite alone for a time. He went along by the Apennine Mountains till he came to the hilly spot called Monte Cassino. Here he settled down, teaching, preaching, training himself, and working among the people for fourteen years; and here, upon the site of an ancient pagan temple, he built his famous monastery. The sick, the poor, the sinful, all came to Father Benedict. He was never harsh or severe in his dealings with the weak and fallen. By all he had gone through himself, he had learned how to treat with gentleness and wisdom the failings of his fellow-men. The Order he formed is kept up still, and is still full of life. The original monastery of Monte Cassino has long since passed away, the building now standing on the

same spot being of much later date; but the Order of St. Benedict has lasted through more than 1,300 years. The rules he drew up and followed, the dress he arranged, are still kept to.

Once a fierce Gothic chief, named Zalla, who had plundered a great many poor Italian peasants near Monte Cassino, caught one of them and put him to cruel torture, trying to force him to give up the little he had to live on.

The peasant would not yield to the brigand chief, and at last he cried out that he had nothing left of his own, that he had given all to the Abbot Benedict.

Zalla at once bound the poor man's arms behind him, and rode up the steep hill of Monte Cassino, driving the peasant on before him, as if he were an ox or a mule. They found the Abbot reading before the gate of his monastery.

"There is the Father Benedict of whom I told thee," cried the peasant.

"Rise, rise!" cried the fierce chief from his horse. "Rise, I say!" he cried to the Abbot.

St. Benedict looked up calmly. He did not move from his seat, nor did he seem in the least disturbed. But he said quietly, "Give back what thou hast taken from this poor man." As he spoke, he looked at the poor bound peasant till it seemed as if his cords loosened of themselves; and the angry Goth, cowed by the quiet sternness of the saint, fell from his horse, trembling and overcome, at the Abbot's feet.

Benedict took him into the convent, set the best of their simple food before him, and then, in burning words of indignation, spoke to him of his cruelty and injustice. The peasant left the place a free man.

St. Benedict had a sister to whom he was greatly attached. She, too, had given herself up to serve GOD as a religious," and lived at a convent that was not very far from Monte Cassino. But he did not think it right for him to visit his

dear sister often, so they used to arrange a meeting once every year; and as the day came round, Scholastica, as she was called, would go out of her own gate to meet her brother on the mountain-side. The last time they were thus together, Scholastica was feeling far from well. Her health was failing; she knew she was going to fall ill. But she would not say much about herself to her brother, only when evening came and it was time for St. Benedict to depart, she said: "My brother, leave me not to-night."

"What is this thou sayest, my sister?" he exclaimed. "At no cost can I stay a night out of my monastery."

Scholastica bent her head, clasped her hands upon the table, and wept silently.

Suddenly there fell upon their ears the sound of rain and storm. The weather till then had been calm and bright. In a moment all had changed. The sister looked up with a gleam of joy. Benedict could not leave his shelter that night. "GOD is hearing me!" she cried. "Brother, I prayed to thee, thou wouldst not listen. Then I prayed to GOD, He is hearing me."

They parted in the morning to meet no more on earth.

St. Benedict had the body of his sister taken to Monte Cassino, and laid in the tomb he had ready for himself. He lived but forty days longer. A fever attacked him. He felt that he was about to die. After six days of suffering he begged to be carried to the Chapel. Then he bade his monks open the tomb where his sister had been laid six weeks before. He went up to it, stretched out his arms to heaven, and so stood in prayer. And then, standing thus, he died—a soldier's death—struggling to the last moment against the weakness of mortal nature. He had fought "manfully all his days against the world, the flesh, and the devil; "he had continued "CHRIST'S faithful soldier and servant until his life's end." Then— POEM "The golden evening brightened in the west, To him, the faithful warrior, came the rest, Sweet is the calm of Paradise the bless'd, Alleluia!"

CHAPTER XXI

ST. MACHUTUS (*S. MALO OF BRITTANY*)

NOV. 15; A.D. 565

St. Machutus was a Welshman and therefore of ancient British race. He was the child of his parents' old age, and they both loved him dearly. At this time there was much more learning and culture in Ireland than in any other part of the British Isles, and in order that he might be well taught, the boy was sent at an early age to an Irish monastery, there to be brought up under the care of a great and good Christian Abbot called St. Brendan.

The monastery was not far from the sea shore. One day the child Machutus was out playing with his schoolmates upon the sandy beach. Growing tired of his games, he strayed away from the other lads, and sat down to rest upon a bed of seaweed. In a few moments the boy's head sank upon the soft bank, and lulled by the calm of the autumn evening, he fell sound asleep.

The other lads were too full of their play to miss little Machutus. Then the tide rose, and the children, driven back from the shore by the flowing waves, went home to the monastery. Now they began to look round for their comrade. He was nowhere to be seen. Abbot Brendan himself ran in haste down to the beach.

"Machutus, Machutus!" he cried. But there was no reply; only the swell and surge of the rolling waves fell upon the Abbot's ear. Darkness came on quickly, and he was obliged to return to the monastery. He spent all that night in lonely, earnest prayer. At day-break, with the first rays of light, St. Brendan was again on the shore. He climbed up on a high rock left bare by the tide, for it was low now, and looked

with eager, searching gaze around. Across the waves he looked—at the jutting rocks which dotted the expanse of water. Perhaps he expected to see the dead body of the poor child stretched stiff and cold upon some crag to which he had clung as the tide rose upon him. But it was no such sight as this that met the Abbot's yearning eyes. There in the morning light, not very far off, was the lost boy standing alive and well on a mass of seaweed which seemed to float upon the waves; he was singing some of the hymns he had learned at the convent.

"My boy! my boy!" And then, Nay, stay where thou art! move not," he cried in an agony of fear, as the child, overcome with joy, seemed about to throw himself into the water, and try to swim to the Abbot.

So the little lad, used to obedience, stayed quietly on the bed of floating seaweed, and the two talked to each other across the space of sea, till in a little while the mass was borne by the waves close up to the shore.

Some years later, when St. Machutus was back in his parents' house in Wales, there came upon Britain the invasions of the Anglo-Saxons.

Among the many native Britons who, after the conquest of our islands, crossed the sea and made a colony in the corner of France since called Brittany, was our saint. Thence he made a journey to Luxembourg, seeking to be alone, and anxious to prepare himself to become a worthy Priest of GOD .

By-and-by the Christians of a place called Aleth, near to what is now the Cape of St. Malo, wanted to have him for their Bishop. He was at first unwilling to take so high a post, but they pressed him so hard that at last he consented, and he was Bishop of Aleth for forty years.

Yet things did not always go on smoothly there. St. Machutus had many troubles with his people, and at one time affairs were in so bad a state that he was obliged to leave

Aleth. He took with him thirty-three monks and sailed away across the sea till he came to an island near Saintonge, where a good Bishop named Leontius gave the little company a grant of land.

