

THE LIFE OF ST CUTHBERT
BY BEDE

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The prologue of the blessed priest Bede to the life of St Cuthbert.

To the holy and most blessed father, Bishop Eadfrith, and also to the whole congregation of brethren who serve Christ on the island of Lindisfarne, Bede, your faithful fellow-servant, sends greeting.

Since, beloved friends, you have bidden me put, as is customary, some kind of preface to the book which I have composed, at your request, concerning the life of our father Cuthbert of blessed memory, that thereby all readers might see your will and pleasure as well as my brotherly assent and obedience thereto, I decided in the prefatory chapter to remind you who know, and to inform those readers who perchance do not know, that I have not presumed to write down anything concerning so great a man without the most rigorous investigation of the facts nor, at the end, to hand on what I had written to be copied for general use, without the scrupulous examination of credible witnesses. Nay rather, it was only after first diligently investigating the beginning, the progress, and the end of his most glorious life and activity, with the help of those who knew him, that I began at last to set about making notes: and I have decided occasionally to place the names of these my authorities in the book itself, to show clearly how my knowledge of the truth has been gained. Further, when my little work was arranged, though still kept in the form of notes, I often showed what I had written both to our most reverend brother, the priest Herefrith, when he came hither, and to others who had lived some considerable time with the man of God and were fully conversant with his life, so that they might read and revise it at their leisure; and I diligently amended some things in accordance with their judgment, as seemed good to them. And thus I made it my business to put down on parchment the results of my rigorous investigation of the truth, expressed in simple language quite free from all obscurities and subtleties, and to bring what was written into the presence of your brotherhood, in order that it might be corrected if false, or, if true, approved by the authority of your judgment. And when I had done this with the help of the Lord, and my little work had been read for two days before the elders and teachers of your congre-

gation and carefully weighed in every detail under your examination, no word of any sort was found which had to be changed, but everything that was written was pronounced by common consent to be, without any question, worthy of being read, and of being delivered to those whose pious zeal moved them to copy it. But, consulting together in our presence, you brought forward many other facts concerning the life and virtues of the blessed man no less important than those which we have written down, which well deserved to be mentioned if it had not seemed scarcely fitting and proper to insert new matter or add to a work which was planned and complete.

Furthermore I have thought you should be reminded of that which will crown your kindness, so that, just as I myself did not delay to fulfil with promptitude the task which you thought fit to lay upon my obedience, so you also may not be slow to grant me the reward of your intercession: but reading the same book, and by the pious memory of the holy father uplifting your hearts to a more eager desire for the heavenly kingdom, you may remember also to intercede with the divine clemency on behalf of one so insignificant, that I may be worthy, now, with a pure heart to long for, and hereafter, in perfect bliss, "to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living". Moreover when I am dead, deign to pray for the redemption of my soul, and to celebrate masses as though I belonged to your family and household, and to inscribe my name among your own. For, most holy bishop, you remember that you have already promised me this, and, in witness to my future enrolment, you gave orders to our pious brother Guthfrith the sacrist that he should even now place my name in the register of your holy congregation. You should also know, holy father, that the life of this same father of ours, the beloved of God, which I have given you in a prose version, I also formerly produced, at the request of some of our brethren, in heroic verse, somewhat shorter indeed, but similarly arranged: if it would please you to have it, you can obtain a copy from us. In the preface of that work, I promised that I would write more fully on another occasion about his life and miracles, and in the present work I am striving to fulfil that same promise, so far as the Lord permits. So I pray on our behalf, my beloved brethren and masters, that the almighty Lord may vouchsafe to keep you in perfect blessedness. Amen.

revised & grouped

couldn't add new stuff

evidence witnesses

editors

simple language

CHAPTER I. *How Cuthbert, the child of God, was warned by an infant and his bishopric foretold*

The prophet Jeremiah consecrates for us the beginning of our account of the life and miracles of the blessed father Cuthbert when, praising the hermit's state of perfection, he says: "It is good for a man to have borne the yoke in his youth; he shall sit in solitude and be silent because he will raise himself above himself." For being stirred up by the sweetness of this blessing, Cuthbert the man of God submitted his neck from early youth to the yoke of monastic discipline; and at a favourable opportunity, he also took to the hermit's way of life, rejoicing to sit in solitude for no short time, and, for the sake of the sweetness of divine contemplation, to be silent and to hear no human speech. But in order that he might be able to do these things in his later years, the heavenly grace had urged him little by little into the way of truth, from the earliest years of his boyhood. For up to the eighth year of his age, which is the end of infancy and the beginning of boyhood, he could devote his mind to nothing but the games and wantonness of children, so that it could be testified of him as of the blessed Samuel: "Now" Cuthbert "did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." This was spoken as a prelude to the praise of his boyhood, for, when he became older, he was to know the Lord perfectly and to receive the word of the Lord, when once the ears of his heart had been opened. Therefore, as we have said, he amused himself with noisy games, and further, as was natural at his age, he loved to be in the company of children and delighted to join in their play. And because he was agile by nature and quick-witted, he very often used to prevail over his rivals in play, so that sometimes, when the rest were tired, he, being still untired, would triumphantly look round to see whether any of them were willing to contend with him again. Whether they were jumping or running or wrestling or exercising their limbs in any other way, he used to boast that he had beaten all who were his equals in age and even some who were older. For when he was a child he understood as a child, he thought as a child; but after he became a man, he put away childish things entirely. And indeed the divine providence at first deigned to check the exuberance of his childish mind by means of a fitting teacher. For Bishop Trumwine of blessed memory used to relate what had been told him by Cuthbert himself, how on a certain day, a large crowd of boys in a field were engaged in the usual contests and he himself was present: in accordance with the usual thoughtlessness of children at play, most of them were

twisting their limbs into various unnatural contortions, when suddenly one of the little ones, apparently hardly three years old, runs up to him and begins to exhort him with the gravity of an old man not to indulge in idle games but rather steadfastly to control both mind and limbs. When Cuthbert scorns his warnings, he throws himself on the ground, wailing and bedewing his face with tears. The rest run up to him to console him, but he persists in his weeping. They ask him what is the reason why he is suddenly overcome with such grief. But when Cuthbert begins to console him he exclaims at length: "Why, O Cuthbert, most holy bishop and priest, do you do these things so contrary to your nature and your rank? It is not fitting for you to play among children when the Lord has consecrated you to be a teacher of virtue even to your elders." The boy, being of a good disposition, listened to these words with fixed attention, and soothing the sorrowful infant with kindly caresses, he forthwith gave up the idle games and, returning home, he began from that time to be steadier and more mature in mind. That Spirit assuredly instructed his heart from within, which had sounded in his ears from without through the mouth of an infant. Nor need anyone wonder that the wantonness of a child should be checked through a child by the Lord who, when He wished, placed rational words in the mouth of a dumb beast of burden to check the madness of a prophet: and it has truly been said in praise of Him that "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise".

CHAPTER II. *How he became lame as the result of a diseased knee and was promptly cured by the ministration of an angel*

Truly "to everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance"; that is, to him who hath the desire and love for virtues, an abundance of them shall be granted by the heavenly gift. For since Cuthbert, the child of the Lord, held fast with diligent heart what he received by exhortations through man, he also earned the privilege of being comforted by seeing and speaking with an angel. For his knee was afflicted by a sudden torment and began to swell into a painful tumour, so that the sinews contracted in the knee; at first he carried his foot hanging lamely off the ground, and then, when the trouble grew worse, he was hardly able to walk at all. On a certain day he had been carried outside by servants and was lying in the open air, when he suddenly saw a horseman coming from

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afar, dressed in white robes and honourable of countenance, and the horse, too, on which he sat was of incomparable grace. He approached and saluted Cuthbert with gentle words and then enquired, as if in jest, whether he was willing to minister to such a stranger. But Cuthbert said: "Most readily would I rise and offer you devoted service, if I were not restrained by the fetter of this weakness, the penalty for my sins. I have long been afflicted by this trouble of a swelling in the knee and no doctor with all his care can heal me." The stranger jumped from his horse and examined the afflicted knee very carefully. Then he said: "Boil some wheaten flour in milk, spread this poultice while hot upon the swelling, and you will be healed." With these words he mounted his horse and departed. Cuthbert followed his commands and in a few days was healed. He recognised that he who had given him this advice was an angel, sent by One who once deigned to send the archangel Raphael to cure the eyes of Tobias. And if it should seem incredible to anyone that an angel appeared on horseback, let him read the history of the Maccabees in which angels on horseback are said to have appeared to defend Judas Maccabæus and the temple itself.

CHAPTER III. *How he changed the winds by prayer and brought the rafts, which had been carried away, safe to land*

From this time the boy was wholly given to the Lord, and, as he was afterwards wont to testify to his friends, often prayed to the Lord when surrounded by difficulties and was counted worthy to be defended by angelic assistance; and moreover, because he prayed with kindly piety for others who were placed in danger, he was heard by Him who is wont to hear the cry of the poor and to "deliver him out of all his troubles". Now there is a monastery not far from the mouth of the Tyne, on the south side, filled with a noble company, in those days

of men but now, changed like all else by time, of virgins who serve Christ. Now once these same servants of Christ were bringing from afar in rafts, along the bosom of the river, wood suitable for the use of the monastery. They had already in their course reached a point opposite the same monastery, and were attempting to bring their rafts to land, when lo! a sudden storm of wind, arising from the west, dragged their rafts away and began to carry them off towards the mouth of the river. When the brethren in the monastery saw this, they launched some boats on the river and attempted to help those who were toiling on the rafts, but they were overcome by the force of

the river and the violence of the winds and could do nothing. So, despairing of human help, they fled to the divine. Therefore, while the rafts were drifting out to sea, they left the monastery and, gathering on the nearest rock, they knelt down interceding with God on behalf of those whom they perceived to be even now in imminent risk of death. But though the answer to their prayers was long delayed, it was by divine providence, in order that it might be made plain how much virtue there was in Cuthbert's prayers. For on the other bank of the river stood no small crowd of the common people, and he was standing among them. These were watching the rafts on which the monks were sadly gazing, being carried so far out to sea that they looked like five tiny birds riding on the waves, for there were five rafts. Thereupon they began to jeer at the monks' manner of life, as if they were deservedly suffering, seeing that they despised the common laws of mortals and put forth new and unknown rules of life. Cuthbert stopped the insults of the blasphemers, saying: "Brethren, what are you doing, cursing those whom you see being carried away even now to destruction? Would it not be better and more kindly to pray to the Lord for their safety rather than to rejoice over their dangers?" But they fumed against him with boorish minds and boorish words and said: "Let no man pray for them, and may God have no mercy on any one of them, for they have robbed men of their old ways of worship, and how the new worship is to be conducted, nobody knows." When Cuthbert heard this reply, he knelt down to pray to God, bending his head to the ground, and immediately the violent wind turned about and bore the rafts safe and sound to land, amid the rejoicings of those who were guiding them, and left them in a convenient place near the monastery itself. When the countryfolk saw this, they were ashamed of their own unbelief, but forthwith they duly praised the faith of the venerable Cuthbert, and thereafter never ceased to praise it. In fact a very worthy brother of our monastery, from whose lips I heard the story, declared that he himself had often heard these things related in the presence of many by one of these same people, a man of rustic simplicity and absolutely incapable of inventing an untruth.

CHAPTER IV. *How, being in the company of some shepherds, he saw the soul of the holy Bishop Aidan carried to heaven by angels*

Now when Christ, whose grace is the guide of the life of the faithful, wished his servant to subject himself to the power of a more rigorous dispensation, and to earn the glory of a greater

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reward, it happened that he was keeping the flocks committed to his care on some distant mountains. On a certain night while his companions were sleeping, he himself was keeping watch and praying according to his custom, when he suddenly saw a stream of light from the sky breaking in upon the darkness of the long night. In the midst of this, the choir of the heavenly host descended to the earth, and taking with them, without delay, a soul of exceeding brightness, returned to their heavenly home. The youth beloved of God was strongly moved by this vision to subject himself to the grace of spiritual discipline and of earning everlasting life and happiness amid God's mighty men, and immediately he gave praise and thanks to God and also called upon his companions with brotherly exhortation to praise the Lord. "Alas," said he, "wretches that we are, who are given up to sleep and sloth and are not worthy to behold the glory of those servants of Christ who are ever watchful. For I myself, though I was watching in prayer for but a short part of the night, have nevertheless seen the wonders of God. The gate of heaven was opened and the spirit of a certain saint was conducted thither with an angelic retinue; and while we dwell in utter darkness, he now, blessed for ever, beholds the glory of the heavenly abode and Christ its King. And indeed I think that it was either some holy bishop or some specially distinguished man from among the number of the faithful, whom I saw carried to heaven amid the splendour of so great a light and accompanied by so many bands of angels." With these words Cuthbert, the man of the Lord, kindled the hearts of the shepherds in no little measure to the worship and praise of God. And in the morning, learning that Aidan, bishop of the church at Lindisfarne, a man of specially great virtue, had entered the Kingdom of Heaven at the very time when he had seen him taken from the body, Cuthbert forthwith delivered to their owners the sheep which he was tending and decided to seek a monastery.

