

Greater and less assemblies.

ship, hundred, *ga* or shire, and kingdom, kept the constitution of the primitive community, modified by such changes as change of circumstances could not fail to bring with them. So far as we can get any glimpses of any of them, we see in all alike the same elements. There is in all the presiding chief, the leading men proposing and debating, the whole body of freemen saying *yea* or *nay* to their proposals. The chief change was one of the highest practical moment, but which was not the result of any sudden revolution, or even of any enacted law. Democracy may change into oligarchy by the mere working of the laws of time and space. The simple freeman may have the same right to appear in the assembly of the kingdom which he has to appear in the assembly of his own township. But he is far from being so likely to be found there. Mere distance settles the question. Only the more wealthy and the more zealous will go long journeys to take a part in public affairs. Thus the assembly, popular and unlimited in its theoretical constitution, silently narrows till it becomes an assembly of the chief men, with such only of the common freemen as live near the place of assembly or are drawn to it in greater numbers than usual on some occasion of special excitement. The assembly of the kingdom, the *Witenagemot* or Meeting of the Wise, gradually took this character. There was no need to shut the mass of the people out; they shut themselves out. In the *Sceargemot*, the assembly of the shire, we see the working of the same law. Attendance has to be enforced by law; at least a *minimum* number for each district is fixed. This practically comes to confining the assembly to those who are specially summoned; for a special summons to certain members is always found to lead in the end to the exclusion of those who are not summoned. In this way, without any formal change, by the mere working of natural causes, the popular character of the primitive assemblies died out. It died out of course more thoroughly in the higher assemblies than in the lower. The great assembly of the kingdom, in theory the gathering of all the freemen of the kingdom, shrank up into an assembly of the king's thegns, subject to the appearance of more numerous bodies of men on specially stirring occasions, and to the presence of the citizens of the town where the assembly was held, when it was held in a town. This will always happen whenever the assembly of a large country is primary and not representative. The more purely democratic its constitution, the more sure is it to shrink up into oligarchy. But it is well to remember that, as long as our national assemblies kept any traces of their primitive shape, those great meetings which chose and deposed kings, which made and repealed laws, which made war and peace, were, in theory at least, meetings not of this or that class, but of the nation.

English towns.

In the last paragraph we have been carried on somewhat beyond the date which we had reached in our narrative, somewhat beyond the period of heathen England. In so doing we have incidentally made mention of towns. The origin of the English towns certainly comes within the period with which we are immediately dealing. Than that origin no part of our subject is more obscure. But one negative point we may assert with full confidence; there is no trace of any possession, of any law or custom or office, which the cities and boroughs of England have inherited from the older municipalities of Rome. Whatever likeness may be seen between the two is due, beyond all doubt, not to direct derivation, but to the eternal law according to which like causes produce like results. In the primitive Teutonic system, in the system reaching from the mark up to the kingdom, there was no place for walled towns. The early Teuton looked on the walled town as a prison. When in after times strictly English towns arose, their position was wholly different from that of the Roman towns. The

Roman town was the centre and mistress of everything within its own range. The city was a commonwealth; the surrounding country was little more than a subject district. Without a city there could, in Greek and Roman ideas, be no organized political or social life. In the Teutonic system, on the other hand, towns were wholly unknown, and they have never in any Teutonic country come to fill the place which they have always filled in southern Europe. The difference between English social life and that of the southern part of the European continent, the shrinking of the English upper classes from town life in any shape but that of the capital of the kingdom, dates from the very beginning of our history. In southern Europe the city is an essential of life; in England it is a kind of accident. When English towns did arise, they were simply districts where houses stood thicker together than elsewhere. The town was a mark, a hundred, perhaps a shire, in which more men lived within a smaller space than they lived in other marks, hundreds, or shires. But the question here arises, When did the English conquerors of Britain begin to occupy walled towns at all? It is certain that in many cases the Roman town was simply forsaken by its English conquerors. At Evesham and Silchester the inhabitants were slaughtered, and the walls left standing empty for ever. It is equally certain that in other cases, as at Bath and Chester, the Roman walls, after standing empty for a while,—in the case of Chester for the ascertained period of three hundred years,—were again inhabited by settlements of Englishmen. The question is whether this last was the case with all the Roman sites which were won during the time of heathen conquest and which became English towns in later times, or whether any of them were continuously inhabited, and simply passed from British to English occupiers. It is quite certain that in some cases the period of desolation, if there was any, must have been short. If London, Canterbury, York, Lincoln, Colchester, ever stood void and forsaken, they must have been settled afresh very soon. Some at least of them were again inhabited cities at the end of the sixth century. London and York, above all, would doubtless hold out long after all the surrounding country had been subdued. They may have held out till the conquerors had laid aside somewhat of their first rudeness, and had learned to see that a city and its walls were a valuable possession. In some then of the greatest cities we may believe that their conquest was comparatively late, and that, when they were conquered, they immediately became dwelling-places of the conquerors. It may then well be that there never was a moment when the walls of Eboracum, the walls of Augusta—the old city once called London and afterwards to be called London again—ceased to gird in the dwelling-places of man. The point is that the connexion between Eboracum and *Eoforwic*, between Augusta and *Lundenbyrig*, is a connexion purely geographical. The Briton went out, and the Englishman came in. The rulers and the people of the Teutonic commonwealth had no political succession from the rulers and people of the Roman commonwealth which had once occupied the same soil.

