

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONVERSION OF IRELAND AND ENGLAND.

Elements in Celtic Paganism favourable to Christianity—British Christianity in the Roman Period—Pelagius and Germanus—St. Patrick—Activity of Irish Missionaries—Scotic Christianity enters England from the North—St. Augustine—Roman versus Scotie Christianity—The Early Bishoprics—Rapid Conversion of the Saxons—Favoured by a large surviving British Element—Condition of Ireland before the fifth century—Ireland the first field for enquiry.

Who were the first to bring Christianity to Britain,¹ and whence they came, is entirely unknown. That they came by way of Gaul would seem obvious ; that they were of the Gallic Church is quite another matter, and the interest subsequently shown in the British Church by that of Gaul can be explained without assuming that the one was the daughter of the other. There is a good deal to be said for the view that the first missionaries came ultimately from Africa and Carthage, rather than from Italy and Rome. Quite possibly those are right who argue that there were no other first missionaries than traders or legionaries, who brought and spread the faith by unofficial means.²

¹ 'We may pass by all attempts at the discovery of an apostolic foundation for the British Church,' Bright, *Lectures on Church History*, p. 2.

² According to the Welsh *Triads* (18), Christianity was introduced by Bran, the father of Caradoc (Caractacus), who had been carried to Rome as a hostage with

his son. Hence his was ranked as first among the 'three holy families' of Britain, the others being those of Cunedda and Brychan. There is nothing particularly improbable in the story, which is corroborated by *Triad* 35, and by *Bonedd Sant Ynys Prydain*. Tradition declares Llanilid, Glamorgan, to have been the site of the

There were Christians here in the days when Rome was still officially pagan, possibly quite early in those days, and they must have found themselves amongst a population of whom the vast majority belonged by tradition to the religion of the druidical time, just when the whole elaborate druidical system had been broken up,¹ and the newly imported Roman paganism had as yet taken no real hold upon the Britons.² The field was in fact cleared for the new faith, and if there is any truth in the confident assertion that Druidism taught *inter alia* the doctrine of a life after death, at the outset the new faith had in common with the old order one most important tenet of which neither the religion nor the philosophy of Rome took cognisance.³ Origen further declares that the Celtic religion, as interpreted by the Druids, might pass for a form of monotheism.⁴ Yet more important is the fact that Celtic paganism and Christianity were alike, albeit in different senses, centred in the cult of the dead; for the earliest known 'churches' of Christianity were those hewn as mortuary chapels in the rock of the catacombs. Thus both in doctrine and in ritual the two religions had very much in common. It has even been argued that the popularity of the Pelagian heresy in Britain was due to its embodying another druidical doctrine, namely that of the freedom of the will.⁵

first Christian 'church' in Wales. It is very near to Llanilltyd, of the antiquity of which there is no question.

¹ Religions, other than those invented by students and philosophers, die very hard, and that of the Britons, rooted in the primordial fact of death, would die as hard as any. The Romano-Britons may have lost their hierarchy and their organisation, but they would not lose all at once those fundamental ideas upon which that hierarchy had played and that organisation had been built up. Not even the Romans could make a people religious by law, and there is little evidence that they tried to do so in Britain.

² Roman official paganism of the first century was an eclectic and artificial religion made up of odds and ends; much of it had no root in the Romans' past, and such part of it as had root was scarcely official, or was thrust into the background. There is little to show that the official religion ever took any hold at all upon the mass of the Britons, the *pagani*.

³ There was neither religion nor philosophy behind this particular doctrine of Druidism. Like everything else in the system, it was purely political: it was calculated to inspire contempt of death and reckless courage in war. So says the matter-of-fact Caesar (*B.G.* vi, 14, 5), who had been seen something of its fruits. At grips with Rome, Druidism had excuse enough for a doctrine which was not even at that date extraordinary (Strabo, § 197). Fifteen hundred years later the Aztecs were teaching the same thing with exactly the same object, but with vastly less excuse.

⁴ So Borlase, *Age of the Saints*, p. 30, referring to Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, p. 3.