CHAPTER V. *How, while he was on a journey, he received food through God's care*

While, with diligent heart, he was now meditating entrance into a stricter course of life, the heavenly grace was present to confirm his spirit more resolutely in his decision and to show, by manifest signs, that to those who seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, those things which appertain to the nourishment of the body are added by the favour of divine providence. For on a certain day, while he was

travelling alone, he turned at the third hour into a village some distance away which he happened upon by chance. And he entered the house of a certain religious housewife, wishing to rest there for a little and purposing to ask for food for the horse on which he was riding, rather than for himself; for it was the beginning of the winter season. The woman received him kindly and earnestly begged him to allow her to prepare him a morning meal to refresh him. The man of God refused saying, "I cannot eat yet because it is a fast day." For it was Friday, a day on which most of the faithful are accustomed to protract their fast until the ninth hour out of reverence for the passion of the Lord. The woman, being given to hospitality, persisted in her entreaties. "Look", she said, "you will find no village and no human habitation on the road you are taking; and you have a long journey before you, which you cannot finish before sunset. So I pray you to accept food before you set out, so that you may not be compelled to fast the whole day or even wait until to-morrow." But though the woman urged him greatly, his love of religion overcame the urgency of her entreaty, and he set out once more fasting, and fasted the whole day until evening. And when, with evening at hand, he discovered that he could not finish the journey he had undertaken on the same day, and that there were no lodgings in the neighbourhood where he could stay, he suddenly saw, as he made his way along, some shepherds' huts close by, which had been roughly built during the summer time and were then lying open and deserted. He entered one in order to shelter there, and fastening to the wall the horse he had been riding, he collected a bundle of straw which the wind had removed from the roof, and gave it to the horse to eat. He himself began to spend the time in prayer, when suddenly in the midst of his psalm-singing, he saw the horse lift up its head, seize the thatching of the house with its mouth and drag it down. Amid the straw falling from the roof, he saw a folded cloth fall as well; wishing to discover more certainly what it was, he drew near, when his prayer was finished, and found, wrapped in the cloth, half a loaf still warm, and some meat, sufficient for one meal for himself. Then he uttered praises for the heavenly favours. "Thanks be to God", he said, "who has deigned to provide a supper for me who am fasting out of love for Him, and also for my comrade." So he divided the piece of bread which he found and gave half of it to the horse and the rest he kept for his own food: and from that day he became readier than ever to fast, because indeed he understood clearly that this food had been provided for him in a solitary



Food

place, by the gift of Him who once for many days fed Elijah in solitude, with food of the same kind, through the ministrations of birds, there being no man there to minister to him. "His eyes are upon them that fear Him and that hope in His mercy, in order that He may snatch their soul from death and feed them in a time of famine". These things a priest named Ingwald, a monk of our monastery at Wearmouth, related that he had heard from Cuthbert himself, who was then a bishop. This Ingwald now, thanks to a lengthy old age, no longer with carnal eyes gazes on things earthly, but rather, with a pure heart, contemplates things heavenly.

CHAPTER VI. What manner of testimony the holy man Boisil gave to him in the spirit, as he came to the monastery, and how he was received and lived there

Meanwhile the reverend servant of the Lord, having forsaken the things of the world, hastens to submit to monastic discipline, since he had been urged by the heavenly vision to seek the joys of eternal bliss and to endure temporal hunger and thirst for the Lord's sake as one who had been invited to the heavenly feasts. And though he knew that the church at Lindisfarne contained many holy men by whose learning and example he might be instructed, yet learning beforehand of the fame of the sublime virtues of the monk and priest Boisil, he preferred to seek Melrose. And by chance it happened that, having jumped down from his horse on reaching the monastery, and being about to enter the church to pray, he gave both his horse and the spear he was holding to a servant, for he had not yet put off his secular habit. Now Boisil himself, who was standing at the gates of the monastery, saw him first; and foreseeing in spirit how great the man whom he saw was going to be in his manner of life, he uttered this one sentence to those standing by: "Behold the servant of the Lord!" thereby imitating Him who, looking upon Nathanael as he came towards Him, said: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile." Thus is wont to testify that pious and veteran servant and priest of God, Sigfrith, who was standing with others near Boisil himself when he said these words. Sigfrith was then a young man in that monastery, having learned as yet only the first rudiments of monastic life; now he is in our monastery, namely Jarrow, living the life of a perfect man in Christ and, amid the feeble sighs of his latest breath, thirsting for a joyful entry into another life. Without saying more, Boisil forthwith kindly received Cuthbert on his arrival, and when the latter had explained the

reason of his journey, namely that he preferred the monastery to the world, Boisil still more kindly kept him. For he was the prior of that same monastery. And after a few days, when Eata of blessed memory arrived, who was then a priest and the abbot of the monastery and afterwards both abbot and bishop of the church at Lindisfarne, Boisil told him about Cuthbert, declaring that his mind was well disposed, and obtained permission from him for Cuthbert to receive the tonsure and to join the fellowship of the brethren. And entering this monastery, he sought at once to observe the rules of the regular life equally with the other brethren, or even to excel them in zeal for a stricter discipline, being more diligent in fact in reading and working, in watching and praying. Moreover in accordance with the example of Samson the strong, who was once a Nazarite, he sedulously abstained from all intoxicants; but he could not submit to such abstinence in food, lest he should become unfitted for necessary labour. For he was robust of body and sound in strength and fit for whatever labour he cared to undertake.

CHAPTER VII. How he entertained an angel and whilst seeking to minister to him earthly bread, was thought worthy to be rewarded by him with heavenly bread

Some years after, it pleased King Alhfrith for the redemption of his soul to give Abbot Eata a certain place in his kingdom which is called Ripon in which to **build a monastery**. This same abbot took with him certain of the brethren, amongst whom was **Cuthbert**, and founded there the desired monastery, instituting therein the same **rules of discipline** as were observed at Melrose. Cuthbert, the servant of the Lord, was appointed **guestmaster** and is said to have entertained in his guesthouse **an angel of the Lord** who was sent to test his devotion. Going out in the early morning from the inner buildings of the monastery to the guests' chamber, he found a certain youth sitting within, and, thinking that he was of the race of men, he speedily welcomed him with his accustomed kindness. He gave him water to wash his hands; he washed his feet and wiped them with a towel and placed them in his bosom so as to chafe them humbly with his hands; and asked him to wait until the third hour of the day and be refreshed with food, lest, if he went away fasting, he might faint from hunger as well as from the wintry cold. For he thought that the man had been tired both by a night journey and by the snow-laden winds, and that he

had turned aside thither at dawn to rest. The youth refused, answering that he would go quickly because the dwelling to which he was hastening was very far away. But Cuthbert, after he had asked him many times, at length compelled him to remain by adjuring him with the divine name; and as soon as the prayers were finished at the third hour and the time for food had come, he placed a table before him and offered him food to eat, saying: "I pray you, brother, refresh yourself while I go and bring you a warm loaf, for I expect that they are now baked." But when he returned, he did not find the guest whom he had left eating; he searched for his footsteps to see whither he had gone, but he found none at all, though fresh snow had covered the earth which would very easily betray the steps of a person walking over it and would show whither he had turned. The man of God was amazed and wondering within himself concerning this event, he replaced the table in the store-house. And as he entered, he immediately encountered a wonderfully fragrant odour. Looking round to see whence so sweet an odour had arisen, he saw near by three warm loaves of unusual whiteness and excellence. And trembling, he said to himself: "I see that it was an angel of God whom I received and that he came to feed and not to be fed. Behold, he has brought loaves such as the earth cannot produce; for they excel the lily in whiteness, the rose in fragrance, and honey in taste. Hence it follows that they have not come from this earth of ours but they have been brought from the paradise of joy. Nor is it wonderful that he should refuse to partake of our human feasts on earth, when he enjoys the eternal bread of life in heaven." And so the man of God, being moved by the manifest virtue of this miracle, gave the greater heed for this reason to works of virtue; and as his virtues grew so also grew the heavenly grace. For from that time he was very often held worthy to see and talk with angels, and when hungry, to be refreshed by food prepared for him by the Lord as a special gift. He was affable and pleasant in his manners, and while for the most part he would relate the deeds of the fathers who had departed as an example of godly living to those still alive, yet he was also wont to add in all humility something about any spiritual gift which the heavenly grace had bestowed on himself; sometimes he would do so openly, but sometimes he would also be at pains to do this in a veiled manner, as though it had happened to another person. Nevertheless those who heard understood that he was speaking of himself after the example of the teacher of the Gentiles, who

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now recounts openly his own virtues, and now speaks under the guise of another person, saying: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, such an one caught up even to the third heaven", and so on.



CHAPTER VIII. *How Cuthbert was healed of sickness and how Boisil, when he was about to die, prophesied things which were to come to him*

Meanwhile because the whole state of the world is frail and unstable as the sea when a sudden tempest arises, the aforesaid Abbot Eata with Cuthbert and other brethren whom he had brought with him was driven home, and the site of the monastery, which he had founded, was given to other monks to dwell in. Yet this same champion of Christ did not change his mind as a result of this change of place, nor abandon his determination once taken to wage the heavenly warfare; but most diligently he paid heed both to the words and the deeds of the blessed Boisil as he had been accustomed to do before. At that time (as Herefrith, a priest who belonged to his community and who was once abbot of the monastery of Lindisfarne, testifies that Cuthbert was wont to relate), he was stricken down with the plague which at that time carried off very many throughout the length and breadth of Britain. Now the brethren of that monastery spent the whole night in watching and praying for his life and safety; for they all thought that inasmuch as he was a holy man, his continued presence in the flesh was necessary to them. When one of them told him about this in the morning—for they had done it without his knowledge—he replied forthwith: "And why do I lie here? for doubtless God has not despised the prayers of so many good men. Give me my staff and shoes." And immediately he arose and began to try to walk, leaning upon his staff; and as his strength grew from day to day, he recovered his health; but as the swelling which appeared in his thigh gradually left the surface of his body, it sank into the inward parts and, throughout almost the whole of his life, he continued to feel some inward pains, so that, in the words of the apostle, "strength was made perfect in weakness".

When the servant of the Lord, Boisil, saw that he had been healed of his sickness, he said: "You see, brother, that you have been freed from the affliction by which you were beset, and I declare to you that you will not be stricken again nor will you die now: and at the same time, since death is upon me,

I admonish you to lose no opportunity of learning from me so long as I am able to teach you. For not more than seven days remain in which I shall have sufficient health of body and strength of tongue to teach you." Cuthbert, never doubting the truth of his words, answered: "And what, I ask you, is it best for me to read, which I can yet finish in one week?" He replied: "The evangelist John. I have a book consisting of seven gatherings of which we can get through one every day, with the Lord's help, reading it and discussing it between ourselves so far as is necessary." They did as he said. They were able to finish the reading so quickly because they dealt only with the simple things of the "faith which worketh by love" and not deep matters of dispute. So when the reading had been completed in seven days, Boisil the man of the Lord, having been attacked by this said disease, reached his last day and, having spent it in great gladness, he entered into the joy of perpetual light. It is said that he declared all Cuthbert's future to him during these seven days: for, as I have said, he was a prophet and a man of marvellous sanctity. And in fact he had predicted this virulent pestilence to his abbot Eata three years before it appeared, and did not hide the fact that he himself would be carried off by it; but he declared that the abbot himself would not die of this but rather of a disease which the doctors call dysentery, and, as events proved, his prophecy was true. But amongst other things, he suggested to Cuthbert that he would be made a bishop. So, in after days, when he was living a hermit's life, Cuthbert would not tell anyone that Boisil had predicted to him that he should be a bishop: but nevertheless, to the brethren who sometimes visited him, he used to declare with much sorrow: "Even if I could possibly hide myself in a tiny dwelling on a rock, where the waves of the swelling ocean surrounded me on all sides, and shut me in equally from the sight and knowledge of men, not even thus should I consider myself to be free from the snares of a deceptive world: but even there I should fear lest the love of wealth should tempt me and somehow or other should snatch me away."

