

## II.—THE LITTLE BOOK OF THE BIRTH OF ST. CUTHBERT.

COMMONLY CALLED THE IRISH LIFE OF ST. CUTHBERT.

TRANSLATED† WITH NOTES BY MADELEINE HOPE DODDS.

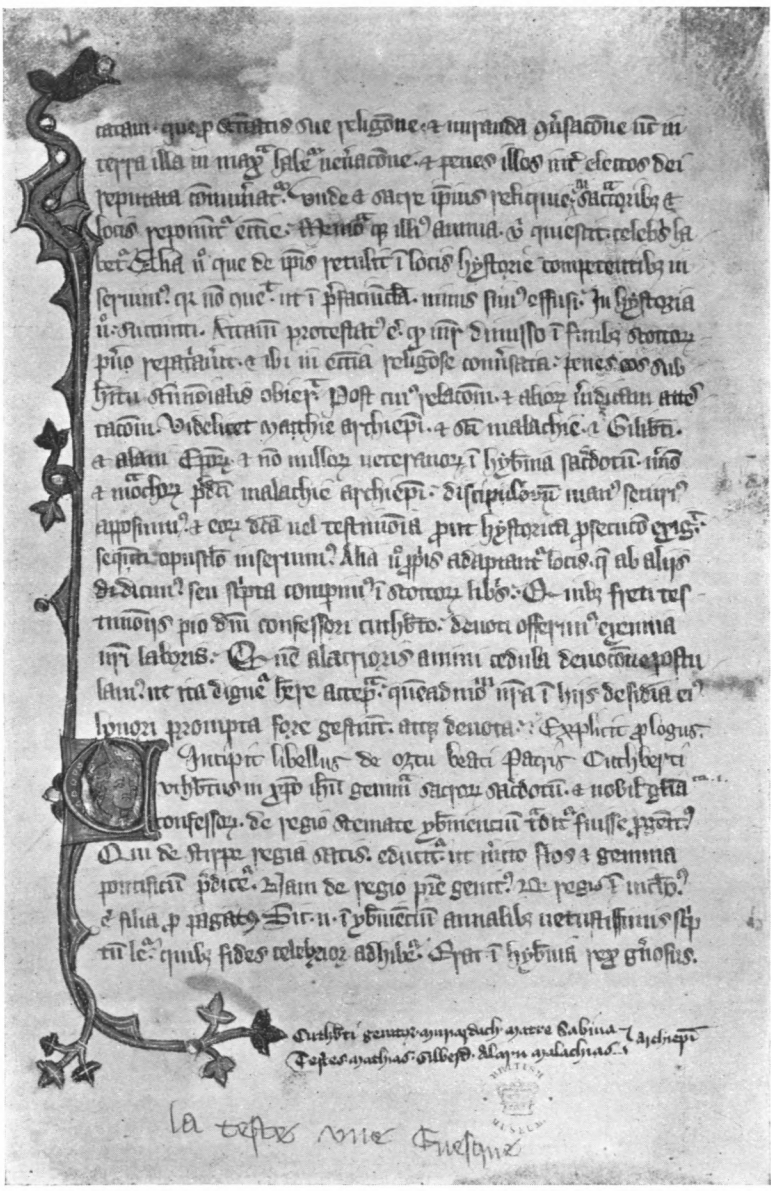
[Read on 27th February, 1929.]

### INTRODUCTION.

St. Cuthbert was fortunate in the number of his biographers. Shortly after his death in 687 an account of his life was written by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne. Bede wrote his famous narrative while persons who had known the saint were still living. Simeon of Durham added the account of the wanderings of his body at about the beginning of the twelfth century, and Reginald of Durham collected his posthumous miracles c. 1175. All these authors say nothing of St. Cuthbert's parentage. They merely state that he was brought up by a widow called Kenswitha, who lived at Hruringham.

Later than any of these lives is the book known as *The Irish Life of St. Cuthbert*, or more accurately, *The Little Book of the Birth of St. Cuthbert*, *Libellus de Ortu Sancti Cuthberti*, which professes to give an account of the early years of the saint's life which were omitted by previous historians. According to the *Libellus* the saint was born in Ireland—and here at once arises a wide divergence of opinion, Irish historians holding that the story must have some foundation, English historians that

† Some chapters are summarized.



FIRST FOLIO OF 14TH CENTURY MS. OF *The birth of St. Cuthbert.*  
(TITUS A II. FOL. 136B; B.M.)



it is a mere fabrication. I agree with the English opinion that the *Libellus* tells nothing about the real facts of St. Cuthbert's life, but on examination it proves to have a very interesting connection with the great religious movement of the twelfth century, the extension of the Cistercian order through England, Scotland and Ireland.

The *Libellus* exists only in fourteenth century manuscripts, one in the Dean and Chapter library at York, bound up with Durham chronicles and documents, another in the British museum, and two versions in leonine verse, one imperfect, in the British museum. The York manuscript was edited for the eighth volume of the Surtees society, *Miscellanea Biographica*, by canon Raine, and a fifteenth century English metrical version was edited by canon Fowler for the eighty-seventh volume of the same series.

The date at which the book was written may be deduced from the authorities quoted by the writer. Fortunately he gives them fully twice over, once at the beginning and again at the end. After explaining how he first compiled the book, a point to be dealt with later, he proceeds:

"Meanwhile the blessed and pious father Cuthbert, propitious to the prayers of our desire, as I think, illuminated us, because he sent to us Eugenius bishop of *Harundina*, born in Ireland, a man of holy opinions and conversation, who corroborated by his testimony those things which we had first discovered about the birth of the blessed Cuthbert."

Harundina is the latinized form of Ardmore, a suffragan see of the diocese of Cashel in 1171. Ardmore was a diocese in 1152, but is not known to have existed earlier and there is no reference to it after 1179. The only bishop was Eugenius, who witnessed a charter between 1172 and 1179.<sup>1</sup> As nothing else is known about him, it seems

<sup>1</sup> Fowler, *Life of St. Cuthbert in English Verse* (S.S., Vol. 87), p. 2 n.; Cotton, *Fasti Eccles. Hibern.*, p. 212; Archdal, *Monast. Hibern.*, p. 684; C. A. Webster, *Diocese of Cork*, p. 375; notes by the Rev. H. J. Lawlor.

certain that the author of the *Libellus* had really known him, and was not simply using a well-known name to give fictitious importance to his narrative. The date of the *Libellus*, therefore, was probably in the second half of the twelfth century.

After his statement about Eugenius, the writer continues :

“ After his relation and the truthful attestation of others, namely Matthew the archbishop, and St. Malachy and Gilibert and Alan, bishops, and many ancient priests of Ireland, and the monks and disciples of the said St. Malachy the archbishop, we wrote this with confidence.”

At the end he writes :

“ For St. Malachy related this fully to David, king of Scotland, and Maurilius the archbishop; his successor, confidently added to it afterwards, and Eugene, bishop of Ardmore, expanded it more clearly; but two other bishops, whose names have dropped out, together with their associates, priests and clerks, at different times have poured into our ears still more.”

When these names are arranged, as far as possible, in their chronological order, the first is Gilbert or Gilibert, bishop of Limerick 1107-1139, who died in 1145. In order to understand the significance of his name, a few points in the history of the Irish church of the period must be mentioned. The diocesan system had never been set up. The Irish church was still monastic. The church lands were held by the monasteries; the abbots were the chief ecclesiastical authorities, and bishops were simply highly respected members of the monastic community; there might be two or three in one monastery. When intercourse with the continent, previously cut off by the Danish invasions, was renewed in the eleventh century, Irish ecclesiastics, who were always great travellers, soon became aware of the local differences in their church which distinguished it from the church of Rome. There grew up a party in Ireland which was anxious to bring about con-

formity of practice with Rome, although there was naturally strong opposition to this. Gilbert of Limerick was the leader of the reforming party, and was from c. 1108 to c. 1139 papal legate in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

The conformity of the Irish church to Rome was finally accomplished by a younger man than Gilbert, his friend and follower, Malachy O'Morgair (1095-1148), abbot of Bangor, bishop of Down, and for a time archbishop of Armagh, papal legate in Ireland from 1140 till his death.<sup>3</sup> He was canonized in 1190, and as our author calls him St. Malachy, the first and last chapters of the *Libellus* must have been written after that date, though the body of the book, as the writer himself says, was earlier.

The next authority mentioned is Matthew the archbishop, to whom chapter XI is expressly attributed. This may have been Matthew O'Heney, a Cistercian monk, archbishop of Cashel and papal legate for Ireland 1192-1206. He is said to have written a life of St. Cuthbert probably on the authority of the *Libellus* itself.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Lawlor suggests on the other hand that the person referred to may have been M. archbishop of Cashel, who occurs between 1168 and 1171.<sup>5</sup> If Matthew O'Heney is the man the date of the *Libellus* must be after 1192, when he became archbishop.

The other two ecclesiastics named cannot be identified with certainty. There is no known archbishop Maurilius. The author seems to have written the last section without referring back to the first, for he says that he had forgotten the names of the two bishops which he had given at the beginning as Gilbert and Alan. His "Maurilius" may be a piece of forgetfulness for Mattheus, i.e. Matthew. If this is so, the probability increases that his archbishop

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of St. Malachy by St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. H. J. Lawlor, pp. xix, xxi, xxx, 47 n.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lii, et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Cotton, *Fasti Eccles. Hibern.* I, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert, *Facsimiles of Irish MSS.* II, pl. lxii, 2.

Matthew was Matthew O'Heney, as he is called the successor of St. Malachy. As Malachy was never archbishop of Cashel, neither of the archbishops of that place could properly be called his successor, but Malachy was papal legate, and in that office Matthew O'Heney was one of his successors.

