

LITERATURE.

MY CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS ON HEARING MUSIC.

How like the map that marks my varied way,
Through life, that music seems!
A varied piece—a mixed display
Of sadness, dullness, passion, pain, and play—
One heap of sound, and variegated dreams!

How many a passage difficult; and there
Loud flourishes that leave,
On all who hear those notes, the mere
Remembrance of their noise; and now appear
Movements and times to teach me how to grieve.

Here love's enchanting strains, whose stops and bars,
And melting cadences,
Bring long-lost echoes to my ears,
Of sounds which oft have hung upon my tears,
And weighed them down—pure drops of extacies!

Like those mixed sounds, I can recall my life—
In fancy hear its echoes play—
Its hurried chords—its passion's strife—
Those sweet deceptive flights with which 'twas rife;
Transient as sound, but mark'd on memory!

THE ANGEL WATCH, OR THE SISTERS.

A daughter watch'd, at midnight,
Her dying mother's bed;
For five long nights she had not slept,
And many tears were shed:
A vision, like an angel, came,
Which none but her might see;
"Sleep, duteous child (the angel said),
And I will watch for thee."

Sweet slumber, like a blessing, fell
Upon the daughter's face;
The angel smiled, and touch'd her not,
But gently took her place;
And oh, so full of human love
Those pitying eyes did shine,
The angel-guest half mortal seem'd—
The slumberer half divine.

Like rays of light the sleeper's locks
In warm, loose curls were thrown;
Like rays of light the angel's hair
Seem'd like the sleeper's own.
A rose-like shadow on the cheek,
Dissolving into pearl;
A something in that angel's face
Seem'd sister to the girl!

The mortal and immortal, each
Reflecting each were seen;
The earthy and the spiritual,
With death's pale face between.
O, human love, what strength like thine?
From thee those prayers arise
Which entering into Paradise,
Draw angels from the skies.

The dawn look'd through the casement cold,
A wintry dawn of gloom,
And sadder show'd the curtain'd bed,
The still and sickly room:
"My daughter! art thou here, my child?
Oh, haste thee, love, come nigh,
That I may see once more thy face,
And bless thee, ere I die!

"If ever I were harsh to thee,
Forgive me now (she cried);
God knows my heart, I loved thee most
When most I seem'd to chide;
Now bend and kiss thy mother's lips,
And for her spirit pray!"
The angel kiss'd her, and her soul
Pass'd blissfully away!

A sudden start! What dream—what sound
The slumbering girl alarms?
She wakes—she sees her mother dead
Within the angel's arms!
She wakes—she springs with wild embrace,
But nothing there appears,
Except her mother's sweet dead face—
Her own convulsive tears.

CHARLES SWAINE.

1. *Lives of the English Saints.* Parts I. to XII. 12mo. London.
2. *Essai sur les Légendes Pieuses du Moyen-Age.* Par L. F. ALFRED MAURY. 8vo. Paris.

[FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW.]

A REMARKABLE contrast is presented by the circumstance, that while in France—a Roman Catholic country—writers are investigating, in a purely philosophical spirit, the legends and miracles of those morally dark ages, from the influence of which we have fortunately been long emancipated, there are found men in Protestant England—men bound by their duty to defend the church which they are deliberately undermining—eagerly engaged in republishing these legends to the world, and recommending them even with more than popish bigotry.

It is singular that any modern religious party, instead of resting its claims on some show of reason, should reject contemptuously the plainest dictates of common sense, and exact a blind acceptance of the most ridiculous, and most disgusting portions of the belief of the middle ages. With these men, absurdity is the extreme of wisdom; and the very errors which liberal-minded Romanists now reject, are, by our would-be "Catholics," held forth as the gage of orthodoxy. Justification is not sought in scriptural or apostolical authority; and the pure and simple faith which Jesus taught to his disciples is represented to be but a rude outline, an *ébauche*, which it required the "wisdom" of the dark ages to develop. The testimony of history is rejected, for it has too much to say: while the mere belief of the "Catholic" is the only sure evidence of

truth, in this new school of religious professors. Such, at least, is the doctrine expressly inculcated in the tracts before us; which are generally attributed to a late proselyte to Romanism, who, at the time of their publication, was a member of the Church of England, and was receiving wages at its hands.