CHAPTER IX. *How Cuthbert was diligent in the ministry of the word*

So after the death of Boisil the priest beloved of God, Cuthbert undertook the office of prior which we have mentioned before, and, for a number of years, he was busy with spiritual works, as befitted a holy man; and not only did he give the monastery

itself counsels concerning life under the rule and an example of it, but he sought moreover to convert the neighbouring people far and wide from a life of foolish habits to a love of heavenly joys. For many of them profaned the faith they held by wicked deeds, and some of them also at the time of the plague, forgetting the sacred mystery of the faith into which they had been initiated, took to the delusive cures of idolatry, as though by incantations or amulets or any other mysteries of devilish art, they could ward off a blow sent by God the creator. So he frequently went forth from the monastery to correct the errors of both kinds of sinners, sometimes riding on a horse but more often going on foot, and came to the neighbouring villages and preached the way of truth to these wanderers, just as Boisil had been accustomed to do in his time.

Now it was the custom at that time amongst the English people, when a clerk or a priest came to a village, for all to gather together at his command to hear the word, gladly listening to what was said, and still more gladly following up by their deeds what they could hear and understand. So great was Cuthbert's skill in teaching, so great his love of driving home what he had begun to teach, so bright the light of his angelic countenance, that none of those present would presume to hide from him the secrets of his heart, but they all made open confession of what they had done, because they thought that these things could certainly never be hidden from him; and they cleansed themselves from the sins they had confessed by "fruits worthy of repentance," as he commanded. Now he was wont to penetrate those parts especially and to preach in those villages that were far away on steep and rugged mountains, which others dreaded to visit and whose poverty as well as ignorance prevented teachers from approaching them. And giving himself up gladly to this pious labour, he attended to their instruction with such industry, that, leaving the monastery, he would often not return home for a whole week, sometimes even for two or three weeks, and even occasionally for a full month; but he would tarry in the mountains, summoning the rustics to heavenly things by the words of his preaching as well as by the example of his virtue.

CHAPTER X. *How the animals of the sea, in which he had passed the night in prayer, ministered to him when he came out, and how a brother who saw it, being ill through fear, was restored by his prayers*

Now while the holy man was going from strength to strength in that monastery by his signs and miracles, and the fame of

his works had spread everywhere, there was a nun, a mother of the handmaidens of Christ, called Aebbe, who ruled over the monastery situated in a place called Coldingham, a woman honoured among all as well for her piety as for her noble birth, for she was own sister of King Oswiu. She sent to the man of God asking that he would deign to visit her and her monastery for the sake of exhorting them. Nor could he deny the loving request of the handmaiden of God. So he came to the place and remained there some days and opened up to them all the path of righteousness about which he preached, as much by his deeds as by his words. Now, according to his custom, while the others were resting at night, he would go out alone to pray, and after watching long throughout the dead of night, he would return home just at the hour of common worship; and on a certain night one of the brethren of the same monastery, seeing him go silently out, followed in his footsteps secretly, seeking to discover whither he meant to go and what he intended to do. Cuthbert left the monastery with the spy following him and went down to the sea, above whose shores the monastery was built; going into the deep water until the swelling waves rose as far as his neck and arms, he spent the dark hours of the night watching and singing praises to the sound of the waves. When daybreak was at hand, he went up on to the land and began to pray once more, kneeling on the shore. While he was doing this, there came forth from the depths of the sea two four-footed creatures which are commonly called otters. These, prostrate before him on the sand, began to warm his feet with their breath and sought to dry him with their fur, and when they had finished their ministrations they received his blessing and slipped away into their native waters. He forthwith returned home and sang the canonical hymns with the brethren at the appointed hour. Meantime the monk who stood watching him from the cliffs was stricken with such deadly fear and weighed down with such distress, that he could scarcely reach home with faltering footsteps; and in the early morning he approached Cuthbert and, stretching himself on the ground, tearfully entreated his pardon for the guilt of his foolish daring, not doubting that Cuthbert knew what he had done that night and why he was suffering. Cuthbert said to him: "What is the matter, brother? What have you done? Have you attempted to view and spy upon my nightly journey? But I will grant you pardon for this fault only on one condition, that you promise you will not tell anyone about what you have seen before my death." In this command he followed the example of Him who, when He showed the glory of His majesty

wades into sea praying

otters warm him

promise

to the disciples on the mount, said: "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead." So the promise being given, he blessed the brother, and freed him both from the fault and from the affliction which he had so rashly incurred; and the brother kept silence about the miracle he had seen so long as Cuthbert was alive, but after the saint's death he took care to tell it to many.

CHAPTER XI. *How he promised the sailors who were cut off by the storm that the sea would be calm by a certain day, and how his prayer for food was answered*

Meanwhile the man of God began to grow strong in the spirit of prophecy also, to foretell the future and to describe to those with him events that were happening elsewhere. Now at a certain time, having left the monastery on account of some necessity which arose, he came by boat to the land of the Picts who are called Niduari, accompanied by two brethren, one of whom afterwards became a priest. It was he who made known to many the miracle which the man of God worked at that place. Now they came thither after Christmas day, expecting that they would return quickly because the state both of the winds and waves was favourable. For this reason, that is in view of their early return, they did not take provisions with them. But things turned out very differently from what they expected. For as soon as they reached land a fierce tempest arose, which entirely prevented their return. And so they languished for some days amid the dangers of hunger and of cold, but the man of God refused to spend this time of leisure in sluggish sloth or give himself up to idle slumber, choosing rather to spend the night in prayer. Now when the most sacred day of the Epiphany was at hand, he spoke to his companions with persuasive words, for he was of a pleasant and kindly disposition: "Why, I ask, do we remain inactive and slothful and not seek some way of safety in every direction? Lo! the land is grim with snow and the sky with clouds; the heavens rage with adverse winds and the sea with waves. We ourselves are in want and there is no man to refresh us. So let us importune the Lord with prayers, that as He once opened up a path in the Red Sea for His people and fed them in a wondrous manner in the desert, so He may also have mercy on us in our danger. I believe that, if our faith does not waver, He will not allow us to remain fasting to-day, a day which He has illuminated with so many wondrous tokens of His majesty. Let us go some-

where, I beg you, and find out what banquet He will deign to bestow upon us, so that we may keep His festival with joy." With these words he led them to the shore on which he was accustomed to spend the night in prayer. And when they came there, they found three pieces of dolphin's flesh looking as though some human hand had cut and prepared them for cooking; and kneeling down they gave thanks to God. Then Cuthbert said: "You see, beloved, what divine favour comes from trusting and hoping in the Lord. Look how He has prepared food for His servants, and has also showed us by the fact that there are three pieces, how many days we must remain here. So take these gifts which Christ has sent us and let us go and refresh ourselves and remain here undaunted, for most certainly after three days we shall get a calm sea and sky." It happened as he had said; a very fierce tempest lasted for three days and, on the fourth day, the promised calm arrived to bring them to their own country with favourable breezes.

CHAPTER XII. *How, while making a journey, he prophesied that he would receive provisions on the way by the ministration of an eagle, and how it came to pass*

Now on a certain day he had left the monastery to preach according to his wont, attended by a youth only; they were already tired with the long journey and no little distance still remained before they would reach the village for which they were making. He said to the boy to test him: "Come, tell me, comrade, where do you intend to refresh yourself to-day? or have you any host on the way to whom you can turn in?" But the boy answered: "I have long been silently pondering this matter in my heart; for we have brought with us no provision for the journey, nor have we anyone we know on the way who will receive us hospitably, and no little part of the journey remains which we cannot complete, fasting, without suffering." Then the man of God replied: "Learn, my dear son, always to have faith and trust in the Lord; for he who serves God faithfully never perishes of hunger." And, looking up, he saw an eagle flying aloft. "Do you see that eagle," he said, "flying afar off? It is possible for God to refresh us to-day even by the ministration of that eagle." With such words they went on their way along a certain river when, lo, suddenly they see an eagle settling on the bank; and the man of God said: "Do you see where our handmaid, as I foretold, is settling? Run, I pray you, and see what food she has brought us from the Lord, and bring it quickly here." He ran up and

brought a large fish which the eagle had just taken from the river. But the man of God said: "What have you done, my son? Why have you not given our handmaiden her share? Cut it quickly in half and take her the share which she deserves for ministering to us." He did as he was bidden and carried the rest with him. When the time for refreshment arrived, they turned into the next village and, giving the portion of fish to be broiled, they refreshed themselves and those too into whose house they had entered, with a most acceptable repast, while Cuthbert preached the word of God to them and praised Him for his benefits; for "blessed is the man whose hope is in the name of the Lord and who has not looked after vanity nor idle folly". And so having resumed their journey, they set out to reach those whom they purposed to teach.

)*
share
Food
w/
eagle

CHAPTER XIII. *How, when he was preaching to the people, he suddenly foresaw that a phantom fire would come from the devil, and how he extinguished it when it came*

At the same time, when he was preaching the word of life to a crowd of people in a certain little village, he suddenly foresaw in the spirit that the ancient enemy would be present to hinder the work of salvation, and forthwith he set out to forestall, by his teaching, the snares which he knew would come. For he suddenly broke into the discourse he was giving with warnings of this kind: "Beloved, it is necessary, as often as the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are preached to you, that you should listen with attentive mind and most watchful ear, lest haply the devil, who has a thousand wiles for injuring you, should with vain cares hinder you from hearing about your eternal salvation." And with these words he once more took up the thread of the discourse which he had interrupted, and at once that most evil foe, producing a phantom fire, set light to a house near by, so that firebrands seemed to be flying all through the village and, fanned by the wind, their crackling rent the air. Then almost the whole crowd that he was teaching leapt up intending to extinguish the fire, though he himself kept back a few with outstretched hand: the rest eagerly threw on water, but with all their real water they could not extinguish the false flames, until at the prayers of Cuthbert the man of God, the author of lies was put to flight, carrying with him his phantom fires into the empty air. Seeing this, the crowd, filled with wholesome shame, approaching the man of God again, prayed on bended knees to be forgiven for their

eagle +
Food

fickleness of mind, confessing that they realised that the devil never ceased, even for an hour, from hindering the work of man's salvation. And he, confirming the weak and inconstant, continued his interrupted discourse on the way of life.

CHAPTER XIV. *How by his prayers he checked the flames of a certain house which was really on fire*

And not only phantom fires but even real fires, which many people could not extinguish with cold water from the wells, he put out unaided with his warm streams of tears. For when, after the manner of the Apostles, he was going through all parts in order to teach the way of salvation, one day he entered the house of a certain faithful handmaid of God, whom he was careful to visit very frequently, because he knew she was given to good deeds, and also because she had brought him up from his boyhood's earliest years and was therefore called mother by him. Now she had a house in the west part of the village, and no sooner had Cuthbert the man of God entered it to sow the seed of the word than a house in the eastern quarter of the same village caught fire owing to carelessness and began to burn very fiercely. Moreover a great wind arose from the same quarter, which tore away the blazing thatch of the straw roof and carried it far and wide throughout the whole village. The fierce flame kept off those who were engaged in throwing water, and even drove them farther back. Then the said handmaiden of God ran excitedly to the house in which she had received the man of God, entreating him to help by his prayers before her house and the whole village perished together. But he said: "Do not be afraid, mother, be calmer; for this fire, however fierce, will not harm you and yours." Immediately he went out and cast himself upon the ground in front of the door; and while he was still praying, the winds changed and, blowing from the west, removed all danger of the fire attacking the house which the man of God had entered. Thus in two miracles he imitated the miracles of two of the fathers: in foreseeing and getting rid of phantom fires he imitated the miracle of the most reverend and holy father Benedict who, by his prayers, drove away from the sight of his disciples a fire kindled by the ancient foe to simulate a kitchen burning; and equally in overcoming and changing the direction of volumes of real flame, he imitated a miracle of the venerable Bishop Marcellinus of Ancona who,

when that city was burning, took up his position over against the fire and prayed, thus subduing the flames which a very great crowd of citizens could not subdue by throwing water on them. Nor is it to be wondered at that such perfect men who served God faithfully, received great power against the strength of flames, when, by daily practice of virtue, they learned both to overcome the lusts of the flesh and "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one". Them indeed this prophecy most aptly fits: "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." But I and those like me, conscious of our weakness and helplessness, are certain that we dare take no such measures against material fire; we are also uncertain whether we can escape unharmed from that inextinguishable fire of future punishment. But the loving-kindness of our Saviour is mighty and abundant; and He will use the grace of His protection even now to extinguish the flames of vices in us, unworthy though we be, and to enable us to escape the flames of punishment in the time to come.

