

ART. XXXII.—*S. Herbert of Derwentwater.* By the Rev.
THOMAS LEES, M.A.

Read at Keswick, October 5th, 1882.

AFTER reviving the fading Christianity of its former professors, and adding new converts to the Faith in this mountainous and woody district, we may, I think, conclude that Bishop Kentigern did not leave the continuation of his blessed work unthought of and uncared for. When recalled to Strathclyde from North Wales, after the final overthrow of British paganism at the battle of Ardderyd A.D. 573, he would necessarily pass, on his way to Hoddam in Dumfriesshire where he met his friend the victorious Christian King Rederech, near, if not right through these scenes of his apostolic labours only three years before. Accompanied as he was by an immense retinue, I think we may safely believe that he would station here one of those 665 British monks who followed him from Llanelwy to minister to the needs of the Mission. However that may have been, we know that within 90 years of St. Kentigern's decease a Christian hermit dwelt on the island here—a hermit of no mean fame, but one who had the privilege of being the pupil and bosom friend of the great St. Cuthbert. All we know of S. Herbert is derived from no less an authority than the venerable Bede, who wrote within 50 years of the saint's demise (Herbert died A.D. 687, Bede died 735). Bede gives us two accounts substantially the same, one in his Ecclesiastical History, and the other in his "Book of the Life and Miracles of S. Cuthbert." From the latter of these two works, with which probably the members of this Society are not so well acquainted as with his famous history, I take the following extract, using the translation published by Dr. J. A. Giles in 1845.

“ Not

“ Not very long afterwards [A.D. 686] the same servant of God, Cuthbert, was summoned to the same city of Lugalialia (now Carlisle), not only to consecrate priests, but also to bless the queen herself with his holy conversation.” (This queen would be the widow of the English king Ecgfrid who had been slain in battle two years before in a raid against the Picts and Britons of the West).” Now there was a venerable priest of the name of Herebert, who had long been united to the man of God, Cuthbert, in the bond of spiritual friendship, and who leading a solitary life, in an island in the large marsh from which the Derwent arises, used to come to him every year, and receive from him admonitions in the way of eternal life. When this man heard that he was stopping in that city, he came according to his custom, desiring to be kindled up more and more by his wholesome exhortations in aspiring after heavenly things. When these two had drunk deeply of the cup of celestial wisdom, Cuthbert said, among other things—‘ Remember, brother Herebert, that you ask me now concerning whatever undertaking you may have in hand, and that you speak to me about it now, because, after we shall have separated, we shall see each other no more in this life. I am certain that the time of my death approaches, and the time of leaving my earthly tenement is at hand.’ Upon hearing these words he threw himself at his feet with tears and lamentations, saying—‘ I beseech you by the Lord not to leave me, but be mindful of your companion, and pray the Almighty goodness that, as we have served him together on earth, we may at the same time pass to heaven to see his light. For I have always sought to live according to the command of your mouth ; and what I have left undone through ignorance or frailty, I have equally taken care to correct, according to your pleasure.’ The bishop yielded to his prayers, and immediately learnt in spirit that he had obtained that which he had sought from the Lord. ‘ Arise, my brother,’ says he, ‘ and

‘and do not lament, but rejoice in gladness, for his great mercy has granted us that which we asked of him.’ The event confirmed his promise and the truth of the prophecy ; for their souls departed from their bodies at one and the same moment of time, and were joined together in a heavenly vision, and translated at the same time to the heavenly kingdom. But Herebert was first afflicted with a long infirmity, perhaps by a dispensation of holy piety, in order that the continual pain of a long sickness might supply what merit he had less than the blessed Cuthbert, so that being by grace made equal to his intercessor, he might be rendered worthy to depart this life at one and the same hour with him, and to be received into one and the same seat of everlasting happiness.” Thus passed to their eternal rest this noble and godly pair of brethren on the night of March 20th, A.D. 686-7. Bede has left us a touching description of St. Cuthbert’s last moments on the wave-beaten rocks of Farne—how the brethren there who had passed the night in watchfulness and prayer, chanced at the very moment in the order of evening service to be singing the 59th (in our version the 60th) Psalm which begins—“O Lord, Thou hast rejected us, and destroyed us; Thou hast been angry and pitied us,” and how one of them instantly lighted two candles and holding one in each hand, ascended a lofty spot and signalled the saint’s death to the waiting brethren of the Monastery of Lindisfarne. But we have no such chronicle of the dying moments of S. Herbert here on this lonely islet surrounded by swamp and rocks covered by the native oak. The ruins overgrown with underwood now seen in the middle of S. Herbert’s Island are most probably those of the chapel built here when in the year 1374 the place became the object of a parish pilgrimage. What was the form of Herbert’s cell we may safely conjecture from Bede’s description of the refuge Cuthbert built for himself on Farne Island:—
“The building is almost of a round form, from wall to wall

wall about four or five poles in extent: the wall on the outside is higher than a man, but within, by excavating the rock, he made it much deeper, to prevent the eyes and the thoughts from wandering, that the mind might be wholly bent on heavenly things, and the pious inhabitant might behold nothing from his residence but the heavens above him. The wall was constructed, not of hewn stones or of brick and mortar, but of rough stones and turf, which had been taken out from the ground within. . . . There were two chambers in the house, one an oratory, the other for domestic purposes. He finished the walls of them by digging round and cutting away the natural soil within and without, and formed the roof out of rough poles and straw." The house was in fact what is now called a "Pict's House" resembling those of his neighbours on the mainland.

The loving friendship of these holy men produced a long-lasting influence on the Northern mind; and nearly seven centuries after their demise Bishop Appleby (A.D. 1374) by a charter of indulgence, given at Rose, ordered that the Vicar of Crosthwaite should every year on the 13th day of April, visit the island and there celebrate a "missa de Sancto Cuthberto cum nota," and granted to all who should attend that day for the sake of devotion and in honour of S. Cuthbert, and in memory of Herbert, forty days of indulgence.

This charter is to be found on folio 74 b. of Bishop Appleby's Register at Carlisle. By the kindness of Jno. G. Mounsey, Esq., the Diocesan Registrar, I have recently inspected it and compared it with the version given in the Appendix to Nicolson and Burn's History which contains some errors. I hope to print a correct copy, with the abbreviations extended, as a supplement to this paper.

The Reverend Canon Raine in his article on S. Herbert in Smith's Dictionary of Christian Biography, has pointed out the fact that the Bishop has mistaken the date of Herbert's death. The mistake seems to me to have arisen thus;—

thus :—The 20th of March was according to the ancient classical form, “ xiii Kal. Aprilis,” and so appears in the *Calendarium* of the York Missal as S. Cuthbert’s Day. The date 13th of April in the *Episcopal Charter* is a mistake for the 13th before the Calends of April, unless the Bishop for some reasons known to himself thought fit to separate in their obituary commemoration these two who in heart and godliness had in this life been as one.

APPENDIX.

BISHOP APPLEBY’S CHARTER OF INDULGENCE.

Thomas permissione divina Karleolensis Episcopus, dilecto filio vicario de Crosthwaite, &c., dignum judicamus atque justum, ut nos, qui ex debito officii nostri testes veritatis esse tenemur, perhibeamus testimonium veritati Sane siquidem nobis nuper sacras paginas legentibus, inter cætera comperimus, venerabilem Bedam presbyterum, doctorem famosissimum, in libro suo de gestis anglorum scripsisse et testimonium perhibuisse, Herbertum presbyterum, discipulum Sancti Cuthberti fuisse, qui in insula fluvii Derwentoris vitam duxit solitariam atque sanctam; volebat tamen sanctum Cuthbertum semel in anno annis singulis visitare, et monita salutaria ab eo recipere Contigit autem, dictum Sanctum Cuthbertum apud civitatem lugubraliam, qui nunc Carleolum nominatur, advenire quod audiens dictus herbertus, more solito ad eum accessit—cui sanctus Cuthbertus, inter cetera narravit dissolutionem sui corporis infra breve imminere; et quod hoc fuit sibi divinitus revelatum, quod audiens dictus herbertus, ad pedes sancti antistitis cum lacrimis se projecit, deprecans eum et orans, ut a domino impetret, quod sicut ipsi in vita sua uno eodemque spiritu domino deservierunt, uno et eodem tempore ac simul, morte perveniente, ab hoc seculo transmigrarent. dictus vero antistes Cuthbertus, super cubitum suum paulisper recubans cito post se erexit, et Herberto presbytero dixit; Frater Herberte, gaude gaudio magno, quia quod a domino petivimus impetravimus quod non diu postea fuerat adimpletum, Nam tertio decimo die Aprivium, dictus antistes in insula Pharensi, et herbertus in insula supradicta, ambo decesserunt. Et quia hoc sanctum factum plurimis, ac fere omnibus, credimus esse incognitum; nec bonum esse videtur quod hoc homines lateat, quod dominus ad gloriam sanctorum suorum dignatus est patefacere; Tibi mandamus, firmiter injungentes, quatenus dicto xiii^{mo} die Aprivium
ad

ad dictam insulam herberti accedens, et missam de Sancto Cuthberto etiam cum nota facias celebrari et has literas nostras parochianis tuis publicari : adjiciens ad hoc, quod omnibus et singulis dicto die ad locum prædictum causa devotionis, et in honorem Santi Cuthberti, et ad memoriam dicti herberti accedentibus, quadraginta dies indulgentiæ concedimus per presentes. Scriptum apud Rosam.