With regard to the principle upon which these Lives have been composed, and on which it is intended that they should be now studied, there is neither disguise nor reservation. We are warned, from the beginning and throughout, that in matters of this high order our belief is relieved from subjection to the ordinary rules of evidence. In a completely un-historical account of the primitive British church, (given in Part III., and containing the first portion of the life of St. Augustine,) after stating the want of historical evidence of the pretended visits of the Apostles Paul and Peter to Great Britain, the writer observes, "yet it has undoubtedly been long received as a *pious opinion* by the Church at large;" after which, he immediately informs us, that "this sort of argument, although it ought to be kept quite distinct from documentary and historical proof, and will form no substitute for such proof with those who stipulate for something like legal accuracy in enquiries of this nature, will not be without its effect upon devout minds." In telling a miracle of a saint of the seventh century, which is not mentioned before the fourteenth century, our historian adds,—"This story is given on the authority of Capgrave, not of Bede; not that there seems any reason for doubting its truth." After the relation of several absurd miracles, without meaning and without object, we meet repeatedly with remarks like the following:—"And from not understanding them (the saints), we go on to criticise them, not always or at once remembering, that 'the natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit,' and that, in the case of certain given persons, it is on the whole far more likely that such as we should be in the dark, than such as they in the wrong." "If the reader so far forgets that he is occupied upon a portion of ecclesiastical history as to stumble at the marvellous portions of the present biographical sketch, it is hoped he will at least suspend his judgment till a few pages further on, or accept the statement, subject to any qualifications which may secure them from the chance of irreverent usage, and him from the risk of that *especial blasphemy* which consists in slighting the manifestations of God's Holy Spirit; a sin, one should have thought, denounced by our blessed Lord in language sufficiently awful to make the possibility of it an unspeakably more formidable alternative than any amount of credulity." "When, to the readers of one age, the miracles of another long past away appear so grotesque as to provoke amusement, their seeming eccentricity is no ground for rejecting them. If men are to be taught, the teaching will be shaped for them, adapted to their way of looking at things, corresponding to their habits of thought, and, as it were, echoing the actual life and manner of the times. Supposing a miracle wrought for the conversion of a barbarous people, will it not almost certainly have a barbarous aspect, and be what a philosophical age would deem a gross display of supernatural power or godness?" Somewhere, near York, St. Augustine restored a blind man to his sight in the name of Jesus Christ. At this time of day, there is something unusually naïve in the exclamation,—"Why should not that name work miracles at any time? Why not among ourselves now-a-days? Truly, because we lack the conditions of its power—Catholic faith and Catholic sanctity!" This is precisely the way in which the late Mr. Irving accounted for the withdrawal of miraculous powers from modern prayers. In another place we are gravely told that the reason why we cannot believe the miracles of the saints is, that we are labouring under an intellectual darkness caused by three centuries of Heresy!

Ravings like these may appear at first sight undeserving of notice. Can they have any weight with any body? But when we look further into the body of the tracts themselves, (and they have been widely distributed,) we find their fallacious doctrines put forth so Jesuitically, the poison so cunningly hidden beneath the sugar, that it is right to exhibit the working of the system in its true colours. The object of this writer may be discovered without difficulty. He knows that the voice of the past, if impartially listened to, is against him—therefore he would cast a discredit upon all but ecclesiastical history. The cross-examination of his witnesses by a skillful advocate must be fatal—therefore he would impress upon us not only the danger, but the *'especial blasphemy'* of criticising. The scheme, too, has been to a small degree successful; because the experiment has fallen upon an age, when people are off their guard. At the time of the Reformation, the whole case was before the eyes of every body; the conviction of its rottenness was general among as many as ventured to enquire, because the evidence was overwhelming. On the contrary, our own age, satisfied with the judgment of our forefathers, has been gradually forgetting the evidence by which that judgment was obtained, until at last a little special pleading is enough to throw doubts upon its justice among the credulous and simple-minded. The only remedy is to produce the evidence again; and fortunately we shall find that in the present case it is increased rather than diminished by lapse of time. The Romanist knows this well, and therefore he sets his face against historical criticism and the publication of historical documents. This is the spirit exhibited in these new 'Lives of the English Saints;' on which account it will not, we think, be uninteresting, to examine a little into the materials of which those extraordinary fabrications called *Lives of Saints* were constructed, and into the mode in which they were put together.