CHAPTER XV. *How he drove out a demon from the wife of a reeve, even before his arrival*

Seeing that we have shown above how the same venerable Cuthbert had power against the illusory deceits of the devil, now we will also show what power he had also against his undisguised and open fury. There was a reeve of King Ecgrith called Hildmer, a man devoted to religious works together with all his household, and therefore specially beloved by the blessed Cuthbert, who, when he happened to be travelling that way, frequently visited him. His wife, though given to works of charity and other fruits of virtue, was suddenly seized upon by a demon and most cruelly afflicted, so that she gnashed her teeth and uttered piteous cries, flinging her arms and limbs about in agitation, and so inspiring no little horror in all who saw or heard her. And when she lay cast out and apparently at the point of death, her husband got on his horse and came in haste to the man of God, and entreated him, saying: "My wife is ill and seems already at the point of death; I beg you that you will send a priest to visit her before she dies and minister to her the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord; and also that you will permit her body to be buried here in holy ground." For he was ashamed to confess that she was insane because the man of God had always been accustomed to see her in her right mind. When Cuthbert had turned away from him for a short time to see what priest he should send with him, he suddenly

drive out demon

crazy ♀

storm fires

realised in his spirit that the wife for whom the man was praying was afflicted by no ordinary infirmity but by the attack of a demon. And turning to him he said: "I must not send another but I myself must go with you to visit her." And when they were on the way, the man began to weep and to reveal the grief of his heart by the tears that flowed down his cheeks; for he feared that when Cuthbert found her possessed of a devil, he would begin to think that she had served the Lord with a feigned and not a real faith. But the man of God consoled him with gentle words. "Do not weep", he said, "as though I were about to find your wife in such a condition as I should not wish. For I know myself, though you are ashamed to say it, that she is afflicted by a demon; but I also know that before we arrive, the demon will be driven away and she will be freed and will come to meet us joyfully, as sound in mind as ever; and she will herself take these reins, and, bidding us enter quickly, will diligently perform her accustomed services for us; for it is not only the wicked who are subjected to such torments, but sometimes also in this world, by the inscrutable judgment of God, the innocent are taken captive by the devil, not only in body but also in mind." And when Cuthbert had spoken these and like words for his consolation and instruction, they approached his home, and the evil spirit suddenly fled, not being able to endure the coming of the Holy Spirit which filled the man of God. And the woman, being loosed from the demon's chains, thereupon rose as if wakened from a deep sleep and, running to greet the man of God, she took the horse on which he was seated by the bridle: and having wholly recovered her strength both of mind and body, she prayed him to dismount quickly and to enter and bless her home; and offering him devoted service, she openly testified how, as soon as she touched his bridle, she felt herself to be freed from all the trouble of her old affliction.

CHAPTER XVI. *How he lived and taught in the monastery at Lindisfarne*

So when the venerable servant of God had passed many years in the monastery at Melrose and had distinguished himself by the many signs of his spiritual powers, his most reverend abbot Eata transferred him to the monastery which is situated in the island of Lindisfarne, in order that there also he might both teach the rule of monastic perfection by his authority as prior and illustrate it by the example of his virtue; for the same

most reverend father ruled this place also as abbot at that time. And let no one be surprised that, though we have said above that in this island of Lindisfarne, small as it is, there is found the seat of a bishop, now we say also that it is the home of an abbot and monks; for it is actually so. For one and the same dwelling-place of the servants of God holds both; and indeed all are monks. Aidan, who was the first bishop of this place, was a monk and always lived according to monastic rule together with all his followers. Hence all the bishops of that place up to the present time exercise their episcopal functions in such a way that the abbot, whom they themselves have chosen by the advice of the brethren, rules the monastery; and all the priests, deacons, singers and readers, and the other ecclesiastical grades, together with the bishop himself, keep the monastic rule in all things. The blessed Pope Gregory showed that he greatly approved of this mode of life, when Augustine, the first bishop he had sent to the English, asked him in his letters how bishops ought to live with their clergy; for he answered amongst other things: "You, my brother, having been brought up under monastic rules, ought not to live apart from your clergy in the church of the English which, by God's help, has lately been brought to the faith; but you ought to introduce that way of living which, at the beginning of the life of the church, was found among our fathers, none of whom said that anything that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common." So the man of the Lord came to the church or monastery of Lindisfarne, and soon equally by his life and by his doctrine taught the monastic rule to the brethren. Moreover in accordance with his custom he also by frequent visits aroused the common people round about to seek and earn heavenly rewards. He also became very famous for his miracles; for by the importunity of his prayers he restored to their former health very many who had been seized with various kinds of diseases and afflictions; and some he cured that were vexed by unclean spirits, not only when present by praying, touching, commanding and exorcizing, but also when absent either by prayer alone or even indeed by predicting their cure; among these was the wife of the reeve of whom we spoke above. Now there were certain brethren in the monastery who preferred to conform to their older usage rather than to the monastic rule. Nevertheless he overcame these by his modest virtue and his patience, and by daily effort he gradually converted them to a better state of mind. In fact very often during debates in the chapter of the brethren

more
Irish
than
Rona

by example

And the wicked foe himself was driven far away together with the whole crowd of his satellites. This soldier of Christ, as soon as he had become monarch of the land he had entered and had overcome the army of the usurpers, built a city fitted for his rule, and in it houses equally suited to the city. It is a structure almost round in plan, measuring about four or five poles from wall to wall; the wall itself on the outside is higher than a man standing upright; but inside he made it much higher by cutting away the living rock, so that the pious inhabitant could see nothing except the sky from his dwelling, thus restraining both the lust of the eyes and of the thoughts and lifting the whole bent of his mind to higher things. He made this same wall, not of cut stone nor of bricks and mortar, but just of unworked stone and of turf which he had removed from the excavation in the middle of his dwelling. Some of these stones were so great that it would seem to have been scarcely possible for four men to have lifted them, but nevertheless he was found to have brought them thither from elsewhere with angelic aid, and to have placed them in the wall. He had two buildings in his dwelling-place, namely an oratory and another habitation suitable for common uses. He finished the walls by digging and cutting away the natural soil both inside and outside, and he placed on them roofs of rough-hewn timber and straw. But away at the landing-place in the island there was a larger house in which the brethren who visited him could be received and rest, and not far away was a well for their use.

CHAPTER XVIII. *How he produced water from dry land by his prayers and how he lived as a hermit*

Now his dwelling-place was lacking in water inasmuch as it was built on very hard and almost stony rock. So the man of God summoned the brethren, for he had not yet secluded himself from the sight of visitors. "You see", he said, "that the dwelling-place I have chosen lacks a well; but let us, I beseech you, pray Him 'who turns the solid rock into a standing water and the flint into fountains of waters', that, giving 'glory not unto us but unto His name', He may vouchsafe to open to us also a spring of water from the stony rock. Let us dig in the midst of my little dwelling and I believe that He will 'make us drink from the river of His pleasures'." So they made a pit and on the next day they found it full of water which came from within. Hence there was no doubt that this

water had been drawn from ground which before had been exceedingly dry and hard, through the prayers of the man of God. And this water was in a wonderful way kept within its first limits so that it never bubbled over and covered the floor, nor failed through exhaustion of its supply; but the grace of the Giver so controlled it that it did not exceed the necessities of the receiver, nor was the supply for those necessities ever lacking. Now when this same dwelling-place and these chambers had been built with the help of his brethren, Cuthbert the man of God began to dwell alone. At first, indeed, he used to go forth from his cell to meet the brethren who came to him, and to minister to them. And when he had devoutly washed their feet in warm water, he was sometimes compelled by them to take off his shoes and to allow them to wash his feet. For he had so far withdrawn his mind from the care of his body and fixed it on the care of his soul alone that, having once been shod with the boots of skin that he was accustomed to use, he would wear them for whole months together. And let it be said that once he had put on his boots at Easter, he did not take them off until Easter came round again a year later, and then only for the washing of the feet which takes place on Maundy Thursday. So, on account of the frequent genuflexions at prayer which he made while wearing his boots, he was found to have a long and thickish callus at the junction of his feet and his shins. Then, when his zeal for perfection grew, he shut himself up in his hermitage, and, remote from the gaze of men, he learned to live a solitary life of fasting, prayers and vigils, rarely having conversation from within his cell with visitors and that only through the window. At first he opened this and rejoiced to see and be seen by the brethren with whom he spoke; but, as time went on, he shut even that, and opened it only for the sake of giving his blessing or for some other definite necessity.

CHAPTER XIX. *How, with a word, he drove away the birds from the crops which he had sown with his own hand*

Now at first he received a little bread to eat from his visitors and drank from his own well; but afterwards, in accordance with the example of the fathers, he considered it more fitting to live by the labour of his own hands. So he asked for tools to be brought to him with which to work the land, and also some wheat to sow; but though the land was sown in spring-time, it had produced no fruit up to midsummer. So, when

Kept shoes on from Easter to Easter
details

the brethren were visiting him after their custom, the man of God said: "Perchance it is not in accordance either with the nature of this land or with the will of God that wheat should grow for me in this place; bring me, I beg you, some barley, to see if perchance that may produce a crop. And if God does not grant me any increase from that, I would rather return to the monastery than be kept here by the labours of others." The barley was brought long after the proper time for sowing it, and when there seemed no hope of any harvest, yet when he put it in the ground, it soon sprang up and brought forth a very abundant crop. And when it had begun to ripen, some birds came and eagerly set about consuming it. The most pious servant of God approached them and, as he afterwards related— for, being of a happy disposition and very friendly, he was often in the habit of disclosing some of the blessings which he had gained by his own faith, in order to confirm the faith of his listeners—"Why", said he, "do you touch the crops that you did not sow? Or is it, perchance, that you have greater need of them than I? If, however, you have received permission from God, do what He has allowed you; but if not, depart and do not injure any more the possessions of another." Thus he spoke and, at the first sound of his commands, the whole multitude of birds departed and thenceforward refrained altogether from attacking his crops. And on this occasion also, the venerable servant of Christ followed in these two miracles the deeds of two of the fathers; namely, in obtaining water from the rock, a deed of the blessed father Benedict, who is said to have wrought an almost identical miracle in the same way, but more copiously because there were more who were suffering from lack of water. Further, in driving away the birds from the crops, he followed the example of the most reverend and holy father Antony, who with one exhortation restrained the wild asses from injuring the little garden that he himself had planted.

CHAPTER XX. *How the ravens atoned for the injury which they had done to the man of God by their prayers and by a gift*

Let us also tell of a miracle wrought by the blessed Cuthbert after the example of the above-mentioned father Benedict, in which human pride and contumacy are openly condemned by the obedience and humility of birds. There were some ravens that had long been accustomed to dwell on that island, and one day, as they were building their nests, the man of God saw them tear with their beaks the little guest-house of the brethren

of which I have spoken before, and carry off in their bills the straw with which it was thatched, as material for their nests. He checked them with a slight motion of his right hand, and bade them cease from injuring the brethren. When they ignored his command, he said: "In the name of Jesus Christ, go away forthwith, and do not presume to remain any longer in the place that you are damaging." Scarcely had he finished these words when they forthwith flew dismally away. Now when three days had passed, one of a pair returned and found the servant of Christ digging. With its feathers sadly ruffled and its head drooping to its feet, and with humble cries it prayed for pardon, using such signs as it could; and the venerable father, understanding what it meant, gave it permission to return. And having got leave to come back, it soon went off in order to bring back its mate. Without delay they both returned bringing a worthy gift, namely a portion of hog's lard; and this the man of God used often afterwards to show to the brethren when they visited him, and to offer it to grease their shoes; declaring how carefully men should seek after obedience and humility, seeing that even a proud bird hastened to atone for the wrong that it had done to a man of God, by means of prayers, lamentations and gifts. And in order to give mankind an example of reformation, they remained for many years in that island and built their nests, not daring to inflict any injury on anyone. Let it not seem absurd to anyone to learn a lesson of virtue from birds, since Solomon says: "Go to the ant, thou slugard, consider her ways and be wise."

CHAPTER XXI. *How even the sea ministered to his necessities*

Moreover not only the creatures of the air but also of the sea, yes, and even the sea itself, as well as air and fire as we have shown above, did honour to the venerable man. For if a man faithfully and wholeheartedly serves the maker of all created things, it is no wonder though all creation should minister to his commands and wishes. But for the most part we lose dominion over the creation which was made subject to us, because we ourselves neglect to serve the Lord and Creator of all things. The very sea, I say, was ready to do service to the servant of Christ when he needed it. For he was intending to build a hut in his monastery, very small but suited for his daily needs; it was to be on the seaward side where the hollowing out of a rock by the washings of continual tides had made a very deep and wide gap; a flooring had to be placed under the hut, and

this had to be twelve feet long so as to fit the width of the gap. So he asked the brethren who had come to visit him, that when they were returning, they would bring with them some timber twelve feet long, to make a flooring for his little house. They promised gladly to do what he asked. But after they had received his blessing and returned home, the father's request escaped their mind; and when they returned to him on the appointed day, they did not bring what they had been asked for. When he had received them most kindly and had commended them to God with his accustomed prayer, he said: "Where is the timber that I asked you to bring?" Then they remembered his petition and, confessing their forgetfulness, they craved pardon for their trespass. But the kindly man consoled them with gentle words and bade them remain on the island until morning and rest, for he said: "I believe that God will not forget my desire and my needs." They did as he had said and rising up in the morning, they saw that the night tide had carried up some timber of the required length, and had placed it over the very spot whereon it was to be set for the building. As soon as they saw this, they marvelled at the holiness of the venerable man for whom even the elements did service; and with fitting shame they blamed their slothful minds, for even the insensible elements taught them what obedience ought to be shown to saints.