But after driving away their Bishop, a dreadful pestilence fell upon the people of Aleth. Then they saw how wrong they had been, and how ill they had treated St. Machutus. So they sent and begged him to return to them. At first he held back; but one night, in his dreams, it seemed to him that angels came and told him he ought to forgive and yield. So he gave way, and went to rejoin his flock.

There are many stories told of St. Machutus, all showing his sweet and kind nature. We read that one day, a warm, sunshiny day in spring, the Bishop had laid aside his cloak and thrown it across the branch of a tree, where he left it for some hours. Soon down flew a little bird, made its nest in its folds, and there laid its eggs. In the evening St. Machutus came to fetch his coat, and saw the nest.

"Poor little bird," he said, creeping quietly away so as not to disturb it. He would not have the cloak touched, but did without it till the eggs were hatched and the little nestlings all fledged.

He is said to have lived till the age of 133 years. He went to pass his last days at the little island near Saintonge, where he had founded a home when forced to leave Aleth; there he died in the year 565.

"Sweet was the infant's waking smile,
And sweet the old man's rest."

CHAPTER XXII

ST. LEONARD

NOV. 6; A.D. 559

St. Leonard is called the patron of prisoners. He was always the friend of the weak, the sinful, the fallen. Men who had done wrong, spoilt their lives, shut themselves out by their misdeeds from the society of other people, all could find a friend and helper in the good monk St. Leonard, from the moment they felt sorrow for their wrong-doing.

He was a Frenchman, born at Limousin, and had been a pupil of the great and good Bishop Remigius. The Frankish King Clovis, of whom you may read so much in history, and who had become a Christian, was very fond of Leonard, and wanted him to remain always at his court. But the saint thought there was other work for him to do; he wished to withdraw from the vain pleasures of the world, and to become a monk. He insisted upon leaving the court, and devoted his life to deeds of mercy towards the poor and sinful. He made his abode in the thick of a great forest, where he built a hut of twisted branches, and lived upon wild fruits and berries.

Here he gave up his days to quiet thought and prayer. Then at times he would come out from his retreat, and go about among the churches preaching and teaching—pouring out from the depth of his soul all his yearning to bring in to CHRIST'S fold the lost and the outcast.

So intensely did he make this desire of his heart felt, that the penitents were all drawn to him, and the forest where he lived became peopled with men and women who had come to him wishing to amend their ways. He had the best possible manner of helping them to do this—he set every one to work.

St. Leonard lived about twelve hundred years before the writer of the well-known words,

"For Satan finds some mischief still,
For idle hands to do."

But this was the spirit of all he did, the principle upon which he acted.

"My sons," he used to say, "My sons, man is born to work as birds to fly. Work for your own need, and that ye may have to give to those that need more."

He set the people who came to him to clear the forests, to build themselves houses, to lead lives of activity and usefulness. So they grew interested in what was given them to do; their days were full and happy; they had no time to fall back into their former ill ways, or to dwell in useless remorse upon their past lives. Working together thus, one with another, they soon learned to take an interest each in what the other was doing, and learned besides to find their happiness in giving pleasure to the good friend who had received them kindly when shut out from all the rest of the world. Life had been opened out anew to these poor, weary, sin-stained but penitent men and women. And thus they learned in truth to "redeem the time" and their own lives, and by labouring to do their duty in the state of life in which through GOD'S mercy they were now placed, they became faithful servants of the LORD.

"So the last shall be first and the first last," for "there is joy in the kingdom of GOD over one sinner that repenteth."

CHAPTER XXIII

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT

MARCH 12; A.D. 605

Among the many relics of ancient times to be seen at Rome, are the portraits of the parents of the great St. Gregory. The face of his father is of oval shape, rather long and grave, with a great deal of beard; that of his mother bright and pleasant, with large blue eyes. St. Gregory was like both parents; he had the sweetness of his mother, and the grave, earnest dignity of his father. They were Christians, and their son was brought up from childhood to know and love JESUS, and to lead a life of earnest purpose. He was always fond of study, and even as quite a young man was very learned. At the age of thirty he was made Praetor of Rome. Then his father died, and his mother withdrew from the world and went to live in a convent, while Gregory sold part of the lands that fell to him, in order to give the money to endow some monasteries in Sicily. His heart was set upon doing good, and living a life of usefulness. By-and-by it seemed to him that he would be better able to serve GOD and his fellow-men if he became a monk. So he gave up his high position in the state, laid aside the robes of silk and purple, and the glittering jewels, denied himself the good fare to which he had been used, and put on the dress and hood of a monk of the Order of St. Benedict. His grand old family palace he turned into a monastery, and at its gates built a special place called a hospice to receive poor pilgrims.

One day as he was crossing the market-place at Rome, he saw a number of little boys set out for sale! For these were the days of slavery, and the children had been taken over from our land of Britain to be sold at Rome, where they were sure to fetch a good price—poor little lads! They had fair skins, long

fair hair, and large blue eyes, just like many of our little English boys now-a-days. Italian children are not often fair like this. Their hair is usually dark, and their eyes brown or even black. So St. Gregory was much struck by their looks, and he stopped to ask who these children were, and where they came from.

"They are Angles," was the answer. For our land, as you know, was then called, "Angleland," from which has come the shorter word England.

"Angles," he repeated, "they ought to be angels." He thought the fair-haired, blue-eyed lads looked good and pure as must be the angels in heaven. And then he sighed to think they did not yet know even the name of the Saviour, for the German tribes, from whence had come the Angles and Saxons who had conquered Britain, were known to be heathens.

"They must be taught," said St. Gregory. So he went at once and ransomed the poor little slaves, and had them taken to his monastery, where they were brought up as good Christian boys.

But Gregory was not content with putting these children in the way of salvation. He went to the Bishop of Rome—the Pope, as he is always called—and said men ought to be sent to the land across the sea from which they had come, to teach all the people there the Faith of CHRIST.

He begged to be allowed to go himself to the land of the Angles to preach to the people. The Pope gave leave. The few things needed for the journey were soon put together, and St. Gregory started northwards.

The journey was a very long and slow one in those early times. St. Gregory had not got very far upon his way when it became known to the people of Rome that he had left the city to go upon a distant mission. He was dearly loved by the Romans. They could not bear the thought that he had left them. No; there were plenty of monks, they said, who could be sent across the sea to the cold, distant British Islands; their

own Gregory ought not to be exposed to the dangers of travel, and the trials of a life among strangers and heathens in a far-off country. Besides they could not spare him from among themselves. So some of them went to the Pope and spoke so earnestly that at last he agreed to their desire, and sent an order to St. Gregory to return to Rome.

Though he was touched by the love and attachment thus shown him by the people of his native city, St. Gregory was sorry to give up his plan; he yearned to carry the Gospel himself to the land which had given birth to those little Angle boys he had thought so like to what he fancied the angels must be. But he sent good Christian Priests to our island, and though he did not come in person, it is to him we owe the first Christian settlement under the Anglo-Saxons. St. Augustine was chief of the band of Missionaries who landed on the shores of Kent about the year A.D. 597, and he did his work well and zealously, as you will hear in another chapter. In a short time St. Gregory was made Pope. But through all his life he remained the simple, humble, hard-working, and unselfish Christian that had first won the love of the Roman people—full of learning, full of culture, but ever ready to turn his hand to the very plainest duty which came in his way.