⁵ This was however a doctrine upon which Roman paganism had also a good deal to say through the lips of the Stoics. But the Druids no more 'made' the religion of the Celts than the Stoics and Epicureans made that of the Greeks and Romans. See above, ch. xiii.

Tertullian declared¹ that the faith of Christ had by his time prevailed even 'in lands of the Britons so remote as never to have yielded submission to the Romans.' Origen, Athanasius, Chrysostom and others make remarks involving the same implication. Unluckily there are no means of deciding whether these utterances express literal truths or are mere 'rhetorical flourishes.' Irenaeus, listing the various Churches of the West in 176, does not mention any Church of Britain.² The first event in the history of British Christianity which can possibly be dated is the martyrdom of St. Alban at Verulamium.³ Even the alleged presence of British bishops at the Synod of Arles (314) is not above suspicion, and if it were it would not justify the picture of a Roman Britain covered at that date with churches and elaborately organised by parishes and dioceses.⁴ The only concrete facts upon which to go are the discovery, amidst the ruins of Roman Silchester, of a building which was probably a Christian church of about 350; the missionary activity of Ninian in Galloway *circa* 400, and his building there, at Whithorn near Burrow Head in Wigtownshire, a church of stone⁵; the survival to Augustine's days of one, or possibly two, buildings which had been used as churches at Canterbury⁶; and the admitted fact that Christianity in Wales has enjoyed an unbroken, if precarious, continuity from Roman times. This does not mean that the whole population of Wales in the fifth century was Christian, or that even where it had maintained itself in Wales the new faith was either very deeply rooted or very sincerely practised. The Christian Welsh of that date were probably a small minority of the population, whose practice as Christians left very much to be desired. Over the greater part of England the invasions and incursions of Saxons and of Picts, which

¹ *Adv. Iudaeos*, vii. Bright (*Lectures*, p. 4) believed the utterance to belong to the closing years of the second century (196-201). Newell (*Hist. Welsh Church*, p. 7) accepts it as a statement of fact, and dates it not later than 208.

² Dafen Jones, *Early Cymru and their Church*, p. 36.

³ Haddan and Stubbs (*Councils*, i, 6) put it in 306. The *A.-S. Chronicle* and *Book of Llandaff* put it 20 years earlier (286). There does not seem to be any good reason

to doubt the fact of the martyrdom, but there are good reasons to question the later date (McClure, *British Place-Names*, p. 70).

⁴ Professor Stokes (*Ireland and the Celtic Church*, ch. i) was undoubtedly too sweeping in his assertion that 'By the close of the fourth century Christianity must have prevailed universally among the British Celts.'

⁵ Bede, *H.E.* iii, iv, § 158, and below, ch. xxii.

⁶ Below, ch. xxii.

had destroyed most of the external tokens of Christianity, suppressed all public profession of that faith, and driven most of its remaining adherents into the fastnesses of Wales¹ and Cornwall and Strathclyde, led inevitably to a disastrous decline both of religion and of morals. Under the circumstances it is as certain as anything can be that the bulk of the Cymru, left 'as sheep without a shepherd,' would revert to the practices of paganism; and that that paganism, itself a discredited and shattered system, would preserve only what was most degraded and least desirable. The case of Christianity in Caledonia was at least as bad. St. Patrick indeed declared its people to be apostates.

In 431 the Council of Ephesus, confirming the verdicts of earlier synods, gave the evil eminence of a first-class heresy to the doctrines of Pelagius, and their much persecuted author disappears from history. He was a Celt,² and although he seems to have spent small part of his active life in Britain, it was but natural that his countrymen should be drawn towards the views of that 'great fat hound from Albion,' even had not the Church at large, and St. Jerome in particular, been at such pains to advertise him. 'Persecution is ever an ill way to plant a religion.' This suspicion of Pelagianism was however a reason the more for the sending of a revivalist mission to Britain, whither accordingly came from Gaul the famous bishop Germanus³ and his less illustrious colleague Lupus of Troyes (429). In the following year these militant prelates, who had already gained an easy victory over the advocates of Pelagianism, gained one much more sensational over a pagan force, Saxons and Picts combined, who were raiding into northern Wales. This was the famous 'Alleluia Victory' (430), of which the scene is usually laid in Flintshire at or near Maesgarmon.⁴

¹ Chaucer, *Man of Law's Tale*, vv. 544-546,

'To Walys fledde the Cristyanytee
Of olde Britons dwellynge in this ile;
Ther was hir refut for the meene
while.'