Alan as a bishop of the period cannot be identified. Dr. Lawlor suggests that he might be Albin, bishop of Ferns in 1192, who died in 1225.

We may conclude that the *Libellus* was completed about the end of the twelfth century, and that the work had spread over some years.

The next question is the place where it was written. Here is a collection of legends about St. Cuthbert containing (a) an Irish book connected in some way with Malachy O'Morgair and King David I of Scotland, (b) several legends told by the Scots and Galwegians, (c) one story of a miracle at Moddri, four miles from Bedford. Such a collection would in all probability be made at the Cistercian monastery of Melrose. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows.

The ecclesiastical problems which confronted David I of Scotland were similar to those of bishop Malachy in Ireland. The king, like the bishop, was engaged in setting up bishoprics and bringing the Celtic church of Scotland into line with the church of Rome. David was a strong supporter of the Cistercian movement, now at the height of its fame under St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and founded several Cistercian houses in Scotland, of which the first and most famous was Melrose, founded in 1136.

David's wife was Maud, the widow of Simon de St. Liz, earl of Northampton. She was a lady of illustrious birth, for her father was Waltheof, earl of Northumberland, executed by William the Conqueror in 1075, and her mother was Judith, the Conqueror's niece. On her second marriage Maud brought with her to Scotland her younger son Waltheof. The only son of David and Maud was prince Henry, with whom was educated Aelred, Ailred,

Ethelred or Baldred, as the name is variously spelt, a boy of a Durham family, afterwards the celebrated abbot of Rievaulx.<sup>6</sup> Ailred and Waltheof therefore grew up together, and both refused the life of the court and the camp to enter religion.

Either at the end of the year 1139, or, more probably, early in 1140, Waltheof, then prior of Kirkham, visited bishop Malachy, who was in York on a pilgrimage to Clairvaux and Rome, and the two became friends.<sup>7</sup> Malachy visited Clairvaux, where he was warmly welcomed by St. Bernard. In Rome the Pope was gracious to him, and created him papal legate to Ireland in succession to the aged Gilbert of Limerick, who had resigned. On his return journey Malachy again visited Clairvaux, and left four of his monks there to learn the rule, in order that he might introduce the Cistercian order into Ireland.

On his way through Scotland in September, 1140, he visited David I, probably by the advice of Waltheof. The king, with his son Henry, was at Cruggleton, a castle in Galloway belonging to Fergus, lord of Galloway. Prince Henry was ill, and Malachy restored him to health by his prayers.<sup>8</sup>

The connection between David, Waltheof and Malachy through their common interest in the Cistercian order was thus established. Waltheof shortly afterwards resolved to become a Cistercian himself, and entered the abbey of Warden in Bedfordshire. Thence he moved to Rievaulx, and in 1148 became the second abbot of Melrose. His friend Ailred made a missionary journey through Galloway,<sup>9</sup> and was particularly assiduous in collecting legends of St. Cuthbert.<sup>10</sup> He is known to have visited

<sup>6</sup> *Reginald of Durham* (S.S., Vol. i), p. ix n.

<sup>7</sup> *Proc. Roy. Irish Academy*, Vol. xxxv, p. 248; Lawlor, *op. cit.*, p. 69 and n.

<sup>8</sup> Lawlor, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 77.

<sup>9</sup> Forbes, *Kalendars of Scottish Saints*, p. 268.

<sup>10</sup> *Reginald of Durham* (S.S., Vol. i), p. viii.



Melrose, and he presided at the chapter which elected Waltheof's successor in 1159.<sup>11</sup> The story in the *Libellus* about Moddri by Bedford may be attributed to abbot Waltheof, who had lived for a time in the Bedfordshire abbey of Wardon, and the Galwegian legends to abbot Ailred.

Jocelin, abbot of Melrose 1170 to 1174 and afterwards bishop of Glasgow, who died at Melrose in 1199, may likewise have had some influence on the compilation of the *Libellus*. His namesake Jocelin, a Cistercian monk of Furness, dedicated to him a life of St. Kentigern compiled from earlier Irish and Scottish lives in much the same manner as the *Libellus*, though on a far larger scale.<sup>12</sup>

The main part of the *Libellus* comes from an Irish book about the birth of St. Cuthbert, and in order to discover its origin we must go back to St. Malachy.

In 1148 he set out on another pilgrimage to Rome. On arriving in Scotland, he founded a small Cistercian community at *Viride Stagnum*, the Green Pool, in Galloway. The abbot was Michael, formerly a monk of Bangor, whom St. Malachy had twice healed, and there were only three monks.<sup>13</sup> Malachy then went on to Carlisle, where he visited king David and stayed for some days. His journey to Rome was never accomplished, for at Clairvaux, on his way there, he died. St. Bernard wrote his life, probably in the same year.

The little community at the Green Pool had not much chance of survival. It may be assumed that the permission of Fergus, the lord of Galloway, had been obtained for planting it, but king David, the chief patron of the Cistercians, had no power there; Fergus was often hostile to him, the people, according to Ailred, were barbarous, the leader of the community had bad health. It is no

<sup>11</sup> Wade, *Melrose Abbey*, p. 203.

<sup>12</sup> Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>13</sup> Lawlor, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 120.

wonder that we hear nothing more of the Cistercians of the Green Pool. Later in the century Fergus founded a Premonstratensian monastery there called Soulseat.

But we cannot suppose that St. Malachy merely dumped his unfortunate monks down there without taking any further steps on their behalf. The suggestion may be made that as one means of interesting king David, Waltheof, and the Cistercian community at Melrose on their behalf, Malachy caused the preparation of the book of the birth of St. Cuthbert in Ireland, and himself presented it to king David, as the author of the *Libellus* states, when he visited him at Carlisle.

The point of this particular legend as applied to these particular circumstances is clear. Just as St. Cuthbert came from Ireland to the shores of Scotland, so do these monks come. If the king will befriend them, his country may be honoured by another St. Cuthbert.

A copy of this book might have come to Melrose through several channels. The king himself might have presented it, or Waltheof, who became abbot there in the same year, 1148, might have had a copy made for him, or some of the Cistercians from the Green Pool might go to Melrose when their own community broke up, and bring their writings with them.

The reason for using St. Cuthbert's name is obvious. He was the chief ornament of the monastery of Old Melrose. King David was reviving the glories of the early monastery in his foundation of New Melrose.

The statement that Cuthbert was originally christened Mulucc requires more explanation. Mulucc is a form of the Irish name Lugaid, pronounced Lua, with the prefix of respect Mo and the diminutive suffix -oc or -og, Mo-lua-oc, my little Lua or my dear Lua. The name Lugaid appears in an extraordinary number of forms. It may be latinized as Ligidus, Luanus, Levanus, Moluanus, etc., while Moluoc may appear as Molloch, Moluag, M'huluoch, Malogue, Muluay, etc., in innumerable

variations.<sup>14</sup> It was a common Irish name, derived from Lug, the name of one of the gods of Celtic Ireland,<sup>15</sup> probably a fire god.<sup>16</sup> There are a number of Irish saints who bear various forms of the name, but the one with whom we are concerned is St. Lugaïd (Moluag) of Lismore, the patron saint of the diocese of Argyle. He was the St. Luanus who founded more than a hundred churches, mentioned by St. Bernard in his Life of St. Malachy as one of the famous men belonging to the monastery of Bangor.<sup>17</sup> As St. Bernard derived all his information about Ireland either from St. Malachy himself or his immediate disciples, we see from this that they venerated St. Lugaïd. There is no other authority for connecting this saint with Bangor, but very little is known about him either in history or in legend, as the only source for his life is a short lection in the Aberdeen Breviary.<sup>18</sup> The important point for the present purpose is that he is represented there as making a missionary expedition to the north of Scotland which was a failure; in consequence of his disappointment he retired for a while to the monastery of Melrose, from which he set out again on another and more successful journey to the north. As St. Lugaïd is supposed to have died in 592, while Melrose was not founded until the seventh century, the historical authenticity of the story is doubtful, but at any rate it may well have been believed in the twelfth century both by St. Malachy and by the monks of Melrose, and thus a link was established between St. Cuthbert and an Irish missionary-saint. Chronology is absolutely ignored in the *Libellus*, so that the gap of a century between the two holy men would be no barrier to their identification.

<sup>14</sup> St. Comgall, d. 602, was said to have in his monastery fifty monks called Lugaïd. Plummer, *Vitæ Sanctorum Hiberniæ* I, p. cxxxvi.

<sup>15</sup> Macculloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, pp. 89-91.

<sup>16</sup> Plummer, *Vitæ Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, I, p. cxxix.

<sup>17</sup> Lawlor, *op. cit.*, p. 28 n.

<sup>18</sup> Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

Some of the incidents in the life of St. Lugaid occur also in the *Libellus* and are indicated here in the notes, but there is nothing about the romantic story of his birth in the *Aberdeen Breviary*. According to the *Leabher Breac*, he was descended from Fiacha Araide and was related to St. Comgall, abbot of Bangor.<sup>19</sup>

Possibly a legendary life of St. Lugaid may have existed at Bangor in the twelfth century, containing the birth stories. They are evidently fragments of pagan tales which the monks tried to Christianize by attaching them to a saint, and may have been ultimately mythological stories about the god Lug, from whose name that of the saint was derived.<sup>20</sup>

One story about the youth of St. Lugaid is given in the *Aberdeen Breviary* but not in the *Libellus*. It is said that when his companions built houses for secular use, he built churches. It is not quite clear whether this alludes to their play as children, or to their actual work as young men. This story may have a connection with the question of the authorship of the *Libellus*, which might possibly be the work of Jocelin of Furness. The evidence in favour of this is as follows:

(a) Jocelin was well acquainted with Melrose abbey, as he wrote the life of St. Waltheof of Melrose, dedicated to William, king of Scotland, grandson of David I. In this life there occurs a form of the anecdote concerning St. Lugaid just quoted. Jocelin says that when Waltheof and his brother Simon, afterwards earl of Northampton, played together as children, Simon built toy castles, but Waltheof built toy churches.

