

## II.—THE MIRACLES OF FARNE.

BY SIR EDMUND CRASTER.

In his *Libellus de admirandis Sancti Cuthberti virtutibus*, Reginald of Durham speaks, on more than one occasion (cc. 58, 102), of the numerous miracles wrought on Farne Island and ascribed to the agency of St. Cuthbert; and he devotes to them nineteen chapters of his work. Reginald's authorities were the Durham monks in the cell of Farne. He particularly names Ælric, Alwin and Bartholomew, who successively lived upon the island as hermits. At the time that Reginald composed his work, Bartholomew was still alive (c. 111). Shortly after his death in 1193, another Durham monk, named Geoffrey, who had already written a biography of St. Godric of Finchale, was employed to write Bartholomew's life. In this work, which is printed in the first volume of the Rolls Series edition of *Symeon of Durham*, Geoffrey has further miraculous tales to tell, derived, it appears, from Bartholomew's successor in the hermitage.<sup>1</sup>

A manuscript volume of historical tracts relating to Durham, numbered 4843 in the Harleian collection at the British Museum, contains Reginald's *Libellus* and Geoffrey's *Life of Bartholomew*, along with a variety of other pieces very imperfectly noted in the Catalogue. The writer of this volume, a young Durham monk named William Tode, has included in it a sermon of his own which he composed in 1528.<sup>2</sup> We know something of him. He came up to Durham College in Oxford, took the Oxford degree of Doctor of

<sup>1</sup> *S.D.*, I, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> For a further account of this MS. see Colgrave's *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert* (1940), p. 29, and my article in the *English Historical Review*, XL (1925), p. 506. In the latter I repeated a mistake made by Arnold, the editor of *Symeon of Durham* (vol. I, p. xix) and gave Tode's Christian name as John.

Divinity in February 1538; and three years later, after the monasteries had been suppressed, was appointed to be first prebendary of the fifth stall at Durham. He combined membership of the new chapter with the incumbency of Northallerton and the archdeaconry of Bedford. Deprived of his stall in 1567, he shortly afterwards died, leaving instructions in his will that he should be buried in the abbey church.<sup>3</sup>

Close examination of Harleian MS. 4843 reveals the fact that the folios originally numbered 54-57 and now 56-59 contain a separate tract, sandwiched in between the Cuthbertine piece known as *Breviſ Relatio*<sup>4</sup> and certain chapters of Symeon's *Historia Ecclesie Dunelmensis*. To this tract, of which there is no other known copy, we may give the name of *The Miracles of Farne*.

The author's style is different from that of Reginald, as may easily be seen by comparing their versions of a miracle which they both record (Reginald, cap. 119; Farne miracles, cap. 4). Reginald's style is the more turgid, and he tells his tale with a greater amplification of medical detail. Nor can our author be identified with Geoffrey, who was a professional biographer and makes no claim to have known Bartholomew personally, whereas the writer of the Farne miracles did know him (see cap. 12). The stories that he records were those that Bartholomew told, for, although that hermit was evidently a store-house of tales, Geoffrey hints (*S.D.* I, p. 298) that he had no gift for literary composition. Geoffrey seems to have written his biography soon after Bartholomew's death in 1193. The Farne writer tells a story (cap. 13) of a man who was employed in work upon Berwick bridge, and this can only refer to the rebuilding of the Border bridge after it had been swept away by floods in 1199.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses; Durham Wills and Inventories* (Surtees Society II), p. 269 and note.

<sup>4</sup> Edited by Hodgson Hinde in his *Symeon of Durham* (Surtees Society I), pp. 223-233.

<sup>5</sup> *Chronica Rogeri de Hovenden* (Rolls Series) vol. IV, p. 98.

There seems little doubt that the piece was written by one of the two Durham monks who made up the little monastic community on the Inner Farne, and who are mentioned as the brethren of Farne in the tenth chapter. Nearly all the places that occur in the narrative lie within a radius of ten miles from Farne,—Mousen, Newham, Ellingham, Bamburgh, North Sunderland, Embleton. Closer identification is not possible. The anonymous writer's composition shows him to have had an eye for pictorial detail equal to Reginald. He was steeped in the Vulgate, and his prose is often a patchwork of scriptural quotations. He had had training in the Arts course which formed the basis of medieval education, with the result that chapter 7 shows him joking heavily on prosody. On one occasion he quotes a line of Horace,—a tag which he may have got out of some book of elegant extracts.