Of English law during this time we have no contemporary monuments. But law in its first form is the same as custom; the earliest written codes are simply the customs of the time set down in writing. We have no written English laws till after the introduction of Christianity; the oldest written code bears the name of the first Christian king. But the dooms of Æthelberht, and the dooms of much later kings, are, in all those points which are not clearly modified by Christianity, good evidence for the laws or customs of heathen times. Our oldest laws set before us a society in which the position of the king is well marked, and where he summons his people to him, doubtless to the general assembly of his realm. The classes of *eorl*, *ceorl*,

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and *peow* are plainly marked. Of the *thegn*, in the earliest code of all, there is no mention. We have mentioned also of the classes intermediate between the freeman and the slave, the *lat* namely and the *esne*. But we see no signs of a society containing men of distinct nationalities; there is nothing answering to the mention of the Romans in the codes of the continental Teutons, or to the mention of the Welsh in other English codes which were drawn up at a later time and under other circumstances. The first English laws are drawn up for a purely Teutonic people, keeping their old Teutonic customs. Two of the most characteristic features of ancient English law are there in their fulness. Every man has his value; but his value differs according to his rank. Every freeman's oath is worth something; but the oath of the earl is worth more than the oath of the churl. Death or injury done to any man has its penalty; but the penalty is higher or lower according to the rank of the person injured. In short, in all the early codes, in England and elsewhere, the state has already stepped in to regulate and modify the natural desire for vengeance on the part of the injured person or his kinsfolk. The natural avenger of the slain man seeks for the blood of the slayer; the state steps in and persuades him, in Teutonic England no less than in Homeric Greece, to accept of a money payment instead of the gratification of his vengeance. The right of a man in a state of nature to do himself justice with the strong arm, the *fæhde* or *feud*—the source of the private war and the duel of later times—is not wholly set aside; but it is regulated and modified, and confined to certain extreme cases. The state in all such cases steps in as a mediator between the wrong-doer and the man who seeks to avenge himself upon the wrong-doer. It takes the right of punishment out of his hands into its own. The later legal doctrine that a wrong done to any member of the community is a wrong done to the community itself, and to the king as its head, has not yet been reached. A crime done against the king is more heavily punished than a crime done against another man; but that is simply because the king fills the highest place in the gradation of ranks. The first notion of a crime against the state as such seems to come out in that venerable enactment which looks like the origin of one branch of our modern privilege of parliament—"If the king his people to him call, and to them then man evil do, twofold bot and to the king fifty shillings."

The Teutonic religion.

The language, the laws, and the constitution which the English settlers in Britain brought with them from their older homes were in the course of ages to undergo many changes; the newer forms were to part away widely from the older; but all was to be gradual growth, gradual change; there was to be no sudden revolution, no supplanting of one tongue by another tongue, of one law by another law. But the English had brought with them from their older homes another possession which was to pass utterly away, a system which was to be thoroughly supplanted by a rival system of foreign birth. With their language and their laws they had brought with them their religion; and while their language and their laws were to abide, their religion was to pass away. The old religion of the English was, like their language and their laws, that form of the common Aryan heritage which had grown up among the people of northern Germany. The old Teutonic faith is best known to us in the poetry and legends of that branch of the race which claved to it longer than the rest, in the Eddas and sagas of the Northmen of Scandinavia. Our system was doubtless essentially the same as theirs, though, as it was laid aside by both High and Low Germans earlier than it was in Scandinavia, it may never have reached among them the same full poetic development which it reached in more