As I have said before, those were the days of slavery. The slave trade was carried on among the nations of Europe at this time, just as it went on until almost our own times among the people of America and Africa. Men, women, and children were bought and sold by those who were rich enough to own them, as if they were mere tools. It was very rare in those days for any one to think this wrong. But St. Gregory felt keenly how unjust it was for men, whatever their race or rank, to be treated as mere brute beasts, and all his life he preached against the custom. Slavery continued long after he had gone to his rest, but he did much to unsettle men's minds upon the subject—to make some people begin to think they were not doing right in counting among their possessions human beings, as they counted their fields, their houses, their cattle, or their

money. Perhaps many a poor slave was freed by a kind-hearted master through what the great and good St. Gregory said; and there is no doubt, since Gregory was so much loved and looked up to by all, that owners tried to act more kindly by their slaves than they would have dreamt of doing had he not spoken out so boldly what he thought. Every one agrees that Pope Gregory did a great deal of good in his day.

He was very fond of music, and founded a school of singing. The chants we speak of as "Gregorian" are so called because it was St. Gregory who first arranged them. Often he would himself go into the choir and sit among the chorister boys, take his own part in the singing, or kindly and lovingly help them in theirs.

It was St. Gregory, too, who wrote many of the beautiful collects we have in our Prayer Book; and the Litany—parts thereof very much as we now use it—was written by him, and ordered to be chanted in the streets of Rome, and through all Italy during a time of great distress. And though he did so much, he was never a strong man; for many years he had a weak and suffering body. But "his strength was made perfect through weakness."

St. Gregory died in the year A.D. 604, at the age of sixty-nine.

CHAPTER XXIV

ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY (MAY 26; A.D. 604)

It was about the year A.D. 596 that the good St. Gregory, who had taken pity upon the little Angle children in the market-place at Rome, sent out a band of monks to Britain. They were to go and teach the love of CHRIST to those who were still heathens in our island. At the head of this company was St. Augustine of Canterbury.

It was a long journey they had to make, and at one of the places where they stopped to rest for a few nights, such terrible tales were told them of the fierce pagan English nation, that the poor monks trembled for fear. They began to think they must turn back home instead of going on to the shores of Britain. From all that they now heard, it seemed as if certain death for the whole band were before them. It was hard to know what to do. They determined to send back to Rome Augustine their leader, to beg to be allowed to give up a journey which was so toilsome, and in which there was so much danger.

But St. Gregory would not hear of this, and Augustine returned with a letter telling the good monks "it were better not to begin a good work than to leave it when once begun." He wrote very lovingly to his "most beloved sons," but very firmly.

It was in truth a weary journey for the poor men. They travelled right through France, sleeping at night on the dead leaves in the forests. Then they crossed the sea till they came to a creek between the old towns of Ramsgate and Sandwich, on the coast of Kent. There they landed, and then went on to Canterbury, where were the ruins of a church called the Church of St. Martin of Tours; for Britain under the Romans

had been in great part Christian. Some people even think that St. Paul had preached both in England and in Ireland. It was the German conquerors, the Angles and the Saxons, who had again brought in so much false worship. But Queen Bertha, the wife of King Ethelbert, was a princess from France, and she was a true Christian. She was so good and gentle and wise that she had already greatly influenced her husband towards the faith of CHRIST, and when Augustine arrived in Kent, he found a glad welcome from both King and Queen.

Ethelbert came to meet Augustine and his monks in the Isle of Thanet, at Ebbsfleet. He received them in state, "sitting royally," in the open air, one fine summer morning. He was not yet fully a Christian, and would not let the monks enter within his palace walls lest they should work him some harm. He could not yet quite understand that there was no sort of magic art mixed up with the Christian rites.

Bearing a silver cross as their banner, and a board with the image of our LORD painted upon it, St. Augustine and his monks came up. As they drew near they chanted a Litany, praying for all men.

The king treated St. Augustine with all honour, and bade him sit down before him. They spoke together for a few minutes; then the Priest rose and preached before the court. Ethelbert was much struck by his words, and when the sermon was ended, he told him he believed he wished indeed to teach "those things you believe to be true and most healthful for me and for my people. Therefore will we not molest you, but give you good entertainment, and take all care that you be supplied with what is needful for your support and living. Nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as you can to your religion."

The king kept his promise. He gave St. Augustine a house in the city of Canterbury, and whatever else he wanted for himself and his clergy. Within a year, at the next Whitsuntide, the king himself was baptized, and at Christmas ten thousand of his subjects. The ancient Church of St. Martin

at Canterbury, was restored, and grew in time into the great Cathedral. So on the site where was the first English Christian Church, stands to this day the chief among the churches of our land, as it is the Cathedral of the Archbishop or Primate of all England.

The letters which passed between St. Augustine and St. Gregory still remain, telling us of all the interest the good and great St. Gregory took till his dying day in the spread of the truth among the people from whence had come those little Angle boys who had won his heart.

Both St. Gregory and St. Augustine died in the same year, A.D. 604; the one in March, the other in the month of May. In looking back, how thankful must St. Augustine have felt that he had been forced to persevere in that toilsome journey to England instead of giving up in the hour of weakness and temptation.

As the seasons of Ember days "come round, and we know that the clergy of our own time are making ready to start each one upon his own journey in the life of struggle against evil—some in our midst, some in far-away lands—let us think of the words of Keble's beautiful Ordination hymn, and pray:

"When foemen watch their tents by night,
And mists hang wide o'er moor and fell,
Spirit of Counsel and of Might,
Their pastoral warfare guide Thou well.

"And oh! when worn and tired they sigh,
With that more fearful war within,
When passion's storms are loud and high,
And brooding o'er remembered sin.

"The heart dies down—O mightiest then,
Come ever true, come ever near,
And wake their slumbering love again,
Spirit of God's most holy Fear."

Christian Year.

CHAPTER XXV

ST. CHAD OF LICHFIELD

MARCH 2; A.D. 672

The story of St. Chad of Lichfield is very full of interest to us, for he was the first really English Bishop in our land. The Faith of CHRIST had first been preached to us by men from Rome and from France, and most of our early Bishops, as well as a great number of the Priests of the early days of Christianity in England, were strangers. Not so St. Chad; he was of an old stock of ancient Britons, and English was his native tongue.

There were in his family four brothers, all high-minded, earnest lads. As they grew up, each one decided to give himself to the Priesthood, and they took great pains to fit themselves for the sacred office.

It was Cedde, the eldest, who founded the monastery of Lestingham in Yorkshire. There he went to live and work in self-denial and privation. He led all the people of the country around to a truer faith in CHRIST, and taught them to live better, holier lives. He was greatly beloved. But in the midst of his work he was taken ill. A dreadful pest had come among the people; hundreds died, and with them the beloved Abbot Cedde. He was laid to rest near the monastery he had founded and ruled so well.