The Lives of Saints may be arranged in several classes. Some were mere forgeries, inventions to serve the purposes of those who first compiled them; others, equally lives of persons who never existed, had their foundation in nothing but popular fables, and even in mistaken allegories; in other instances, they are the mere legends which during ages had gathered round the memory of some personage known only by name, and committed to writing long after the period at which he lived; while, in many cases, we have the life of an individual written by his contemporary, sometimes a friend, almost always a prejudiced chronicler, intentionally or unwittingly inserting much which it would have been very difficult indeed to have ever authenticated or ascertained. The saints of this latter class (the only one which has much historical importance) are of two races. They gained a place in the calendar, either by the part they took in supporting the usurpations of the church upon the civil power, during the long struggle in which the former was not over-delicate in the choice of its weapons, or

by their activity as missionaries in converting the heretics or the heathen to the Church of Rome. In general; the more authentic the lives, the fewer the miracles; and, in like manner, the earlier lives of the same saint contain much fewer miracles than the later ones. The mass of the mediæval miracles appear to have originated in the mixture of ideas produced by the conversion of the pagan tribes by men who, though Christians, were almost as superstitious and credulous as themselves.

When the missionaries first entered upon their labours among the people of western and northern Europe, they found a creed which acknowledged two classes of supernatural beings,—the gods (*dei majores*) of the respective tribes, such as Odin, Thor, &c.—and a multitude of lesser spirits, who were believed to haunt wood and valley and mountain, and to inhabit air and water, continually intermixing visibly or invisibly with mankind, and exerting over individuals an influence for good and for evil. The worship of the gods was the province of the higher classes, and was the business of priests; the minor spiritual beings, elves or nymphs, held intercourse with individuals at their pleasure, or sometimes by compulsion: And these individuals (the originals of the sorcerers and witches of later times) obtained by this means miraculous powers; for instance, the power of curing diseases, of working good or evil like the spirits themselves, and of foretelling future events. They were consulted by those who laboured under such diseases, who had sustained losses by accident or robbery, or who sought to gratify revenge or conciliate love. As the monkish missionaries made their way, they banished the heathen priests—whose gods and their worship were soon forgotten—while their mythic histories were preserved in the form of romances and popular stories. But the elves and minor spirits, in whose existence the monk believed equally with the peasant, still held their sway; and sorcerers and witches continued to follow their occupations.