CHAPTER XXII. *How he gave instruction in the way of salvation to many who came to him and showed the weakness of the snares of the ancient foe*

Now many came to the man of God, not only from the neighbourhood of Lindisfarne but also from the remoter parts of Britain, having been attracted by the report of his miracles; such people declared to him either the sins they had committed or the temptations of devils to which they were exposed, or else revealed the common troubles of mankind by which they were afflicted, hoping that they would get consolation from a man of such sanctity. Nor did their hope deceive them. For no one went away from him without enjoying his consolation, and no one returned accompanied by that sorrow of mind which he had brought thither. He knew, in fact, how to refresh the sad by his pious exhortation; he could recall to the memory of the afflicted the joys of the heavenly life, and show them how fleeting were both the pleasures and the sorrows of this world; he had learned how to lay bare before tempted men

the manifold wiles of the ancient foe, by which the soul that is without brotherly or divine love may easily be entrapped: but he who goes strengthened by unwavering faith passes with the help of the Lord through the snares of the enemy as though they were spiders' webs. "How many times", he said, "have they cast me down headlong from a high rock; how many times have they hurled stones at me as if to kill me! But though they sought to frighten me away by one phantasmal temptation or another, and attempted to drive me from this place of combat, nevertheless they were unable in any way to mar my body by any injury, or my mind by fear!" He was also accustomed very frequently to bid the brethren not to wonder at his way of life, as though it were specially exalted, because he despised worldly things and preferred to live alone. "But", said he, "the life of monks ought rightly to be admired, for they are in all things subject to the commands of the abbot and govern all their times of watching, praying, fasting and working by his judgment; and I have known many of those who, both in purity of heart and in loftiness of prophetic grace, far exceed me in my weakness. Among these is the venerable servant of Christ, Boisil, a man to be named with all honour, who formerly in his old age, when I was but a youth, brought me up in the monastery of Melrose, and, amid his instructions, predicted with prophetic truth all the things which were to happen to me. And of all those things which he predicted to me, only one remains, which I would might never be fulfilled." He said this because that servant of Christ revealed that he would hold the office of a bishop, and he trembled at the thought of taking it, owing to his great longing for a more solitary life.

CHAPTER XXIII. *How the abbess Aelfflaed and one of her nuns were healed by means of his girdle*

Now the miracles of healing wrought by the man of God did not cease although he was far removed from mankind. For the venerable handmaiden of Christ, Aelfflaed, who to the joys of virginity added a maternal and pious care of no small company of the handmaidens of Christ, and increased the nobility of a royal pedigree by the much more potent nobility of the highest virtue, always had a great affection for the man of God. At that time (as she herself afterwards related to the most reverend priest Herefrith of the church of Lindisfarne, and he to me) she had been stricken by a grievous sickness and long afflicted, and seemed almost to have reached the point of death. But when the physicians could not cure her, she was

suddenly cured by divine grace within, and gradually escaped the imminent danger of death, though she was not entirely healed. For the internal pain indeed departed and her strength of limb returned, but her power of standing or of walking was wholly gone, for she could neither stand upright nor move about except on all fours. She therefore began sadly to fear that the weakness would last always, for she had long since despaired of any help from doctors. One day amid the afflictions of her sad thoughts, the blessed and quiet life of the most reverend father Cuthbert came into her mind and she said: "Would that I had something belonging to my Cuthbert! I know well and believingly trust in God that I should speedily be healed." Not long afterwards there came one who brought her a linen girdle which he had sent. She greatly rejoiced at the gift and, realizing that her desire had been made known to the holy man by heavenly means, she girded herself with it, and in the morning she was able forthwith to stand erect, and on the third day was entirely restored to health. A few days afterwards, one of the virgins of her monastery began to suffer from an intolerable pain in the head. Since the disease grew worse daily and she seemed about to die, the venerable abbess came in to visit her. Seeing her grievously afflicted, she brought this same girdle of the man of God and had it bound around her head: on that same day the pain departed and she was healed. The abbess, however, took away the girdle and placed it in her box. After a few days, when she sought it again, it could neither be found in the box nor anywhere else. It is clear that this was done by divine dispensation, so that the holiness of the father beloved of God might be made apparent to believers through these two miracles of healing, and that henceforth all occasion for doubting his sanctity might be removed from the incredulous. For if that girdle had always been there, sick people would always have wished to flock to it; and when perhaps one of them did not deserve to be healed of his infirmity, he would disparage its power, because it did not heal him, when really he was not worthy of being healed. Hence, as has been said, by the providential dispensation of heavenly grace, after the faith of believers had been strengthened, forthwith the opportunity for the envious and unbelievers to disparage was entirely taken away.

CHAPTER XXIV. *How, in answer to the same Aelflaed, he made predictions about the life of King Ecgrith and about his own bishopric*

On another occasion also the same most reverend Aelflaed, virgin and mother of the virgins of Christ, sent and asked the man of God, adjuring him in the name of the Lord that he would deign to visit her and talk over matters of importance. He went on board a ship with the brethren and came to the island which lies at the mouth of the river Coquet from which it receives its name. It is famous for its companies of monks, and it was here that this same abbess asked him to meet her. Having got into conversation with him, and having heard much from him on the matters about which she was asking him, suddenly, in the midst of their talk, she fell at his feet and adjured him by the terrible awe-inspiring name of the King of Heaven and of His angels, that he would tell her how long Ecgrith her brother would live and rule over the kingdom of the English. "For I know", she said, "that through the spirit of prophecy in which you abound, you can also tell me this, if you wish." But he, being sorely afraid at her adjuration and yet not wishing openly to reveal the secret she was asking about, said: "It is wonderful that you, a wise woman and learned in the Holy Scriptures, should be willing to speak of the term of human life as if it were long, when the Psalmist says that 'our years are reckoned as a spider's web', and when Solomon warns us that 'if a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many; when they come, the past is reckoned as vanity'; how much more does he, to whom only one year of life remains, seem to have lived a short time, when death stands at the gates?" When she heard this, she shed tears and wept over these dire prophecies; but drying her eyes, once again with womanly daring, she adjured him by the divine majesty to tell her whom her brother would have as heir to the kingdom, seeing he lacked both sons and brothers. After a short time he said: "Do not say that these are lacking; for he will have a successor whom you will embrace with as much sisterly affection as if he were Ecgrith himself." She answered: "I beseech you, tell me where he is." He said: "You see how this great and spacious sea abounds in islands? It is easy for God to provide from any of these a man to place over the kingdom of the English." So she understood that he was speaking of Aldfrith, who was said to be the son of Ecgrith's father, and was then in exile among the islands of

the Irish, for the study of letters. Now she knew that Ecgfrith proposed to appoint Cuthbert bishop, and wishing to learn whether this proposal would be carried into effect, she began to ask him in this way: "How the hearts of mortal men differ in their several purposes! Some rejoice in the riches they have gained, others who love riches always lack them. You despise the glory of the world, although it is offered, and although you may attain to a bishopric, than which nothing is higher among mortal men, yet will you prefer the fastnesses of your desert place to that rank?" But he said: "I know that I am not worthy of such a rank; nevertheless I cannot escape anywhere from the decree of the Ruler of Heaven; yet if He has determined to subject me to so great a burden, I believe that after a short time He will set me free, and perhaps, after not more than two years, He will send me back to my accustomed rest and solitude. But I bid you in the name of our Lord and Saviour not to tell anyone before my death what you have heard from me!"

When he had expounded to her these and many other things about which she asked and had given her instruction about such things as she needed, he returned to his island and monastery, and industriously continued the life of solitude, as he had begun it.

Not long afterwards, when no small synod had gathered together, in the presence of the most pious King Ecgfrith beloved of God over which Archbishop Theodore of blessed memory presided, he was elected to the bishopric of the church at Lindisfarne with the unanimous consent of all. And when he could by no means be dragged from his place by the many messengers and letters that were sent to him, at length this same king himself, together with the most holy Bishop Trumwine, as well as many other religious and powerful men, sailed to the island; they all knelt down and adjured him in the name of the Lord, with tears and prayers, until at last they drew him, also shedding many tears, from his sweet retirement and led him to the synod. When he had come, in spite of his reluctance he was overcome by the unanimous will of them all and compelled to submit his neck to the yoke of the bishopric. His consecration however was not carried out until after the end of that winter which was then beginning. And so that his prophetic words should in all respects be fulfilled, Ecgfrith, a year afterwards, was slain by the sword of the Picts and was succeeded in his kingdom by his bastard brother Aldfrith, who for some considerable time before this had been pursuing his studies in the regions of the Irish, suffering a self-imposed exile to gratify his love of wisdom.

CHAPTER XXV. *How, when he was elected to the bishopric, he cured the ailing servant of a gesith with holy water*

When therefore Cuthbert the man of God, after his election to the bishopric, had returned to his island and for a little time was fighting the good fight in secret with his wonted devotion to the Lord, his venerable bishop Eata summoned him, bidding him come to Melrose to have converse with him. When their conversation had finished and he was beginning his homeward journey, a certain gesith of King Ecgfrith met him and begged him urgently that he would turn aside to give a blessing to his homestead and his house. When he came there and had been received with dutiful kindness by all, the man told him about the illness of one of his servants saying: "I thank God, most holy father, that you have deigned to visit us and to enter our house, and in truth we believe that your coming will prove the greatest gain to us both in mind and body. But there is a servant of ours who has long been tortured by a most evil disease, and to-day he suffers so much pain that he appears more like a dying than a sick man. For the extremities of his body are prematurely dead and he seems to draw but little breath through his mouth and nostrils." He immediately blessed some water and gave it to the servant of the gesith, a man named Baldhelm, who is still alive and holding by appointment the office of priest in the church of Lindisfarne adorns it by his character. He counts it sweeter than honey to relate the miracles of the man of God to all who wish to know about them; and it was he who told me of this very miracle which I relate. So then the man of God gave him the holy water saying: "Go and give it to the sick man to take." He obeyed his words and brought the water to the sick man. After he had poured it into his mouth for the third time, the sufferer straightway fell into a quiet sleep which was unusual for him. It was now evening time, and he passed a quiet night also, and when his master visited him in the morning, he was found to be cured.

CHAPTER XXVI. *Of his manner of life in his bishopric*

Now the venerable man of God, Cuthbert, adorned the rank of bishop which he had received, by his virtuous works, in accordance with the apostolic precepts and examples. For he guarded the people who had been committed to his charge with his constant prayers, and called them to heavenly things by his most wholesome admonitions, and—a thing which is a great help to teachers—he taught what ought to be done,

would attack us, but I was only warned by the instinct of my mind that the heart should always be in a state of defence against any sudden storms of temptations. But when they left me in the morning and went back to their monastery, that is Lindisfarne, they found that one of their number had died of the pestilence; and as it grew and became worse from day to day, yea and from month to month, and almost throughout the whole year, nearly the whole of that renowned congregation of spiritual fathers and brethren departed to be with the Lord in that pestilence. Now therefore, brethren, do you also watch and pray, so that if any tribulation come upon you it may find you already prepared." Will

after first showing them by his own example. He delivered "the poor from him that was too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoiled him". He sought to "comfort" the sad and "faint-hearted", and to bring back those who rejoiced in evil to "godly sorrow". Gladly and diligently he practised his wonted frugality and, amid the thronging crowds, rejoiced to preserve the rigours of monastic life. He gave food to the hungry, clothing to the suffering, and he was duly adorned with all else that should mark the life of a bishop. And signs and miracles whereby he shone outwardly gave witness to the inward virtues of his mind. It has been our task briefly to commemorate some of these.