At a little distance from Lestingham was another monastery. When the monks there heard of the death of the beloved Cedde, they were overcome with grief. Then thirty of them left their own house, and went to Lestingham, thinking they would have more courage to work bravely as he had done if they were near the abbot's resting-place. Alas! they all took

the pest too and died. Now it was that St. Chad came to take his brother's place and rule the monastery.

In a little while he was made Bishop of York, and then, after a time, Bishop of Mercia. This was one of the Saxon divisions of the country, and was very large. As a bishopric it took in Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and part of Cheshire, so that St. Chad was thus Bishop of almost all the north of England.

Of this large diocese he made Lichfield his chief city. Here he worked and studied and prayed, directing the affairs of the many churches and monasteries under his charge. He worked for those under his special care, he prayed for all men. In bad weather whenever a storm arose, the good Bishop's thoughts went at once to the poor sailors who earned their bread upon the sea; to the fishermen whose wives and children were looking for the father's return, and to the many poor peasants of the country round, whose slight huts were rudely shaken by the blasts of wind, and often deluged by the heavy rains. All this—all the misery and suffering of the poor in times of rough weather—came before him in an instant, and he would at once lay aside his books or his writing and kneel in prayer.

St. Chad had a friend and disciple named Owini, who left some account of the Bishop's life, and has told us the beautiful story of his death. Owini had been a great man at the Court of Queen Etheldreda, but he grew tired of court life, and he loved and honoured St. Chad. So he gave up his position in the queen's counsels, and came to the monastery at Lestingham, meaning to devote himself to hard work and to the service of GOD. He was very strong, and used to do the outdoor work about the monastery, while the monks were busy at their reading and writing. One day Owini was hewing down trees, and putting logs of wood ready for use, while the Bishop was writing alone in his oratory close by. Suddenly he thought he heard the sound of music. He stayed his axe and looked around, but he could see no one. The air was calm and still, the

monks were all hard at work in their cells. His Bishop, he knew, was quite alone in his room. Still he felt sure he heard strains as of persons chanting in a strange, sweet way; the sounds seemed to be in the air as if coming from heaven. Then in a few moments they seemed to die away and cease.

Owini, full of wonder, but bent still upon the duty before him—his work of chopping the wood—was about to take up his axe again, when he noticed St. Chad standing at the window of his retreat and beckoning to him.

"Haste thee, Owini!" the Bishop cried, as he threw aside his hatchet and hurried up to the window. "Go, fetch the brethren from the monastery, and come with them to the church. I must pray with you, and speak with you all now while time is yet given me. In seven days I shall go hence."

When the monks were all come together in the church, the Bishop stood before them and told how, while he was writing, he had heard strains of wonderful music coming towards him from the south-east. He had felt, he said, as if in the presence of a band of angels, who had come, he believed, to bid him make ready, for in seven days his spirit would be called to his rest in GOD .

And so it was. A week later St. Chad quietly passed away from earth.

More than twelve hundred years have gone by since that day. But the grand old Cathedral stands to bear into future ages the name of the first Bishop of Lichfield, and to carry on to all time the earnest and blessed work begun on that spot by St. Chad.

CHAPTER XXVI

ST. GILES

SEPT. 1; A.D. 725

St. Giles was a Greek, born in the ancient city of Athens. From his very earliest years he seems to have had an affectionate, loving heart. He was deeply attached to his parents, and when one after the other both his father and mother died, St. Giles, though a young man of twenty-four, was so full of grief at their loss, that he thought he could never more have any pleasure in life. He longed now to give himself up to prayer and meditation, and to live away from the world. So he sold all he had, gave most of the money to the poor, and went forth with just what he needed to keep himself from starvation, hoping to find a quiet place far from the "haunts of men," where he could live alone, and serve CHRIST in his heart.

He took ship and sailed across the sea till he came to a small and lonely island. Here he landed, and seeing what looked like foot-prints on the shore, he followed their track till he reached a cave. In this cave he found an aged hermit who had lived there for twelve years, and whose only food was roots and herbs.

The old man welcomed the young stranger, and shared with him his cave and his simple fare. But when three days had gone by, St. Giles began to think that if he stayed here his friends might find him out, and try to lead him back to the busy city, for the island was not very far from Athens. So he hailed a passing ship that was going westward, and landed by-and-by at Marseilles, in the south of France, where there was a large colony of Greeks.

It was not solitude that he found here—the French port was full of people then as now, for it had been a place of great importance from the earliest times—but he found a great number of persons who were poor and sick, and in need of help, and so he stayed to work among them, and to do what he could for those in need.

Still to be alone was his one chief longing, and after a time he bade farewell to Marseilles and crossed the river Rhone in search of a place of quiet.

He again came upon a cave, the retreat of another hermit. Here he stayed for some time, but the people of Marseilles, who loved him for his kind heart and his gentle ways among them, found him out, and to gain the solitude he wished for, he was forced to seek a more hidden spot.

He made his way into the thick of a dense forest, where he settled himself among the trees and rocks, hoping now at last to be left in peace. Here he had one companion, a gentle hind, whom he loved and cared for, and whose milk was his chief food.

It had happened one day that there was a great hunt in the forest. The woods rang with the sound of horn and hounds and the cries of the chase. The poor hind, flying before the dogs and the huntsmen, had, after a long run, sunk down breathless at the mouth of the cave of St. Giles. He rushed out to rescue the panting animal, and received in his own arm the arrow that had been aimed at her.

The huntsmen followed where the hind had led. They were struck by the gentle dignity of the young hermit. They questioned him as to why he lived thus alone and away from the world; and when he spoke to them of his life and of his faith in the Saviour, they listened with respect, and went to fetch their king to hear what the Greek Christian said.

The king was as much touched as his knights, and begged St. Giles to go to his court, promising him lands and money to build a monastery. But he did not feel himself fit for

such a life. No doubt he believed he would be unable to do much good among others. His was, perhaps, a nature too quiet and gentle to rule, or to contend with the difficulties of a busy life. He felt, perhaps, that he would no longer be able to serve GOD faithfully if he were forced to live among other men. He refused all the king's offers and only begged to be left to his solitude. The hind never quitted him.

St. Giles is called the patron saint of lame people and of lepers—of all such as need help on account of bodily weakness, or are driven into solitude, like the wounded and exhausted deer.

All the churches called "S. Giles' "are built, not on high ground, as, you notice, was so often the custom in old times, but in the valleys, and just outside the town or city, usually near the chief entrance from the high road. As the tired hind found safety and refuge with the saint, so the churches called after him were to be the first refuge and resting-place for the poor, the weary, the lame, who were journeying to the town. There are also in most of these old churches of St. Giles what are called "leper windows." People who had that terrible illness, leprosy, which you may have read of in the Bible, and which was very common even in England in old times, were obliged to live outside the town or village, at a distance from all other men, and were not allowed to go to the ordinary churches. Sometimes there would be a special chapel, or little church, for them near the places where they lived outside the city, but more often they would come and stand by these leper-windows and listen thus to the service which was said within the church. From time to time the poor lepers would receive through the opening the Holy Communion from the hands of the Priest—" the Body and Blood CHRIST for the strengthening of their souls."