(b) Jocelin dedicated his life of St. Kentigern to Jocelin, bishop of Glasgow, who had been abbot of Melrose from 1170 to 1174, and who died there in 1199.

(c) Jocelin was able to read Irish, and compiled his life

<sup>19</sup> Lawlor, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 29 n.; Forbes, *op. cit.*, 308; Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. lix n.

<sup>20</sup> See A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, pp. 167-8, 176-8, for the Christianizing of pagan gods and goddesses as saints; cf. Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. cxxix *et seq.*

of St. Kentigern from Scottish and Irish sources in the same way that the *Libellus* is composed.

(d) About the end of the twelfth century he was sent to Ireland to take part in the foundation of a Cistercian house at Down. This might account for his acquaintance with the various Irish bishops whom he mentions. But this is a doubtful argument, for on the whole it seems more probable that, if he did write the *Libellus*, it was during his connection with bishop Jocelin and before his journey to Ireland.

(e) He also wrote a life of David I, afterwards St. David, besides lives of St. Patrick and St. Helen (the latter lost), and there is attributed to him a book *De Britonum Episcopis*, now lost. He was therefore a learned and practised writer of the lives of saints. But this again is a doubtful argument, for, as he was well known, it seems unlikely that a book of his would remain anonymous. His surviving books all have dedications to important personages of the time, and of this there is no trace in the *Libellus*.

Personally I should prefer to believe that the *Little Book of the Nativity of St. Cuthbert* was the work of some unknown monk of Melrose. But on the other hand Reginald of Durham, who wrote c. 1175, about twenty years before the *Libellus*, says that John, abbot of Furness, in the reign of Henry II won a law suit through the intervention of St. Cuthbert; in gratitude for this help he dedicated an altar of St. Cuthbert in the abbey church and made a pilgrimage to Durham. St. Cuthbert, therefore, was particularly revered at Furness.<sup>21</sup>

In the *Libellus* we find a number of legends attached to the name of St. Cuthbert which are also told of other Scottish and Irish saints. A particular reason that one community on one occasion might identify St. Lugaid of Lismore with St. Cuthbert has already been suggested, but the final compiler of the book had probably a wider

<sup>21</sup> *Reginald of Durham* (S.S., Vol. i), pp. 112, 203.

object than this. The Cistercian monks who were Romanizing the Celtic church of Scotland came into conflict with the belief in the earlier Celtic saints. The more thoroughgoing reformers tried to abolish the old saints altogether.<sup>22</sup> The more thoughtful and sympathetic rewrote the lives of the Celtic saints in order that their flock might still revere them without being injured by any unorthodox teaching. St. Cuthbert may have appeared to them a convenient compromise. He was already widely honoured in Scotland, but by the end of the twelfth century he was regarded as a strictly Roman saint. This is curious when we remember that only a hundred years before, St. Cuthbert had been in exactly the same position with regard to the Benedictines that the Celtic saints were now with the Cistercians. When Benedictine monks were brought to Durham between 1070 and 1080, they were horrified by the unorthodox practices they found there, turned out the canons, as they called the Saxon monks, and established the Roman use.<sup>23</sup>

A hundred years later we find one of the Cistercians who were bent on a similar change in Scotland using St. Cuthbert as a thoroughly Romanized saint to replace a saint of the Celtic church.<sup>24</sup> In this object the author of the *Libellus* was unsuccessful. The Celtic saints held their own in Scotland, and came back to popularity on the outbreak of war with England at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

But the author of the *Libellus* accomplished something which he had not at all in mind. His book proved very popular, as his miracles were thoroughly to the taste of the period, and he succeeded in turning St. Cuthbert into an Irishman, instead of making St. Lugaid a Benedictine. There were Cuthbert windows at Durham and York show-

<sup>22</sup> Forbes, pp. xxii-iii.

<sup>23</sup> *Feodarium Prior. Dun.* (S.S., Vol. 58), preface; *Victoria County Hist. Durham* II, 10-11.

<sup>24</sup> Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. cxxiii.

<sup>25</sup> Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii.

ing his birth in Ireland and all the other stories of the *Libellus*.<sup>26</sup> The legend is summarized, rather incorrectly, in the fourteenth century *Nova Legenda Anglie*.<sup>27</sup> Muriardachus and Sabina are said to be the parents of Cuthbert's mother, instead of his own father and mother, and his Irish name is given as Nulluhoc instead of Mulucc, which has caused several conjectural emendations to be made, and obscured the connection with St. Lugaid.

### THE LITTLE BOOK CONCERNING THE BIRTH OF ST. CUTHBERT EXTRACTED AND TRANSLATED FROM IRISH HISTORIES.

Here begins the preface concerning the origin of St. Cuthbert.

As for many years I have secretly revolved within myself what I could perpetuate in memory with my pen to the honour of the venerable father Cuthbert, I have burned very vehemently with that spirit in which I desired to learn something of such importance as to deserve to be related. For many miracles, on account of his conspicuous merits, he effected by the power of God, in divers regions, which no one hitherto has left recorded in writing, commended to the memory of posterity. Diligently investigating these, and, from those who saw and took part in them, most solicitously examining them, I shall treasure up many worthy things in the closet of my heart; and I shall propose to weave them into this little work. My book being completed, I revealed my intentions to my friends. Among these studies of many books, a certain quarto fell into my hands, which expounded the birth of the Blessed Cuthbert in Ireland, also from what a royal and noble stock he sprang, and revealed very clearly how he sub-

<sup>26</sup> *Rites of Durham* (S.S., Vol. 107), p. 3; *Metrical Life of St. Cuthbert* (S.S., Vol. 87), preface.

<sup>27</sup> Vol. I, p. 216, ed. Horstman.

sequently came to English shores. Meanwhile the blessed and pious father Cuthbert, propitious to the prayers of our desire, as I think, illuminated us, because he sent to us Eugenius bishop of Harundino, born in Ireland, a man of holy opinions and conversation, who corroborated by his testimony those things which we had first discovered about the birth of the blessed Cuthbert; and moreover other things of which we knew nothing before he wove together in a most interesting narrative. For he asserted that he (Cuthbert) most truly was born in Ireland of a royal house; and he expounded to us the names of the place and city in which he was born, more clearly than any of the others. Among other things indeed, which he related about our Cuthbert, a saint from early boyhood, he said that king Muriadach was his father; who by his probity in those days subjugated the kingdom of all Ireland under the sceptre of his monarchical power, and of whose strength and power he had read much in their histories; his mother indeed was called Sabina, who for her religious sanctity and admirable conversation was held in the greatest veneration in her own country, and was reputed among them to be numbered with the elect of God. Where her sacred relics were placed in the very holy places of the church, and her memory is celebrated every year where she rests. Other things, indeed, which he related concerning them, we will insert in their proper place in the history; because it is not convenient that we should be too diffuse in the preface and brief in the history. But yet it must be stated that his mother, having left her son in Scotland, returned to her native country; and there died as a religious in the church in the habit of a holy nun. After his relation and the truthful attestation of others, namely, Matthew the archbishop and St. Malachy and Gilibert and Alan, bishops, and many ancient priests of Ireland, and the monks and disciples of the said St. Malachy the archbishop, we wrote this with confidence; and their sayings and testimony as far as it was necessary for the prosecution of this history, we inserted in the



following work. Other things also are adopted in their proper place, which we learnt from others or found written in Scottish books.

Relying upon these testimonies we devoutly offer our labours to the pious lord confessor Cuthbert, which we desire with the sedulous devotion of a very eager spirit that he may deign to hold acceptable whatsoever our prompt and devoted wishes in these works have eagerly desired to perform for his honour.

The preface ends.

#### NOTE ON THE PREFACE.

In the main body of the book, the parents of the holy child are nameless; they are merely referred to as the king and the girl. Bishop Eugene of Ardmore supplied the names of Muriadach and Sabina which occur only in the preface. There is not much importance in their identification, as they are evidently very slightly connected with the legend. Muriadach might stand for Muircheartach Mac Erc, who was ard-ri of all Ireland, about the beginning of the sixth century.<sup>28</sup> He belonged to the royal family of Connaught, and waged long and successful wars against the men of Leinster. During one such war he carried off a maiden whom he forced to become his concubine, but her name was not Sabina.<sup>29</sup> According to another account he was captivated by a fairy maiden.<sup>30</sup>

Sabina is a latinized form of the Celtic Sadhbh, which was the name of at least one Irish legendary heroine.<sup>31</sup> Sadhbh was one of the six best women in the world named in a poem of c. 973.<sup>32</sup> There was another ancient poem mentioned in the Book of Leinster on The Courtship of Sadhbh, the daughter of Sescenn.<sup>33</sup> Sadhbh, the wife of king Oilíoll Olíum of Munster, was also celebrated and her grave was pointed out, but she was perhaps slightly more historical than the lady or ladies previously mentioned.<sup>34</sup> In the Feilire of Angus, c. 800, the festival of SS.

---

<sup>28</sup> O'Curry, *MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*, p. 499.

<sup>29</sup> *Dic. Nat. Biog.*

<sup>30</sup> O'Curry, *op. cit.*, p. 599.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 585.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 515.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 585.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

Sabina and Romula is entered on 20 July. Nothing whatever is known about these saints, and it is conjectured that Sabina is a mistake for Sabinus, a saint who had no connection with Ireland.<sup>35</sup> It might possibly be this festival to which Bishop Eugene referred.