CHAPTER XXVII. *How, though absent, he saw in spirit the destruction of King Ecgfrith and of his army, in accordance with his own prediction*

Now when King Ecgfrith, rashly daring, had taken an army against the Picts and was devastating their kingdoms with cruel and savage ferocity, Cuthbert the man of God knew that the time was at hand concerning which he had prophesied a year before to the king's sister, declaring when she asked him that he would not live more than another year. He came therefore to the town of Lugubalia [Carlisle], which the English people corruptly call Luel, to speak to the queen who had arranged to await the issue of the war there in her sister's monastery. On the next day, while the citizens were conducting him to see the walls of the city and a marvellously constructed fountain of Roman workmanship, he was suddenly troubled in spirit, and as he stood leaning on his staff he turned his face sadly towards the ground; and again, standing upright and lifting his eyes towards heaven, he sighed deeply and said in

'is at hand'." When Hereberht heard this, he fell at his feet and with sighs and tears he said: "I beseech you by the Lord not to leave me but to remember your companion and ask the merciful God that as we have served Him together upon earth, we may journey together to the skies to see His glory. For you know that I have always sought to live in accordance with the commands of your mouth, and whatever I have done amiss through ignorance and weakness, I have taken equal care to correct in accordance with your judgment and will." The bishop gave himself up to prayer and forthwith having learned in spirit that he had gained what he sought for

city quickly, lest perchance the king has been slain. But since I have been asked to go to-morrow to a neighbouring monastery to dedicate a church there, I will follow you at once, as soon as the dedication is completed."

Now when Sunday had come, he was preaching the word of God to the brethren of the same monastery, and when the sermon was over and all those present were approving, he began again in this way: "Beloved, I beseech you to watch, in accordance with the warnings of the Apostle, 'stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong', lest perchance some temptation coming upon you may find you unprepared; but rather be always mindful of that command of the Lord, 'Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation'." His listeners thought that he said this because a devastating pestilence had not long before laid low both them and many others on every hand with widespread destruction, and that he was prophesying a return of this scourge. But continuing he said: "Once, when I was still living alone in my island, some of the brethren came to me on the holy day of the Lord's nativity, and asked me to go out of the hut, my dwelling-place, that I might spend with them this holy day so sacred and yet so joyful; I yielded to their earnest prayers and went out, and we sat down to our feast. But it happened that, in the middle of the repast, I said to them: 'I beseech you, brethren, let us be cautious and watchful, lest by recklessness and carelessness we be led into temptation.' But they answered: 'We beseech you, let us be joyful to-day, because it is the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And I said: 'So be it.' And a little time after, while we were indulging in feasting, rejoicing and story-telling, I again began to warn them that we should earnestly engage in prayers and vigils and be ready for the approach of any temptation. They said: 'You give us good, yea excellent, instruction, but nevertheless,

be speedily restored to health by the grace of God, or that, if she is to die, she will pass from death to everlasting life, and, by dying, more quickly reach the end of her wretched and long-lasting affliction." The man of God granted his petition, and blessing the water which was brought to him, gave it to a priest, bidding him sprinkle it over the sick woman. He entered the sleeping chamber in which she lay like one dead, sprinkled her and her bed and, opening her mouth, poured in a portion of the health-giving draught. A wonderful and exceedingly amazing thing happened—as soon as the blessed water touched the sick woman, though it was done without her knowledge, she yet received full healing of mind and body, so that she immediately recovered her senses and blessed the Lord, giving thanks to Him who had deigned to bring such honourable guests to visit and cure her. Without delay she rose up whole and ministered to those who had themselves ministered to her health; and it was a fair sight to see how she who had escaped the cup of death by the bishop's blessing, was the first of all the household of so great a man to offer him the cup of refreshment. She thus followed the example of the mother-in-law of the Apostle Peter, who, when she was cured of a fever by the Lord, forthwith rose and ministered to Him and to His disciples.

CHAPTER XXX. *How he cured a girl of pains in the head and the side by anointing her with oil*

There are many who have borne witness to a miracle of healing wrought in their presence by the venerable Bishop Cuthbert not unlike this last one; among these witnesses is the pious priest Aethilwald, then a servant of the man of God, but now the abbot of the monastery at Melrose. For while according to his custom he was going through all the villages teaching, he came to a certain village in which there were a few nuns to whom he, the man of God, had a short time before given a place of abode in that village, when they had fled from their own monastery through fear of the barbarian army. One of these, a kinswoman of the same priest Aethilwald, was afflicted by a very severe illness; for all through the year she had been troubled with an intolerable pain in the head and in the whole of one side, and had been entirely given up by the physicians. When those who had come with him told the man of God about her and prayed for her restoration, he had pity on her and anointed the wretched woman with holy oil. She began to get better from that very hour and after a few days was restored to complete health.

CHAPTER XXXI. *How a sick man was healed with bread which he had blessed*

Nor do we consider that we ought to pass over in silence a miracle which, as we have learned, was performed by the virtue of the same venerable man, though he himself was absent. We have already mentioned the reeve Hildmer whose wife the man of God freed from an unclean spirit. Now this same reeve afterwards took to his bed with a most serious illness, and, as his affliction grew from day to day, he seemed already to be at the point of death. Many of his friends came to console the afflicted man. And as they sat by the bed in which he lay, suddenly one of them recalled that he had some bread with him, which Cuthbert, the man of the Lord, had recently blessed and given to him. "And I believe", he said, "that Hildmer by tasting this can receive healing, if only the slowness of our faith does not hinder." Now they were all laymen, but devout. So turning to each other, they confessed one by one that they believed without any doubt that he could be healed by partaking of this blessed bread. They filled a cup with water and put in a very little of the bread, and gave it to him to drink. No sooner had the draught of water, sanctified by the bread, reached his stomach, than all the inward pain disappeared as well as the outward wasting of his limbs. His health returned without delay, and brought strength back to the man who had thus been set free from affliction, deservedly stirring him and all who saw or heard of the swiftness of so unexpected a cure, to praise the holiness of the servant of God and to wonder at the power of true faith.

CHAPTER XXXII. *How, by his prayers, he recalled to life a dying youth who was brought to him when he was on a journey*

Once, too, as the most holy shepherd of the Lord's flock was going round visiting his sheepfolds, he came to mountainous and wild regions where there were many gathered together from the widely scattered villages, on whom he was to lay his hands. But in the mountains no church could be found, nor any place fit to receive the bishop and his retinue. So they pitched tents for him by the wayside and, cutting down branches from the neighbouring wood, they made every man for himself booths to dwell in as best they could. There the man of God had been preaching the word for two days to the crowds who flocked to hear him, and by the laying on of hands had ministered the grace of the Holy Spirit to those who had lately

been regenerated in Christ, when suddenly there appeared some women bearing upon a pallet a youth, wasted with a long and grievous sickness. Placing him on the edge of the wood, they sent to the bishop, praying that he would allow him to be brought to him to receive his blessing. When the youth had been brought to Cuthbert and he saw his terrible affliction, he bade them all go farther off. And turning to his wonted weapon of prayer, he gave his blessing and drove away the plague which the careful hands of the doctors could not expel with their compounds and drugs. Thereupon the youth rose up the same hour, received food and was strengthened and, giving thanks to God, he returned to the women who had carried him. And so it came to pass that he returned home well and joyful, amid the rejoicings of the same women who had sorrowfully conveyed him thither when he was sick.

CHAPTER XXXIII. *How, during the time of the plague, he restored a dying boy in sound health to his mother*

At the same time there suddenly arose in those parts a most grievous pestilence, and brought with it destruction so severe that in some large villages and estates once crowded with inhabitants, only a small and scattered remnant, and sometimes none at all, remained. So the most holy father Cuthbert, diligently traversing his diocese, did not cease to bring the ministry of the word and the help of much-needed consolation to the poor few who remained. Coming to one village and having helped by his exhortations all whom he found, he said to his priest: "Do you think that anyone is left in these parts who needs to be visited and exhorted by us; or have we seen all who are in trouble and can we now pass on to others?" The priest, looking round everywhere, saw a woman standing at a distance who, having lost one son a little while before, was now holding his brother in her arms at the point of death; her eyes, streaming with tears, bore witness both to her past and her present troubles. The priest pointed her out to the man of God, who did not delay but, approaching her and giving her his blessing, kissed the boy and said to the mother: "Do not fear nor be sad; for your infant will be healed and will live, nor will anyone else be missing from your home through this plague." The mother herself and her son lived long afterwards to bear testimony to the truth of this prophecy.

CHAPTER XXXIV. *How he beheld the soul of a certain man, who was killed by falling from a tree, being carried to heaven*

Meanwhile Cuthbert, the man of God, being aware that his death was approaching, had now decided in his mind to lay aside the cares of the pastoral office and to return to a solitary life, so that, freed from outside anxieties, he might await the day of his death, or rather of his entrance into heavenly life, in the undisturbed practice of prayers and psalm-singing; but first he wished not only to go round his own diocese, but to visit the other dwellings of the faithful in the neighbourhood and to strengthen them all with the needful word of exhortation; and, having done this, to be refreshed by the joy of the solitude he longed for. While he was thus engaged, at the request of the most noble and holy virgin of Christ, the abbess Aelflaed, whom I have mentioned above, he came to an estate belonging to her monastery, in order that he might see and have conversation with her and also dedicate a church. For the estate contained no small number of the servants of Christ. When they had taken their seats at the table at meal-time, the venerable father Cuthbert suddenly turned his mind from the carnal banquet to contemplate spiritual things. The limbs of his body relaxed and lost their function, the colour of his face changed, and his eyes were fixed against their wont as if in amazement, while the knife which he was holding fell to the table. When his priest, who was standing by and serving, saw this, he bent towards the abbess, and said quietly: "Ask the bishop what he has seen; for I know that not without cause has his trembling hand loosed the knife, and his countenance changed; but he has seen something spiritual which the rest of us have not been able to see." She immediately turned to him and said: "I beseech you, my lord bishop, tell me what you have just seen; for not for nothing did your hand relax and loose the knife it held." He attempted to hide the fact that he had seen anything secret, and answered jestingly: "Can I eat all day? I must rest sometimes." But when she adjured him and importuned him more earnestly to reveal his vision, he said: "I have seen the soul of a certain holy man being carried by the hands of angels to the joys of the heavenly kingdom." Again she said: "From what place was it taken?" He answered: "From your estate." Then she enquired after his name. He said: "You will tell me his name when I am celebrating mass to-morrow." When she heard this, she immediately sent to her larger monastery to see who had recently been summoned from the body. But

the messenger found that all there were safe and sound, and on the following morning was preparing to return to his mistress, when he met some men bearing the body of a dead brother to burial on a cart. On asking who it was, he learned that one of the shepherds, a man of good life, climbing a tree too incautiously had fallen down, and his body was so injured that he breathed forth his spirit at the very hour in which the man of God had seen it carried to heaven. On his return, he told the abbess and she immediately went to the bishop who was then dedicating the church; with woman-like astonishment, as if she were announcing something new and doubtful, she said: "I pray you, my lord bishop, remember at mass my Hadwald"—for that was the man's name—"who died yesterday through falling from a tree." Then it was clear to all how manifold was the spirit of prophecy in the breast of the holy man, who could not only see the secret removal of a soul in the present, but could also foresee what would be told him by others in the future.

CHAPTER XXXV: *How, by tasting water, he gave it the flavour of wine*

Having passed through the upper districts in turn, he came to the monastery of virgins which, as we have explained above, is situated not far from the mouth of the river Tyne; here he was magnificently received by a devout and also—so far as this world is concerned—a most noble handmaiden of Christ, the abbess Verca. After they had risen from their midday rest, he asked for something to drink, saying that he was thirsty. They asked what he wished to drink and prayed that they might be allowed to bring him wine or beer. "Give me water!" he said. So they brought him water drawn from the well. Having blessed it and drunk a little of it, he gave it to his priest who was standing by, who gave it to a servant. When the servant had taken the cup, he said: "May I drink from the cup from which the bishop has drunk?" He answered: "Yes, why not?" Now this man also was a priest of the same monastery. So he drank, and it seemed to him as if the water had acquired the flavour of wine, and wishing to make a brother who was standing by a witness of so great a miracle, he handed him the cup; and when he too had drunk, he also tasted wine on his palate instead of water. They gazed at each other in wonder and when they had an opportunity to speak together, they confessed to each other that it seemed to them that they had never drunk better wine. One of these

related it to me himself, for he dwelt some considerable time in our monastery which is at the mouth of the river Wear, and he now lies peacefully buried in the same place.