northern lands. The names of the chief gods, Woden, Thunder,<sup>1</sup> Frigga, and the rest, are the same with only dialectic differences. The name of one of our old gods is of special interest; the great Aryan power of the sky, Zeus himself, appears among us, though with lessened honours, under the English form of *Tiw*. He, with his fellows, gives his name to a day of the week; and his name, like that of his fellows, may be traced in the local nomenclature of our land. Of that land the Teutonic gods took full possession along with their worshippers. The creed of the Roman and the Briton passed away with those who professed it. The still unconquered Welsh never thought of undertaking the work of missionaries among the conquerors and destroyers of their brethren. And they would have had small chance of being hearkened to by those conquerors and destroyers, if they had undertaken such a task. It was otherwise when a new light came from lands beyond the sea, between whose people and ours there reigned no such mutual scorn and hatred. And above all things, it was otherwise when the call to a new faith came directly from the capital of the western world. The English folk were first called on to cast aside the faith of Woden and to embrace the faith of Christ by men who came on that errand from Rome herself, at the bidding of the acknowledged father of Western Christendom.

The conversion of the English to Christianity was not only one of the great turning-points in the history of England; it was one of the great turning-points in the history of Christianity itself. It was, as far at least as the West is concerned, a conversion of a kind that was altogether new. Christianity is historically the religion of the Roman empire; wherever the influence of Rome, East or West, has spread, there Christianity has been dominant; beyond that range it has taken little root. The Teutonic conquerors of the continental provinces accepted the religion of the empire as they accepted its laws and language. At the end of the sixth century, all the subjects, all the western conquerors of Rome, were Christian. Heathendom took its only the lands, like Scandinavia and Germany beyond the Rhine, which had never formed part of the empire, together with the one Western land which had wholly fallen away from the empire. The conversion of England was the first strictly foreign mission of the Western Church. It was the first spiritual conquest of a people wholly strange, a people who stood in no kind of relation to Rome and her civilization. It was the first act of a long series of spiritual conquests which gradually brought all Europe within the pale of the Church. And it was more than the first act of the series; it enlisted in the missionary work the people who were to send forth the most successful apostles to other lands. The conversion of England directly led to the conversion of heathen Germany and Scandinavia. Gregory, who was so anxious for the soul of Trajan, was himself a spiritual Trajan, enlarging his spiritual empire by conquests more lasting than the earthly conquests of Trajan himself. The conversion of the English to Christianity carried with it the readmission of Britain into the general world of Europe. Throughout the fifth and sixth centuries the notices of the affairs of Britain in continental writers are rare and meagre beyond expression. They show that Britain had fallen back into the isolation of the days before Caesar; it had again become an unknown world, a world about which any kind of fable might be safely uttered. Such rare intercourse as that world had with the Roman world was through the Teutonic masters of Gaul, the Franks. And it may be taken as a sign that, in the latter

<sup>1</sup> Þungr, Þunor, in modern form *Thunder*, is the true English name. The more familiar form *Thor* is, like most Scandinavian forms, a contraction. *Thursday* is for *Dunrestias*.

years of the sixth century, Kent at least must have been striving to bring itself within the European circle, when we find its king Æthelberht married to a Christian wife, the daughter of a Frankish king. It is to be noticed however that neither the queen herself nor the Frankish bishop whom she brought with her seem to have directly done anything for the conversion of the king or his people. That work could be done by nothing short of the majesty of Rome.

One point which cannot be too strongly insisted on at this stage is that the Church of England which was founded by Augustine has nothing whatever to do with the early British Church. In after times certain British dioceses submitted to English ecclesiastical rule, and that is all. The Christianity of England did not come wholly from any single source; and one of the sources from which it came was found within the British islands. But that source was not a British source. The Roman planted; the Scot watered; but the Briton did nothing. He not only did nothing; he refused to do anything; he would have nothing to say to Augustine's invitation to join in preaching the gospel to the heathen English. Theologians may dispute over the inferences which may be drawn from the fact; but the historical fact cannot be altered to please any man. The Church of England is the daughter of the Church of Rome. She is so perhaps more directly than any other Church in Europe. England was the special conquest of the Roman Church, the first land which looked up with reverence to the Roman pontiff, while it owed not even a nominal allegiance to the Roman Cæsar.