The Little Book of the Birth of St. Cuthbert begins.

### CHAPTER I.

[Summary.] The chief king of Ireland, a good Christian, ruled in the principal city of Leinster.

### CHAPTER II.

[Summary.] The wicked king of Connaught made a surprise attack upon Leinster by night, and killed the whole family of the good king, except one little girl, the king's daughter.

### CHAPTER III.

[Summary.] The captive maiden was made the slave of the wife of the king of Connaught, who ill-treated her.

### CHAPTER IV.

[Summary.] The king was seized with a lustful passion for the captive maiden, but she was virtuous and avoided him.

### NOTE ON CHAPTERS I—IV.

This is a common opening for a romance or for the life of a saint, because it was a fairly common incident in the stormy life of the early middle ages. St. Patrick and his sister were said to have been carried off by pirates and sold as slaves in Ireland in their childhood.

The story of a German woman, saint Cunera, also has some resemblance to these opening chapters. (Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 43; Eckstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, p. 21.)

---

<sup>35</sup> O'Hanlon, *Irish Saints* VII, 279; O'Reilly, *Irish Writers*, p. liii.

## CHAPTER V.

Now in Ireland then the custom existed that at certain times of the year, a flock of serving girls should go all together to the glades of the forest and there gather flowering branches and come back laden with suitable branches for adorning the queen's chamber; and such service had to be done by all the queen's household of maidens. But if an abundance of flowers were not to be found at the time, the servants in their helplessness gathered loads or bundles of green rushes, or green grasses, or even any little sweet-scented flowers. When therefore at that time the usual festive solemnity of the queen took place she sent the maiden with her companions to the performance of the accustomed task. And she, while the others hastened to return with their burdens, remained behind alone, for she had not learnt how to handle a scythe. For she had not learnt from the laborious use of custom, but when she had made up her bundle and placed it on her shoulder, she had wandered into a strange part destitute of paths. And it happened that on the banks of a river she all alone met the king alone, when he was shooting water birds. But though he addressed her humbly he could not persuade her mind to yield either by flattery or by promises of reward. Wherefore conscious of his greater power he carried off the maiden, and leading her into the recesses of the wood, using his strength he violated her. This violence caused the conception of Cuthbert, whom in the glory of his virtues, renowned fame commends to her heaven.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER V.

The Scottish ballads contain many warnings of the danger that a girl incurs by going into the woods alone and breaking a spray from a tree. See for examples *Tam Lin*, *Cospatrick*, *Hynd Etin*, and *The Bonny Banks of Fordie*. The frequency of this incident may have, in part, the commonsense explanation that at a time when woods were infested by outlaws it was

dangerous for young girls to walk there, but there is another strand of thought also involved. In the first three of these four ballads, the man who appears when the girl breaks the tree is a supernatural being. He is in fact the spirit of fertility that lives in the tree, and is especially powerful in the spring-time, when the tree is budding and flowering. For this spirit and his spring festival it is only necessary to refer to sir James Frazer's monumental work *The Golden Bough*. (See also the chapter on Festivals in Macculloch's *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, at Beltain, May 1st, and Lugnasad, August 1st, houses decorated with boughs, ritual marriage of king and queen of the May.) But the spirit of fertility was not necessarily male; it might just as well be a woman, for there are both kings and queens of the May. The story told in this chapter is probably a piece of Celtic folk-lore, with a mortal man and woman substituted for either the marriage of a god and goddess, or the mystical rite representing a marriage between a god and his priestess or a goddess and her priest. We may compare it with the account given by A. B. Cook in *Zeus*, pp. 273, 276, of the worship of the Greek goddess Nemesis.

Even the water-birds which the Irish king was shooting in our story are symbols of fertility. (*Modern Language Review* (January, 1926), Vol. xxi, p. 71; cf. O'Curry, *MS. Materials for Ancient Irish History*, p. 478, Little Baile's Birds.)

## CHAPTER VI.

[Summary.] The girl was overwhelmed with shame, but the king promised to protect her. He had no son, and therefore, if the child were a boy, he intended to make it his heir. He put the girl under the care of his own mother, the queen dowager, who treated her kindly. The queen mother withdrew into a convent, taking the girl with her. This convent was governed by a very holy bishop.

### NOTE TO CHAPTER VI.

For monasteries of women under the supervision of a male bishop see Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. cxii n. From the Roman ecclesiastical point of view it is remarkable that several of the most famous Celtic saints are represented in their legends as illegitimate, as in the Roman church such persons could not be admitted to the priesthood without a special dispensation. These stories probably arose from a misunderstanding of Celtic traditions. The Celts had a matriarchal form of inheritance, and

the influence of matriarchy was strong, especially in Ireland, which had never been part of the Roman Empire. (Macculloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, p. 222.) The old mythological stories which attached themselves to the most famous and popular of the saints reproduced this feature of the lives of the mythological heroes, in an age when it was no longer understood, with the curious result that the birth of the saint is represented as the consequence of an outrage. Examples of this are the stories of St. Brigit, whose mother was a slave girl, of Nonna, St. David's mother, of St. Tenew, who was St. Kentigern's mother, of St. Patrick's sister Lupait, and the present legend. (*Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. Horstmann, I, 154, 254; Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 364; Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 32 n.)

## CHAPTER VII.

[Summary.] On the night when the baby boy was born, "such a radiance of light surrounded all the place, that because of the splendour of so much light scarcely anyone could look upon it. For to the neighbours and those elsewhere, all the house appeared to be in flames. Some hastened up, to extinguish the devouring fire, but on arriving, and examining the place carefully, they found all safe and free from fire." It was revealed to the bishop at his prayers that this was a sign that a marvellous child had been born. He went at once to the king, and obtained permission to undertake the education of the child. But he was displeased that the child should have been born in the convent, and reproached the queen mother.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER VII.

This is one of the stories which shows that St. Lugaid had attracted to himself some of the legends of the Celtic god of light. From the same source come chapter XI, where he makes up a furnace with green rushes, and chapter XX, where the saint imparts to the spot where he had made a fire the virtue of lighting sticks, which are piled there, spontaneously. Another sign of his connection with the fire god is the occurrence of friendly animals and of miracles connected with animals in his legend, as in chapter X, the prophecy concerning a cow's calf, chapters XIV

and XVIII, the friendly seal who saves his psalter from the sea, and chapter XXI, a blackbird restored to life. The Celtic fire god, like Apollo, seems to have been a protector of animals. (Plummer, *Vitæ Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, I, pp. cxxxvi, cxli.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

[Summary.] His remonstrance on the pollution of the convent.

## CHAPTER IX.

[Summary.] The queen mother told the bishop the whole story, at which he was relieved and reconciled both to her and to the girl, whom he treated with kindness. "Soon he baptized the child and gave him at the sacred font the name Mulucc in the Irish speech; . . . He received baptism in the city which they call Hartlbrechins" [or Hartwrechins, alternative reading, i.e. Ardbrecain, co. Meath].

## CHAPTER X.

[Summary.] One day the bishop, in the Irish manner, went to visit his livestock, taking the boy with him. The attention of the little boy was attracted by a cow with calf. When the bishop asked him why he gazed at the animal so carefully, the boy replied that it seemed strange to him that a black cow should have a calf red in colour and with a white star on its forehead. Just then the cow brought forth the calf, which was coloured as the boy had described. The bishop marvelled at the spirit of prophecy in the child.

### NOTE TO CHAPTER X.

It seems to be quite certain that the cow was a sacred animal in the pagan religion of all the Celts in the British Isles, and more traces of its sanctity survived in unromanized Ireland than elsewhere. In the life of St. Bridget we are told that she could not eat the food of her heathen master, and was brought up on the milk of a white cow. (*Nova Legenda Anglie* I, p. 154.) The

legend contains other stories connecting her with cows and milk which show that she had attracted to herself some of the legends of the Celtic goddess Brigantia.

"There was a tradition at Clonmacnois of a dun cow, called Odhuyr Kyarain, which supplied the whole monastery with milk; 'and its skin even to-day remains honoured in the city of St. Kiarani; for by the grace of God miracles are worked by it. And it has this grace as ancient saints, i.e. the disciples of St. Kiaran, told us, because its divinity is shown, that any man who dies upon it possesses eternal life with Christ.'" (Reeves, *Life of St. Columba*, p. 352 n.)

The importance of bulls is shown in the epic of Cuchulain, in the persons of the two supernatural bulls who caused the war. When St. Patrick died there was great contention as to where his burial-place should be. "The monks of Saul (where he died) yoked two untamed oxen to the cart which bore his body and left them without guidance." Where they stopped, the body was buried. (Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 95.) There is a similar story about the burial of the holy man Fergus of Carnock, who died while St. Kentigern was visiting him (Forbes, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-6), and about St. Lugaid of Clonfert. (Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. cxli.)

Miss Eckstein, writing of women saints on the continent, says :

"Tacitus tells how the image of the German goddess Nerthus was carried about on festive occasions in a chariot drawn by cows. The pseudo-saint either during her lifetime or after her death was often similarly conveyed. Sometimes the animals put themselves to her chariot of their own accord, frequently they stopped of their own accord at the particular spot which the saint wished to be her last resting-place." (*Woman under Monasticism*, p. 28.)

These stories bring us back to our own St. Cuthbert. From the last bald traces of such a legend in the seventeenth century story of the woman looking for her cow who directed the bearers of St. Cuthbert's body, Durham may fairly claim, like Thebes, to be a cow-founded city.