CHAPTER XXVII
VENERABLE BEDE
MAY 27; A.D. 735

Against the date May 27 we find in our Prayer Book Calendar the name of Venerable Bede. His name has indeed always been greatly honoured, "venerated," both by the Church on account of St. Bede's good and holy life, and by men who love books and learning, because of the great book of history he wrote and gave to the world.

He was a north-country man, born either in Durham or Northumberland, and he never moved from that part of the country.

From a child Bede loved study. He was only seven years old when he was placed under the care of an Abbot named Benedict. Benedict was a man of great learning, who did all he could to bring books and treasures from other lands to England, and tried to teach those around him as much and as well as was in his power. Of all the Abbot's pupils, none was like Bede, who set himself to work with his whole heart and soul, and became by-and-by quite the greatest scholar of his day.

It was in this monastery of Jarrow that all his life was passed. A very quiet life it was, but very busy. He seems never to have lost a moment of his time. He studied Latin and Greek, History, Medicine, and Science, besides what is called Theology, or the special learning that belongs to religion. He also gave much time to music, singing, and poetry. As quite a young man he began to teach in the great school of the monastery. Sometimes there would be six hundred pupils there at once, monks who had lived always at the Convent, and strangers who came from other parts to learn of the great

Bede. He loved his work. In one of the books he wrote, he says: "I always took delight in learning and teaching and writing." He speaks also of the "daily care of singing" which he had in the church. He wrote many books; the one we prize most is his *Church History*, of which I have spoken above. It is full of stories about many good men of that time, and tells us much of how people lived and thought in those days.

The story of St. Bede's last days is very beautiful. It is told us by St. Cuthbert, who was one of his pupils, and was with him when he died. Even when in great pain he was bright and cheerful. "He gave thanks to GOD," says Cuthbert, "day and night, yea at all hours. Every day he taught us lessons, and when night after night he lay awake, he never spoke one word of complaint, but seemed only to be full of joy, and gave constant praise to GOD."

Through all the last days of his sickness he continued working as hard as he could with his pupils at a translation of the Gospel of St. John into English. Those about him begged he would rest. "No!" he said, "I do not want my boys to read a lie; I must see that the work is done as well as it can be before I die."

So, weak as he was, he still strove to get on with his writing, and still taught his pupils.

"Learn with what speed you may," he said to them, "I know not how long I shall last."

He grew worse. But he was eager to get on. His pupils were around him, and wrote as he dictated the words. Often their own tears blinded them and they were forced to stop, for great was the love they bore to their aged master.

On the eve of Ascension Day St. Bede was very weak. One of his pupils, a young boy, said, "We have still one sentence left to write." "Write quickly," was the reply. Soon the boy said, "It is written;" and the master answered, "Thou hast well said—it is done, it is finished."

Then he said to the youth, "Raise my hands, for it will do me good to sit where I may see the place in which I was wont to kneel and pray, that so sitting I may call upon my FATHER."

Thus he died, leaning upon his pupil's arm, and chanting the *Gloria*. As he named the HOLY GHOST his spirit passed from earth to heaven.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ST. BONIFACE (*WINFRED*)

JUNE 5; A.D. 755

This is the story of a brave old saint of our own land—an Englishman. We may well be proud of him.

In the year 680 there was born in a secluded village in Devonshire, called Crediton, a little boy to whom was given the name Winfred. Among the rugged hills of his native county he grew up a strong, healthy child. We may think of him as a bright, rosy lad, tall for his age, passing the live-long day in the open air; playing with other boys in the green fields at the foot of the mountains; running with childish glee along the lanes and roadways around his village home.

Winfred was not more than five or six years old when there came, one day, a band of monks to the village. Every one ran out to gaze upon them, and when they stopped and preached upon the village green, boys and men, women and children, all came up to hear what these strangers had to say. Among the throng was little Winfred. He listened, and his childish heart glowed. When the preaching was over he said, "I want to be a monk like these men."

People smiled at the little fellow who was too young, they thought, even to have understood what the monks had said. But little Winfred had understood, perhaps, more than many of the older listeners, and the words of the preachers had sunk deep into the boy's heart. He knew they had spoken of a loving Saviour Who had given His Life for men; of a Master Whom even a young lad as he was could serve; of a battle against all that was wrong and sinful in which each child might be a brave Christian soldier. He was not too young to have felt how hard it often is to be good, to resist what is

wrong, to do what is right. The little boy of five or six had his own struggles with the evil nature within, and was able to see for himself that there was much sin among men around him. He thought nothing could be so grand and noble as to go about preaching and helping people to do right. His boyish heart was aglow, and his one wish from this day was to live among these monks and learn like them to teach and preach the Gospel.

"I too must be a monk," was his cry.

But Winfred's father would not listen to what seemed to him so strange a notion. He said sternly, No; that cannot be." The boy was silent for the time, but as he grew older his wish grew stronger and stronger. When he was about thirteen he was taken very ill. Every one thought he would die. The poor father was in great trouble. What could he do to save his beloved son? He remembered the boy's wish to become a monk. He bowed his head and vowed to give up his child to GOD, if only his life might be spared. His prayer was not in vain. The illness passed; Winfred grew strong and well again, and the father kept his vow. The boy was sent first to the Abbey at Exeter; then he went to Nutcell, where was one of the greatest schools of those days. Winfred liked study, and he became, after a time, one of the most learned men in England. He was fond also of teaching others all that he learned himself, and loved being among children and young people. They all loved him, too, for he was earnest and good and brave, and always full of zeal.

But St. Winfred was not content to pass his life in quiet and happiness, among duties that were easy and pleasant to him. He said he must go to the heathen and preach in rude, far-off lands the Gospel of peace and love. Across the centre of Europe were vast tracts of country where the name of CHRIST had never been heard, where the people were wild and savage but strong and numerous; people who often made inroads upon other lands, coming in great tribes from their own forest-covered countries, and by their strength and numbers overcoming all before them. Such in those days were the

Germans, two tribes of whom—the Saxons and the Angles—had conquered a great part of Britain, as we know, about 300 years before the time of St. Winfred. To Germany, then, Winfred said he must go and work as a Missionary.

In the year 716 he set out. He went first northwards to Friesland. There he worked hard for two years, teaching the people the Faith of CHRIST, and showing them also how to live in a less rude, rough way than was their habit.

Then he came back for a little while to England and to his monastery, of which he was made Abbot.