The conversion of the English was gradual, and, on the whole, peaceful. Christianity was nowhere forced on an unwilling people by fire and sword, as was done in some later conversions. We find wars between Christian and heathen kingdoms in which religion is clearly one great animating cause on both sides; but we do not hear of persecutions or wars of religion within the bosom of any kingdom. As a rule, the king is converted first. The great men follow, perhaps in duty bound as his thegns. The mass of the people follow their leaders. But all is done without compulsion; if conversion was not always the result of argument, it was at least the result of example. This may perhaps show that the old religion sat somewhat lightly on its votaries, and in some cases the new religion seems to have sat somewhat lightly on its converse. The Christian king sometimes had heathen sons, and their accession was followed by a relapse. But, in the space of about a hundred years, all the English kingdoms had become Christian. The men of Wight in their island, and the men of Sussex isolated between the sea and the great wood, were the last to cleave to the idols of their fathers. The seventh century was the great time of struggle between the two religions. It was also the time when Mercia first stood forth as an equal rival with Northumberland, Wessex, and Kent. Kent soon sinks into a secondary rank, and leaves the first place to be disputed between the three other great powers. At the beginning of the period when the first Roman missionaries came, in 597, the Bretwaldom, which had been held by Ælle of Sussex and Ceawlin of Wessex, was held by Æthelberht of Kent. He is expressly said to have been supreme over all the kingdoms south of the Humber. That this supremacy was not a mere name is shewn by the fact that his safe-conduct held good when Augustine crossed the still heathen land of Wessex to confer with the British bishops on the banks of the Severn. Under Æthelberht, the Kentish Church was planted by Augustine, and from Kent the new teaching spread over Essex and East-Anglia. From Kent too came the first conversion of Northumberland, and with it of Lindesey, by the preaching of Paulinus under the

No British share.

The conversion gradual.

powerful Bretwalda Eadwine of Deira. That king had, before his conversion, conquered the Welsh kingdom of Loidis and Elmet, and had made Northumberland the first power in Britain. His first rivalry was with Wessex, which he brought to acknowledge his supremacy. After his conversion he had to endure the more dangerous enmity of two powers which united against him on different grounds. The Teutonic conqueror was hateful to the Briton Cædwalla, whose kingdom of Strathclyde, cut off from his southern countrymen by the victory of Æthelfrith, was still a powerful state. The Christian convert was hateful to the heathen Penda, under whom Mercia first became great. Before the two Eadwine fell at Heathfield in 633, and with him fell for a moment the Christianity and the power of Northumberland. The new power of Mercia grew equally to the south at the expense of Wessex. But this first burst of Mercian power was not to be lasting. Before long Northumberland was again united, powerful, and Christian, under the Bernician Bretwaldas, and her power and religion were first restored for a while by Oswald the saint. He overthrew his British and Christian enemy at Heavenfield in 635. This is a date of importance. In some sort it marks the completion of the English conquest. Much British land was still to be won by hard fighting; but Cædwalla was the last British prince who could wage aggressive and dangerous warfare against an English rival. Against his heathen and English enemy Oswald was less successful. He too, like Eadwine, fell before Penda at Maserfield in 642. A time of confusion and division followed, but under Oswiu, the next Bretwalda, Northumberland rose again. In 654 Penda fell before him at Winwedfield, and the armed strife between Christianity and heathendom was at an end. The second conversion of Northumberland, and the conversion of Mercia which followed the fall of Penda, were chiefly the work of the Scots. That name, it must be remembered, though it does not shut out the Scottish colony in Britain, primarily means the original Scots of Ireland. Columba and his successors in their holy island linked the two together, and both were zealous in the missionary work, both in Britain and on the continent. But, though a large part of England thus owed its Christianity to the Scots, yet the special Scottish usages did not abide in the churches of Northumberland and Mercia. After much debating, the Bretwalda Oswiu adopted, on behalf of his people, the usages of Rome and Kent. Meanwhile Wessex had been converted by an independent mission from the Franks of Gaul under its apostle Birinus. The heathendom of Sussex gave way in 681 to the preaching of the Northumbrian Wilfrith, and a few years later the men of Wight, the last abiding-place of the old gods, were partly converted by Wilfrith, partly slaughtered by the West-Saxon Cædwalla. All England was now Christian; and the English Church was finally organized between 668 and 690 by Theodore of Tarsus. The Roman, the Scot, and the man of the East, thus all worked together to bring the English conquerors of Britain within the pale of the Christian Church, and thereby within the general world of Europe.

There is something wonderful in the way in which Christianity fitted itself in, so to speak, to the old Teutonic institutions of England. The change in men's thoughts, the change in their ways of looking at most things, must have been great; but there is no sudden break. The old political and social state goes on; the old laws and institutions are not abolished; they are hardly modified; all that happens is that many new laws are inserted among the old. But the laws bear the old character. The old scale of ranks is enlarged to take in some new members, in the form of the various degrees of the Christian priesthood. Some new crimes are forbidden: some new observances are

The Northumbrian Bretwaldas

Conversion of Mercia.