It is a fascinating conjecture, though, of course, only a conjecture, that in the eighteenth century sculpture of two women and a cow upon Durham cathedral there is the last trace of some heathen temple. It replaces an older group, though this cannot safely be traced back from the Norman to the Saxon building. The building of a church on the site of a pagan sanctuary was a regular part of the policy of the missionary church. (Bede, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. I, cap xxx.) The erection of an image of the old divinities on the outer wall of the church was also quite usual. (Eckstein, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. cxxix.) The

monks regarded it as a sign of their triumph, while the common people came to venerate the old gods as well as the new. Thus :

" At Meerbeck in Brabant corn is blessed before it is sown under the auspices of Saint Berlindis, who protects tree planting. She is a saint of many associations. . . . Peasants, men and women, may be seen to this day touching in reverence the udder of the cow which a rudely cut relief in wood represents by the side of the saint Berlindis at Meerbeck." (Eckstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.)

Among the grotesques in the elaborate carvings on the north door of the lady chapel at Glastonbury there is a woman milking a cow, and the same subject occurs over one of the doors of the tower on Glastonbury Tor.

Starting from the cow on Durham cathedral, we may reconstruct the following sequence of events. On the high, forest-covered headland of Durham, almost surrounded by the river, there was a secret Celtic cult of a goddess, or two goddesses, and a sacred cow. It survived the Anglian invasion. It survived the introduction of Christianity for more than two hundred years. But the monks of St. Cuthbert at Chester le Street must have been aware of their rival, and at last they made a bold move. In 995, fearing an attack by the Danes, the congregation of St. Cuthbert carried the saint's body from Chester le Street to Ripon. In the same year, the danger having passed, they returned, but instead of going back to Chester le Street, they advanced on Durham, and drove out the pagan worship, as St. Cuthbert had driven the demons from Farne. The church of St. Cuthbert was built on the sanctuary of the Celtic goddess.

In the story of St. Lugaid as a child prophesying the colours of an unborn calf we may see a trace of this cow-worship, for the colour and markings of the sacred animal were a matter of great importance in the cult. (See A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, pp. 431, 451, 467-71, 540; Macculloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, p. 209; Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. cxlv.)

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP MATTHEW.

As the boy lived illuminated by the Lord in all things, he received many valuable presents from his paternal relatives. Among which he had a certain bell which in their language is called kelim, which in the Irish fashion



he wore round his neck. It happened by chance that the boy's kelim was broken by some fall or blow, which caused him much grief and sorrow. Then led by dove-like innocence, he went alone to a smith, and eagerly begged him continuously for the love of God to mend his kelim. And the smith marvelling that he made his request with such mature prudence, though he was within the years of childhood, felt he must yield to his prayers; because he perceived the spirit of God speaking through his lips. Wherefore he said to the boy, "For God's sake I am ready to do your will gladly, but I do not know the art of fusing brass." The boy replied, "I trust in God, in Whom I believe, that you will not lose your skill in this art, if you are willing for His love to fulfil my desire." Then the smith said, "He Who could make the heavens can very well give me skill in this art, but behold, though I may have the will, the means are not at hand, for we are a long way from the woods and I can by no means do forged work without oak charcoal." The boy replied, "God will be with us, and minister to our needs. For I will go in His name, and bring back sufficient fuel for us." And taking the bundle of a reaper he went into the fields, and mowed green rushes (cyrpos) which he brought back to the smith. "I believe in Christ that I have brought enough to fuse the metal." Then the smith seeing the faith of the boy, soon took up the green rushes, placed them in a heap, and put fire to it. Marvellous to behold, and what is better to hear, the virtue and clemency of Christ shone out declaring the merits of the boy. For the smith, making up his furnace, and the brass melting, cast the bell, and it came out of the mould such as by their prayers they desired, and he gave the token whole to the boy.

#### NOTE TO CHAPTER XI.

This chapter is interpolated into the story taken from the Irish book, as appears by the heading "The Statement of Archbishop Matthew." It has already been shown in the introduction

that this archbishop was probably Matthew O'Heney, archbishop of Cashel in 1192, and this reference to him is one of the reasons for thinking that the *Libellus* may have been written by Jocelin of Furness after he went to the Cistercian monastery of Down. But as archbishop Matthew O'Heney was a Cistercian, it is possible that both he and the abbot of Melrose, with attendant monks, might have met at some council of the Cistercian order, and that the story might have come from him to Melrose thus.

The *Aberdeen Breviary* tells the same story of the repairing of the bell about St. Lugaid (Molocus) of Lismore (Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 409), and this is the principal means of identifying the Mulucc of the *Libellus* with that particular saint; as the story is not common, and is not told of any other Scottish or Irish saint whom I have discovered. The differences in the version of the *Aberdeen Breviary* are that the incident happens when the saint is a man, on his mission in Scotland, and that the bell is iron, not bronze.

I have not been able to find out anything about the alleged Irish custom of hanging a bell round the neck of a child, but there are endless stories about the sacred bells of the saints of the Celtic church. See Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, pp. 49-50, 333, 409; Plummer, *op. cit.*, pp. clxii, clxxvi, clxxxv; Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 345; Reeves, *Life of St. Columba*, pp. 34 n., 205-6 n. Reginald of Durham says that in the time of prior Turgot, 1087-1107, there was at Durham a bell of ancient workmanship called a schyll, which was believed to have belonged to St. Cuthbert. It was moderately small, made of an alloy of brass and tin, giving a very sweet sound. It was not a hand-bell, but was rung by a cord. It stood on the upper table of the refectory, and in honour of St. Cuthbert, prior Turgot caused it to be ornamented with gold. (*Reginald of Durham*, Surtees Soc., Vol. i, pp. 169-70, 310.)

## CHAPTER XII.

There is a very large city in Ireland, which in the Irish tongue is called Kenanus (Kells), the province of this region is called Media (Meath), which is adorned most fruitfully with wild animals and fruits, pastures and groves, streams and rivers; and the river Mana (Min) waters the aforesaid city, which is wont to abound most abundantly with all sorts of fishes. In this town, as delightful as wealthy, the holy child is said to have been born, where his birthplace is still shown by the inhabitants, and the sacred chamber among the antique ruins is known

by many; as the glory of the virtuous boy by the record of his piety is frequently held in honour by the people of the province. Bishop Eugenius of Hardionensis (Ardmore) states that he saw and read this in Irish histories; and in that region he was born and was educated from youth to manhood. And in his bishopric rests St. Tedanus the bishop, the marvellous raiser of nine dead persons and the worker of many miracles, which while he lived illuminated the land. And he asserted that the province of his fathers was more famous and more remarkable for fertility than all the other regions of Ireland.

#### NOTE ON CHAPTER XII.

This chapter also is an interpolation of the information conveyed by bishop Eugene of Ardmore. It is discrepant with chapter IX, where it is stated, that the child was christened Mulucc at Ardbreachain. It is of course possible that a child born at Kells might be christened at Ardbreachain, but the chapter implies that he was born as well as christened there. In Kells there is an ancient building dating from the sixth century and called St. Columkille's House. (Joyce, *Social History of the Ancient Irish* I, p. 325; Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 106.) This may have been the ancient building which bishop Eugene politely supplied as the birthplace of St. Lugaid-Cuthbert when questioned. But there is another possible explanation. It has already been pointed out that the name Lugaid is derived from that of Lug, one of the ancient gods of Ireland. (Macculloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, p. 89; O'Curry, *MS. Materials for Ancient Irish History*, p. 478.) August 1st was a great festival in ancient Ireland, and was called Lughnasad in honour of the god Lug. (Macculloch, *op. cit.*, p. 273.) One of the chief places where it was celebrated was Tailltin in Meath on the river Blackwater, not far from Kells. (Macculloch, *loc. cit.*; O'Curry, *op. cit.*, p. 478.) Here were the remains of an ancient fort or palace, and one of its chambers was called Raith Lughdhach or Lis Lughdhach. (O'Curry, *op. cit.*, p. 478.) It was said that St. Patrick had preached here against the heathen rites, practised at the feast, and had nearly been put to death by the king of the district. (Bury, *St. Patrick*, p. 120.) Perhaps the church tried to Christianize this heathen place of worship by turning Lug's chamber, possibly his bridal chamber (Macculloch, *op. cit.*, p. 273), into the birth chamber of St. Lugaid.

It has been conjectured that St. Tedanus in the text is a

corruption of St. Aidan (*Metrical Life of St. Cuthbert*, S.S., Vol. 87, p. 15 n.), but it seems more probable that it is an attempt at the name of St. Declan (Declanus), who was the reputed founder and patron saint of Ardmore. (O'Hanlon, *Lives of the Irish Saints* VII, p. 307.) St. Declan is said to have been a bishop before the mission of St. Patrick to Ireland, but concerning his historical character it can only be said that there certainly were Christians in Ireland before St. Patrick (Bury, *St. Patrick*, p. 351), but his life is purely fabulous, and was not written earlier than the twelfth century. In it, however, is described the miracle of his bringing to life seven noblemen who died of the plague (O'Hanlon, *op. cit.*, VII, pp. 334-5), and this seems to be the miracle in the text, though Bishop Eugene added two to the resuscitated noblemen, either from a different tradition or for the greater glory of the saint.

### CHAPTER XIII.

[Summary.] After these digressions, the author resumes his subject. Soon afterwards the bishop died. The boy's mother was in great alarm for fear she should again fall into the power of the wicked king. She therefore resolved to fly from the country, and explained her plan to her son, who obediently submitted to it.

### CHAPTER XIV.

[Summary.] The little boy before the death of the bishop had fully learnt the symbol and psalms of David. He was so beautiful and accomplished that everyone talked about him. This alarmed his mother still more, and she and the boy fled secretly by night to a port, where they found a ship about to sail to Britain. The wind was favourable, and they went on board, but as they embarked the boy dropped his book of Psalms into the sea. A seal instantly rose from the water and swallowed the book, much to their distress.