We trace, indeed, every where the attempts of the ecclesiastics, down to a late period, to turn the popular superstitions to their own purposes. Elves and nymphs were, in their creed, innumerable hosts of demons, against whom they had to contend. The martyrs of the primitive ages of the church had suffered for refusing to worship idols of wood and stone; the monkish saints advanced a step further, and embarked in a more substantial warfare with spiritual beings. These imaginary demons were naturally opposed to the intruders; and we find them seizing every opportunity of tormenting the missionaries and their converts. In the seventh century, St. Sulpicius, while a mere child, went to pray by night at a ruined church near his father's house; two black demons, who haunted the ruin, would have scared him from his devotions, but he drove them away with the sign of the cross. With the same weapon his contemporary, St. Frodobert, at that time also a boy, drove away a devil which used to stop him on his way to school. So late as the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Belgian St. Juetta, when she went to her devotions at night, was persecuted by demons who appeared to her in every variety of form, ludicrous as well as fearful. We might fill a volume with such stories. The tricks which these demons played upon their spiritual adversaries are often of the most frivolous kind; precisely such as are laid to the charge of the playful elves of the popular mythology. When St. Frodobert was at his nightly devotions in the church, a devil overthrew his candlestick and put out the light. A demon stole the bread of St. Amatus, abbot of Remiremont. St. Benedict, the father of monachism in the west, lived for some time at the summit of a rock, and his food was sent up by a rope to which a bell was attached; one day the Evil One threw a stone at the bell, and it was broken, whereby the saint could no longer make known his necessities. In a majority of cases, the demon exhibited much greater malignity; as in another adventure of St. Amatus, when the fiend threw down the upper part of a lofty rock, that it might crush him in his cell; but the saint caused it miraculously to stop in the midst of its descent. Like the spiritual beings of the popular mythology, we often find the demons in possession of ruined cities or fortresses; we have already had an example in which they haunted a ruined church; St. Salaberga encountered a whole host in the ruins at Laon, who appeared in the shapes of fierce wild beasts. But, in the Teutonic mythology, the special haunts of spirits of almost every description were the wild morasses and the unfrequented woods. It was in such places that the mythic heroes of the pagan creed went to encounter them, or that the charmer consulted them; accordingly, when their imitators, the monks, had gained strength in the country, and were no more subject to the attacks of the demons at home, they began to act upon the offensive, and followed the enemy into his own dwelling-place. Under these feelings, St. Guthlac took up his residence amid the marshes of Croyland; and St. Cuthbert established himself in the island of Farne; where their legendary histories describe their long continued struggle with their spiritual adversaries. People implicitly believed that such places could only be rendered habitable by the holiness of the saints. We sometimes find the saints contending with water-demons, the nickers of the ancient creed, the memory of whose transformation is still preserved in the popular term of "Old Nick." In a district in France, there was in the seventh century a certain whirlpool (*gurgies*) in the river, which the pagans had "consecrated to their demons," and these demons dwelt in it, and, if any one entered the river in its vicinity, they dragged him to the bottom and he was drowned. The people of the neighbourhood prayed St. Sulpicius to drive away these demons, which he did, but as it appears ineffectually; for a man falling in soon afterwards was strangled by the fiend, and brought out lifeless. The saint, to save his credit, restored the drowned man to life. The nymphs of the older mythology also acted their parts; according to the popular fables, they became frequently enamoured of men, and had intercourse with them, an intercourse which is the foundation of many romantic stories. The monks and hermits were no less frequently the objects of their amorous propensities, and had need of all their piety and miraculous powers to withstand their seductions. Water-nymphs appeared to St. Gall (Act. Ss. Bened. sec. ii. p. 237); a nymph (or, according to the Legend, a devil in woman's form) came by night to St. John, abbot of Moulter, in the diocese of Langres, and tried her seductive arts upon him in vain; a similar attempt was made upon St. Benedict, and it was repeated with a multitude of other saints.