² Pelagius is said to be a Greek echo of his native name, which was either Morgan or Morien (*mor* = *pelagus*). St. Jerome says he was an Irish Celt: *habet progeniem*

Scoticae gentis, de Britannorum vicinia (Praef. ad. Comment. in Jerem. lib. iii).

³ Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. His name reappears in Wales as Garmon (Armon) in such forms as Maesgarmon and Llanarmon.

⁴ 'The Field of Germanus.' It is a mile from Mold, and close to the borders of the parish of Llanarmon, 'The monastery of St. Germanus.'

Two years later (432) landed Patrick¹ in Ireland to commence the conversion of its people, and so successful was he that the foundations which he laid have never been uprooted. A son of the sister of St. Martin of Tours, he had been trained at Lérins and Tours for his life-work. The part taken by the Church of Gaul in safe-guarding or furthering the faith in Britain and Ireland—and even in Scotland, for Ninian dedicated his church at Whithorn to St. Martin of Tours—must be emphasised as possibly explaining some peculiarities of British and Irish usage. Whence the Gallic Church itself derived its own peculiarities of use need not be discussed here. Monasticism is the point chiefly concerned.

Tradition declares that the first Christian church in Ireland was that consecrated by Patrick near Armagh, and from that day to this called *Sabhall*,² 'the Barn.' His greatest day was when he met and discomfited the Druids of all the tribes of Ireland in their national assembly on the hill of Tara. He died³ at Sabhall at a date unknown, having founded, so it is said, as many churches as there are days in the year, and consecrated no less than 450 bishops.⁴

Within a century from his demise the Irish Christians were sending missionaries of their own to Friesland, to Burgundy, and to Switzerland, and in 563⁵ landed Columba at Hy (Icolumkil, Iona) to essay the conversion of the

¹ There are vague legends that Patrick was preceded by other missionaries, of whom nothing is known historically. The student has his choice between two extremes, one of which declares that there was no such person as St. Patrick, while the other avers that there were at least ten persons of that name. According to one view he represents a Euhemerised pagan god; according to another he was a converted Druid. There is as much difference of opinion regarding his birthplace. See J. B. Bury, *Life of St. Patrick*; Whitley Stokes, *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*; and W. C. Borlase, *Age of the Saints*.

² Pronounced *Saul*.

³ Even in the ninth century (Nennius, § 55) the place of his burial was unknown (cf. *Three Middle Irish Homilies*, p. 37: 'Moses and St. Patrick were very much alike in other matters,' and also in that 'the burial-places of both are uncertain'). Legend says

it was at Downpatrick—St. Patrick's *dun*—but Prof. Bury sets this aside and leaves the choice between Sabhall and Armagh. If so important a fact as this be in doubt, it is clear that other so-called facts of his life must be very dubious. According to St. Bernard his relics were at Armagh in the twelfth century, and his tomb (*lipsana Patricii*; *ferta*) is frequently mentioned.

⁴ In the Celtic Church only a bishop could celebrate the Eucharist, and there were no parishes and no territorial dioceses. The priest corresponded rather to what we call a deacon, the bishop to what we call a priest. The abbat of a monastery was commonly (not necessarily) a bishop, and every Christian settlement in the Ireland of St. Patrick's time was a monastic settlement.

⁵ The date commonly received. Bede however puts it at 565, and so does the *A.-S. Chronicle*.

Scots of Dalriada, themselves immigrants from Ireland. In the same century Irish missionaries were very active also in Cornwall and in South Wales. In Wales and Cornwall they were perhaps revivalists only; in Scotland they came into a region where Christianity, if it had ever reached so far, was absolutely lost. Yet their success was surprising, and within a few years they had extended their activities beyond the Lowlands into Northumbria, where the work was carried on by Aidan (d. 651), Chad (d. 672) and Cuthbert (d. 687). The Britons of Wales, unable to forget and forgive, would have no dealings even as missionaries with the race which had driven them west of the Severn,¹ and it was from Ireland that the faith first came to the Saxons. It came first to those of the north (Bernicia and Deira), some of whom had assuredly seen Christianity, or heard of it, before the Roman Paulinus came to York (627) and even before St. Augustine landed in Thanet (597). That Frankish princess who became the queen of Ethelbert of Kent was herself a Christian, and for her own use as a church had restored a building which had been so used before the Romans abandoned Britain.

Landed in Kent, Augustine, if he had not known it before, speedily found that there was a vigorous, if self-centred, Christianity on the western side of the island. He made overtures to its prelates at once, only to find that there were wide differences of usage between the Roman and the Celtic Churches, and that the Welsh bishops had no intention of submitting tamely to Roman interference. It may be doubted whether there was not something strongly resembling a political motive present to the mind of pope Gregory when he resolved to send a Roman mission to England with the ostensible object of turning the *Angli* into *angeli*. Such at any rate was the suspicion of the Welsh, and Augustine's overtures were fruitless. Whether he would have been more successful had he addressed himself to the Irish or Columban missionaries, it is impossible to say. He does not seem to have attempted it. He founded his own bishopric in Canterbury, and two others in London and Rochester, all three, be it noticed,

¹ Bede, *H.E.* ii, 20, § 147.

upon the sites of Roman towns once great. There his work came to a standstill, and he himself died in 604. Twenty-three years passed before another Roman missionary. Paulinus, aroused probably by the rapid success of the Celtic missionaries in the north, came to York and there (627) baptised king Edwin of Northumbria in a little round church¹ built hurriedly of wood for the occasion. The event was acclaimed as a notable victory for Paulinus and Roman orthodoxy, but it is not by any means certain that it was so.² It is certain that the Celtic Church went on steadily and successfully with the work which Paulinus failed to follow up,³ the rival 'uses' breeding constant friction until the decisions of the Synod of Whitby (664) in effect declared all England to be an ecclesiastical province of the Church of Rome. Ireland, Iona and Wales⁴ successively came into line within a century or so, but Dyfnaint (Devon and Cornwall) submitted only in 936.

The see of Canterbury had been founded in 602, those of London and Rochester in 604. The contiguity of these three, and their close sequence in date, as contrasted with the wider interval of space and time which separated the remainder, suggest that the Saxons too, like others before them, had made their most numerous and most progressive settlements thereabouts; and archaeology shows that, so far at any rate as concerns Kent, this was the fact.⁵ York became a see in 627, Dunwich in 631,⁶ Dorchester (Oxon.)

¹ It was a baptistery only, and probably, had Paulinus not been a Roman, he would have dispensed with any building at all. The Celtic way was to baptise *al fresco*, and Paulinus himself was forced presently to fall in with it (Bede *H.E.* ii, xiv, § 133).

² Nennius (*Hist. Brit.* § 63) is emphatic in declaring that the actual baptism of king Edwin was the act of a Celtic ecclesiastic, whose name he expressly gives as Rum ap Urgan (Rhun ap Urien). So *Annales Cambriae*, sub anno clxxxii (626). By way of reconciling the contradictory statements of the Celtic authorities and the Latin Bede, it has been maintained that Paulinus was in reality a Briton who had been trained at Rome, or even that he was himself Rhun ap Urien. But Bede is at pains to describe his personal appearance, which was as little Celtic as were his views. See *Dict. Christian Biography*.

³ Paulinus withdrew in 633, after only seven years of work.

⁴ The actual dates are: South Ireland (Council of the White Field), 634 (?); North Ireland (Scoti), 704; Iona, 716; Wales, between 755-777. 'Seven hundred and seventy was the year of Christ when the Easter of the Britons was altered by Elbot, a man of God' (*Brut y Twysogion*).

⁵ Thurlow Leeds, *Archaeology of the A.-S. Settlements*. He takes the view that Essex was politically subordinate to Kent at the time, and further maintains the survival of a large Romano-British element among the population. The number of churches in Essex which are built largely of Roman materials is remarkable, and the same applies to Kent; Worley's *Essex*; *Arch. Cant.* xxi (1895), p. 301.

⁶ The second East Anglian see of Elmham, founded 673, seems to have subsisted for a generation only (to 706).

and Lindisfarne in 635. Lichfield, symbolising the conversion of Mercia, belongs to 656. Hereford (676) marks the advance of Christianity to the Severn; Hexham belongs to 678, as does also Lindsey in Lincolnshire; Worcester and Leicester to 680; Selsey to 681. That the six sees last named were all founded within as many years indicates that by that time the resistance of Saxon paganism was completely broken. With later sees we are not concerned, for Wilfrid's conversion of Sussex completed the nominal christianisation of all England. Nor is it needful to recount the ups and downs of the new faith. It had its reverses, as when Redwald of East Anglia (? 593-617) lapsed, and when Penda of Mercia (626-655) lived and died for the old gods of his race. But on the whole it must be admitted that the conversion of England was a surprisingly rapid matter. There has from that day to this been no such complete and speedy conversion of the nation upon any single point of religion large or small. It is clear that there was in Saxon paganism nothing at all analogous to the highly developed and highly organised system of the Celts, and the history of the internecine struggles of the Heptarchy proves the same thing. So rapid a conversion was necessarily but a superficial one. Religions die hard, and that of Woden was no exception. Some of its traces still survive, thirteen centuries of Christianity notwithstanding: many of its god-names go to make those of our familiar villages, and it would be hard to prove that in no case does a Christian church stand upon the site of a *locus consecratus* of Woden or of Freya.

As Christianity first approached England from Ireland by way of Iona and the north, it is in the north that we must look for its earliest vestiges. There we should reasonably expect to find some traces of those outward forms which are known to be the marks of Celtic Christianity—the monastic foundation with its circular *cashel* and clustered huts and diminutive non-chancelled rectangular oratories. They are still traceable. Here too we should expect to find the inevitable circular *limes*. We do—in numbers. And here finally, we might hope to find the oldest form of the very name 'church.' And again it is even so.

At what precise date the first Columban missionaries appeared in northern England we do not know, but it cannot well have been later than 600, and was probably some years earlier; for at the close of the sixth century the Saxons would seem to have penetrated not at all into the Lowlands and only very slightly into the interior of Northumbria.¹ The population here was therefore almost exclusively Celtic, and so far likely to be receptive. Sussex, the last area to resist the Cross, was converted in 681. Thus the conversion of Saxondom was a matter of less than a hundred years. When one recalls with what obstinacy the kindred of these Saxons—the so-called Danes and the Normans—withstood all attempts to convert them, and how long was the struggle with paganism in Frisia, the speedy success of Christianity in England becomes still more a matter for wonder. Other contributory causes may be suggested, but it is scarcely to be doubted that the chief cause was the presence of a large British element in the population of many parts of the country. Strathclyde and Cumbria and Cornwall, like Wales, were British (Brythonic) until long after their conversion, and in those regions Christianity—a revivalist Christianity perhaps—was without question vigorously active long before it reached the Mercian midlands; and the fervid Christianity of these Celts was not wholly due to the exhortations of men like Gildas and a true repentance of previous laxity. The attitude of the Welsh towards the Saxons as expressed by the Welsh bishops at Augustine's Oak² proves that a great part of its strength sprang from mere contrariety: they were the more stubbornly Christian because their natural enemies were otherwise. The old view of the 'cataclysmic historians' that the Saxons systematically extirpated the Celts in England is now altogether exploded.³ Within certain very limited areas it was so, as in Sussex, where at the storming of Anderida (491) 'there was not one

¹ Thurlow Leeds, *Archaeol. of the A.-S. Settlements*, p. 73; cf. also pp. 44, 52-53. Dr. Beddoe drew the same inference from the evidence of craniology.

² Bede, *H.E.* ii, 2, § 91.

³ The old view is that of Milman (*Hist. Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ii, 227): 'The re-occupation of the island by paganism is a strong confirmation of the complete

expulsion of the Britons.' The evidence of craniology and of archaeology emphatically contradicts any such 'complete expulsion.' See also Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, pp. 38-42. When Alfred made his will he could still speak of the SW. counties—Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset—as *Wealh-cynne*, 'lands of the Britons' (*Thorpe Diplomatarium*, p. 488).

Briton left alive,'¹ and this explains why the Irish missionary Dicul and his companions made no headway amongst the South Saxons, whose ultimate conversion came from another Saxon, the Northumbrian Wilfrid.² Elsewhere, and especially in East Anglia and in the eastern midlands, there would seem to have survived a large Celtic population amongst its Saxon conquerors, whether as serfs³ or as refugees in the less accessible parts of the country such as the Fens. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth⁴ it was not until the days of Careticus, fifth in succession from Arthur, and only a short time before the coming of Augustine, that Theon, bishop of London, and archbishop Thadioc of York, at last abandoned their sees and fled into Wales, 'carrying with them the relics of the saints, for fear the sacred bones of so many holy men of old might be destroyed by the barbarians.' In spite of all efforts to prove the contrary,⁵ there is small ground for believing that London was ever forcibly reduced by the Saxons, while certain facts in its history point very clearly to its having maintained a continuous existence throughout the dark centuries.⁶ Excepting a narrow strip along the coast, the Saxon Deira, the whole of the northern counties were still British⁷ in the year 600, and so also was a vast area of western Yorkshire. The rapidity with which Christianity—Scotic Christianity—overran the whole of that county and thence passed into Lincolnshire and East Anglia, is most easily explained by the presence, amid the population of those regions, of a large element which, because it was

Celtic, was well disposed towards the Celtic missionaries and to the Celtic form of Christianity as opposed to that offered by Paulinus.¹ The assertion of Nennius² that there were Celtic missionaries in York at Paulinus' coming is in no way unlikely, and there is probably much more than a poet's imagination in the statement of Chaucer that certain of the lower class in king Aella's Northumbria (560-588) were secretly Christians and even possessed of Christian books.³ The evidence of place-names⁴ establishes the fact that in various localities there long survived considerable bodies of Celtic people. The monkish tale of St. Guthlac at Crowland, that he mistook for actual Britons the creatures who disturbed his peace, and was greatly relieved to find that they were 'only' devils, has its value: there is a large mass of evidence that there did survive in the Fens a considerable British population. The tough Celt had outlived the brief three hundred and fifty years of the Roman occupation. His blood has survived also the 1500 years of Saxon rule, and he is a rash Englishman who would maintain that in his own veins is no admixture of Celtic blood.

Mercia's obstinate resistance to Christianity is quite understandable, for the Saxons of Mercia were those whose relations with the Britons were naturally the most embittered. The Saxons here were late comers but aggressive ones, and the struggle between the two races, face to face with each other along the Severn, was necessarily incessant. Here in the nature of things the British element among the Saxons would be but small, for it was easy for it to make its escape across the boundary into Wales. So Mercia made an obstinate resistance. But the most obstinate of all was that of the South Saxons, where it would seem there remained no British blood at all.

It is doubtless true that Augustine and Paulinus in

¹ *A.-S. Chronicle*. This express statement is borne out by the place-names and the folk-lore of the county.

² It is remarkable that there is not in all Sussex a village-name embodying the word 'church,' or any certain trace of its Celtic precursor *cruc*.

³ The fact that a king of Wessex in Bede's time (685-8) bore the purely British name of Ceadwalla, suggests that some at least of the conquered people rose to more distinguished positions. Many critics maintain that 'Saxon Cerdic' himself bears a British name. There is a doubt whether again the name of Coifi, the pagan high priest of the Northumbrian king Edwin in 627, be Saxon or rather Celtic.

⁴ *Hist.* xi, 10. The truth of this statement (which Geoffrey took from the *Brut*

Tysilio) has been accepted by some writers of authority, such as Raine.

⁵ For example, J. R. Green and Sir Walter Besant, who have each his own theory of its desolation, and more recently Major Godsal (*The Storm of London*).

⁶ So in particular Sir L. Gomme. One very remarkable fact is that the city, albeit situated on the confines of the three great Saxon kingdoms of Kent, Essex and Mercia, never belonged to one or other of them, but remained a separate entity. Augustine's action in early appointing a bishop of London points in the same direction.

⁷ A Welsh *Triad* (no. 7) explicitly says that, when all the rest of Lloegria had become Saxon, Cornwall, Bernicia (Bryneich), and Deira (Deivyr) remained British.

¹ His assumed 'success' has actually been taken as an additional argument that he was identical with Rhun ap Urien. Whether the facts, as recorded by the partial Bede (our sole authority), justify this being called a 'success,' must be matter of opinion; and if one is to assume a British parentage for Paulinus to account for his 'success' in the north, by what assumption are we to account for that of Augustine in the south?

² *Brit. Hist.* § 63.

³ *Man of Law's Tale*, vv. 541-550: cp. v. 666, 'a Briton boke written with Evangiles.' For further evidence of this survival, see Johnson, *Folk-Memory*, chap. v, and cf. G. H. Moberly's edition of Bede's *History*, (Oxford, 1869), introd. p. vi.

⁴ Ekwall, *Place-names of Lancashire*, pp. 224-237. So also Prof. F. M. Stenton in *Introd. to Study of Eng. Place-Names*, p. 181, and W. J. Sedgefield, *ibid.* p. 13.

Saxondom, like Patrick in Ireland and Columba in Dalriada, advisedly addressed themselves first to the ruling class. It is equally true that in Rome itself the conversion came rather through the lower classes. The conversion of the Saxons was twice as rapid as that of Rome, and this rapidity may well be due in large measure to the fact that while paganism was attacked on the one hand through the persons of its kings and thanes, the lower classes on the other hand were already in varying measure predisposed to welcome the faith of their forefathers. And here too may be part of the explanation of the stubbornness with which, as the sequel will show, certain peculiar features of the Celtic as distinct from the Latin Christianity have survived in the English Church of to-day.

The Romans never attempted the occupation of Ireland, where the old order went its downhill way without interference from the outer world.¹ If Druidism had ever boasted in Ireland any such predominance as in Gaul, no trace of the fact is discoverable. In Gaul it had made for internal peace and national unity; it was in fact the only formula for the expression of Gallic nationalism. In Ireland there appears never to have been any national unity or any abiding peace; the nearest approach thereto was perhaps a kind of 'truce of God' for the duration of such meetings as that of the national assembly at the hill of Tara. What evidence we have reveals only the decay of Druidism. When Christianity entered the field there was no organisation and no faith to withstand it: the ruins of the older organisation were everywhere, and Christianity repaired them, reconstructed them, and entered into possession. Of continuity there was no break at all. If therefore it is possible anywhere to catch sight of any traces of the fusion of the new with the old order, it should be in Ireland. Wales will rank as a good second. In Scotland we have evidence in abundance for the introduction and spread of the new faith and its outward forms, but little for the pre-existing order of things. In England itself the continuity will be the hardest to trace, and the harder as one travels further away from the Celtic regions.

¹ See F. Haverfield in *English Historical Review*, vol. xxviii, pp. 1-12. Elsewhere he himself sums up his consideration of the relations of Ireland with the Roman empire

in the words 'these relations were few and unimportant' (*Roman Britain*, 1913, p. 53). Another opinion is argued by e.g. Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, c. 1.