### CHAPTER XV.

[Summary.] "Some things must now be interpolated, which are found in the Irish histories and must not be

omitted, although they seem to be incredible." There was a certain holy man, much revered by the Irish, who had undertaken the education of six noblemen's sons. When the fathers of these boys died, their relations wished to take them from the holy man and force them back into secular life. The teacher and his pupils therefore resolved to escape to Britain, and they came to the same port as the mother and the holy boy. The two parties greeted each other affectionately and determined to travel together. At first the voyage was calm. Then a storm sprang up, but after a time it was calm again.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Meanwhile a marvellous vision appeared to the boy, but whether he was in the body or out of it he did not know. It seemed to him that their anchor descended into the depths of the sea, and he beheld in miraculous manner the anchor firmly fastened to the beams and tiles of a house. And the boy, incredulous, swiftly descending from the ship, tried to loosen the rope of the anchor, and to pull to pieces the form of the apparent house. And to him there came as it were an excited farmer very swiftly, and asked who was carrying off the spoils of his house as if in grief. And coming to the door and seeing the boy near by, he hastened immediately to kiss him, and in a language unknown to the boy, by his own name he adopted the salute of eternity. "Welcome," he said, "welcome, pious boy, who by the ordinance of God art a consort of the heavenly host. It is long since the cause of thy arrival was known to me, and the divine grace promised that I should see thee in these parts. Neither shouldst thou now fear concerning the unwonted cause of the event, because in corporeal safety thou shalt see and know the prefigured pattern of thy future life." And taking the boy's hand he led him into the house, and placed three vases of admirable work in the boy's hands, which this

divine person (demi-god) indicated with his wand. To which he added, "Here, my child, this vase belongs to thee thyself, and the two others are for thy master; see that thou dost not lose thine." Then leaving the house, he soon freed the anchor and allowed the boy to return, saying, "See that thou salutest thy aged teacher in my name which is inexpressible and what all this portends to thee, thou wilt be able to learn fully from him."

## CHAPTER XVII

[Summary.] "Now the man who appeared to the boy was mature in appearance and of ancient beauty and shone like a red flame of fire." The boy took the vases to his master, and asked him to interpret the sights he had seen. The master explained that the white-haired old man was a messenger of God. The ship is the Church sent on missionary work to the heathen. The house under the sea was the hermit's cell where the boy was to live in a foreign land. The three vases typified the Trinity. Two were for the master because he was to preach two precepts to ignorant Christians. One was for the boy because he was to live a solitary life and never return to Ireland.

At length they all safely reached Britain.

## NOTES ON CHAPTERS XV-XVII.

These chapters are evidently taken from a different legend from that which has been followed so far, and are interpolated awkwardly into the middle of the story of the friendly seal, which is completed in chapter XVIII. The opening of chapter XV, the flight of the virtuous tutor and his pupils, has a certain resemblance to the legend of St. Machutus, otherwise St. Malo (d. 565), which runs as follows :

"On the death of the bishop of the city where he lived the people rose and determined to make him bishop of the place where his father was count. . . . He resisted the proposed honour, and with a few companions fled, committing himself to the waves. He voyaged to Brittany, where he is now honoured as St. Malo." (Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 381.)

But in the present story it is the pupils, not the master, who are threatened with worldly honours.

Chapter XVI is remarkable for bringing into the legend of a saint the country under the sea which is a very popular subject in secular Celtic traditions (Rhys, *Celtic Folk Lore*, chapter VII), but which very rarely occurs in stories of the saints. The Reverend Charles Plummer, after an exhaustive study of Irish saints, found only one example, from which our chapter is evidently derived. In an ancient hymn to St. Brigit of the eighth century, and in the entry on St. Brigit's day in the Martyrology of Angus c. 800, there are references to St. Brigit's "congregation of Plea," and in notes of ancient but unknown date in both these manuscripts a story is told to explain the fact that the order of the celebration of Mass in St. Brigit's church of Kildare differed from the established Roman Use. According to the legend, "St. Brigit was anxious to learn the correct Use of Rome, and twice she sent seven men to Rome to learn it for her, but each time they returned at the end of a year no wiser than they went. The third time she sent with them a blind boy who could remember every word that he heard. As their ship was passing through the Ictian Sea (the sea of Wight (?), the Solent, or possibly the sea off St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall) a great storm came on, and they cast anchor. When the storm had passed, they attempted to draw up the anchor, but it was fixed below. They cast lots to find out who should go down to release it, and the lot fell upon the blind boy. He climbed down the rope and freed the anchor, whereupon his comrades sailed on without attempting to take him up again. At the end of a year they were sailing back over the same place, when again a storm came on, again they cast anchor, and the blind boy climbed up the rope. He had spent a year in the submarine city of Plea; the anchor had become fixed in the roof of the church of Plea. The blind boy brought with him a bell, which he gave to St. Brigit, and it was the bell of Kildare. During the year under the sea the boy had learnt the order of the Mass used in Plea, and that was the order henceforward followed at Kildare, which is why the Use of Kildare differs from the Use of Rome. (*The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, Henry Bradshaw Soc. II, pp. 1, 41, 189, 191; *The Martyrology of Angus*, Henry Bradshaw Soc., p. 65 n.; Plummer, *Vitæ Sanctorum Hiberniæ* 1, pp. cxxvii, cxlix.)

The first part of the story in chapters XV and XVI, the storm, the anchor becoming entangled, the boy going down to free it, the anchor fixed in the roof of a submarine house, seems clearly to come from the Plea legend, but no parallel has yet been discovered for the story of the three vases, which may perhaps be an allegorical invention of the writer of the *Libellus*.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Behold while they rested in the port and hastened to leave the ship for the English shore, suddenly with great speed the seal arriving, came before them landing on the shore, and cast up the book on the beach. Then amid the congratulations of all around he took up his book. And the boy seeing the book quite unhurt and free from marks of water rendered thanks to God, and directed the minds of all to the glory of God.

## CHAPTER XIX.

In order that we may explain clearly what we have heard concerning him, we will not be silent about vulgar traditions and beliefs. The Irish, the Gallwegians and the Scots all say that the child of God, on account of the miracles which God showed through him, was much hated in his own land. Wherefore many advised that he should leave the country, and fly to a foreign kingdom. To whom he replied, that he would not do this, unless they gave him an unaccustomed ship. Pleased by this promise, by way of mockery, they cut for him out of hard rock a certain ship, which they called a curroc, and standing on the shore, they ordered him to sail in it. But as soon as he had made the sign of the cross over it, the stone curroc swam on the waves. And when, wondering at his sanctity, they could not by prayers hinder further his intended journey, he with his mother and companions went away secretly by night; and carried in marvellous manner in the stone boat, he reached Galloway in that district which is called Rennii, at the port which is called Rintsnoc. At which port on the shore the strong stone curroc of St. Cuthbert may still be seen. After this, leaving the stone curroc in Galloway, he took another ship and went to another port which is called Letherpen in Erregaithle, which is in Scotland. That port is between Erregaithle and Incegal near a lake which is called Loicafan. There



were not more than three men who travelled with the mother and son.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER XIX.

This chapter is another interpolation, inconsistent with the stories in chapters XIV and XV. The *Aberdeen Breviary* tells us that St. Lugaid

"betook himself to the northern parts of Ybernia, through many straits, where, abiding for a time, he found men of a like mind with himself in a little ship, from whom he sought aid to sail to more desert places. When they refused, dreading the effect of (his) miracles on the men across the sea, and left him there, the stone on which he stood floated to Lismore before them." (Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 410.)

This seems to be the foundation for the present chapter. The story of a saint who either floats on a stone himself, or causes some person or sacred object to float on a stone is extremely common in Celtic saints' legends. It is a relic of the stone-worship of the pre-Celtic population. (Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. clv; Perry, *The Children of the Sun*.) Originally it was the stone itself which was the object of worship.

The Rinns of Galloway are headlands still called by that name, but Rintsnoc, where the stone curragh might be seen, is now unknown. Letherpen cannot be identified. Erregaithle is Argyle. Loicafan may be Loch Affy, a small lake near Loch Awe, where there was a cell of St. Columba. There is still a place called Inishgall in the Outer Hebrides, but Insi Gall, meaning Isles of the Strangers, was an Irish name for the Hebrides collectively. (*Metrical Life of St. Cuthbert*, Surtees Soc., Vol. 87, p. 23 n.; Reeves, *St. Adamnan's Life of St. Columba*, p. 60; Plummer, *Vitæ Sanctorum Hiberniæ* I, p. cxxvi n.)

The Reverend Robert Lambe, vicar of Norham 1747-95, used to assert that the broken fragments of a stone coffin in St. Cuthbert's chapel at Tillmouth were the remains of a stone boat in which the body of St. Cuthbert had floated from Melrose to Tillmouth. As the vicar was an inveterate practical joker, this story has generally been dismissed as one of his inventions, but it might be based on a local tradition derived ultimately from the *Libellus*, which had not been printed then, and could not be known to Lambe. (Welford, *Men of Mark* III, p. 4.)

#### CHAPTER XX.

[Summary.] On landing, they collected sticks to build a fire, as it was winter. But a robber band dwelt in the

neighbourhood, and seeing golden bracelets on the woman's arms, they attacked her. The holy boy prayed for help, and by the mercy of God the robbers turned their weapons against each other so that all three were killed. The mother and the boy then made their fire, lighting it by striking sparks from a flint. From that day to this, sticks and twigs laid on that piece of ground will burst into flames of themselves, to witness to the merits of this child.

## CHAPTER XXI.

[Summary.] The mother and boy went to St. Columba, the first bishop of Dunkel, who undertook to educate the boy together with a little girl called Brigit from Ireland. Three southern clerks from England, members of St. Columba's household, were jealous of the children; they killed the saint's pet blackbird, and accused the children of having done it. St. Columba knew that the children were innocent, but did not wish to favour one party more than the other. The boy prayed that his innocence might be revealed, by the restoration of the bird to life. The bird immediately recovered.

## NOTES TO CHAPTERS XX AND XXI.

In these chapters the author of the *Libellus* seems to return to his Irish source, after the interpolation of chapter XIX from some other tradition. The dates of chapter XXI have caused some concern to serious historians. (Reeves, *op. cit.*, p. 296-8.) St. Columba died in 597. Dunkeld was founded c. 849 by Kenneth MacAlpine, who dedicated it in honour of St. Columba and transferred a portion of his relics to the new church. St. Brigit is supposed to have died in 523, whereas St. Cuthbert died in 687. A considerable part of the confusion disappears when we remember that the story is not about St. Cuthbert but about St. Lugaid, who died in 592. The writer probably did not know when Dunkeld was founded, and supposed that St. Columba had been associated with the place in his lifetime. Columba was in fact a contemporary of Lugaid of Lismore, and though there is no recorded connection between them, as each conducted a separate mission, yet there were several monks in St. Columba's monastery

of Hy (Iona) called Lugaid, who might be confused with the saint. (Reeves, *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 143, 153, 236.) Thus it was an easy mistake to connect St. Lugaid of Lismore with Hy and St. Columba.

The writer no doubt regarded the maiden Brigit as St. Brigit of Kildare, who performed the miracle of curing a man called Lugaid of an inordinate appetite (*The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, Henry Bradshaw Soc., Vol. II, p. 202), but it is possible that St. Lugaid of Lismore was contemporary with a less known namesake of St. Brigit.

"Among the thirteen Brigids mentioned by Ængus the Culdee is 'St. Brigida de Mag Luinge,' whom Colgan places in Dalriedia, by which, if he means the original territory of that name in the north of the county of Antrim, he is in error. In the farm of Cornagmore, on the north side of Tiree, is a place called Kilbride, where a small chapel formerly stood, and this is the true site of the 'ecclesia S. Brigidæ de Mag-luinge.'"

Compared with its extent, the ecclesiastical remains of Tiree are very numerous: Kilbride—Kilmoluag, commemorative of SS. Bridgid (and) Molua, are the names of farms on which there are, or were, religious houses. (Reeves, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 n., 207 n., quoting a paper on this Island of Tiree in the *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, Vol. II, pp. 238-44.) The story, therefore, may be founded on an historical fact that there was a Bridget who worked with the missionary St. Lugaid of Lismore.

With regard to the revival of the murdered bird, there is a very similar story of St. Kentigern reviving the pet robin of St. Servanus. (Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 362.)

## CHAPTER XXII.

[Summary.] Brigit now bid farewell to the boy, as her mission was to Ireland and his to England. Afterwards the boy and his mother went to Hy, and lived for some time with the religious men there. The mother had two brothers, Meldanus and Eatanus, bishops in the province of the Scots. She took the boy to them, and told them that she had made a vow to visit the country of SS. Peter and Paul. The brothers encouraged her to fulfil her vow, and undertook to bring up the boy.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

[Summary.] The bishops Meldanus and Eatanus put the boy into the care of a religious man called Lodonicus. Cuthbert was popular with his playfellows and took part in all their sports. When he stood on his head, "in marvellous manner his clothes did not fall down, but stood rigid without folds. They would not wrinkle, but, wrapped round the boy's legs, exhibited reverence for his honour." A church has now been built in that place, "which from the contest of the boys at play to-day is called Childerschirche."

Here ends the Book of the Nativity of St. Cuthbert taken and translated from Irish histories.

## NOTES ON CHAPTERS XXII AND XXIII.

The reasons for connecting St. Lugaid, mistakenly, with Hy have already been given. All the relations of his mother were slaughtered at the beginning of the book, but it need not disturb us to find that now she has two brothers. They also seem to be connected with Hy. In *St. Adamnan's Life of St. Columba*, p. 55 and note :

"St. Columba foretells the arrival of a guest at Iona. The guest was Aidanus, son of Fergnoi, who, as they say, for twelve years ministered to Brenden Mac Ua Alti (the navigator)."

To which the editor adds the note :

"Colgan devotes two folio columns to the identification of this individual, and comes to the conclusion that, of the twenty-three Ædhans in the Irish calendar, he was the Ædhan Mac Ua Coinn, whose brother Meldan founded a church at Inis Mac Ua Coinn in Loch Cirbsen (now Inchiquin in Lough Corrib).

Lodonicus is the man of Lothian, and Childerschirche is Channelkirk, a parish on the river Leader. The Irish life winds up very neatly at a point where Bede's life can be reasonably fitted on to it, as Bede's life of St. Cuthbert begins with stories of the saint's school-days.

## CHAPTER XXIV

[Summary.] The blessed Cuthbert now withdrew to a solitary life at a place called Dul. About a mile away there was in a forest a very high mountain, only accessible on the east side. It is called Doilweme, which in Latin means beautiful and pleasant. The blessed Cuthbert lived as a solitary on the top of the mountain, where no one had ventured before, as it was haunted by devils. The devil tried to drive him out with threats and spears, but Cuthbert was unmoved. As there was no water, by prayer Cuthbert drew a spring from the rock. The surface of the spring is two feet across, and it must always be covered by the stone which the saint placed over it, or it would overflow and inundate the country. The spring never fails, and has healing properties.

## CHAPTER XXV

[Summary.] In order to drive out the devil, Cuthbert erected a great stone cross on the top of the mountain, approached by a staircase. He built himself an oratory of unhewn stone, and hewed himself a bath out of a single rock. He used to spend all night praying in the freezing water. The devil, in mockery, made another bath beside it, "incomplete and enormous." They are both to be seen to this day. At last Cuthbert took a great staff like a fuller's stake and drove the devil out of the mountain. The devil rushed down the wood on the east side, which still seems to hang on the steep slope of the mountain. The footprints of St. Cuthbert and of the devil are to be seen on the stone. "The steps of St. Cuthbert show quite a decent shape, but the devil's are wide, curved, large and distorted. But whoever places his weak or feeble limbs above or below the steps of St. Cuthbert receives health."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## A MIRACLE.

Some time after St. Cuthbert left that country. But no one dared to break the peace of the place, even if he had by chance slain the king or some great person of the land and been able to fly thither. No one brought any women there with impunity, because the blessed Cuthbert had forbidden women to enter his habitation. As a certain count of Scotland, namely Madet Maccrie Mor, that is son of Mor, learnt by experiment; because when at some time he had committed a crime punishable by death, in the reign of King David, he fled there, and remained for a long time in peace. But as soon as he brought his wife and daughters there, as he followed them, up the steps to the entrance of the place, he fell at the top and broke his hip and leg so badly that by no art could he be cured thereafter. Soon therefore he took the women away, and never afterwards, as never before, did any woman presume to enter that place. In the country of the Picts St. Cuthbert led a solitary life for some time, where a great concourse of people came frequently to see him, because, by God's providence, no one left him without receiving from him the consolation of grace. Old men and young came to him, because they delighted to see and hear him.

## NOTES TO CHAPTERS XXIV-XXVI.

Having come to the end of his Irish source, the writer now give us the legends which he had collected among the Scots and Galwegians, of which we have already had a specimen in chapter XIX. St. Cuthbert is no longer identified with St. Lugaid of Lismore, but with St. Adamnan of Hy (d. 704), who founded a monastery at Dull as a daughter house of Hy c. 680. It did not survive very long, as it was suppressed in 717 by Nectan, king of the Picts. (Zimmer, *The Celtic Church in Britain and Ireland*, p. 85; Scott, *The Pictish Nation*, pp. 367, 380.) St. Adamnan set an enduring mark on Dull, where under the name of St. Eonan there are his fair (6 October), his well, his crag, his market and his footmark. (Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 266.) The well, the crag, and the footmark are all appropriated by our author to St. Cuthbert.

Just as miracles of the Celtic fire god had been transferred to St. Lugaïd, so those of some Celtic water god seem to have been transferred to St. Adamnan, e.g. the story of the miraculous well, which must be covered with a stone to prevent a flood, and of the saint's and the devil's baths. (Macculloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, pp. 191-3; Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, cxlvii, cxlix-cl, clxxxi n.; Rhys, *Celtic Folk Lore*, chapters VI and VII.)

About two miles from Dull is Weem, where there are St. David's well, St. David's fair, and St. David's burial-ground.

"Tradition relates of this guardian saint that he was one of the lairds of the place who had turned monk; and that he had a chapel on the shelf of the rock still called Crag an t'Scheapail or the Chapel Rock." (Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 320.)

The identity of this St. David is doubtful. Forbes suggests that he was an Irish saint, Dabius or Davius, patron saint of Donach Cloney in county Down and of Kippen in Scotland. Scott, in *The Pictish Nation*, p. 157, maintains that he was the Welsh St. David, though he says that

"there is a foolish folk-story current among the clan Menzies connecting Father David Menzies (1377-1449), master of St. Leonard's hospital, Lanark, with this ancient Celtic foundation."

Forbes states that there was an ancient church of St. Cuthbert at Weem. (*Op. cit.*, p. 319.) Perhaps here the well and the chapel were originally St. Cuthbert's, but were transferred to a local St. David in the fifteenth century.

The bachul or staff of a Celtic saint was as important as his bell. (Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. clxxiv; Lawlor, *op. cit.*, p. 54 n.; Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, p. 90; Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 345.) The bachul of St. Lugaïd (Molua) is still in existence, in the possession of the Duke of Argyll. (*Ibid.*, p. 410.) The pillar of St. Aidan, against which he was leaning when he died, was preserved as a sacred relic in the Saxon church at Bamburgh. (*Northumberland County History*, Vol. I, p. 103.) This veneration for a post or staff might possibly be a relic of pillar worship.