But St. Winfred could not rest in peace while he knew how much work there was to be done among the heathen. So he soon set out again—never to return. Before beginning his mission work this time, he went with a band of pilgrims to Rome; then he proceeded to the forest of Thuringia, where for many years he worked most bravely. It was a hard life. Often he was in great peril, often called upon to bear cold, hunger, bodily distress of every sort. Still he went on teaching and preaching. He would never give in. After some time he left Thuringia for a little while to go again to Friesland. He found the mission he had founded there going on well, so with a thankful heart he travelled along the banks of the Rhine and the Moselle, back to Thuringia. Then he made another journey to Rome, and it was there that the new name of Boniface was given to him. So from this time he is less known by his own old English name of Winfred than by the Latin one given to him by the Pope of Rome. But this does not make him any the less an Englishman. An Englishman in heart he remained till the end of his life.

To the last he wrote long and earnest letters to his friends and fellow-workers in his native land. He loved England, and it must have been a great grief to him never to return there. But St. Boniface, as we will now call him, never for a moment thought of what he would like to do—only of what was his duty, of the work before him, and of what was best to be done.

The heathen among whom St. Boniface was working had in their own religion many strange rites. Like the Druids of France and Britain, they used to bow down before the great oak trees of their vast forests, and look upon them as gods, or at least as filled with power by their gods. And even when they learned to believe in JESUS CHRIST, they would often mix up their own strange ways of worship with the Christian prayers. St. Boniface was deeply pained at this, and thought much how he could show the people that their notions were vain and foolish.

One day he took some of his clergy, and went out into the forest of Hesse, which was near the little village of Geismar where he was staying, to cut down an immense oak tree which grew there. The Germans came round him and stood by in awe. They thought he could never cut down so huge a tree, both because of its size, and because it was sacred to the gods which they could not yet quite think false. But St. Boniface was strong of arm and will. A few strokes and the mighty oak came smashing down, split in four pieces. It seemed as if a blast of wind had suddenly swept through its branches.

Awe-struck, the heathen at once gave in. They were ready now to put aside their own rites, and worship the GOD of St. Boniface in simple faith. They took the beams of their grand old fallen oak and built with them a Christian oratory. This was the first church of the country.

St. Boniface was not content only to turn the people from their false worship, he wished also to help them to lead settled, orderly lives. Full of bodily energy he set to work with them to make clearings in the forests, build houses and chapels, till the ground, sow, reap, fish. So they learned to love him, and to look upon the Christian saint as their true friend, and were ready to follow him in everything.

Then there came from his English home helpers in the great mission work. Among these were a few devoted women, sisters of the clergy. Their gentleness brought a feeling of

homeliness and respect into that rude land. One of them, St. Lioba, was a cousin of Boniface. She was good and beautiful, and full of energy and helpfulness. She did much to aid the Christian work, and was of great service and comfort to St. Boniface and his hard-working Priests for many years.

About the year A.D. 738, St. Boniface made yet another journey to Rome. He had a glad welcome, for he had done more for Christianity than any man of his time. A hundred thousand Germans had been baptized through him. He was now made Archbishop of Mayence. For fourteen years longer he went on working as hard as when a young man. He founded six bishoprics. In history you will read that it was this St. Boniface, the Englishman Winfred, who placed the crown upon the head of Pepin le Bref when he was made King of France. But he cared little for his high position except as far as it might help him to do good for the Church of CHRIST. His was always the heart of a missionary, and at the age of seventy-five he begged leave of the Pope to lay aside the dignity of Archbishop, and go out once more to work as a simple monk in Friesland. He named an Englishman from Malmesbury to take his place at Mayence, and we have still the letter he wrote to the chaplain at the court of King Pepin, in which he begs the king to protect and care for the mission-workers he was leaving behind in France. Then he went forth with a band of eight brave, faithful Priests. He did not know how things would go on in Friesland; he thought it very likely he would be called on to suffer death at the hands of the heathen there, and with the few books, the Holy Gospels, and the altar-cloth which he took with him, he took also his shroud.

At first all went well. Whitsun Day came and St. Boniface pitched his tent and erected an altar in a field on the riverside. He was to hold a Confirmation that day, to lay his hands upon a number of newly-baptized converts. When all was ready he knelt in his tent in prayer until they should arrive. Poor, brave old man! Instead of the Christian converts,

a fierce band of armed heathens suddenly appeared before the tent. With wild shouts they rushed upon him. His friends came up in haste, and were about to fight. St. Boniface stopped them. "We must give good for evil," he said. "I have long waited for this day: the hour of my salvation is come."

He begged his clergy to put aside their fear; with them he went out from his tent. But the heathen fell upon them with their rude wooden clubs, and soon St. Boniface was slain with all his band.

Struck down in his old age after a lifetime of devoted work, slain by those whom he had served, there he lay at rest at last, the old man who as a boy of five, listening to the Gospel story, had vowed himself to the work of a mission Priest.

The heathen had expected to find booty, but there was nothing of any value to them in the tent of the saint, no vessels of gold or silver, nothing but a few books, a little wine for the Holy Communion, and some relics. They were furious, and in their anger turned and fought against each other.

Wrapped in the shroud Boniface had brought with him, the body of the saint was taken first to Maestricht, and then to Fulda, where, in time, St. Lioba was brought and laid near him.

"Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please."
Fairy Queen, Canto IX., verse 40.

CHAPTER XXIX

ST. DUNSTAN

MAY 19; A.D. 988

One of the noblest and one of the greatest of our Archbishops of Canterbury was St. Dunstan.

I dare say you have read his name in your English history, for he lived through the reigns of six of our old Saxon kings, and was very much mixed up with all that went on in England in his time.

St. Dunstan was born in the county of Somerset, not very far from the old Abbey of Glastonbury, of which the ruins are still to be seen. His family was of high, perhaps even of royal, rank. It was a Christian family, and from his earliest years St. Dunstan had been taught to love JESUS, and to make it his aim "to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life."

While still very young his father took him to the monastery at Glastonbury, to be brought up under the care of the good and clever monks

who there gave themselves to teaching, for this was one of the greatest schools of the day. The boy worked well, and learned much. He loved music, and learned to play the harp. He also became very clever in writing out manuscripts with beautiful coloured letters, illuminating, as it is called. Many of these fine old writings, the very same that were written by St. Dunstan and the monks of his time, are still to be seen in our museums and libraries.

We have seen when reading about St. Columba how important a business was the writing out of books before printing was invented, and when the Gospels, or the books of prayer, or other sacred writings were copied, the monks would

try to make them look as beautiful as ever they could. St. Dunstan took great pains with all the copying that was given him to do, and indeed with everything he learned. As a boy at school, as a grown man at the court of the king, as a Priest and Bishop in the Church, St. Dunstan always threw his whole heart and his whole energy into whatever he did.

While still a lad he used often to be called by King Athelstane to spend weeks, and sometimes months at a time at the court. He was not very happy there, for he was unlike the other boys of his day and age. He used to have strange dreams, and believe he saw visions. When he told these he was laughed at, and looked upon as a foolish child. Often he would pass hours in prayer, at which also his comrades jeered; and at last some of the people about the court begged the king to send this strange boy away.