Conversion of Wessex, Sussex, and Wight

enjoined; but the spirit of the law, the nature of the penalties, the manner of their execution, remains the same. The various ranks of the clergy have their value, in Teutonic fashion, along with the various ranks of the laity. Churches arose, and the fabrics, with their ministers and their property, were placed under the protection of the law. Provisions against idolatrous practices are found; but the old faith passed away so easily that but little legislation of this kind was needed. The land received a new geographical division in the form of ecclesiastical provinces and dioceses; but these commonly followed the existing civil geography. The extent of the bishop's diocese coincided with that of some kingdom or principality, and, as the ecclesiastical divisions underwent, till quite late times, much less change than the civil ones, the boundaries of the dioceses are our best guides to the boundaries of the old kingdoms and ealdormanships. Nowhere was the Church more thoroughly national than in England. The old assembly of the shire received the bishop as a new chief, along with the ancient ealdorman, and the two sat together jointly to hear matters which the more minute jurisprudence of a later time divided into causes ecclesiastical and causes temporal. Bishops, abbots, and other churchmen, became prominent in the counsels of kings and in the assemblies of the nation. A century or two later, we even find them leading the national armies to battle. Through the whole native history of England, we find no traces of any of the controversies between Church and State which show themselves in later times. In truth, Church and State did not exist as two distinct bodies; they hardly existed as two distinct ideas. As the army was the nation in its military aspect, so the Church was the nation in its religious aspect. The leaders of the body might be different according to the matter in hand; but the body itself was one.

Addition to the elder legislation.

This strongly national character of the ancient English Church naturally followed on the time and manner of the conversion of the English nation. The English were not like the Teutonic conquerors on the continent, in whose eyes the Church was a Roman institution, alongside of other Roman institutions. In Gaul and Spain, for some generations after the Teutonic conquest, ecclesiastical power and office remained in the hands of the conquered. In some later conversions the Church was a foreign institution through an opposite cause. It was an institution forced on the people by their conquerors. In England neither of these causes of separation had any being. The English of their own free will accepted the creed of foreign teachers; but the Church was not to them a foreign institution. The first two or three bishops of each see were necessarily strangers; but as soon as Englishmen were found fitted for such offices, they held them to the exclusion of strangers. It is hard to find a foreign prelate in England between Theodore of Tarsus and Robert of Jumièges. Again, when England was converted, the privileges of the clergy as an order, the powers of the bishop of Rome as their head, were things which were still in their infancy. The claims made by the clergy and the popes in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries would have been unintelligible either to Æthelberht or to Augustine. There was nothing in England to part off the clergy, as a body having feelings and interests distinct from the rest of the nation. There was nothing to tempt the Roman bishops, subjects as they still were of the Roman emperors, to put forth the claims of an Hildebrand or an Innocent. There was nothing to make them claim from the newly founded English Church anything beyond the reverence due to a parent from a child who has already reached full age.

In short, if we look through-out early law, and seek

for changes in the law itself—as distinguished from legislation on new subjects—which can be said to be directly owing to the change of religion, we shall find few indeed. It is indeed very likely that the power of bequeathing property by will was introduced by the Roman clergy. There is a remarkable reference to the practice which implies as much; and we know that the wills of dead men were a matter which the clergy took largely into their own hands, and which became in the end a subject for the specially ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Yet the power of willing may have grown up in England, just as it did at Rome. In the beginning a will is an exceptional act. The testator prays the community to allow his goods to be disposed of in a particular way. The confirmation gradually becomes matter of form; at last it is altogether dispensed with, and the power of bequest, once a privilege granted in a particular case, becomes the common right of every man. Still there is a strong likelihood the other way, and it may well be that the power of bequest has really been transferred from the Roman law to that of England. Only, if so it be, it must be remembered that it is no heritage from the inhabitants of the Roman province of Britain. It is something which was brought in afresh, as part of the ecclesiastical system of Gregory and Augustine.

Another novelty in our law, which was directly owing to the conversion, was the institution of ecclesiastical property. This is plain on the face of it. Nothing could be given for the support of the new religion till the new religion had been accepted. But the institution of ecclesiastical property involved something more than this. If it did not from the beginning imply the legal doctrine of corporate property, it at least soon grew into it. This doctrine is something wholly distinct from the primitive communal property. It presupposes the intermediate stage of private ownership. The land is first cut off from the common possession to form the particular possession of this or that person. Then, by a legal fiction, several persons are clothed with the attributes of a single person, and the artificial being called a corporation appears. Such corporations were quite familiar to Roman law; but it is inconceivable that any such subtlety should have been thought of in primitive Teutonic times. The king or ealdorman, who gave lands to this or that church,—commonly under the formula of giving to God, or to such and such a saint,—if he did not at once create, at least paved the way for, all the fictions and subtleties of law with regard to corporations of all kinds, lay and spiritual, aggregate and sole.