Such, evidently, was the origin of a considerable portion of the multifarious demoniacal agency, which fills the mediæval saints' legends. The monks borrowed another class of miracles from the observances of paganism, in their desire to vindicate to themselves powers, the same as those with which popular superstition had invested priests and sorcerers. The heathen priest, as well as his Christian rival, cured diseases: and that by charms, which were in many cases identical, if we except the mere insertion of Christian terms. For instance, the pagans applied to their priests and sorcerers for the detection of robbers, and for the recovery of goods lost or stolen; in due course this attribute was transferred to the monkish saints, whose legends are so full of instances of the miraculous detection of theft and robbery, that it is unnecessary to particularise them. We know what reverence our heathen ancestors paid to fountains—the favourite objects of their pilgrimages and religious ceremonies: These also enter extensively into the saints' legends; and were every where translated into objects of Christian worship under the Romanized Christianity of the middle ages. If we believe the legends, the saints made so many of the fountains now in existence, that the pagans can hardly have found a spring to worship at. The stories of fountains produced miraculously by the saints are repeated, by the compiler of our new *Lives of Saints*, without a smile,—on the contrary, he seeks to awe us into the impression, that it would be a "special blasphemy" to disbelieve them. (See the *Life of St. Augustine*, p. 87.) The monks even fell into the reverence with which the people cherished the barrows, or graves, of their ancestors, and they sometimes dug up their bones to make relics of them. Thus, while the unconverted Saxon revered the barrow, because he believed that it was from time to time revisited by the spirit of its tenant, the English monk, with a grosser superstition, worshipped the bones, the last mouldering witnesses of his mortality. On the site of the present town of Ludlow, in Shropshire, stood, in early times, a large barrow, probably Roman: it was an object of popular superstition, and in Christian times a church was built beside it. In 1199, as we learn from a document printed in Leland's *Collectanea*, (iii. 407,) it being found necessary to remove the mound, three sepulchral interments were discovered. The clergy of the adjoining church carefully gathered up the bones, and placed them in a coffer; telling people that they were the blessed relics of three saints of Irish extraction—St. Fercher, St. Coroua, and another, whose name is preserved only imperfectly in the document!

One of the most common exploits of the heroes of the Teutonic mythology was the destruction of dragons, which were supposed to have the care of treasures concealed in old ruins and in the barrows of the dead. The monks would have their saints rival these mythic heroes. When St. Julian preached the gospel to the Franks, a dreadful dragon brooded in a ruined temple at "Artinas," which the saint immediately put to flight. Nearly at the same period, in another part of France, (*in deserto Thornodorensi*) a dragon, the terror of the neighbourhood, dwelt in an ancient pit or well; it was killed by St. John of Remiremont. When, in the sixth century, St. Tozzo, St. Magnus, and St. Gall had wandered through France to the borders of Switzerland, they came to the Roman Campodunum, (Kampten,) which was then a deserted mass of ruins. A presbyter of the neighbourhood told the strangers that the people of the country sometimes visited the ruins by day; but that at night the access was dangerous on account of the fearful dragons and serpents which had their dens there, and which frequently slew such incautious hunters as might be led thither by their eagerness in the chase. In the midst of their conversation, "a great serpent called a boa" (*egressus est foris de oppido vermis magnus qui dicitur boa*) suddenly issued from the ruined town and approached the saints; Tozzo and one of his companions sought refuge in a tree; but St. Gall miraculously slew the assailant, and afterwards cleared the old town of its noxious occupants. In the sequel of their journey, the saints came to a narrow pass in the mountains of Switzerland, called Rosshaupten, which was strictly guarded by a ferocious dragon; they pitched their tent, and spent the night in prayers for the overthrow of the monster, and in the morning they found it stretched lifeless on the ground. St. Maximin, abbot of Micy, in the diocese of Orleans, slew a dragon which vomited flames, and ravaged the country far and wide, sparing neither age nor sex. By his own desire, the saint was buried on the spot where he vanquished this dragon, and many miracles were afterwards performed at his grave. Towards the end of the seventh century, his bones were dug up and carried to the church of Micy, where they were preserved as relics endowed with miraculous powers. It is probable that these also were nothing more than bones found in an ancient barrow, the hero of which was believed to have slain a dragon. St. Samson, bishop of Dol, slew several dragons in Brittany; St. Gildas destroyed a dragon in Italy; and St. Lifard killed another at Méhin, in the diocese of Orleans. M. Alfred Maury (in the work indicated at the head of the present article) enumerates nearly forty saints who slew dragons, chiefly in France. There is no room for mistaking the animals slain; they were the identical dragons of the Teutonic mythology—imaginary beings, in the existence of which we will, fearless of the consequence of our "irreverence to the saints," venture to disbelieve.