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CHAPTER XXXVI. *How a storm at sea detained certain brethren who were disobedient to him*

So, having spent two years in episcopal rule, Cuthbert the man of God, knowing in his spirit that the day of his departure was at hand, threw aside the burden of his pastoral care and determined to return to the strife of a hermit's life which he loved so well, and that as soon as possible, so that the flame of his old contrition might consume more easily the implanted thorns of worldly cares. At that time he was wont to go out of his dwelling-place frequently, to meet the brothers who visited him and to speak with them in person. It is well to narrate a certain miracle wrought by him, so that it may be more evident how obedient we ought to be to holy men, even in those matters about which they seem to give very casual commands. On a certain day some of them had come and he went out to refresh them with words of exhortation; after he had finished his admonition, he added these words: "It is now time for me to return to my dwelling and you, as you are disposed to start, first take some food; and that goose"—for there was a goose hanging on the wall—"cook it and eat it, and so in the name of the Lord go on board your vessel and return home." Having said these words and given them his blessing, he entered his dwelling. They took food as he had bidden; but because they had brought plenty of food with them, they did not trouble to take the goose as he had commanded them. When, after the meal, they wished to go on board their boat, suddenly a fierce tempest arose and entirely prevented them from setting sail. And it happened that for seven days they remained miserably on the island, shut in by the raging seas; nor did they realise that it was for the sin of disobedience that they were suffering imprisonment of this sort. When they had anxiously returned to speak with the father and complained about the delay in their return, they received from him exhortations to patience. However, on the seventh day, he went out to them of his own accord, wishing to alleviate their sadness by graciously visiting them and by words of pious consolation. As soon as he had entered the house in which they were and saw that the goose had not been eaten, with unruffled mien and even with joyful words, he convicted them of disobedience. "Does not the goose hang there still unconsumed," he said, "then why

Forgot the goose

marvel that the sea does not permit you to depart? Put it quickly therefore into the pot; cook it and eat it in order that the sea may quieten and let you go home." They did at once as he commanded; and it happened in a wonderful way that when the goose which was to be cooked at the bidding of the man of God had begun to boil in the pot over the fire, at that same hour the waves of the sea ceased from their fury and the winds fell. And so when the meal was finished, they saw that the sea was calm and went on board their ship and with favourable winds returned home with feelings both of joy and shame. For they were ashamed of their disobedience and of their slowness to perceive, whereby they were hindered from recognising and correcting their faults, notwithstanding the chastisement of the Creator. They rejoiced because they saw that God took such care of His faithful servant that He even punished, by means of the elements, those who esteemed His servant lightly. And they rejoiced because their Creator took such care of themselves that He corrected their errors even by a manifest miracle. This miracle which I have related, I learned not from any chance source, but from the account of one of those who were present, namely from Cynimund, a monk and priest of reverend life of the same monastery, who is still alive and well-known far and wide to many of the faithful, on account of his great age and of his manner of life.

CHAPTER XXXVII. What trials he endured while sick and what he commanded concerning his burial, when about to depart this life

Now Cuthbert the man of God sought his island dwelling-place once more, as soon as ever the holy day of the nativity of the Lord was past. And when a crowd of brethren stood round him as he was about to go aboard his ship, one of them, an aged monk of venerable life, strong in the faith but now weakened in body by dysentery, said: "Tell us, lord bishop, when we may hope for your return." And the bishop, who knew the truth, gave a plain answer to this plain question, saying: "When you bring my body back here." He had passed almost two months greatly rejoicing in his refound quiet, keeping under both mind and body by the rigours of his accustomed strictness, when he was attacked by a sudden illness and began to be prepared by the fires of temporal pain for the joys of perpetual bliss. His death let me describe in the words of him from whom I heard about it, namely Heretrith, a devoutly religious priest who also at that time presided over the monastery at Lindisfarne as abbot.

"After having been weakened", he said, "by three weeks of continuous sickness, he came to his end thus. For he was taken ill on a Wednesday and again on a Wednesday his illness came to an end and he went to be with the Lord. On the morning when his illness first began (for I had come to the island with the brethren three days previously) I came to him and gave warning of my approach by means of the usual signal, desiring to receive the comfort of his accustomed benediction and exhortation. He came to the window and answered my greeting with a sigh. I said to him: 'What is the matter, my lord bishop? Perhaps your illness has attacked you during the night?' He said: 'Yes, illness has attacked me during the night.' I thought that he was speaking of his old complaint which used to afflict him almost daily, and not of some new and unusual complaint. Without asking any further questions, I said: 'Give me your blessing, for it is time to set sail and to return home.' 'Do as you say,' he said, 'get on board your vessel, and return home safe and sound. And when God has taken my spirit, bury me in this dwelling near my oratory towards the south, on the eastern side of the holy cross which I have erected there. Now there is on the north side of this same oratory a sarcophagus hidden under the turf, which the venerable abbot Cudda once gave me. Place my body in this, wrapping it in the cloth which you will find there. I was unwilling to wear the cloth while alive but, out of affection for the abbess Verca, a woman beloved of God, who sent it to me, I have taken care to keep it to wrap my body in.' When I heard this I said: 'I beseech you, father, since I hear that you are ill and like to die, that you will allow some of the brethren to remain here and minister to you.' But he said: 'Go now and return at the proper time.' And though I besought him very diligently to accept a servant, I could by no means gain my request. At length I asked him when we ought to return. He said: 'When God wills and when He himself shall direct you.' We did as he commanded, and, immediately calling all the brethren to the church, I commanded that prayer should be made without intermission for him. 'For', I added, 'it seems to me from certain words of his, that the day is approaching when he will depart to be with the Lord.' Now I was anxious about returning on account of his infirmity, but for five days a tempest hindered us; however, as events proved, this was a divine dispensation. For in order that Almighty God might, by chastisement, purify His servant from all blemish of worldly weakness and in order that He might show his adversaries that they could avail nothing against the strength of his faith, He wished to test him by bodily pain

directing
for
burial

and by a still fiercer contest with the ancient foe, cutting him off from mankind for that space of time. But when calm weather was restored and we returned to the island, we found that he had gone out of his monastery and was sitting in the dwelling in which we used to stay. And because some urgent matter compelled the brethren who came with me to return to the neighbouring shore, I myself remained on the island and immediately set about ministering to the father. So I warmed some water and bathed his foot which, owing to a long-standing swelling, now had an ulcer on it and, as it was suppurating, required treatment. I also warmed some wine and brought it and asked him to taste it; for I saw by his face that he was greatly wearied both by lack of food and by disease. When I had finished my ministrations, he sat down quietly again on the couch and I sat near him. Since he was silent, I said: 'I see, my lord bishop, that you have been greatly afflicted by illness since we left you; and I marvel that you would not suffer us, when we went away, to leave some of our brethren here to minister to you.' But he said: 'It happened through the providence and will of God that, destitute of human society and help, I should suffer some afflictions. For after you departed from me, my sickness immediately began to grow worse; and so I left my dwelling-place and came in here in order that those of you who came to minister to me could find me here and not be compelled to enter my dwelling. And since I came hither and composed my limbs on this couch, I have not stirred from here, but for five days and nights I have remained in this place without moving.' I said to him: 'And how, my lord bishop, could you live thus? Surely you have not been so long without taking food?' Then he drew back the coverlet of the bed on which he was seated and showed me five onions concealed below and said: 'This was my food during these five days; for as often as my mouth was parched and burned through excess of dryness and thirst, I sought to refresh and cool myself by tasting these.' And indeed somewhat less than half of one of the onions seemed to have been nibbled away. And furthermore he added: 'My adversaries have never persecuted me so frequently, during all the time I have been living on this island, as during these five days.' I did not dare to ask what were the temptations of which he spoke. I only asked him to allow some of us to wait on him. He consented and kept with him some of our brethren, amongst whom was the priest Beda the elder, who was always accustomed to render him intimate service, and so knew all about all the gifts he had given and the presents he had received; for this reason Cuthbert greatly

desired him to remain with him, in order that, if he had not made a fitting return for any gifts he had received, Beda might remind him of it, so that, before he died, he might restore to each one his own. Moreover he specially named another brother to be amongst his servants. This man had long been very ill with diarrhoea and could not be cured by the physicians; but was worthy, by merit of his piety, prudence and seriousness, to be a witness of the last words that the man of God should speak and of the manner in which he departed to be with the Lord. Meanwhile, having returned home, I told the brethren that the venerable father had ordered that he should be buried in his own island. 'But', I said, 'it seems to me much more proper and worthy that we should win his permission to bring his body here and bury it with fitting honour in the church.' My words pleased them and we came to the bishop and asked him, saying: 'We did not dare, my lord bishop, to despise your commands in bidding us bury you here; nevertheless it seemed right to us to ask you to consider us worthy to bring you to ourselves and to have you with us.' He said: 'It was my desire that my body should rest here where, to some small extent, I have fought my fight for the Lord, where I desire to finish my course, and where I hope that I shall be raised up to receive the crown of righteousness from the righteous Judge. But I also think that it will be more expedient for you that I should remain here, on account of the influx of fugitives and guilty men of every sort, who will perhaps flee to my body because, unworthy as I am, reports about me as a servant of God have nevertheless gone forth; and you will be compelled very frequently to intercede with the powers of this world on behalf of such men, and so will be put to much trouble on account of the presence of my body.' But after we had pleaded with him earnestly and long, and had declared that labour of this kind would be pleasing and light to us, at length the man of God spoke words of counsel. 'If', he said, 'you wish to set aside my plans and to take my body back there, it seems best that you entomb it in the interior of your church, so that while you yourselves can visit my sepulchre when you wish, it may be in your power to decide whether any of those who come thither should approach it.' We gave him thanks on our bended knees for his permission and his counsel and, returning home, we did not cease from that time forth to visit him very frequently."

CHAPTER XXXVIII. *How though sick himself he healed his attendant of diarrhoea*

“And when his illness increased and he saw that the time of his departure was at hand, he commanded that he should be carried back to his little dwelling-place and oratory; it was now the third hour of the day. So we carried him thither because, owing to the pain of his disease, he could not walk. But when we came to the door, we asked him that he would allow one of us to enter with him to minister to him; although for many years no one except himself had entered it. And looking round us all, he saw the brother whom I mentioned before, who suffered from diarrhoea, and he said: ‘Let Wallstod’ (for that was the brother’s name) ‘enter with me.’ He remained inside with him until the ninth hour, and then he came out and called me saying: ‘The bishop has commanded you to enter. And I can tell you some very wonderful news, for since I went in there and touched the bishop when about to take him into the oratory, I forthwith felt that all my affliction and long-standing infirmity had left me.’ Nor can it be doubted that this was brought about by the dispensation of the heavenly grace, so that he who had healed many before this, while he was well and strong, should when at the point of death also cure this man in order that by this sign too it might be plain how strong the holy man was in spirit, though he was weak in body. And in this cure truly he followed the example of the most holy and most reverend father and bishop, Aurelius Augustinus; for when he was afflicted by the disease from which he died and was lying on his bed, there came a certain man bearing a sick friend, who asked him to lay his hands on him in order that he might be healed. But the bishop said: ‘If I could do anything in these matters, I should surely have done something for myself first of all.’ The man who had come said again: ‘I have been bidden to visit you for I received a command in my sleep: “Go to Bishop Augustine in order that he may place his hand upon him and he shall be made whole.”’ When Augustine heard this, he forthwith placed his hand upon the sick man and blessed him, and without delay sent the man back healed to his own home.”

CHAPTER XXXIX. *Of his last commands to his brethren and how, when he had received the viaticum, he yielded up his spirit in prayer*

“Now”, he said, “I entered in to him about the ninth hour of the day and I found him lying in a corner of his oratory,

opposite to the altar; so I sat down by him. He did not say much because the weight of his affliction had lessened his power of speech. But when I asked him very earnestly what words he would bequeath and what last farewell he would leave the brethren, he began to utter a few weighty words about peace and humility, and about being on our guard against those who would rather fight such things than delight in them. He said: ‘Always keep peace and divine charity amongst yourselves; and when necessity compels you to take counsel about your affairs, see to it most earnestly that you are unanimous in your counsels. But also have mutual agreement with other servants of Christ and do not despise those of the household of faith who come to you for the sake of hospitality, but see that you receive such, keep them, and send them away with friendly kindness, by no means thinking yourselves better than others who are your fellows in the same faith and manner of life.

But have no communion with those who depart from the unity of the catholic peace, either in not celebrating Easter at the proper time or in evil living. And you are to know and remember that if necessity compels you to choose one of two evils, I would much rather you should take my bones from the tomb, carry them with you and departing from this place dwell wherever God may ordain, than that in any way you should consent to iniquity and put your necks under the yoke of schismatics. Strive to learn and to observe most diligently the catholic statutes of the fathers; and practise with zeal those rules of regular discipline which the divine mercy has deigned to give you through my ministry. For I know that, although I seemed contemptible to some while I lived, yet, after my death, you will see what I was and how my teaching is not to be despised.’ These and like words the man of God said at intervals, because, as we have said, the stress of his sickness took from him the power of speaking much. He passed a quiet day in the expectation of his future bliss, until the evening; and he also continued quietly in prayer through a night of watching. But when the accustomed time of nightly prayer arrived, he received from me the sacraments of salvation and fortified himself for his death, which he knew had now come, by the communion of the Lord’s body and blood; and, raising his eyes to heaven and stretching out his hands aloft, he sent forth his spirit in the very act of praising God to the joys of the heavenly Kingdom.”