Just as there is a certain amount of overlap between Reginald and Geoffrey, so there is also between the Farne writer and the other two. The two miracles here set out at length as chapters 2 and 3 are each recorded in a single sentence by Geoffrey (*S.D.*, I, p. 314). The miracle that follows next after them (cap. 4) whereby a lady of note was cured of a feverish ague, had already been told, as we have seen, by Reginald. If a marginal note in his manuscript were to be believed, she was the wife of John Vescont, owner of Embleton; but it seems better to accept our author's direct statement that she was Emma de Grenville. That lady was married to William de Grenville, lord of the barony of Ellingham. She survived her husband (who died before 1158), and was still alive ten years later.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from Baldwin, the rich Flemish merchant of Aardenburg, the only other person of standing who comes into these tales is Nicholas de Stuteville (cap. 5). Mr. Charles T. Clay informs me that he was nephew to Roger de Stuteville the sheriff, and points out that his father, Robert, was supervisor of the works of Bamburgh castle in

<sup>6</sup> *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis*, p. 104 note; *N.C.H.*, II, pp. 227, 229.

1168.<sup>7</sup> This helps to explain Nicholas's presence at Bamburgh, and gives an approximate date for the miracle.

The most interesting and best-told of the stories is the fairy-tale which forms chapter 6 of this collection. English fairy-tales are not unknown at this early period; we get them in Gervase of Tilbury and in the Yorkshire chronicler, William of Newburgh. But our story is notable for the many details of its fairy lore;—the three boys clothed all in green (not in diminutive size; be it noted); the mortal carried off on horseback into Fairyland; the King of Faery; the fairy feasts and the magic drinking-horn (one such became the Luck of Edenhall); the warning against tasting fairy food if one would ever return to the upper world; the striking dumb (or blind) those who have seen the fairy mysteries. Here in the twelfth century we are in the world of Thomas the Rhymer. The North Sunderland labourer was not the only one to be led by fairies into the desert. Remember the ballad—

O they rade on and further on;  
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;  
Until they reached a desart wide,  
And living land was left behind.

#### THE MIRACLES OF FARNE.

Translated from the Latin text in Harleian MS. 4843.  
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[c. I.] *Of the wonderful things of God declared to the present times in the island of Farne.*

To the praise and glory of the Lord Jesus. I have thought it right to bring to the notice of the faithful those miracles which have shone forth to the present times in the island of Farne, through the working of the blessed father Cuthbert; the grace of God, which was not in vain in him, working with him. So may I not seem to hide a lamp of so great brilliance under the bushel of indolence. While I fix the eyes of the mind upon its ray, I become blinder from gazing upon it; for the glory of the divine work, when contemplated, beats upon the human brain. God has made a new thing upon earth, and, even as a woman conceived a man-child, so the Bishop Cuthbert has

<sup>7</sup> *Pipe Roll Soc.*, xii, p. 169.

been born to fleshly incorruption. While he lived in the flesh, he withheld from the flesh in full measure those things which were of the flesh. He mortified the flesh, and so after fleshly dissolution, the flesh could not be subjected to decay in the manner of flesh. The flesh is everywhere gainsaid; it could not have what it willed when it lived nor yet its due when it was dead. Nature passes over into grace, and flesh puts on a new creature of the same nature but of a different glory. If something sweet be seasoned with bitter, or hot with cold, the bitter grows sweet, the cold grows hot, and they receive by grace that which they have not by nature. He that shows forth some of the beauty of the resurrection cannot wither, nor does the efficacy of signs grow old, for, with the Ancient of Days, his spirit has received eternal youth. His virtue, like a spring of water welling up from God's paradise, waters the whole face of the earth. The pitcher of meal of his benefits to his peoples has not failed, nor has the cruse of oil of his consolations to his servants lessened. The more liberal is he to him that asks of him, so much the more plentiful is he in his outpouring. God has kept the good wine of his grace until now. His grace is as Rebecca's pitcher, from which thy people, Lord Jesus, like Isaac, drinks, and its flocks also. For by Cuthbert's merits the sick receive health from infirmity, the weary rest from tribulation, the sinners indulgence from crime, the faithful the desire longed for in faith. It has come to pass that the good things which he did in the life of flesh are testified after death by works of power. Let no one then think that I tell a doubtful tale; for those things which I speak, I speak not of myself, but only retell what the venerable monk and hermit Bartholomew saw with his eyes or received from the report of the faithful. This is that disciple who bears witness of these things, and we know that his witness is true.