The outline or groundword of the lives of many other of the saints is clearly taken from some of the stories of the earlier mythology of the people, or of the mediæval romances which sprung out of it. The saint is often a creature of the imagination; while sometimes the story is attached to a name which had been handed down almost without a history. Thus from the early writers, we know little more of St. Furseus, than that he was the hero of a vision of purgatory. But a monk, at a later period, has compiled a wild and extravagant life, in which we are told that his father had contracted a secret marriage with a king's daughter without the monarch's consent; and that, when the damsel was discovered to be with child, her father, in his wrath, ordered her to be burnt for her incontinence. As she was dragged to the place of execution, the child, which was Furseus, cried out from its mother's womb, and declared that it was unworthy of a king to condemn his daughter without a trial. The king treated the admonition with contempt, and the lady was thrown into the fire; but she shed so large a flood of tears that the flames were instantly extinguished. The king, finding that he could not burn his

daughter, banished her from his kingdom; and she gave birth to Furseus in a foreign land. This is an incident which occurs, with some variations, and without the miracle, in several mediæval romances, from one of which it was doubtless taken. The mother of St. Samson of Dol was barren, to the grief of her lord; they went to a wise man or priest, by whose blessing the lady's infirmity was removed; and his prophecy that she should soon give birth to a son was confirmed by the visit of an angel, to announce to the mother her pregnancy. A similar story is told of the birth of St. Molagga, and it is repeated in the legends of other saints. A somewhat similar incident occurs also in some of the mediæval romances, such as that of Robert le Diable; but, in the *Saints' Lives*, it is probably imitated directly from the New Testament.

Invention, we are aware, is a rare talent. Nevertheless, we are surprised at finding how often the same incident is repeated in the lives of different saints. St. Mochua was attended by a multitude of people in a wild district, where he had nothing to offer them for food. In this dilemma, the saint called to him stags from the forest, and, having killed them, they were soon eaten up; but he had given strict orders that the bones and skin should be carefully preserved and kept together: Next morning, after he had said a blessing or a charm over them, the stags were restored to life and vigour, and hurried off to their old haunts in the woods. St. Euchadius was on one occasion, obliged to kill a favourite cow to regale his guests; after the meal, he placed the bones in the skin, and restored the animal to life. St. Finian performed the same exploit with a calf. These are all variations of one original story, and that story, singularly enough, is found in the ancient mythology of the North. We quote it from the readiest source at hand—Pigot's *Manual of Scandinavian Mythology*, p. 117. Thor, on one of his expeditions against the giants, went in his car, drawn by two he-goats, to seek a lodging in the hut of a peasant. "The peasant's family consisted of himself and his old wife, and of a son and daughter, Tialf and Roska. The old woman lamented to Thor, that she had nothing to offer him for supper but some roots. Thor answered that he would provide food, and bade her prepare at the table. He then took Miölnir, his hammer; and slew his two he-goats; and having stripped them of their skins, put them into the boiler. The skins were spread out carefully before the hearth, and Thor desired the peasant to be sure to put all the bones into them. When the meat was cooked, they all sat down to supper. During the supper, however, Tialf, the boy had contrived to get a thigh-bone of one of the goats, which he broke for the sake of the marrow. Thor staid over the night in the cottage. The next morning, before dawn, he rose, and taking Miölnir in his hand, he swung it in the air over the goat-skins and bones. The goats immediately sprang up in life and spirits; but one of them was lame in the hind leg. Thor's anger on this was kindled. He said that the peasant or his people must have been careless with the bones, seeing that a thigh-bone had been broken." Mr. Pigot observes in a note, that "the heathen Fin-lapps still take care not to break the bones of the animals which they sacrifice, saying that the gods may put flesh and skin on them again." It would not be easy to conceive a more convincing illustration of the source of the mediæval legends of saints.*