One day a party of lads, angry with him for being so different to themselves, took St. Dunstan, bound his hands and his feet together, and threw him into a muddy pond. The poor boy struggled out, but as he did so some dogs rushed upon him. Instead of showing fear, St. Dunstan called the dogs and caressed them; then they fawned upon him, licked away the mud, and tried to show pity for his state. But a fever followed, and his life was in great danger for some time.

When he got better he was still more earnest in his prayers, and more given to dreams than before. He had gone to live with his uncle Elfege, Bishop of Winchester, and by him he was now persuaded to give up the world and to devote himself as a Priest to GOD'S service. So he retired to the Abbey of Glastonbury, and, as was his wont, threw his whole heart and soul into the work he had undertaken. He was very stern towards himself, and would allow himself no bodily comforts. He lived in a cell five feet long and only two and a half feet wide, and he never spent a moment idly.

By-and-by he was again called to the court. Edmund was now king. But he was no happier there at this time than he had been as a boy. People were envious of his great learning

and of his power, for he was wise, and had a calm, clear judgment, and the king was glad to listen to his advice. Yet after a time his enemies so gained the ear of Edmund, that he behaved unjustly to St. Dunstan, and he was again driven from court.

But his absence now was short. The king went out hunting in the forest a few days after he had sent away St. Dunstan; the deer he was following rushed over the edge of a deep chasm, some of the dogs followed, and at the same moment the reins of the king's horse broke in his hands. The animal was frantic, the precipice was before him—Edmund thought he was lost. Face to face with death, he remembered the wrong he had done to St. Dunstan, and he made a vow that if his life should be spared, he would at once try to make that wrong good.

"I cannot think of any one else whom I have injured in these past days," he said, as he prayed earnestly to GOD to forgive his sins, and to save him from death, "but only Dunstan; if I live I will at once recall him, and try and make up for the ill I have done."

The horse stopped on the edge of the cliff, and the king was saved.

When he reached home he instantly sent for the Priest, and rode with him to Glastonbury to pray for forgiveness for his past injustice, and to give thanks to GOD for His mercy in sparing his life. He made St. Dunstan Abbot, and gave him a great deal of money to build another monastery, and to carry on the good works he had in hand.

In the reign of Edwy his troubles began again, for the king was not a good man, and he had married wrongly. His wife was beautiful, and Edwy seems to have been very fond of her, but she was a near relation, and he had no right to marry her.

St. Dunstan went to the king, rebuked him for his sin, and begged him to give up his wife. Edwy would not listen.

Then the Priest spoke out very boldly before all the court, for he thought it a shame that the king of the land should set so bad an example to his people. But nothing could turn Edwy from following his own will. He was very angry with Dunstan, and banished him from the country.

He went over the sea to Flanders, where he spent a year in learning how some of the great convents abroad were arranged, and in thinking out plans for the improvement of the schools and monasteries of his own land.

When Edgar came to the throne of England St. Dunstan was recalled from his exile, and was begged by the king to become Bishop of Worcester. Some time later he was made Bishop of London, and then Primate or Archbishop of Canterbury.

Through all his life St. Dunstan never ceased to speak out boldly what he thought, and to rebuke sin wherever he saw it. There were at this time a great many customs among the clergy which he thought wrong, and indeed many of the monks, and even the Priests of those days, had fallen into idle habits and led evil lives. St. Dunstan tried hard to make them better, and to raise the Church in England to a high and noble standard of Christian life. He did much towards this, but as so often happens when any one tries to make what we call reforms, that is, to alter what is not good and arrange things in a better manner, St. Dunstan was hated by all those who loved their own way best, and who did not care about what was right so long as they could live at ease. So his life was one of struggle and conflict, but he was strong and firm to the end, and he did a great deal to bring learning as well as purity of life into the Church in England.

In the spring of the year 988 the Archbishop began to fail in health. He was not much over sixty years of age, and he had kept up bravely through his many trials, but now he was worn out. He knew that his term on earth was closing in. On the Feast of the Ascension he went into the cathedral to preach, and he knew it would be for the last time. Lovingly he

bade the people around him good-bye. "GOD be with you!" that, indeed, was his most earnest desire—what he had striven and struggled for through all his life, to bring the Church and the people near to GOD . Now his work was done. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course."

Tears fell from the eyes of all present as the old Archbishop spoke, sobs were heard throughout the whole building. As he ended he bade the clergy and the brethren of the school and chapter come together in his room, with them he received the Holy Communion, and so died.

"A little while to patient vigil-keeping,
To face the stern, to wrestle with the strong,
A little while to sow the seed with weeping,
Then bind the sheaves and sing the harvest-song."

Church Hymns

CHAPTER XXX

ST. HUGH OF LINCOLN

NOV. 17; A.D. 1200

In an old castle in the land of Burgundy there was born about the year A.D. 1134 a little child who was to become in later times one of our noblest and most famous Bishops of Lincoln. His family for ages past had been one of the foremost of the powerful old families of the country; and perhaps if little Hugh had had a different father, we should read of him as one of the proud and fierce warriors of the time, instead of as the good and humble Christian saint.

Hugh was only eight years old when he lost his mother. The father's grief at this loss was so great, that he seems to have cared no longer to keep up the state of his castle-home. He took his little son and went with him to live in a house of Canons at Grenoble. The boy was placed in a school for

youths of noble birth. "But," said his father, "the levity of thy school-fellows is not for thee, thy lot is not such as theirs. Little Hugh, I nurture thee for CHRIST, and jest and levity are not for thee."

His father loved Hugh dearly, and was never harsh. But his was that true love which is strong enough to show itself in wise control. He often saw his child, and his frequent words of counsel were loving and tender; but he was never so weak as to overlook the boy's natural faults, or to shrink from giving reproof when it was needed. And so the bond between father and son was very strong and true, a bond not only of natural affection, but also of deep and loving respect.

The boy was quick and clever, and worked well at his books, which gladdened the father's heart. He grew up, and his father became old and infirm. Then he was made a monk in the house of the Canons, and the Prior gave into the son's charge the care of his beloved parent; this was to be his special work for the time. What a blessed work! To Hugh it was really given to "succour his father." He rarely left his side, but would gently lead him about the place, carry him when he could not walk, with his own hands prepare his food and serve it to him, and in every possible way minister to his comfort and his need. Every one learned to look upon the young man with respect, and he was loved by all around him. At nineteen years of age he was ordained Deacon.

His father died, and now Hugh said he must have a harder life than that among the Canons. The Prior took him to the monastery of Chartreuse. Here the monks lived, each one alone in a cell cut out of the hard rocks among which the monastery stood. Their beds were simple horse-cloths, their pillows rough skins, their dress a horse-hair shirt, their food scanty, and always eaten in silence.

"The men who dwell among these rocks," said an old monk, are as hard as the rocks themselves. They are severe, each man to himself and to all other men."

But this instead of daunting St. Hugh, only made him the more eager to brave so rude a life. He loved learning, too, and thought that here he should be able to study with profit.