It was also doubtless owing to direct Christian influence that the early jurisprudence of England came to differ in one singular point from that of other Teutonic nations. The wager of battle, an original Teutonic institution, one which was brought again into England in later times, seems to have been altogether disused between the conversion and the Norman conquest. It has an English name, the *ordeal*, but it is quite unknown to English law or English usage. Its place is taken by the direct appeal to the judgment of God in the form of the ordeal. The divine power, it was held, would directly interfere to save the innocent and to punish the guilty. We need not suppose that the ordeal itself was an invention of Christian teachers. The same idea may be found in many customs in other parts of the world. But it must be owing to direct Christian teaching that the judgment by hot iron or hot water altogether drove out the more warlike appeal to the judg-

<sup>1</sup> The Norman writer William of Poitiers (p. 128 Giles) makes Harold thus answer William's claim by Eadward's bequest:—*Ab eo tempore quo beatus Augustinus in hanc venit regionem, communem gentis hujus fuisse consuetudinem donationem, quam in ultimo fine suo quis fecerit, eam ratam habere.* It is an odd quarter to go to for a statement of English law, but its soundness can hardly be doubted.

Corporate property

Ordeal and wager of battle.

ment of battle, so that this last came in again in after times in the guise of a foreign innovation.

But, small as were the direct legal or political changes which it wrought, the conversion of the English, even setting aside its purely theological and spiritual side, was the greatest event in the history of our nation. The effects which it wrought were great and manifold. The Roman missionaries brought with them a new learning, a new culture. The little influence which Rome had on our language and laws, before the great continental infusion of later times, was due far more to the days of the conversion than to the days of the first conquest. Our forefathers translated a great number of ecclesiastical terms, some of which we have come again to use in a Latin shape. Still, as new things must have new names, the Roman missionaries brought into our language a good many Latin words to express ecclesiastical ideas, and seemingly a few other words, expressing other objects of Roman culture. Here was a second Roman infusion into our Teutonic speech. It was an infusion far greater than the handful of Latin words which we picked up in the course of the first conquest; but it was still an infusion which in no way affected the purity of our native vocabulary. Some foreign things kept their foreign names; but no native thing changed its native name for a foreign one. The effect on language was in short much the same as the effect on law. There was no break, no change; only certain new elements were adopted and assimilated by the old.

Effect on literature.

But if the conversion wrought but little change in the English tongue, it breathed a new literary life into the English people. The missionaries brought with them the whole learning of their time, and, above all, the use of the Latin language. Latin, it must be remembered, was still, not merely the literary tongue, but the common every-day speech of Western Europe. The dialects which grew into the Romance languages had doubtless already begun to form themselves; but no one looked on them as anything but vulgar dialects of Latin; no one thought of committing them to writing, or of using them for any serious purpose. A people who knew no Latin were cut off from all intercourse with the civilized world of the West; a people among whom Latin was cultivated at once formed part of that world. From the coming of Augustine, "book Latin" again took its place among the languages of Britain.<sup>1</sup> But happily it always remained "book Latin." It never displaced the native Teutonic speech on the lips of men; it never even shut out the native speech from the rank of a cultivated language possessing a written literature. Or rather, the general intellectual impulse which followed on the conversion, while it first gave us a Latin literature, also first made our English written literature. We learned to use a more convenient alphabet than the runes, a more convenient writing material than the beech. English was, what the Romance languages were not as yet, so far apart from Latin that the two languages, the two literatures, could live side by side. One point only is to be regretted. It is at once the strength and the weakness of the Latin Church, and one of her points of contrast with the Churches of the East, that, wherever her system is accepted in its fulness, she imposes the tongue of Rome as the one tongue of religious worship. Like crowds of other laws and usages, good and bad, this usage came about of itself, without any set purpose; it was only when it was objected to in after times that arguments were sought for to defend

<sup>1</sup> The Chronicles at the very beginning say, "Her synd on þam iglande fīf geþeðdu—Englisc, Brytwylisc, Scottysc, Pihhtisc, and Boelæden." This translates Bæda's list "Anglorum videlicet, Brittonum, Scottorum, Pictorum, et Latinorum, quæ meditatione scripturarum ceteris omnibus est facta communis."

it. It was in England that the practice began of having divine service in a tongue not understood of the people. That is to say, England was the first country of wholly foreign speech which the Roman Church had to deal with. It had not come into any man's head to translate the mass or the lectionary into the dialects of Gaul or Spain. Indeed we may be sure that the time for such a step was not yet come; the ecclesiastical Latin was doubtless at least as intelligible then as the English of the sixteenth century is now. Thus men who were accustomed only to Latin in public worship went on using it, even in a country where the same reasons which pleaded for the use of Latin at Rome pleaded no less strongly for the use of English. But this was the only error; the native tongue was in no way discouraged as the tongue either of devotional writ or of translations or paraphrases of Scripture. A noble Christian literature soon grew up in the English tongue. The only thing to be lamented is that its growth must have put the older heathen literature under a cloud. The songs which record the English conquest live only in Latin fragments, and Beowulf himself has been taught to utter Christian phrases, if only with stammering lips.

The two ends of England contributed to the growth of the new English literature. Our Christian English poetry is of Deira; our English prose is of Wessex; our Latin literature, our earliest history in literary shape, is of Bernicia. Cædmon of Streoneshalh led the way, the first of our English sacred poets, he who, a thousand years before Milton, dealt with Milton's theme in Milton's spirit—he who sang the warfare of Hebrew patriarchs with the true ring of a Teutonic battle-song. Next came Bæda of Jarrow, the first who recorded English history in Latin prose, and who, amid a crowd of Latin writings, did not forget the rendering of the gospel into the tongue of his own people. For Cædmon there might have been a place in the older state of things; for Bæda there could have been none. Cædmon, born while parts of England were still heathen, might have been a heathen born; he might, in the self-same spirit, with little more than the change of names, have sung of Woden and Loki instead of Christ and Satan; he might have told the tale of Ida warring with the Briton instead of the tale of Abraham warring with the kings of Caanan. But Bæda is the direct offspring of the great religious change. The monk, the student, who never struck a blow in battle or raised his voice in the assembly of shire or kingdom, was a new character among Englishmen. Yet Bæda is English too; he is no stranger to us; he is the man of our own race, as the man of our race might now become under a state of things so far removed from the thoughts of the olden time. Of English prose, though in a sense it begins with Bæda, the true and full growth is later. Its founder is the king who was at once the judge, the captain, and the teacher of his people, West-Saxon Ælfred himself.

We may also safely say that it was with the conversion to Christianity that the first rudiments of art were brought back into Britain. As heathen Rome taught her culture to the Briton, so Christian Rome taught her culture to the Englishman. How far the monuments of Roman skill were designedly swept away it might be hard to say. Most likely there was no design in the matter. Much would perish in the ordinary course of barbarian havoc, and there was no English Theodoric to guard what escaped. It is a speaking fact that a Roman column standing in its place is a thing unknown in Britain. We may be sure that the art of stone building was unknown to the heathen English in their old homes; nor was there anything in the circumstances of their settlement in their new homes to lead their thoughts in that direction. Architecture, and with it the other arts, painting, music, and the rest, came in again in the wake of the Church. Churches were built in the style

Cædmon and Bæda

Effects on the doctrine of kingship.

which was then usual in Italy, churches of brick or stone with round arches. Sometimes a Roman ruin was still able to be repaired; more commonly it supplied materials for a new building. When the tall bell-towers came into fashion in Italy, they were imitated in England also. Thus arose, in England as elsewhere, that early round-arched style, based directly on Italian models, which formed the usual style of all western Europe till the eleventh century. The art of those days was mainly ecclesiastical. Houses were commonly, most likely always, of wood till the coming of the Normans. The Roman military works seem hardly to have been imitated till the great era of fortification in the tenth century.

With the new religion the land received a wholly new class of mankind, utterly unknown to the heathen Teutons, the class of men and women devoted to the religious life. Monasticism forms a marked feature in some pagan systems; but it had no place in the old Teutonic religion. We had not so much as anything that answered to the virgins of Vesta. But Teutonic monasticism took a character of its own. Monasteries became private inheritances; the distinction was not always very accurately drawn between the ordained monk and the secular priest, between the unordained monk and the layman. Celibacy was doubtless essential to the very laxest form of the monastic life; but we shall look in vain in the early monasteries of England for any very strict observance of the rule of Saint Benedict. There was room however in them alike for the ascetic scholarship of Bæda and for the ruder zeal which led a crowd of men and women of all ranks, among them kings' daughters and even reigning kings, to forsake the world to embrace the religious life. A large proportion of the native saints of the English calendar were supplied by those kingly houses whose pride had once been to be sprung of the blood of the gods of heathendom.