If more of the stories of the earlier mythology of the Teutonic race had been preserved, we should without doubt be enabled to identify in this manner many particulars in the outlines of the Saints' legends, of the origin of which we are now ignorant. With such a beginning, it was easy to fill the canvass; and we shall find that, in the composition of the life of a saint almost every class of materials was made to contribute in illustration of this part of the subject, we would point out to particular attention the number of interesting facts collected together by M. Maury, in his *Essays on the Pious Legends of the Middle Ages*. He has divided the mediæval miracles into three classes—1. Miracles from the Gospels, and from the Old Testament; 2. Legends formed by confounding the figurative meaning with the literal, in consequence of the tendency of uncultivated minds to refer everything to material life; and, 3. Miracles or legends invented to explain figured symbols or emblematical images, the real meaning of which had been forgotten. Instances of the latter class meet us at almost every turn. We know that even in modern times people are frequently inventing fables to account for pictured representations which have been handed down from the past without any authentic explanation. The number of imitations—evident copies—of the Scriptural miracles, found in the legends of the saints, is perfectly extraordinary. M. Maury cites imitations of the Annunciation in the lives of fourteen different saints; twenty-nine imitations of the miraculous multiplication of food, and of the changing of water into wine; and so on with every miracle in the Old and New Testaments. Instances of the two other classes of miracles are equally numerous; even the Gospel parables, or Eastern apologies, are thus transformed. After this fashion, in the coarse comprehension of these monkish biographers, the odour of sanctity, or its reverse, become material scents; the bones of the saints, when dug up from the grave, smell like roses, while those of sinners and pagans stink insufferably. The new writer of *Saints' Lives* gravely informs us, that "It is said of the holy Sturme, a disciple and companion of Winfrid, that in passing a horde of unconverted Germans, as they were bathing and gamboling in a stream, he was so overpowered by the intolerable stench [of sin] which arose from them, that he nearly fainted away." Thus also, the fervour of holiness becomes a material warmth. It is related in the life of St. Fechin, how his piety was so fervent, that when he bathed himself in cold water, the water was rendered nearly boiling hot. A similar unspiritual conception led the monk of Mont St. Michael to show amongst their relics the spear and shield with which St. Michael was armed when he encountered the dragon of the Revelations; and we have read that some relic-monger of old, mistaking the symbolical representation of the Holy Spirit for a real pigeon, exhibited to the pious gaze of his hearers a feather of the Holy Ghost!

Then the immense profusion of miracles! This is a characteristic of the mediæval lives of saints, which immediately attracts the attention of the reader. In Scriptural history, the Creator interrupts rarely the laws which he has given to Nature, and that only on occasions of extraordinary impor-

*Several of the saints, like St. Colman, left the imprint of their feet or hands on rocks, which were afterwards worshipped. These marks had no doubt been objects of pagan reverence, as we still find them in the East.

tance. On the other hand, the monkish saints seem to be so overburdened with the miraculous power, that they daily perform miracles, the only object of which appears to be the relieving themselves of the desire of exercising it. Their frequency must have changed altogether the aspect of society. Prisons are so often miraculously opened by their intervention, that the ordinary course of justice must have been constantly at fault: while between those whom they relieved from wounds and sickness, and the dead whom they recalled to life by dozens and scores, the land must have been peopled for successive generations with a population literally stolen from the grave. When the Franciscans compared the miracles of their founder with those of the Saviour, they boasted that, for Christ's single transformation, St. Francis had exhibited twenty; that Jesus had changed water into wine but once, whereas St. Francis had performed the same miracle thrice; and that in place of the small number of miraculous cures enumerated in the Gospel, St. Francis and his disciples had restored more than a thousand blind to their sight, and more than a thousand lame to the use of their limbs, and had raised more than a thousand dead to life.

The writer of the *Lives of the English Saints* argues insistently, that as the object of the miracles was teaching, we have no right to judge, by our present standard, of the homely and ridiculous character which they often possess. The criterion which he proposes is—were they fitted to the manners and comprehension of the age? In any thing but miracles, an argument like this might have its weight. But, instead of considering the false logic implied in it, let us show that it is founded on an untrue statement. A majority of the saints' miracles are performed for the most frivolous causes—often with selfish motives and for personal revenge, and very commonly in private. A few examples taken at random, will give the best idea of their usual character.