After he had been at Chartreuse a little time, there was given into the charge of the young man, who had known so well how to care for his father in his old age, the care of an aged monk who needed loving, patient attention. The old man was often very trying and severe to the young Priest. But at other moments he was gentle enough, and would beg Hugh to bear with his weakness. "Be not troubled by the worries of these present days, my son, or rather, indeed, my lord," he would say. "There will come a day, in GOD'S own good time, when thou wilt be a Bishop."

And so, indeed, it came to pass. Hugh had until now passed all his life in his own land of France. But while the good monks at the monastery of Chartreuse were training themselves to endure hardship and self-denial, the clergy of our own country were trying to awake their people to a braver, truer, religious life. Then the king, Henry II., invited over some of the monks of Chartreuse, gave them lands at Witham in Gloucestershire, and money to build a monastery, so that they might live in England, teach and preach to the people, and set "an example of godly life."

This was the first "Charterhouse" in our land. The second was that great London school where so many of our English boys have been taught for ages past, and which is still one of our grandest public schools. It was built first as a simple monastery under the Carthusian Rule. Traces of the old cells can still be found. But the poor monks were harshly treated, and turned out of their house in the time of Henry VIII. Then, about the year 1606, a very rich man named Sutton left money to endow the building as a hospital and house of refuge for the aged, and a school for the young.

The first Abbot of the new monastery at Witham did not get on with the peasants who lived and worked on the land, and in a short time he gave up his office. The monks of

Chartreuse sent another, but he died very soon, and now the king sent for a third. The good monks thought it their duty to send one whom they believed to be truly fitted for so high a post, but it was with grief that they gave up their beloved Hugh.

St. Hugh soon won everybody's heart in the land he had crossed the sea and left his own brighter country to come to. All felt that this brave Abbot was truly upright and just. He had no easy post to fill. Often there were disputes among the rude peasants who worked on the lands around; sometimes there were disputes even within the monastery walls. There had not been time yet, since it was set up, for its ways and rules to have become quite orderly and settled. But as his father had acted with him, so Hugh acted now with those under his charge. He never weakly gave way to one side or another, but looked every matter bravely in the face, and then strove to be just and firm in his judgment about it. And in whatever he did, he kept a bright face, and a good-humoured manner. So full of smiles and fun was he often, that the shyest of children loved him, and would come creeping up to his side. He was loved alike by the king on his throne, and the poor peasants in their rude huts, by little children and by dumb animals.

He always kept to his simple Carthusian dress, and his plain, hard Carthusian way of living.

Then he was made Bishop of Lincoln.

King Henry was always devoted to St. Hugh, and he helped both Henry and Richard Coeur de Lion with advice and counsel; with John he did not get on. Before all things St. Hugh was true—true to GOD, to himself, and to others—and King John, as we all know, was weak, and mean, and false.

But, friend of kings though he was, St. Hugh made everything give way before the duties of his Priesthood. There is a story that Henry once went to see him just as the Bishop was about to read the Burial Service over the grave of a poor

peasant. There were, no doubt, several clergy about; Hugh might easily have taken off his surplice, called another to take his place by the grave-side, and have gone at once to the king. But this was not his idea of what was due to the dead in CHRIST, even in the case of a simple peasant. He sent to tell the king how he was engaged, and went on calmly with the service while Henry waited for him. At one time, however, the king was very much offended with him. But Henry was wise enough to know the true worth of the good Bishop, and soon made it up with him.

In the spring of the year 1200 he caught a fever while staying in London. It was soon seen that his work on earth was over. His friends sent to St. Paul's to ask the choristers to come and chant the service of Compline for him. The Bishop had himself laid on a bed of ashes upon the floor of his room, in sign of penitence for whatever wrong he had done during his life. Then the boys and men stood by and softly sang the service. As the words of the *Nunc Dimittis* were slowly chanted, the spirit of the brave old saint passed away.

"Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

The body of St. Hugh was carried to Lincoln. All kinds of people flocked to his funeral, rich and poor, Christians and a crowd of poor Jews. The Jews had really been banished from the kingdom, but at the grave of the Bishop who was loved and honoured indeed by "all sorts and conditions of men," they dared to show themselves. King John was there and helped to bear the coffin, and the King of Scotland stood by in tears. All men felt of Bishop Hugh—

"Christ's love and His Apostles twelve he taught,
And first he followed it himself."

Chaucer's Preface.

CHAPTER XXXI

ST. RICHARD OF CHICHESTER

APRIL 3; A.D. 1253

The story of this, the latest-born saint of our Calendar, is one of noble devotion and duty, even more than duty, towards his family. His parents had once been very rich, but things went wrong, they fell into great poverty, and the eldest brother was thrown into prison for debt. Richard at once set to work to try and put matters right. He was ready to turn his hand to anything. The roughest work about the house was welcome to him; he only asked to be of use, and he managed the family affairs so well that they were soon put quite straight, the brother released from prison, and his property saved for him.

At first the brother was so grateful that he would no longer take his place as the elder. "Richard," he said, "had saved their honour and their goods; Richard must be looked on henceforth as the head of the family."

But by-and-by these warm feelings changed. The brother said he had been foolish after all to give up his birthright. At once Richard gave back everything. He was quite ready to work and to earn his own bread, he said; and he went out into the world as a poor scholar.

He went first to Oxford in order to study, then on to Paris. At one time he lodged with two other students, both as poor as he was. They had but one tidy coat between them, and used to take their lessons in turn, one wearing the coat while the others stayed at home without it! But, poor as he was, Richard used to say that these were the happiest years of his life. He did not wish for riches. He did not regret his brother's portion, nor long for what had been taken from him. Then he

went to Bologna in Italy, like so many poor students of those days, for here there was a famous school. He worked for himself and taught others, and when, after a time, one of the chief professors fell ill, it was proposed that Richard should fill his place and marry the old man's daughter. But Richard was a true Englishman at heart. The thought of giving up his native land, and settling down for life so far away, was too much for him. He left Italy and went back to Oxford, where, after a time, he was made Chancellor of the University. His greatest friend was Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury. Edmund died, to the great grief of Richard, who was with him in his last hours. Then he was ordained Priest, and in time became Bishop of Chichester. All his life St. Richard was free-handed, and fond of giving what he could to others. His elder brother, who indeed must have been far from having so kind a heart, would often rebuke him for being so liberal.

"Our father ate and drank out of common crockery," was St. Richard's reply. Shall I, then, wish for gold and silver plate? No, my brother, what was enough for me in my youth is all I ask for myself now, though through GOD'S mercy I am supplied with the means of comfort."

Then came the third Crusade. St. Richard went about from village to village throughout the whole country, preaching the duty of joining the sacred war.

By-and-by he fell ill. He might have recovered, but he had fixed a day to go to Dover to consecrate a church and burying-ground for the poor, in the name of his friend St. Edmund. He would not put off the day. "No, no," he said. I must do the work before me, I cannot set aside my duty. Who knows what may befall? Before I die, let me at least consecrate this church in the name of my friend and master."

The church and burying-ground were consecrated, but the Bishop went home to his death-bed. "Dear in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints."