

has a great surface likeness to the rule of Basil, which alone has rivalled it in permanence, though far below it in diffusion and, it may be added, in services to humanity. Superior in flexibility and in the power of adapting itself in new conditions of circumstance and society to any rule which preceded it (and indeed to most of those devised later), the effect it produced in its own immediate day and for several centuries afterwards is almost incalculable.

Obedience, silence, humility; worship, study, and work; such are the ideas and employments with which this code of seventy-three chapters is occupied. It opens with a sermon or hortatory preface, and then proceeds to define the existing classes of monks, as divided into Cenobites, Anchorites, Sarabaites, living by twos and threes together without any fixed rule or lawful superior, and Gyrovagi, vagrant tramps who, even at that time, as more than a century earlier, continued to bring discredit on the monastic profession. It was one great aim of the Benedictine reform to extirpate these two latter classes, and the method adopted was the addition of a fourth vow, that of "stability," to the three usual pledges. This fourth vow bound the monk to continuance in his profession, and even to residence for life at the monastery in which he was professed, unless temporary absence or permanent transfer were permitted by the authorities, and thus struck directly against the temper of restlessness and desire for change which were such powerful factors in generating the irregular and wandering classes just named. Chapter ii. describes the qualities of an abbot, and also decrees that no distinctions of worldly rank or station are to be recognized amongst the inmates of the monastery. Chapter iii. is one of those which best enable us to estimate the foresight and good sense of Benedict. It enacts that the abbot is to call the entire body of the brethren together to deliberate on any weighty matter, and not to decide it till he has heard the counsel of even the very youngest; while in matters of less moment consultation with the elder members suffices. Chapter iv. enumerates the instruments of good works, summed up in seventy-two pithy maxims, mainly Scriptural in letter or spirit. Chapter v. is on the obedience of disciples. Chapter vi. is on silence, recommending spareness and wholesomeness of speech, but not laying down any hard-and-fast rules such as those of the Trappists of a later day. Chapter vii. treats of humility, including injunctions to the monk to confess his secret faults and thoughts to the abbot, to do nothing but what the common rule or the example of his seniors teaches, and to exhibit lowliness and meekness in outward bearing as well as in the inward spirit. Chapters ix.-xx. are occupied with directions about the performance of Divine service, so far as relates to the recitation of the Canonical Hours, seven of the day and one of the night. Chapter xxi. provides for the appointment of deans (officers over ten monks) in large monasteries, to be chosen by merit, and not by mere seniority. Chapter xxii. prescribes rules for the dormitory, each monk to have a separate bed with suitable coverings, and to sleep in his habit, and girded, so as to be ready to rise at a moment's notice, and a light is to be kept burning in the dormitory till morning. Eight chapters (xxiii.-xxx.) then deal with offenders, a graduated scale of penalties being provided: first, private admonition; next, separation from the brethren at meals and recreation; then scourging; and, finally, expulsion in the case of hardened offenders, but not until the abbot has used every means to soften and reclaim them. Even in this last event, the outcast may be received again, and that thrice, on the condition of forfeiting his seniority and descending to the lowest place. After the third expulsion, return was finally barred. Chapter xxxi. is on the character and duties of the cellarer, an important officer in monasteries; who was steward, and had the charge of all the stores, and the responsibility of serving them out as needed; while the next chapter provides for the appointment of inferior officers to take charge of the tools, clothes, and other goods belonging to the monastery. Chapter xxxiii. prohibits any monk to give, receive, or keep aught as his own without leave of the abbot, who is, however, bound to supply him with all necessities. Murmuring at anything in the manner of distribution is censured in the next chapter as a very grave offence. Chapter xxxv. ordains that the brethren are to serve in the kitchen by turns, unless excused by reason of sickness or some more important occupation, and that whoever is on duty on Saturday is to clean up for the week, and to deliver all the cloths and utensils to the cellarer in good condition for his successor in office. Chapter xxxvi., while warning the sick not to be impatient or exacting, gives careful directions for their comfort. They are to be placed in an infirmary and to be committed to the care of a competent attendant, are to be allowed baths as often as is expedient, and a flesh diet to promote their recovery, though against the rule for those in health. Old men and children are also to be dispensed from the rigour of the rule, and they may have their meals before the usual hours, instead of waiting for the others. Chapter xxxviii. directs that reading aloud during meals is to be practised, and that no conversation, even about the subject of the reading, is to be carried on by the brethren, who are to keep

silence, using signs if they need anything. The reader is to be appointed for a week, and to enter upon his duties on Sunday. He is to be allowed a little food before beginning his task, lest he should become faint, and is to finish his meal afterwards along with the kitcheners and waiters. And the readers are not to take turns of duty in order, but only such persons are to be appointed as can discharge the office satisfactorily. Chapters xxxix. and xl. prescribe the daily rations of food and drink. Two meals are allowed, consisting of two cooked dishes (*pulmentaria*), to permit a choice of food, lest one or other dish should be unsuitable to any one, and a third dish of fruit or young vegetables is granted as an occasional addition. A pound of bread is to be served out daily for each, though the abbot is empowered to increase the rations of such as had extra hard work to do; while the rations of children are to be proportionally diminished, and flesh-meat is forbidden to all except the sick and weak, but there is no prohibition of any flesh save that of four-footed beasts, thus leaving the use of poultry, eggs, and fish optional. One pint of wine daily is allowed to each monk, but the hesitation with which this is conceded is noteworthy; and, while the prior is empowered to increase the allowance if he judge it well, the brethren are told that voluntary abstinence is the best course, and that where a house is too poor to provide wine those debarred from it are not to murmur. Chapter xli. prescribes the hours for meals at different seasons of the year, care being taken that both meals shall be taken by daylight, without need of lamps. Chapter xlii. directs the monks to assemble in the evening for a reading, preferably of the *Collations* of Cassian, followed by compline, after which silence is to be strictly observed, save for some necessary cause. Chapters xliii.-xlv. impose penalties for minor breaches of rule, such as coming late to prayers or meals. Chapter xlvii. gives some further directions as to Divine service, throwing on the abbot or his deputy the responsibility of notifying the hour for it, and provides that no incompetent person shall be set to chant or read. Chapter xlviii., although brief, is one of the most important and characteristic in the rule. It is on daily manual labour, and begins with the pithy axiom, "Idleness is an enemy of the soul" (*Ociositas inimica est anime*). It proceeds to enjoin that the brethren are to distribute the time not already taken up with prayer, meals, and sleep, into periods of manual labour or devout reading. From Easter till the 1st October they are to work from prime till the fourth hour. From the fourth till nearly the sixth hour they are to read. On rising from meal-time after the sixth hour they are to rest in silence on their beds—the familiar *siesta* of warm countries—but those who prefer to read may do so, provided they disturb no one. Nones are to be said about the middle of the eighth hour (2.30 p.m.), and then work is to be resumed till evening. From the 1st October till the beginning of Lent they are to read till the second hour, then to say *terce*, after which to work till the ninth hour. At the ninth hour they are to leave off work, and after their meal to read spiritual books or the Psalms. In Lent they are to read from the morning till the third hour, then to work till the end of the tenth hour. And every one is to have a book given out to him from the library at the beginning of Lent, which he is to read through; while two senior brethren are to go the rounds during reading hours to see that the monks are actually reading, and neither lounging nor gossiping. On Sundays all are to read throughout the day, except such as have special duties to discharge; and if there be any who either cannot or will not read or meditate, some task to keep them from idling is to be assigned them. Sickly and delicate brethren are to be given light work, suitable to their health. Chapter xlix. suggests, without commanding, the adoption of some voluntary self-denial during Lent, to be undertaken with the abbot's approval only,—austerities without such sanction being denounced as vainglorious. Chapter l. directs that brethren who work at a distance, so as to be unable to attend common prayer, are to recite the office where they may happen to be. Chapter ii. prescribes that monks sent on an errand, and expecting to return the same day, are not to eat while out, unless they have special leave from the abbot. Chapter liii. gives a few directions as to behaviour in the oratory. Chapter liii. contains rules for the entertainment of guests. The most noteworthy provisions are that the abbot is licensed to break his fast with the guests, unless on a church fast-day, in order to bear them company at meal-times; that the kitchen for the abbot and guests is to be separate from the general kitchen, and served by the same two brethren for a year, to insure that no additional labour may fall on the ordinary kitcheners through the unexpected arrivals of strangers needing to be fed; that the guest-room be entrusted to a brother (the hospitaller), and that no monk shall speak to or mix with the guests unless by special appointment—a very salutary regulation, in view of the miscellaneous rout of visitors likely to apply for food and shelter. Chapter liv. forbids monks to receive letters, tokens, or gifts, even from their nearest kin, without the abbot's permission, or to give any such things to another; and the abbot is empowered to transfer presents to some person other than him for whom they were intended. Chapter lv. prescribes the dress, and, with Benedict's usual good sense, leaves it wholly in the abbot's discretion to provide clothing suitable to the climate and locality,

merely ruling that in temperate places a cowl and tunic, thick in winter and thin in summer, with a scapular (a sleeveless woollen garment passed over the head, and falling down over the breast and back) for work hours, as also shoes and stockings, all of the ordinary country make and cheapest kind, shall suffice. Each monk is to have a change of these garments, to allow of washing, and yet another for use when sent on a journey, to be of rather better materials, and to be kept in the general wardrobe when not in actual wear. The old clothes are to be given up when new ones are served out, and are to be laid by in the wardrobe for the poor. A straw mattress, blanket, quilt, and pillow are to be furnished for each bed; and in addition the abbot is to give every monk a knife, a pen, a needle, a handkerchief, and tablets. Chapter lvi. rules that the abbot is to take his meals with the guests and strangers, with the privilege, if guests be few, of inviting any of the brethren he chooses, so long as some seniors are left in charge. Chapter lvii. prescribes that craftsmen amongst the brethren are to work with the abbot's permission, and if their work is to be for sale, those who are entrusted with making the bargains are to deal honestly with purchasers, and to sell rather below the current trade price. Chapter lviii. lays down the rules for the admission of new members. It is not to be made too easy. The postulant is to be allowed to knock for entrance in vain for four or five days, then to be brought into the guest-room for a few days more, and so be transferred to the novice-house, where he is to remain under the charge of a senior monk for two months. If he persevere at the end of this time, the rule is to be read over to him, and the option of departing or remaining is to be offered. If he persevere, he is returned to the novice-house for six months' further probation, after which the rule is again read to him as before, and yet a third time after a further term of four months. Not till he has surmounted this final ordeal can he be admitted into the community, and before that is done he must divest himself of his property, either giving it to the poor, or making a deed of gift to the monastery. Then he is allowed to sign the act of profession, including the vow of stability, which he is to lay with his own hand on the altar. Chapter lix. provides for the dedication of young children, noble or poor, by their parents to the monastic life, and requires a promise from the latter never to endow the oblate with any property, directly or in trust, though they may give to the monastery if they please and reserve the life-income to themselves. Chapter lx. regulates the position of priests who desire to live in the monastery. They are to enjoy no relaxations or priority in virtue of their ecclesiastical rank, though the abbot may assign clerical functions to them; and a somewhat like rule is laid down for clerks in minor orders. Chapter lxi. provides for the reception of strange monks as guests, and for their admission if desiring to join the community. The abbot is enjoined to listen to any criticisms such a guest may offer, and is empowered to give him, if accepted as a new member, higher standing than that of his entrance, but is forbidden so to admit a monk of any known monastery without the consent or letters commendatory of its abbot. Chapter lxii. rules that the abbot may choose a monk for ordination as priest or deacon; but the ordinand is to rank in the house from the date of his admission, except when officiating, or if the community and the abbot single him out for promotion by merit. If he misbehave, he is to be reported to the bishop, and if continuing to misconduct himself, shall be expelled,—only, however, in case of obstinate disobedience to the rule. Chapter lxiii. lays down rules for the gradation of rank in the community, and warns the abbot against arbitrary government. Chapter lxiv. allows the abbot to be chosen either by the common consent of the whole community, or by a select electoral committee; and the lowest in standing may be chosen, if fit. In the event of a bad choice, the bishop of the diocese, the neighbouring abbots, or even the neighbouring laity, if having reason to think the election made for the purpose of keeping up abuses, may annul it and appoint another superior. Chapter lxv. speaks of the mischief occasioned in many monasteries by the rivalry of the provost or prior with the abbot, and advises that no such officer be appointed; yet, if the circumstances of the place need one, the abbot may name a brother to the post, but he is to be as entirely subject to the abbot as any other monk, and may be admonished, deposed, or expelled for misconduct. Chapter lxvi. directs the appointment of a porter to answer at the gate, and further recommends that every house shall have its own well, mill, garden, bakery, and handicraftsmen, to avoid the need of intercourse with the outer world. Chapter lxvii. directs that no monk shall quit the cloister without leave of the abbot, and that, on the return of any from a journey, they are to beg the prayers of the community for any faults they have committed during their absence, and are forbidden to speak of what they have heard or seen outside. Chapter lxviii. bids a monk who has received a hard or impossible command to undertake it patiently and obediently. If he find it beyond his powers, he may mention the cause quietly to his superior; and, if the command is still persisted in, he must obey as best he can. Chapter lxix. forbids monks to uphold or defend one another in the monastery, even their nearest of kin. Chapter lxx. forbids striking or excommunicating another, without the abbot's authority, and provides that children until fifteen, shall

be subject to discipline from all the monks; but any who shall chastise those above fifteen without the abbot's leave, or be unduly severe towards the younger, shall be himself punishable by rule. Chapter lxxi. lays down that the principle of obedience is to prevail throughout the community, not only towards the abbot, or his officers, but from the juniors towards their seniors. Chapter lxxii. is a brief exhortation to zeal; and chapter lxxiii. a note to the effect that the Benedictine rule is not offered as an ideal of perfection, or even as equal to the teachings of Cassian and Basil, but for mere beginners in the spiritual life, who may thence proceed further.

It has been necessary to make this detailed analysis of the rule, because no mere summary of its general scope conveys an adequate notion of it; and it plays so important a part in the history of European civilization that it is expedient to obtain a clear idea of its details as well as of its main outlines. The first peculiarity in it meriting attention is the absence of any severe austerities. Plain and bare as the food and lodging appear if tested by modern notions, yet it is to be remembered that what is called "comfort" is a wholly recent idea, and even still scarcely familiar, it may almost be said, out of Great Britain and its colonies. The scale of living appointed by the rule secures a greater abundance of the necessities of life, not only than was at all common amongst the Italian poor of the 6th century, but than is to be found amongst the humbler peasantry of any European country at the present day; while even the excluded superfluities entered but little into the habits of any save the very wealthy. Next, high thinking—the highest thought of the time—was united with this plain living, as the considerable stress laid upon reading attests. To this part of the code is due the great service performed by the Benedictines, both in the erection of schools, and in the preservation of almost all the remains of ancient Latin literature which have come down to us. It made it not only possible but easy for them to become a learned order, and it is a very imperfect estimate of the stride forward in this provision which Milman makes, when he views the injunctions as to reading in the mere light of expedients to fill up time somehow. If it were so, the hours for reading would have been fewer, shorter, and more occasional, merely rounding off the intervals between times of labour; but they are just as prominent and nearly as long as these. It is true that Benedict, whose own education had been abruptly broken off by his early retreat from Rome, did not specifically enjoin the pursuit of learning on his monks; but they borrowed the idea at once from his contemporary, the celebrated Cassiodorus, the real founder of monastic learning, of which his monastery of Viviers in Bruttium is the first known school. But the most valuable feature of the rule is the position of dignity which it assigns to work. It is scarcely possible to realize at the present day the dishonour into which toil of all kinds had sunk in the days of Benedict. Not only had the institution of slavery degraded many kinds of occupation, but the gradual disappearance from Italy of the yeoman class, ruined and exiled by the concentration of great estates (*latifundia*), or slain in the ceaseless battles of competitors for empire or of barbarian invaders, left few save serfs and bondsmen to till the soil, while the military habits of the invading tribes led them to contemn any life except that of a warrior. It is the special glory of Benedict that he taught the men of his day that work, sanctified by prayer, is the best thing which man can do, and the lesson has never been wholly lost sight of since.

The new institute spread with even more astonishing rapidity than the earlier monachism which it practically supplanted in the West, and its history thenceforward is, with one important exception, that of Western conventual life for some centuries. Moreover, besides marking the close of the first or tentative era of monachism, when all kinds of crude essays and experiments were being made,

and being itself the beginning of a new and settled order, it has the distinction of giving greater dignity and weight to the female side of monachism than had been the rule previously. Numerous and crowded as convents for women were in the early church, there is little evidence of their exercising any powerful influence as a factor in the practical religious life of the time, and though a few individual women of eminence, a Euphrosyne or a Macrina, illustrate the annals of the common life in the East, yet as a class the Basilian nuns do not play at all so important a part in ecclesiastical history as the spiritual descendants of Scholastica, sister of Benedict; for the same flexibility and comparative gentleness of his rule which made it healthier for men than its precursors were still more effective when dealing with the more sensitive organization of women. Accordingly, the Benedictine nuns offer a far greater variety of type than their Eastern sisters, and exerted a much more visible influence upon society, even before those newer forms of the organization of women's work in the church were devised which have given it much additional importance. Further, whereas the most serious and well-founded objection alleged against monachism is that by parting large companies of men and women irrevocably from each other, and treating this severance as an indispensable condition of the highest kind of life, it has tended to throw discredit on marriage and the family, and so to weaken society, which is based on family life alone, a strong counter-plea can be put in for the Benedictines. Not merely are they free, as already remarked, from the anti-social tendencies of Oriental monachism, which actually did disintegrate society in Egypt, but their institute was the one corrective in the early Middle Ages of those habits and ideas which tended to degrade the position of women. The cloister was not alone the single secure shelter for women who had no strong arm to rely on; but it provided the only alternative profession to marriage, and that one recognized by public opinion as of even higher distinction, and opening to women positions of substantial rank and authority, less precarious than the possession of temporal estates, which might only serve to attract cupidity, and so invite attack. The abbess of a great Benedictine house was more than the equal of the wife of any save a very great noble; and, as single women were thus not obliged to look to wedlock as the only path to safety and consequence, they were enabled to mate on more equal terms, and were less likely to be viewed as the mere toys or servants of the stronger sex.

But the special eminence of the Benedictines, in which they were without even the semblance of rivalry till the Jesuits arose, is that they were a missionary, civilizing, and educational body. It is true that the first successful efforts to convert the barbarian conquerors of the empire somewhat precede their entrance on that field of labour, and Ulfila amongst the Meeso-Goths, Valentinus in Bavaria, and Severinus in Austria had achieved much even before Benedict was born; but their work needed to be taken up on a larger scale, and by a permanent organization not liable to be imperilled by the death of any one missionary or group of missionaries. And the task of laying the very foundations of civilized society, apart from the question of religious conversion, was as yet quite unessayed. It was as teachers of what for those times was scientific agriculture, as drainers of fens and morasses, as clearers of forests, as makers of roads, as tillers of the reclaimed soil, as architects of durable and even stately buildings, as exhibiting a visible type of orderly government, as establishing the superiority of peace over war as the normal condition of life, as students in the library which the rule set up in every monastery, as the masters in schools open not

merely to their own postulants but to the children of secular families also, that they won their high place in history as benefactors of mankind. No doubt there was another side to this picture, even before the order began to deteriorate collectively; but the good actually effected far exceeded the evils which may have accompanied it. The Benedictine institute was carried to Sicily by Placidus in 534; to France by Maurus, Simplicius, and their companions in 543; to Spain at a somewhat later and uncertain date; but did not touch any of the Teutonic countries till the very end of the century. That work was chiefly accomplished by another agency, that of the Celtic monks, themselves disciples of a Christianity presumably carried to Ireland from Gaul, and following a rule seemingly adapted from that of Pachomius. The early history and constitution of Irish and Scottish monachism are too obscure to be set down with any confidence, but it is at least clear that it was mainly tribal in organization, and even less subject to episcopal authority than the Eastern and Italian forms. The same holds good of the Welsh communities which survived the Saxon invasions of Britain. Legend is abundant, trustworthy record is scanty, and only a few facts can be rescued from oblivion. Amongst them may be included the introduction into Scotland of a species of monachism resembling that of Augustine, by Ninian, first missionary of the southern Picts, who borrowed his institute from Martin of Tours, and set up a cathedral, a house of canons, and a school of learning at Whithorn (*Candida Casa*) in Galloway before the close of the 4th century, himself dying, it is thought, about 432 (*Ælred, Vit. Nin.*). The foundation of the second model of Welsh monachism (the first has gone below the horizon of history) is ascribed to the bishops Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes, who visited Britain in 429 to combat the prevalent Pelagianism, itself a form of opinion due to a British monk. They are alleged to have been, directly or through their disciples, founders of great monasteries and schools at Hentland on the Wye, at Llantwit, Llancarvan, Doewinni, Bangor, Whitland, &c.; while among the more famous names connected with these and similar houses may be mentioned Asaph, David, Illtud, Dubric, Cadoc, Gildas the Wise, and Kentigern, the last-named being a zealous missionary. But Ireland was the true stronghold of Celtic monachism, and before the close of the 5th century was already thickly planted with religious houses. Armagh, Clonard, Aran, Lismore, Cluain-ednech, Clonfert, and, above all, Benchor or Bangor, the famous abbey of Comgall, on the coast of Down, near the entrance of Belfast Lough, are some of the more conspicuous foundations; and there are numberless stories recorded of the learning, the austerities, and the miracles of their inmates. The chief interest they have for the student of ecclesiastical history lies rather, however, in the colonies they sent forth than in their home operations, and it is to the great foundation of Columba (521-597) at Iona, the hive of missions and home of Western learning, more than to any Irish monastery, except Bangor, that the Celtic raid on heathenism is mainly due. The rule of Columba resembles the Benedictine in prescribing three kinds of employment—prayer, work, and reading; while under the last-named head not only Scripture but all attainable secular learning was included, and it is also certain that the work of copying MSS. in a careful and beautiful fashion, which became so important a part of monastic occupation, reached maturity first at Iona. It remains only to say in this connexion that the discipline of Iona, apparently borrowed from Irish use, made the abbot supreme, not

¹ Published by Dean Reeves in Colton's *Visitation of Derry*, p. 109, and in another form by Haldan and Stubbs, *Councils*, &c., ii. p. 119.

merely over his monks, as in other rules, but over bishops also, whose office was simply that of ordaining such as were to be promoted to holy orders;¹ they had no territorial jurisdiction as rulers, because the monastery, not the diocese, was the primary local unit in Celtic Christianity, and thus a great founder or abbot was of more account and power than a bishop. Another famous pupil of Irish monachism, Columbanus, trained at Benchor along with his companion Gallus, exercised a powerful influence on the religious life of his time (543-615), not only as the founder of important monasteries at Luxeuil, Fontenay, and Bobbio, and as scholar and missionary, but also as the author of a rule, more severe both in its provisions and in its penalties than the Benedictine, with which it disputed for a considerable time the first place, and which it might very probably have displaced, had not the Benedictine institute, as of Italian origin, found that favour at Rome which a Celtic code, bearing more than one trace of divergence from Latin usages, could scarcely expect. With the mention of another prominent name in the list of distinguished Celtic reformers and missionaries, that of Fursey, abbot of Lagny near Paris (c. 650), we close this sketch of the Celtic movement in the 6th and 7th centuries, merely adding that its extent and influence may be partly estimated from the number of monasteries founded in England and various parts of the Continent by Irish monks, and the list of Celtic saints recoverable from the different martyrologies and similar records. The former amount to more than one hundred; the latter to nearly three hundred.

Returning to the Benedictines, the most important event in their history after the consolidation of their institute was the favour they received from Gregory the Great, himself once a monk, who set himself to reform monastic discipline, then at a very low ebb save where the new foundation was at work. He enacted several regulations for the better government of monasteries, such as prohibiting the admission of any persons under eighteen, exacting two years' novitiate, enforcing inclosure, visiting relinquishment of monachism with imprisonment for life, and finally, in the Lateran synod of 601, exempting monasteries in all cases from the jurisdiction of bishops (a measure due, it appears, to episcopal misconduct and oppression rather than to monastic ambition), thereby abolishing the measure of control which the eighth canon of Chalcedon and the legislation of Justinian I. in 535 had left in the hands of the diocesan, and leaving only the still surviving check, that the bishop's consent was required for the erection of any new monastery. The mission of the monk Augustine to England in 596 was, however, destined to produce more immediate and fortunate results than this piece of legislation. It brought Latin monachism into a part of Britain whence Welsh monachism had been long extirpated, and though little success attended the original foundation at Canterbury, yet two other houses were destined to be the cradles of great things. Jarrow-on-Tyne, founded by Benedict Biscop, trained the illustrious Bede, to whom is due the monastic school of York, which in its turn sent out Alcuin to reconstitute European learning under the fostering hand of Charlemagne; Nutecll in Hampshire reared Boniface to be the apostle of Germany, and founder of one of the most celebrated and powerful monasteries of the Middle Ages, that of Fulda. Nevertheless, decline set in very soon,

¹ So Bede tells us: "Habere autem solet ipsa insula rectorem semper abbatem presbyterum, cujus juri et omnis provincia et ipsi etiam episcopi, ordine inusitato, debeant esse subiecti, juxta exemplum primi doctoris illius, qui non episcopus sed presbyter extitit et monachus" (*Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 4); though, after all, the principle is precisely that of the Benedictine rule as applied to priests.

and the 8th century was a time of deterioration amongst both the seculars and the regulars. To amend the former, Chrodegang, bishop of Metz, instituted in 760 an order of Canons Regular, living by a rule carefully based on and adapted from the Benedictine, with the bishop as abbot, the archdeacon as prior, and with a general likeness in all the details of community life, except that there was no obligation to poverty, and the canons were allowed to enjoy any private property and such fees as they might receive for the performance of religious rites. This rule became extremely popular, was sanctioned by the council of Aix-la-Chapelle in 816, and was adopted in most cathedrals of France, Germany, and Italy within fifty years after, besides making some way in England also. It prevailed till the institute of the Austin Canons was substituted for it. And, as regards the laxity amongst regulars at this time, there is extant a very interesting letter from Bede addressed to Egberht, archbishop of York, calling his attention to the excessive number of monasteries in northern England which were conducted without a rule, and were often merely fictitious institutions, founded by laymen with the object of obtaining charters of privilege which would exempt them from civil and military burdens,—such laymen then assuming, without warrant, the title and powers of abbots, and filling their houses either with monks expelled from their own societies, or with lay retainers induced to receive the tonsure and promise obedience. Bede calls on the archbishop to convene a synod and institute a visitation for the correction of these abuses. The cause of the decline of the monasteries is to be sought in their popularity, which brought them great estates and other kinds of wealth, leading to the relaxation of the vow of poverty, which was interpreted as merely forbidding individual property; in the growth of pluralities; and in yet another cause which at first does not seem to lead in the same direction—the growing custom of ordaining monks, hitherto laymen, to fit them better for missionary work. But this led, not only to much more intercourse with the society of a lax and turbulent age than suited with claustral rules, but to ambition, as it became customary to fill several sees with monks from certain abbeys. The declension, notably in the habits of the superiors of wealthy houses, had become very marked, when a reformer arose in the person of a second Benedict, of Aniane in the modern department of the Hérault (750-821), who, in gratitude for an escape from drowning in the Ticino in 774, adopted the monastic life, and changed his name Witiza to that of the great Nursian monk. But he accounted the Benedictine rule too easy, and adopted instead the severest practices of Eastern monachism. He quitted the house of Seine, where he had been professed, and betook himself with a couple of companions to Aniane, where by 782 he had built a monastery for a thousand monks, with dependent cells, and collected a considerable library, paying special attention to the acquisition of the rules of the different monastic bodies both of East and West. He was transferred by his warm patron, the emperor Louis the Pious, to an abbey built for him near Aix-la-Chapelle, whence he acted as in some sense a superior-general and inspector of all the Benedictine houses, and drew up a harmony of all the rules he had collected to aid him in the task of reform. What he actually effected was the practical abolition of most of the competing codes, so as to leave the Benedictine in nearly sole possession, and to procure the enactment of a large body of canons in the council of Aix-la-Chapelle before mentioned, which laid down detailed provisions for the government of monasteries, whose very minuteness made them vexatious and ultimately intolerable, so that the reform lasted scarcely two

generations from its inception. Parallel with the time of de-cision and partial reform just described was the rise and decay of the noble and far-sighted school-system projected by Charlemagne, and entrusted to the superintendence of Alcuin. Its relation to monachism as distinguished from the history of education, is that one of its main features was the capitulary of 789, which directed that, besides the primary school attached to each monastery, all the more important houses were to found and open secondary ones also, with a higher range of subjects, even if such schools were interior or claustral, and only for the junior monks and novices, not exterior and free to the general public. Several of these schools rose to considerable efficiency and repute, notably those of Fulda, St Gall, Tours, and Rheims, discharging to some extent the functions of universities. But the weakness of the later Carolings involved this plan in the troubles which ended in the break-up of the empire of the Franks, and the 10th century saw the end of it. In England monachism shared the common destiny of decay. It had been marked during the period known as the Heptarchy by a degree of royal favour unparalleled elsewhere; for it may almost be said that the number of kings, queens, and persons of royal race who here betook themselves voluntarily to the cloister—and not under political compulsion, as often in contemporary France—exceeds the aggregate of those in all other countries. Yet it is likely that the fashion set in this wise helped to hasten decay, by inducing many persons to adopt the monastic life with little taste for its restrictions; and it is certain that secularity (chiefly manifesting itself in costly dress), riotousness, and drinking had become frequent amongst the English monks of the 8th and the early part of the 9th century. The decay was further precipitated by the spread of the institute of Chrodegang, which thinned the supply of recruits to monachism proper, as the easier life of canons regular was preferred. The same cause affected the convents of nuns, for an order of canonesses was established about this time on similar lines. The one bright spot in the history of 9th century monachism is the conversion of Sweden by Anskar, a monk trained in the famous house of Old Corbie in Picardy, which, albeit Benedictine, had been mainly planted by a colony from the stricter Columbanian house of Luxeuil, and had thus kept the traditions of a purer time almost unimpaired.

The 10th century—emphatically the "Dark Age" or "Age of Lead"—was the time when monachism, both in East and West, touched its lowest point. Three causes contributed to this in the West:—first may be placed the raids of the Northmen; next, the growth of the feudal system, converting abbots into secular lords in virtue of the lands held by their monasteries being chargeable with feudal obligations; and lastly, the seizure and appropriation of monastic revenues by kings, princes, and bishops. The last of these causes was at work in the East also, further complicated, as we learn from the decrees of a council held at Constantinople in 861, by the foundation of monasteries intended from the first merely as sources of pecuniary advantage to the founders; although the success of Greek monks in the conversion of Bulgaria, Moravia, and, somewhat later, southern Russia, showed that the cloister had not become quite effete even under the conditions of the Byzantine empire in that era.

What the state of things was in the West, even at the outset of the 10th century, may be learned from the language of the council of Trosley, near Soissons, in 909. It speaks of the ruin of many abbeys by the heathen, and of the disorderly condition of many which survived. Monks abandon their profession; married lay

abbots, with guards and hunting retinue, occupy the cloisters of monks, canons, and nuns; and the rules are universally disregarded. But, as constantly before, so then, reformers were at hand. Berno first abbot of Cluny in France, Dunstan in England, and, somewhat later, Anno archbishop of Cologne in Germany, undertook, and to a considerable extent effected, the work of reform. Only the first of these, however, calls for special notice here; and it will suffice to say that Berno, after having been abbot of Beaume, was set by William the Pious, duke of Aquitaine, over his new foundation of Cluny in 910, where he speedily initiated a reform of the Benedictine rule, whose very name, and even the memory of the reforms of Benedict of Aniane, had been forgotten in nearly all the so-called religious houses of the time. This new rule is the first example of the establishment of an order within an already existing order, of which it still formed part, many subsequent instances of which occur later. It was stricter than the original code in several particulars, notably as regards fasting and silence; and it laid especial stress on liturgical splendour. Cluny became the head of a large number of dependent houses, and, under the government of Berno's successors, Odo, Aymard, Majolus (who refused the papacy), Odilo, and Hugh I, rose to great eminence, but was nearly brought to ruin by Pontius, abbot in 1109, who was soon deposed, and succeeded by Hugh II, and then by Peter the Venerable, who completed the work of drafting the statutes of the new order, begun long before, but not finished, by his predecessors. In his time (1093-1156) the Cluniacs spread over not only the whole of France, but had houses in Italy, Spain, England, Palestine, and in Constantinople itself, and the "Arch-Abbot," as he was called, had more than 300 churches, colleges, and monasteries under his authority. It is enough to say, with regard to Dunstan's reforms in England, that they were directed to two objects: the substitution of monks for secular canons, and the introduction of the Benedictine rule, till then practically unknown in England, into the monasteries,—for the monachism introduced by Augustine belonged to an earlier type.

The 11th century is noticeable for several events in the history of monachism; first of which stands the foundation of the Order of Camaldoli by Romuald, early in the 11th century, a strict community of hermits, living by the system of an Eastern laura of detached cells; but this society has never been of much importance. The Order of Vallombrosa, founded by John Gualbert in 1039, is more remarkable, as being the first to introduce the grade of "lay-brothers," which plays so large a part in later monastic annals,—the object being at once to open the cloister to a class previously barred by the obligation to recite the office in choir, which necessitated a certain degree of education, and to lighten the strain on the choir-brethren by relegating the rough work of the monastery to an inferior grade of inmates, thus securing more time for reading and meditation for the cultured monks. A series of struggles between bishops and abbots in this century in respect of monastic jurisdiction—the practice having constantly vacillated in despite of Gregory the Great's decision 400 years earlier—issued mainly, though not wholly, in favour of exemption, and the reforms pushed everywhere rehabilitated monachism in popularity. The great stimulus given to the spirit of ecclesiastical discipline and energy by the Hildebrandine movement continued not only during the reign of Gregory VII, but for a considerable time after: amongst its results were the Order of Grammont, founded in 1074, but not transferred to the place whence it is named till 1124; the far more celebrated and influential Carthusians, a peculiarly ascetic

community, established by Bruno at the Chartreuse, near Grenoble, in 1084, which still boasts that it is the only order which has never been reformed on the ground of deviation from its original institute; and the Order of Fontevraud, founded for both monks and nuns (more strictly, canons and canonesses) by Robert of Arbrissel in 1100. Regarding the last named two remarkable facts may be cited: that the founder in 1115 entrusted the superior-generalship of the whole institute to the abess of the nuns; and that he provided that new abbesses should always be elected from secular women, as having more practical knowledge of affairs and capacity for administration than women trained in a cloister. There is yet one order more belonging to this period of new foundations, of higher note than most—that of the Cistercians, founded by Robert of Molesme in 1098 at Cîteaux, near Dijon. This society, chiefly famous as that to which Bernard of Clairvaux belonged, carried its asceticism into a region whence the other monastic bodies had banished it, that of Divine service. The barest simplicity in buildings, church furniture, and worship was enjoined by the rule: plain linen or fustian vestments, iron chandeliers, brass or iron censers, no plate save a chalice and a tube (and those of silver rather than of gold), no pictures, stained glass, or images, and only a few crosses of painted wood, and the most rigid simplicity in chanting,—such was the ceremonial code with which they challenged the costly ritual of Cluny. A more durable innovation was the institution of "General Chapters," to which every abbot of a Cistercian house had a right to be summoned to share in the deliberations held at the chief establishment, and which he was even bound to attend, that, while each dependent house thus obtained a representation in the parliament of the order, it could be called on to render to the central authority an account of its own doings. The Austin Canons, already mentioned, were probably founded at Avignon about 1061, and the Order of Prémontré by Norbert in 1120. This society was simply a stricter body of Austin Canons, standing towards them much as Cluny did to the Benedictines. But there are yet two other institutes of this active period which differ from all previous foundations. So far, the new orders are merely modifications, more or less sweeping, of the original Egyptian system, but the crusades gave birth to two entirely unprecedented forms of monachism:—the Military Orders, of which the most celebrated are the Templars, the Hospitallers, and the Teutonic Knights; and convents of women, affiliated to these orders, who were appointed to serve in the lazaret-houses, hospitals, and similar institutions attached to them, and whose rule, for the first time in monastic history, was drawn up on a distinctly active and not a contemplative basis. Work of the sort had been done long before, but only as a casual accident, not as the primary object of a community.

The military orders arose in a more accidental fashion than any other variety of monachism, being due to the desire felt to lessen the perils which attended pilgrimage to Jerusalem, then almost as much part of the religious craving of Christendom as the hajj to Mecca is with devout Moslems. The Templars were at first designed only as an armed escort to protect the visitors from attack, and the idea of permanent guardianship of the Holy Places did not shape itself till later; while the Hospitallers (afterwards famous as Knights of Rhodes and of Malta, as the main bulwark of Christendom against the Turks, and as maintaining the police of the Mediterranean against all pirates and rovers), borrowed the first idea of their institute from the knightly order of St Anthony of Vienne, founded in Dauphiné about 1095, and devoted themselves originally to tending-sick pilgrims at Jerusalem. The Teutonic Knights date from the third crusade, and owe their foundation to

the sufferings of the duke of Swabia's army at the siege of Acre, as it would seem that the Hospitallers were either unable or unwilling to supply the needed assistance. These knights, when at last the Eastern crusades were abandoned, turned their arms against the heathen of Prussia, which they conquered, as also Livonia, Courland, and Pomerania, besides keeping the Slavonic enemies of Germany in check by frequent raids into Lithuania and Poland, holding their ground as a sovereign order for three centuries, till the Reformation brought about their fall. The common characteristic of all these orders was the union of the seemingly incompatible qualities of the monk and the soldier in the same persons, of the convent and the barrack in the same house. But the contrast was not so sharp to mediæval eyes as it would be to modern ones; for while knighthood was surrounded with religious ceremonies and sanctions on the one hand, and on the other the feudal rank of bishops and abbots made them in some sense military chiefs, occasionally even taking the field in person, there was no great difficulty in accepting the permanent combination of what was often found casually united. The military orders passed away when their work was ended: the Templars, as the victims of a great crime, closed by a ghastly tragedy; the Hospitallers, and those Spanish and Portuguese orders which were enrolled as regiments against the Arab invaders of the Peninsula, though titularly still existing, yet really ceased to be more than a name when the Moslem power in Europe was finally broken. But the active organization of women was a more fruitful germ, and has never since ceased to put forth new developments, varying with the noticed wants of each period. To this epoch belongs also the beginning of that policy of the Roman see of utilizing the monastic orders, won over by special privileges and exemptions, as a body of supporters—almost a militia—more to be relied on than the secular clergy, and thereby the seed of conflict between seculars and regulars, destined to work much evil later, was sown, and also the beginning made of that denationalization of monachism which tended from the first to its unpopularity and decay.

It was found that a new order was the best safety-valve for enthusiasm which might become dangerous if discouraged, but which could be made a valuable ally if allowed to take shape in a fresh society, hoping to surpass all its precursors; and it is worth remarking that the one occasion when this wise policy was departed from, when Peter Waldo vainly sought in 1179 recognition and sanction from Pope Alexander III. for his proposed institute of mission preachers, gave rise to a sect (the Waldenses) which is still existing, and which has given trouble to the Roman Church quite disproportionate to its numbers and influence. The Carmelites, founded by Berthold of Calabria on Mount Carmel about 1180, and incorporated under rule by Albert, Latin patriarch of Jerusalem in 1209, were the last order of importance which sprang up at this time; for the Gilbertines, an English order founded at Senpringham in Lincolnshire in 1148, curious chiefly for their double monasteries for men and women; the Beguines, c. 1170 (who are, however, notable for their semi-secular and parochial organization, whence many later active bodies have borrowed hints); the Humiliati, c. 1196; and the Trinitarians, for the ransom of captives amongst the Moors and Saracens, founded by John de Matha and Felix de Valois in 1197, never rose to great influence or popularity, though the Servites, an order of the year 1223, became powerful in Italy. This period of rapid multiplication was quickly followed by one of equally rapid decay, the first to show clear tokens of degeneracy being the once rigid Cistercians, who never recovered their old moral footing, and who, it may be mentioned, were accountable for much of that hatred of the Church of the Pale in Ireland