[c. II.] *Of one who disturbed the young gulls.*

The first tale I have to tell is of Roger of Embleton, the story of whose rashness stays the vice of pride among his like and inculcates the fear of reverence which is due to holy places. Being on the island of Farne, he came to the venerable monk and hermit Bartholomew, praying and asking something of him, namely that he should give him one of the young gulls or allow him to take one himself. Bartholomew refused, saying "You know not what you ask. Go rather to the neighbouring islands and take thence what you can. But do not presume to stretch forth your hand against those whom the lodging of this holy place has brought forth. They must enjoy the privilege of that great peace." The young man went out straightway for it was night. Night, I say, not of the night but of the mind. For, ignorant of what was to come and foolishly led

away by the spirit of elation, he despised the command of his good counsellor and fell into the snare of him who creeps in Paradise and raises himself up in man's mind. He hastened to the cliff and began to volley stones on the young gulls, his object being to drive them from the upper to the lower places so that he might get at them more easily. Meanwhile the older gulls (I speak as a man) were ware of it. Grieving with family feeling for the harm to their children and, as it were, lamenting with just complaint for the breach of the peace, they flew round and round and filled the island with their clamour. At the noise that they were making, brother Bartholomew came out, knowing that some robber or pirate was doing injury to his young birds. He came to the place and found one with its wing broken. "What have you done, Roger?" he said. "Leave off now and sin no more, less worse things befall thee." Roger resisted the man to his face. But because he put no limit to his disobedience, after three days he ended his life. The speed with which punishment followed showed how greatly he sinned against Almighty God by his contempt of the holy place.

[c. III.] *Again of the same.*

Another miracle happened in another case, though the form of transgression was the same. There was one William by name, nephew of the foresaid Roger. As he was near to him in relationship, he was next to him in guilt. He had come to Farne to fish and disregarding the prohibition of the said brother Bartholomew, was in the habit of disturbing the gulls by throwing stones. Bartholomew bore this hardly, and admonished him by Roger's example, warning him lest like fault be followed by like punishment. The wretch laughed at this and laughed again, and said with a grin "Do you think St. Cuthbert cares for gulls?" His heart was hardened, and, as the scripture says, lifted up before a fall. He got into his boat, and such pain followed in his fingers, namely in thumb and forefinger (though no outward swelling was visible), that he gave vent to cries of misery and called out that he was going to die. It was right that those fingers should be in pain which were the abettors of his fault. He asked to be put on shore, thinking to numb the pain by death. Yet life did not leave him, but left a mark of his presumption on his forefinger, which withered away to its middle, skin and flesh consumed and only the bone left. In these cases it seems that it may well be asked why Almighty God does not strike with the same sentence of punishment those whom he finds in the same fault. For, see, he determined that one should meet death; the other he reproved sternly and did not allow to die. It is not for man but for God to know these things and to pass judgment upon them, for God

can weigh men's merits and examine their consciences. Perhaps he who died had it not in his mind to be converted even if he were to die; but the other, when he saw himself stricken, took counsel for his life by lamentation which showed his penitence. For a just judge does not consider the equality of the crimes, but, in delivering retributive judgment, he assesses the quality of the intention. Also sin is the death of the soul, and sometimes is the death of the body also; whence it generally happens that he who sins in body and soul is stricken in both. Hence the psalmist says "The sinner is taken in the works of his own hands." We must therefore all beware lest, through the death that lies in an evil deed, we incur also the death of the body, and, through the time for penitence being cut short, we receive double in the final condemnation.

[c. IV.] *Of a lady who was cured of sickness.*

Emma de Greneville was the victim of an attack of a distressing illness. Sometimes she was very cold and sometimes very hot. When she was cold, no clothes or fires were any help; when heat followed and set her burning no taking off of clothes or rolling on the ground was any help either. In extremity of cold and of heat she laboured in the fourth degree, and while still alive she had a foretaste of the alternate tortures of Hell. For we read of how the spirits of some, who are condemned to tortures among the shades, are carried from cold to hot and from hot to cold because of their changefulness and inconstancy. So it was that, while this poor lady could find rest in neither state, she seemed to have found Hell in her own body. Often she used to lie in her chamber clad only in a shift, generally careless as to who, of those who came in or went out, might see her rolling or naked. One who is deep sunk in ills minds not to have shame for one. For blindness does not blush at the light, nor does weakness have regard for the human gaze; because frequently in cases of bodily suffering forgetfulness holds greater sway than memory in the hearts of the sufferers, carelessness than bashfulness, mood than modesty. Her flesh consumed away and her bones cleaved to her skin. Only her lips were left about her teeth. Like as if humbled under the yoke, she went about bowed, leaning on two sticks which supported her in her goings and comings. She had tried many doctors while she still had hope of health, but the strength of her illness could not be overcome, and she is thought to have baffled all medicines. At last she met with sound advice and sought Farne. Having prayed to the memory of the blessed Cuthbert for health, she handed over her sticks to brother Bartholomew, and, rendering thanks to her Saviour, returned home healed. All these words were noised abroad over all the Northumbrian

moors, and one and all wondered and were filled with amazement and delight at that which had happened to her.

[c. V.] *Of one who had the dropsy.*

There was a man named Henry who came from Wartre. Rising in the night he took a draught of water, and from the water he caught the disease of dropsy. The mass of liquid grew daily, and the sick man's belly swelled till it was like a cask. And now he was not only a load upon his friends but he was made a burden to himself. And because he was unable to seek a living from his own labour, he came to the town of Scarborough where he had learned that there was a fishing place, and there he led a life for some time on the charity of the faithful. Those who saw him shook their heads at him, for the pain was great and so their compassion was the stronger. God, the father of mercies and helper in tribulations, who decreed that he should be ill that the works of God might be manifested in him, took pity upon him, and predestined from eternity a doctor for him to the honour of His Name. So Cuthbert, the blessed Confessor of God, stood over him in his dreams saying: "Do you know, Henry, whence this weakening illness comes to you?" He replied, "I know not." "From the water," says he, "which you drank at night." He, "I believe, sir." To whom the saint, "Come to me on the day of my translation,<sup>8</sup> and I will cure you." To this the sick man answered, "Who are you, sir, and where is your home?" He says to him, "I am he whom they call St. Cuthbert, and my home is Farne. It lies in the sea, opposite Bamburgh, and no one reaches it except on shipboard." Henry replies, "Between us there is a great gulf fixed, and I am so fettered by ills that I am prevented from crossing hence to it." The saint, "Come quickly, and I will go before you thither. And the nearer you come to that place, you will daily become stronger than you were." Henry slept and dreamed and rose up, pondering all these things in his heart, and signifying what must be done shortly by God's servant, Cuthbert, to all that he saw. And they all marvelled at those things which proceeded out of his mouth. So he came to Bamburgh where, with the assistance of alms given to him by Nicholas de Stuteville, he awaited the day of his cure. And when the day was come, the neighbours placed him in a boat, for their hearts were moved at him; and they brought him to the island and handed him over to brother Bartholomew. He, overflowing with bowels of pity, received him pityingly, and brought him into the oratory. Henry at once gave himself up to prayer, having hope in Him who is the hope and salvation of all men;

<sup>8</sup> September 4.

knowing also that the faithful and prudent servant whom the Lord set over his household would give him at the determined time the grain of the wheat of health. As the hour of his cure approached, he began to be violently afflicted with pains of the bowels, and to be tossed hither and thither with a pitiable convulsion of his limbs. There went out a report among those that stood by that he is now dying; but the holy father did not say that he is going to die, but that he willed him to remain until he should come. He knew that he now had come, for the swelling could not hold out longer. Little by little it settled down, and he felt himself free from all that griping of his swollen stomach. And he cast off like a hide the skin which hung in folds about his stomach and loins, saying "Thou art St. Cuthbert. Thou art St. Cuthbert." His groaning was a declaration of joy. At this word Bartholomew runs to him, and there run to him the rest who had trembled at his trembling and had stood afar off. Seeing these things and having sung a hymn of praise, they gave thanks to God, for that he magnified his saint, who is wonderful among his holy ones and holy in all his works.

[c. VI.] *How one was led into the desert by a spirit of phantasy.*

One Richard of Sunderland, a man of lowly birth, had been bound as a labourer to a certain man of Ellingham. His master bade him go out at dawn and cut, in a lake hard by, reeds suitable for thatching houses. He obeyed his governor's command, and took with him a sickle and a rope. But while he was taking his journey, it happened that he was drawing near the place whither he went, and, looking, he saw three young men coming down along the road. Their clothes were green and so were their horses, and they themselves were beautiful of stature and of countenance. One of them came up to him, saluting him, saying "Where are you going?" And Richard thought, "What kind of a salutation is this?" And he said "I have been sent to cut reeds." To whom the other, "The lake is deep, and you have no way of coming to it, for the rains fill it and bar you from all approach. Come then after us and be amongst us as one of us." He refused, wishing to have nothing to do with them, but only that he might carry out the task allotted to him. And he whom he thought to be a man put out his hand and seized the young fellow, and, throwing him up on to his crupper, compelled him to sit behind him. And they went forward, robbers enriched by a lowly capture. And they came to a valley which opened to them of its own accord. So Richard was led into the desert by a spirit of phantasy, that he might tempt him thrice, if so be, and that he might be held prisoner by a company of devils. But the Lord was with him. He saw there the great beauty of the

place, and a lofty house into which they brought him and offered to their king what provender they had found. He saw also young men and maidens; old folk with those younger than they, and marked their habitation which was as of those who make holiday. He fed, as he told afterwards, on wheaten bread and very thin milk, eating and drinking what they had with them, at the Lord's command. Yet so it was; they brought to him in a green horn liquor in the likeness of new ale. He put it to his mouth, but when he had tasted he would not drink. For he remembered the stories he had heard while he was still among men, and what popular opinion handed down about things of this kind. Meanwhile the goodman of the house wondered that his bondservant had passed the given hour; and rising up he came to the place and, not finding him, he thought that he had gone over to his parents' home for work of some kind. When he had learned that he had not appeared to them, they (his parents) were as if stricken dead at the tidings, and their hearts stood still like to a stone. The two ran out together, going round and round in their anxiety, supposing that he was sleeping out in the fields or that he had gone to neighbours for a visit. And when in the end he had not been found, they thought him dead and that he had fallen from a high cliff into the sea, for they knew not that he had been carried off. And they began to stand on the shore and weep, thinking that it were enough for them if they should see his lifeless corpse. The next day dawned and had advanced to noon, and Richard wished to return from that far country but was not allowed. They asked him to stay with them, and that, leaving the world's toil, he should take rest with them. And when they saw that unlawful pleasures were not permitted to him, and that he would not leave the things to which he was used, they endeavoured to play upon his bodily health. Sentence was pronounced, and judgment given that he should be brought back to the place from which he was taken, and that, for his crime of disobedience, he should be deprived of the use of his tongue. Restored to his place and to his senses, he tried to utter words, but was silent and could not speak until the day of his visitation by God's grace. And when it was late on that day and the doors were shut, he came to his parents' house, beating on the door and bellowing instead of speaking. And they who were within, looking out through the windows and lattice, appeared to him; and they were astonished, for they thought at first that they saw a ghost; but when they recovered themselves, they recognized their son. And they said to him, "Son, why has thou done this to us? Lo, thy father and thy mother have sought thee sorrowing." And he beckoned to them, and remained dumb, and when questioned he did not reply to them a word; for He

who in the beginning was the Word was his word, and the Word was with God. They knew then that he was dumb, and they would not question him further. Though speech had failed him, yet he remained sane; and, as often as he caught sight of Farne Island, he bowed his head and reverently prayed. His father one day noticing this, cleverly interpreted his son's mind, namely that he would gladly go thither, if the power of speech might be restored to him. This was done. It was a Sunday and the great feast of St. Denis.<sup>9</sup> And as the venerable brother Bartholomew was blessing the holy water, straightway his mouth was opened, and his tongue, and he cried saying, "St. Cuthbert! St. Cuthbert!" And he spoke plain. His parents were amazed, and they who had come thither congratulated him and blessed God, who has done all things well and has made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

[c. VII.] *How someone, waking from his sleep, found one foot longer than the other.*

I will tell a laudable miracle of the said Richard's nephew, in which, as it is matter of wondering glory that God opened a dumb mouth, so in this it is matter of glorious wonder that he gave back to a man the power to walk. He was taking care of the flocks entrusted to him, and slept in the fields, and, when he woke up, he found one foot longer than the other. Although this was done by a trick of the Devil, I do not doubt that the Lord allowed it. And getting up he tried to go, but the length of one foot scorned the shortness of the other. More people were surprised at him, and pointed him out than were sorry for him. What then? Leaning on a stick, he outdid the lame who had lost the use of both feet. He took good counsel for himself and gave orders that he should be taken to Farne. And, passing the night in prayer, he who was a trochee and came a dactyl returned home a spondee. For he was a trochee when he had a long foot and a short foot. He was a dactyl when to a long foot and a short foot he applied a short, namely a stick, and made up for the lack of length in one by becoming a trinity that was co-equal. He was a spondee when the original equality and conformity of feet was restored to him. No wonder if, by cleaving to God and being made one spirit with Him, he should overcome the pranks of the devils. While in the body and absent from the Lord, he foiled all their efforts.

[c. VIII.] *How one who healed others was unable to heal himself.*

The said Richard's father was laid up with an illness of which he had been used to cure others, but he had been unable to benefit

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<sup>9</sup> October 9.

himself. This was done by the dispensation of Almighty God, who withdrew the power of treatment that he might show that a cure is God's gift and not man's. For if it were his, he would have rendered it to himself in the first instance. Having measured his body in length and breadth with a hempen rope, and made a candle thereof, he came to Farne, and, paying his vows to the blessed Cuthbert, by his aid returned healed. Then was his mouth filled with joy and his tongue with exaltation; and they said among the people that the Lord hath done great things for him.

[c. IX.] *Of one who lost his senses.*

On Ellis the smith of Newham He who wrought this world's fabric wrought a sign of wondrous novelty. This man had lost his senses, and an evil spirit led his mind's captivity captive, so that he surpassed the error of the brute creation. So uncareful was he of himself and so terrifying to all who looked at him, that his friends bound his hands in gyves and his feet in fetters. But when they heard of the prodigies that were being wrought by the merits of the blessed Cuthbert in Farne, they thought that their sick friend should be taken thither, that from the flow of so great virtue he too might draw the antidote of health. When he had been placed in a boat and loosed from his bonds he settled down in a wonderful way, and began to help in rowing, for the old enemy blushed at the presence of the holy place. They came to the island, and, when prayers had been said for him, they returned home. And it came to pass that within three days he was wholly restored to his senses and to his occupation.

[c. X.] *Of another who was mentally afflicted.*

Another man, named Adam, laboured under the affliction of the like mental trouble. Because of his violence his parents bound him in chains, and, beating him with rods, thought from the lashing to bring him back to his former state of mind. And when they had profited nothing, they took counsel, and it was decided that his parents, along with a little boy, should go over the stories of the saints, to see if there were one of them who would take pity on him. When they came at length to Farne island, the brethren of that place said, "Why have you brought this man bound? Loose him and let him go." And when he was loosed, straightway he was in his right senses, even according to the faith that was in his parents. Cured in his mind, thenceforward he suffered in person no bonds for the fault of insanity. Two others also who were mentally afflicted were brought to the said island. They were bidden to be loosed, and reported lasting release from all trouble of the mind.

[c. XI.] *Of one who lost his health.*

William of Mousen was so deprived of the use of all his limbs that, on whatsoever place his hand or foot or side should lie, he could not turn it to another without someone helping him. Only the free use of his tongue and of his eyes was left to him. It was pitiful to see the sufferer's pitiabie condition. But as that was the more abject, the care that followed was the more glorious. Having been brought to Farne island, in accordance with the faith that was in him, he who had been carried thither by an act of clemency from on high returned a healthy man. It was as if the blessed confessor had said to him, "Thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace."

[c. XII.] *How a man's possessions were saved by a hempen rope.*

God is spirit, and, because He is spirit, He is everywhere. Even so the spirits and souls of the just who are created in God's image and are with him, through the administration of powers given to them by God, are everywhere. For as the human nature of Him who is our Head is spacially contained in space but His divine nature is taken hold of by none, so the bodies of their members are buried in peace and their names live for evermore, and, whithersoever the faith of those who call upon them asks, their presence comes. This is proved by the miracle which I am about to narrate and which was lately performed by the blessed Cuthbert in the parts of Flanders. Although he gave the deposit of his holy body to the men of Durham for their protection, yet he stretches forth the long arms of his power to distant bounds of the earth. There was a rich man, Baldwin by name, a Fleming by race, of the city of Aardenburg, who went to far countries for trade, leaving his wife and his children at home. She had frequently heard her husband tell of the miracles of the man of God and had adopted him as her special patron. Fire broke out by chance in that city, and the flame so increased that, though many poured water on it, its voracity seemed to grow in hunger from that by which it ought to have been put out. You would think that the flame was maddened by the waters since they gave added fury to the blaze. House fell upon house and one set light to another, and each was a danger to the next house, for not one perished alone. Wherefore the townfolk in despair said good-bye to their homes and occupied themselves, not in putting out the fires but in seeing to their own safety and that of their belongings. So when all their substance had been carried away, there remained only the woman's house and those things that were with her in the ark. Her neighbours and kinsfolk came to her shouting "Spare your husband; spare him, we beseech you, nor let him in his absence be plagued by these calami-

ties, lest his property go down in the general conflagration. For your turn comes when the next house catches alight."<sup>10</sup> She would not, and, having made a rope of tow, she put it round the circuit of her dwelling; nor, in her confidence, did she oppose any other defence to the flame. And she said, "If my lord and patron be with me and keep me and that place, he shall be to me a refuge in all things, and the candle which I shall make will be for a sign." Oh woman, great is thy faith. It shall be to thee as thou wilt. Wondrous thing. When it touched the tow the flame stayed, and the untameable element did not dare to pass the bounds which the woman in her faith set to it. And it began to twist back upon itself in a wonderful fashion, as if, by the recoil of its attack, it was crying out that it could not touch any part of that building. When those men saw what a sign had been wrought, they glorified God in all things which they had seen and had heard by the woman's word. When some days had passed, her husband returned, and, having learned what had been done through the patronage of the blessed Cuthbert, said "So will I too give thanks." And it was so. He made two great lights, not plaited lengthways in the manner of the English, but rolled spirally after the fashion of his own people. And when opportunity came for him to go to the northern parts, he put in to Farne island and, recounting everything to the venerable monk Bartholomew, deposited the candle for a testimony upon the altar. These he showed to me whole, and he used still to tell this miracle to those who came to him, and give them little bits of the candle that by the gift he might the more deeply fix in the hearts of his hearers the memory of so great a matter. Herein the holy father renewed the miracle which he performed in his lifetime, when he freed from a town fire the house of a widow whom he had been used to call 'Mother', and helped it by the like aid of his power;<sup>11</sup> showing by the exhibition of his powers that he truly lives after death, seeing that he is glorified when ungirdled as well as girdled and out of the body as well as when in it. It drew the minds of some to wonder that the tow drew no hurt from the fire. But we who have known the blessed man's powers do not wonder that through his power the tow, as if it had been water, repelled the fire. His flesh, which he had dedicated to chastity, did not admit corruption when in the fire of temptation, and so did not fail to achieve incorruption. What the breath of fire does on tow, the heat of temptation does on our flesh. So when tow meets fire and flesh temptation, he will be perfect whose tow does not burn.

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<sup>10</sup> A quotation from Horace, *Epistles*, 1, 18.

<sup>11</sup> The reference is to the miracle recorded in chapter 14 of Bede's prose life of Cuthbert.

[c. XIII.] *Of one who was smitten with dysentery and cured.*

Walkelin, an officer of the king of Scots, had a nephew named William who was smitten with dysentery and was left with the right side of his body quite dry and bloodless. The day of the translation of the blessed Cuthbert was drawing near, and, though he was ignorant of it, health drew near to him. Brought to Farne island he offered the vows of his prayers to the blessed father and got the one side back equal to the rest. Many knew him and saw him working upon Berwick bridge, and learned from his own report that it had been as has been said.