I have not been able to trace Madet Maccrie Mor.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### WHY WOMEN MAY NOT ENTER THE CHURCH OF THE BLESSED CUTHBERT.

[Summary.] The daughter of the king of that province had a child in adultery and when she was questioned, she accused St. Cuthbert. The king went,

with his daughter and his attendants, to the hermitage and rebuked the saint. He prayed that his innocence might be revealed, and as the girl falsely accused him, the earth opened and swallowed her up. The place was called Corruen. St. Cuthbert forgave the king, but he left that place and thenceforth women were not permitted to consort with him or to enter his churches.

#### NOTE TO CHAPTER XXVII.

The writer seems to place this miracle somewhere in the neighbourhood of Weem and Dull. A corrie is a rugged hollow in the side of a mountain, which might be pointed out as the place where the earth opened and swallowed a young woman up. Corran is a fairly common placename in Argyll, and Corrennie is a forest between Aberdeenshire and Kincardine. On the other hand, if Corruen is merely the writer's attempt to spell a name which he did not know, it might represent Girvan in Ayrshire, where there is a church of St. Cuthbert.

The punishment of the earth swallowing the criminal up derives partly from the fate of Dathan and Abirain in *Numbers* xvi, but was also within the power of the Druids. (Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. clxviii and n.) The story crops up every now and then in odd places. George Peele, the Elizabethan playwright, wrote a chronicle play of Edward I in which Queen Eleanor, after taking a false oath, sinks into the earth at Charing Cross and rises again at Queenshithe! This legend is told also in a contemporary ballad. The anti-Spanish feeling of the time showed itself in this blackening of the character of the good and beloved Queen Eleanor of Castille.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

##### ANOTHER REASON.

In modern times a certain man of solitary life spent his time in a forest which in the English tongue is called Moddri; who before had been a professed monk in Lichfield, who was called Randulph de Nuers. It happened then that the prior of this place invited him to the feast of St. Mary which festival was held chief by them. Who not delaying, gladly wishing to obey the summons of his father, made certain commodious and suitable



preparations for his journey. The night coming, after which at dawn he had prepared to set out, after his wonted rest of sleep, he kept vigil as was his custom. And he suddenly was oppressed with a great weariness, and sleep suddenly seized him, and carried away all the senses of the exterior man. And suddenly a certain venerable man, dressed in a pontifical fillet, stood before him in his imagined sight, and used gentle words convenient to him. "Why," said he, "dost thou resolve to desert this place at such a feast, and leave me, the former occupier and present guardian of this place in the service of God, destitute? I am Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, formerly a bishop, consecrated by the divine munificence by Christ, and this place, formerly my habitation, is sanctified by God." For in ancient times this was called the place (platea) of St. Cuthbert because he was wont to guard anything which entered that enclosed stronghold from all incursions of savage beasts or men. "Wherefore I warn thee that thou shalt not desert my desolate place for the service of God again." Saying this the man of God vanished from his presence, and the hermit, returning to himself rapidly, awoke from the vision of sleep, was agitated, stupefied and concerned for a long time over this vision, and began to examine what the revelation might portend. Hitherto he knew nothing of the Blessed Cuthbert. While he was silently turning this over in his mind, suddenly in the dawn an old man came to the outer door of the cave, and knocking hard and shouting often, was not able to obtain admission from the priest. Then he, vehemently demanding admission, always invoked the Blessed Cuthbert his patron and help. At length the hermit, hearing and opening the gate, inquired why he called diligently upon St. Cuthbert, with such an importunate voice. Then the old man replied, "This place is dedicated in the name of St. Cuthbert, and we have often heard from our progenitors and ancestors about a certain sanctuary of this house in his honour, and we learn that on account of this sanctity frequent miracles

have often been done here in experience. So we learn from the traditions of our fathers, formerly in the solitudes of this forest there was such a multitude and savage gluttonous rapacity of wolves, that no living man or beast could survive them. All, however, which this fence enclosed, the rapine of no molestation presumed to harry; neither did robbers, thieves, or other evil doers in this territory ever succeed in touching anyone in this enclosure. Wherefore this place is a refuge and help to animals as well as to men, and also a refuge and protection to all living things. For in the time of the ferocity of wolves certain countrymen drove their flocks into this enclosure, and all the savage beasts surrounding them never dared to cross the limits of the ordained area. They could shriek, roar and bellow against them, but they were not able to cross the boundaries." This having been told, the hermit, amazed beyond measure, gave thanks to God, and from that time devoutly worshipped the Blessed Cuthbert, because he could not doubt what he had seen and heard. The inhabitants of that place to this day say that within those limits thieves never break in or steal, nor animals nor anything else are able to carry off anything unjustly, violently or fraudulently from that place. The place is called Moddri, about four miles distant from the city of Bedford.

#### NOTE TO CHAPTER XXVIII.

There is independent evidence of the existence of Ralf the hermit of Moddri. When Robert d'Albini founded the priory of Beaulieu in the parish of Clophill near Bedford he gave to it the site of the hermitage which his father Henry d'Albini had granted to Ralf the hermit at Moddry. The priory was founded between 1140 and 1146. It was a cell of St. Alban's Abbey, and a small place, containing only four or five monks. The original community might be Ralf the hermit and three or four disciples of his. St. Cuthbert is not mentioned in connection with it, but it is rather curious to notice that the priory had attached to it the chapel of St. Machutus in Haynes. (*Victoria County History Bedfordshire* II, pp. 350-1.)

Reginald of Durham tells how the sheep of a poor widow took refuge from wolves in the churchyard of the chapel of St.

Cuthbert at Slitrig in Teviotdale. (*Reginald of Durham*, S.S., Vol. i, pp. 288, 324.)

Waltheof, afterwards abbot of Melrose, was living in the abbey of Warden in Bedfordshire some time between 1140 and 1146, and he may have heard the story from Ralf the hermit himself, and afterwards carried it to Melrose. The author of the *Libellus* may have heard the story, as a novice, from the abbot's own lips.

The stories in chapters XXVII, XXVIII and XXIX are all explanations of why women were not allowed in St. Cuthbert's churches. In the pre-Christian religion of both the Angles and the Celts women took an important part, though there were sexual taboos; some holy places might not be visited by women, others might not be visited by men. (Plummer, *Vitai Sanctorum Hiberniæ* I, p. cxxi.) The introduction by the Normans of the continental belief that women were inferior and impure was therefore regarded with a good deal of bewilderment. Instead of taking it as a matter of course, special reasons were invented for what seemed to north country people a freak on the part of St. Cuthbert. These three stories show three different ways of solving the problem. The first, in chapter XXVII, is an adaption of a universal moral tale illustrating the punishment of an oath-breaker. The second, the story with which we are at present dealing, is rather an odd explanation. There does not at first sight seem to be any ground for the heading "Another Reason (why women may not enter the church of the Blessed Cuthbert)". When we reflect upon the story, however, we see that the reason is that St. Cuthbert is jealous of the veneration paid to the Virgin Mary! As it is rather a discreditable reason, the author does not state it very plainly, but his point seems to be that the saint objected to his hermit paying honour to the Virgin.

The third story shows a trace of Irish influence. Plummer says

"that in the legends of the Irish saints 'one curious device which the druids and hostile princes are represented as adopting against the newcomers (Christians) in order to drive them away, was that of sending abandoned women to annoy them with their impudent gestures and behaviour.'" (Plummer, *op. cit.*, I, p. clxvi n.)

## CHAPTER XXIX.

[Summary.] When St. Cuthbert was a bishop, he used to come from his solitary cell to the monastery on holy days to celebrate the rites of procession, receive con-

fessions, and preach. One day as he was preaching he saw that his audience had become inattentive and was laughing. Then he saw that their attention was distracted by a very beautiful woman, magnificently dressed. St. Cuthbert blessed some water, and sprinkled the woman with it, whereupon she disappeared, leaving a horrible smell. The bishop then warned his congregation against incontinence, and forbid women henceforward to enter his churches:

We have written this from the books and writings of the Scots, but because sometimes we have been unable to transfer, expounding and interpreting, every word flowingly, we have laboured to explain the sense and translate it into this tongue. Because we have heard certain notable things from most important men and especially from the bishops of Ireland preaching about St. Cuthbert's birth, it seemed suitable that we should insert them in this book, and we have connected the figure of one body by joining together diverse parts. For what the holy priests read in their own tongue and country concerning such a child ought not to be buried in silence. For perhaps for this purpose God caused them to come to us, because He did not wish the birth of St. Cuthbert to be longer slighted in the ashes of ignorance and oblivion. And indeed whoever knows the signs of their sanctity, cannot doubt their words and the protestation of their truth. For St. Malachai related this fully to David, king of Scotland, and Maurilius the archbishop, his successor, confidently added to it afterwards, and Eugene bishop of Ardmore expanded it more clearly; but two other bishops, whose names have dropped out, together with their associates, priests and clerks, at different times have poured into our ears still more. For there have been a great many and other who here and elsewhere often used to bear witness about this before us, and to see each of their books would be to exceed the means of reason. Wherefore we have inserted for our example certain handfuls of flowers

and the tunic of most mild virtue of the Blessed Cuthbert from such probable testimonies gathered and joined together. These, therefore, to the honour and glory of the most Blessed Cuthbert we have written, which we pray may be a small but welcome gift to him. Hail, therefore, Blessed Father Cuthbert, who art before God perpetually, worthy of felicity, continually mindful of the needy and wretched, those grovelling and weeping at your most sacred footsteps, to join you in eternal joy. Where thou livest for ever and gloriest in glory, the grateful coheir of Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.

Here ends the little book of the Nativity of St. Cuthbert.