The object of many of these miracles was the mere personal convenience or advantage of the saint. When St. Mochua wanted a fire in his cell, he called down a flame from heaven to light it. The candles of the saints were often lit in a similar manner. When St. Senan found that he had only one small candle, and that no more were to be obtained, he caused it miraculously to burn during a whole week without consuming. When St. Faro, of "Meldis," in Burgundy was at supper, his cup-bearer let fall the vessel from which he drank, and it was broken to pieces. The saint, by a miracle, made it whole, and continued his meal. St. Goar, of Treves, seeking a beam to hang up his cape, saw a sunbeam that came through the window, on which he suspended it, and it remained hanging there till he took it down. The biographer observes, that "it is not to be wondered at if a ray of the sun assumed the hardness of wood in obedience to the holy man, since, to one who lives in devout intimacy with the Creator, the creature is also subjected by the Creator's will." The same miracle was performed by (among others) St. Aicadrus, abbot of Jumieges, who similarly hung up his gloves on a sunbeam. St. Leufroi, when in summer the flies infested his cell, and settled on his food, drove them away by a miracle. By another miracle, St. Columbanus kept the grubs from his cabbages, when other gardens were over-run by them. St. Cuthbert, in a similar manner, kept the field he had sown with corn from the intrusion of birds. St. Fechin, on his return from a distant excursion, finding that he had a long way to travel before he regained his monastic home, and perceiving the approach of night, caused the sun to stand still, in order that he might not be overtaken by darkness. Thus the miracle which God had once vouchsafed in the hour of battle for the salvation of his chosen people, was here repeated at the caprice of an individual to avoid a very slight inconvenience. The want of a meal was a sufficient cause for a miracle. When St. Fintan expected company, having no flour to make bread, and there being no water to turn the mill, he ordered the mill to work of itself, and it obeyed. When St. Cadoc was travelling in Cornwall, and overtaken by thirst in a district where there was no water, he struck his staff into the ground, and a beautiful stream at once administered to his wants. When St. Mael was in want of fishes, he caught them on dry ground; and when another Irishman, St. Berach, wanted fruit, he caused the willows to bear apples. When St. Aidan, bishop of Ferns, was hungry, he took a handful of leaves and turned them into bread; and when St. Fechin wanted meat, he took acorns and turned them into pork. St. Tillo on visiting his monks, finding they had no wine to give him, filled their barrel by a miracle. St. Romaric also miraculously filled a vessel with wine, and another with ale. Turning water into wine was the most common of miracles.

In the course of their travels, the saints had still more frequent occasions for the exertion of their miraculous powers; which, to judge from the narratives of their biographers, must have rendered their labours extremely easy. In the first place, they were not liable to be wet. When St. Albin, a French saint of the sixth century, (even in his youth,) went forth with his companions, he alone was untouched by the heaviest rain. When St. Roger, abbot of Elant, fell into a river, he was brought out perfectly dry. The saints, indeed, seem to have possessed the same power over the elements as the witches and sorcerers, from whom probably the idea was derived. St. Columbanus forbade the rain to wet his corn in harvest time; and when the reapers of St. Geneviève were occupied in the field, she ordered the rain away, that they might not be inconvenienced by it. When St. Gildas and his companions resolved to take their lodging in an island that was inconveniently small, it miraculously expanded at their desire. When St. Trivier, with two or three companions, was on his way to Italy, and they lost their way in the woods, at his prayer two wolves came forward to offer themselves as guides. It may be observed, too, that he must have been only a second-rate saint; for Bolland, who prints his life from a manuscript, acknowledges that he could not find his name in any of the calendars. When St. Fechin was travelling, he came to where a large tree had fallen across his path; instead of taking the trouble to walk round or scramble over it, he merely ordered it to make way: and immediately it raised itself upright in its place. St. Dominic, under similar circumstances, beheld a large beach-tree falling upon him; he stretched out his arms towards it, and it drew itself back and fell in the contrary direction. St. Corbinian travelled on horseback from France to Bavaria; in his way through a forest, a savage bear rushed out, and killed and devoured his horse: another saint would have restored the horse to life,