This last idea had of course wholly to change its shape under the influence of the new faith. The pedigree was not forgotten; Woden was still the forefather of all the kingly houses. But Woden was now found out to have been a mere mortal hero, the descendant of Noah in such and such a generation. We may suspect that one effect of Christianity was to lessen the reverence for the kingly stock as such, to strengthen the elective element, and to make it easier to choose kings who were not of kingly descent. The analogy alike of the Roman emperors and of ecclesiastical officers of all kinds would work the same way. But kingship, as an office, was in Christian hands clothed with a higher majesty, and became an object of deeper reverence. If one form of sanctity was taken away from the son of Woden, he gradually obtained another in his new character of the Lord's Anointed. At least from the eighth century, perhaps from an earlier time, English kings began, as the emperors had long been, to be admitted to their office with ecclesiastical ceremonies, among which the rite of unction held the chief place. The king thus became in some measure a sharer in the sanctity of the priesthood. He was clothed in sacred vestments, and enjoyed sacred privileges beyond the laymen of ordinary degree. But this only brought out more strongly his position as holding an office according to law. The priest, the abbot, the bishop, was chosen and admitted to his office according to a known law. According to the same law, he might, in case of demerit, be deposed from his office. So it was with the kingly office. The greater the mysterious sanctity that was shed over the kingly office, the more was his person shorn of all mysterious sanctity. He held a sacred office; but that sacred office might, like any other office, be taken away from an unworthy holder. On the other hand, the growing practice of personal commendation stepped in to restore the balance, and to strengthen the king's personal authority.

He became the personal lord of all the chief men in his kingdom. They were bound to him by a voluntary tie of personal faith and honour. But these two growing notions, which made the king, on the one hand a personal lord, on the other hand an ecclesiastical officer, worked together somewhat to wipe out the older idea of the king as the head of the people, the chief, the judge and captain of the community, commanding obedience directly as the head of the state, without any need either of religious consecration or of personal allegiance.

But if the new religion thus modified the older ideas of kingship, and tended on the whole to strengthen the kingly power, it affected the national being of the English people in a yet more direct way. In fact, it created that national being. Hitherto there had been no tie to bind together the various Teutonic kingdoms in Britain, except the precarious and fluctuating tie of the Bretwaldadom. Had the Bretwaldadom been permanent, it might have gradually fused all the Teutonic settlements into one nation. In the form which it actually took, it was a mere momentary superiority of one kingdom over others, which was naturally irksome, and was thrown off as soon as might be. The Church sowed the seeds of a truer national unity by accustoming Englishmen from different kingdoms to act together, and to acknowledge a common head. England had national synods long before she had national parliaments. Her kingdoms acknowledged a common primate long before they acknowledged a common king. The original scheme of Gregory would have divided Britain into two ecclesiastical provinces of much the same extent. York was to have taken in all Scotland; but the claim of York to ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Scotland was always precarious, commonly nominal, and it was in the end formally abolished. The regular succession of archbishops of York began later than that of Canterbury, and the northern primate, sometimes with one or two suffragans, sometimes with none at all, never practically held the same metropolitan position as the archbishop of Canterbury. This last became, long before any king could so call himself, the "head of Anglekin,"<sup>1</sup> the chief of the English nation, irrespective of political divisions. And such an influence was purely national. It gave no political importance to the secondary, soon to become the dependent, kingdom of Kent. It worked however when Kent had been merged in Wessex, to help the advance of Wessex, and to settle the general headship of England in the south. And, in the same way, the position of the see of York, which in practice was not so much an archbishopric as a great and powerful independent bishopric, doubtless did much to strengthen the general tendency of Northumberland to keep up a being distinct from that of southern England.

The two ecclesiastical provinces.

Thus, before the end of the seventh century, Teutonic and heathen England had embraced a new creed, and with that creed it had received those changes in thought, law, and custom which could not fail to follow on such a conversion. One change above all affects the general history. Warfare still goes on, warfare alike with the Britons and with Englishmen of other kingdoms; but warfare no longer implies extermination. Where the heathen conqueror carried mere slaughter and havoc, the Christian conqueror was satisfied with political subjection. The overthrow of Deva by Æthelfrith may well have been the last case of mere destruction. The greatness and fall of Penda form part of the history of the conversion; his reign was the armed

<sup>1</sup> In the poem on the martyrdom of Ælfrith in the Chronicles, 1011, the archbishop is called—

"Se þe ær wes heafod  
Angelcynnes  
And cristendomes."