CHAPTER XL. *How, in accordance with the prophecy of the psalm which they had been singing when he died, the Lindisfarne brethren were attacked, but, with the help of the Lord, were protected*

V. Kings?
“I immediately went out and announced his death to the brethren who had passed the night in watching and prayers, and then were by chance, according to the order of lauds, singing the fifty-ninth psalm, which begins, ‘O God, thou hast cast us off and hast broken us down; thou hast been angry and hast had compassion on us.’ Without delay one of them ran out and lit two torches: and holding one in each hand, he went on to some higher ground to show the brethren who were in the Lindisfarne monastery that his holy soul had gone to be with the Lord: for this was the sign they had agreed upon amongst themselves to notify his most holy death. When the brother had seen it, who had been keeping watch and awaiting the hour of this event far away in the watch-tower of the island of Lindisfarne opposite, he quickly ran to the church where the whole assembly of the brethren were gathered together celebrating the office of the nightly psalm-singing; and it happened that they also, when he entered, were singing the above-mentioned psalm. This indeed was ordained by divine providence, as the event showed. For after the man of God was buried, so great a blast of trial beat upon that church that many of the brethren chose to depart from the place rather than be in the midst of such dangers. But after a year, when Eadberht had been ordained to the bishopric, a man of great virtues and wonderfully learned in the scriptures, and greatly given to works of charity, the storms and disturbances were driven away; then if I may use the words of Scripture, ‘The Lord did build up Jerusalem’—that is the vision of peace—and gathered together the outcast of Israel. He healed the broken in heart and bound up their wounds’, so that it was then given to them openly to understand what the psalm meant which they were singing when they heard of the death of the blessed man—namely that, after his death, his fellow-citizens were to be cast off and broken down, but after the manifestation of the wrath that threatened them, they would forthwith be revived by the divine mercy. And he who examines it again will see how well the rest of the psalm agrees with the same sense. We placed the body of the venerable father on the ship, and bore it to the island of Lindisfarne. It was received by a great company who came to meet it and by choirs of singers, and placed in a stone sarcophagus in the church of the blessed apostle Peter on the right side of the altar.”

CHAPTER XLI. *How a demoniac boy was healed by an infusion of some of that soil on which was poured the water wherein his body had been bathed*

But not even when the servant of Christ was dead and buried, did miracles of healing cease, such as he had wrought when he was alive. For it happened that a certain boy on the Lindisfarne estate was vexed by a most cruel demon, so that he had completely lost his reason, and cried out, howled and tried to tear in pieces with his teeth both his own limbs and whatever he could reach. A priest was sent from the monastery to the demoniac boy; and although he had been accustomed to put impure spirits to flight by the grace of exorcism, he could nevertheless do nothing to help the possessed boy; so he counselled the boy's father to put him on a cart and bear him to the monastery and to pray to the Lord for him at the relics of the blessed martyrs which are there. The father did as he was advised; but the holy martyrs of God would not grant him the cure that was sought, in order that they might show what a high place Cuthbert held amongst them. When, therefore, the insane boy horrified all who saw and heard him by howling, groaning and gnashing his teeth, and there was no one who could think of any kind of remedy, then one of the priests, being instructed in spirit that he could be healed by the help of the blessed father Cuthbert, came secretly to the place in which he knew that the water had been poured wherein his dead body had been washed. Taking a small paracle of the earth, he put it in water and brought it to the patient, pouring it into his mouth, which was gaping wide in a horrible manner, and uttering fearful and lamentable cries. But as soon as he touched the water, he restrained his cries, shut his mouth and his eyes which before were wide open, bloodshot and furious, while his head and his whole body sank into repose. He also passed the night in quiet sleep, and in the morning awoke from both sleep and madness, realising that he had been freed from the demon by which he was oppressed through the merits and the intercession of the blessed Cuthbert. It was a wonderful and delightful spectacle for all good men, to see the son sound in health going round the holy places with his father and returning thanks with sound mind for the help of the saints, when the day before, on account of his insanity, he did not know who he was or where he was. And with the whole company of the brethren standing by, looking on and congratulating him, he gave praises to our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ as he knelt at the relics of the martyrs

and, being freed from the scourge of the enemy and at length made stronger in faith than he was before, he returned home. The pit is still shown to-day into which that memorable bath of water was poured—it is in the form of a square with a border of wood on all sides and filled up with pebbles; and it is moreover near the church in which his body rests, on the south side. And it happened from that time, by God's permission, that many miracles of healing took place by means of those same stones or with some of that earth.

CHAPTER XLII. *How his body was found incorrupt eleven years afterwards*

But the divine Providence wished to show still further in what glory the holy man lived after his death, whose sublime life had been attested before his death by frequent signs and miracles; so He put it into the hearts of the brethren, eleven years after his burial, to take his bones—which they expected to find quite dry, the rest of the body, as is usual with the dead, having decayed away and turned to dust—and to put them in a light chest in the same place, but above the floor, so that they might be worthily venerated. When they reported their decision to Eadberht their bishop, about the middle of Lent, he consented to their plan and ordered them that they should remember to do it on the day of his burial, which is the 20th of March. They did so; and opening the sepulchre, they found the body intact and whole, as if it were still alive, and the joints of the limbs flexible, and much more like a sleeping than a dead man. Moreover all his garments, in which he had been clothed, were not only undefiled but seemed to be perfectly new and wondrously bright. When they saw this, they were struck with great fear and trembling, so that they hardly dared to say anything or even to look upon the miracle which was revealed, and scarcely knew what to do. But they took away the outer garments to show the miracle of his incorruption, for they did not dare to touch what was nearest the skin; and they hastened to relate to the bishop what they had found. He happened to be in solitude in a place remote from the monastery, surrounded on every hand by the sea at flood tide. Here he always used to spend the time of Lent as well as forty days before the Lord's birthday, in deep devotion, with abstinence, prayers and tears. In this place also his venerable predecessor Cuthbert, before he went to Farne, as we have explained above, for a while fought for the Lord in solitude. So they brought him part of the clothes

that had enwrapped the holy body. He joyfully received these gifts and gladly listened to the story of the miracles, kissing the garments with great affection, as though they were still wrapped round the father's body; and he said: "Put fresh garments around the body instead of those which you have taken away, and then replace it in the chest which you have prepared. For I know most assuredly that the place which has been consecrated by the virtue of so great a heavenly miracle will not long remain empty. And greatly blessed is he to whom the Lord, the author and giver of true blessedness, shall deign to grant a place of rest therein. And as he marvelled, he added words which I once put into verse, saying:

What tongue the heavenly gifts of God can tell?
What ear the joys of Paradise can hear,
Until within heaven's starry citadel
The Lord in mercy grants us to appear,
Who now adorns these lifeless limbs with grace,
Fair pledges of good things that know no end?
Blest home! how great a guest shines in this place,
Free from all stain, where joy and glory blend!
With ease, Omnipotent, his blest remains,
Thou bidst corruption's gnawing tooth to spare—
Thou, who couldst keep thy prophet in the reins
Of the great whale three days, then to the air
Open a path to light, even from death's jaws—
Couldst save fair Hebrews from Chaldean flame,
Or, forty years, fleeing from Egypt, cause
Thy people's robes to be renewed; the same
Who, when the angelic trumpets shake this earth,
Shall from our ashes give our limbs rebirth."

When the bishop had finished saying these things with many tears and great emotion, the brethren did as he had commanded: they wrapped the body in a new garment and, putting it in a light chest, they placed it on the floor of the sanctuary.

CHAPTER XLIII. *How the body of Eadberht was placed in the tomb of the man of God, and the sarcophagus of the saint placed upon it*

Meanwhile Bishop Eadberht, beloved of God, was attacked by a fell disease and, as the violence of the illness increased from day to day, he himself not long afterwards, that is on the sixth of May, went to be with the Lord: and thus he won from Him the boon that he sought most earnestly, namely, that he might depart from the body not by sudden death, but worn out

by a long sickness. His body was placed in the sepulchre of the blessed father Cuthbert and they placed over it the chest in which they had put the incorrupt limbs of the same father; and there even now signs and miracles are not wanting, if an importunate faith seeks for them. Even the garments which covered his most holy body, whether in life or death, do not lack the grace of healing.

CHAPTER XLIV. *How a sick man was cured by praying at his tomb*

Now one of the clergy of the most reverend and holy Willibrord Clement, the bishop of the Frisians, who had come from across the sea, after staying there for some days as a guest, fell grievously ill so that his affliction increased for a long time and he lay in a hopeless condition. Overcome by the pain, he seemed as though he could neither live nor die, until, thinking of a profitable plan, he said to his servant: "I beseech you, lead me to-day, after mass has been celebrated, to worship at the most sacred body of the man of God"—for it was Sunday—"for I hope by virtue of his intercession to be freed from these tortures, so that either I may be restored to health in this present life, or else I may die and attain to eternal life." He did as he had asked and with no small effort led the sick man, leaning on his staff, into the church. He bent his knees at the sepulchre of the most holy father, beloved of God, and with head bowed to the ground he prayed for recovery; forthwith he felt that his body had received such strength from that incorrupt body, that he rose from prayer without any effort and, without the help of the servant who had led him or of the staff that had supported him, he returned to the guesthouse. After a few days, when his strength was completely restored, he set out on his intended journey.

CHAPTER XLV. *How a paralytic was healed by his shoes*

There was, in a certain monastery not far away, a youth who was deprived of all use of his limbs by the disease which the Greeks call paralysis. And his abbot, knowing that there were some very skilled physicians in the monastery at Lindisfarne, sent him there, asking whether they would if they could provide some cure for the sick man. On the command of both the abbot and the bishop, they diligently came to his aid and applied all the medical skill they possessed, yet they availed nothing

at all; but rather his disease daily grew worse and gradually he became weaker, until he could hardly move a limb but only his mouth. But when he lay despaired of and deserted by the carnal physicians who had long laboured in vain, he fled to the divine aid of the heavenly Physician, Who, when sought in truth, "pardoneth all our iniquities and healeth all our diseases". He therefore asked his servant to bring him some portion of the incorruptible relics of the sacred body because he believed that, by the bounty of the Lord, he might return to the grace of health through its virtues. And having consulted the abbot, the servant brought the shoes which had been upon the feet of the man of God in the sepulchre and put them upon the nerveless feet of the sick man—for the paralysis had first seized him in his feet. He did this at the beginning of the night when the time for rest had come; immediately the sick man fell into a calm sleep and, as the silence of the dead of night came on, first one and then the other foot began to twitch, so that the servants, who were awake and watching, clearly perceived that the desired restoration had been given by means of the healing powers of the saint's relics, and that it would pass from the soles of his feet throughout his other limbs. And when the accustomed signal for the nightly prayer sounded through the monastery, he was aroused by the sound and sat up. Without delay the sinews and all the joints of his limbs were strengthened with inward power, the pain was banished, and he rose up realising that he had been healed, and spent the whole time of the nightly psalm-singing, or mattins, standing up and giving thanks to the Lord. When morning came he went to the church and, with everyone watching and congratulating him, he went round the holy places praying and offering the sacrifice of praise to his Saviour. And it came to pass, by a most happy turn of events, that he who had been carried there on a cart with all his body paralysed, returned home by himself safe and sound, with all his limbs under control and strong. Hence it is profitable to remember that this is the unchanging right hand of the Most High, whose wonders, memorable from of old, cease not to shine in the world.

CHAPTER XLVI. *How the hermit Felgild was cured of a swelling in the face by the covering of his wall*

I think that I ought not to pass over a certain heavenly miracle which the divine mercy showed by means of the fragments of the most holy oratory in which the venerable father used to fight in solitude for the Lord. But whether this ought to be

ascribed to the merits of the same blessed father Cuthbert or of his successor Aethilwald, a man equally devoted to God. He knows who judges the heart. Nor does any reason forbid us to believe that it was wrought by the merits of both, accompanied also by the faith of the most reverend father Felgild, through whom and in whom the miracle of healing, to which I refer, was wrought. He is the third heir of that dwelling and of that spiritual warfare and to-day, more than seventy years of age, he awaits the end of the present life, eagerly longing for the life to come. Now when Cuthbert the man of God had been translated to the heavenly kingdom, Aethilwald began to inhabit the island and the hermitage, after having for many years previously been tested by the monastic life, and having duly risen to the heights of the hermit life. He found that the walls of that same oratory which had been made of planks not too carefully joined together, had been loosened through age, and the planks had come apart and allowed easy access to stormy winds. But the venerable Cuthbert who sought the splendour of a heavenly mansion rather than of any earthly habitation, used to take straw or clay or whatever material of that kind he could find and stuff up the cracks, so that he might not be hindered from the fervour of his prayers by the daily violence of rain or wind. When therefore Aethilwald entered the place and saw this, he asked the brethren who used to visit him for the skin of a calf, and fixed it with nails in the corner in which he and his predecessor Cuthbert used most often to stand or kneel in prayer; and so he kept out the violence of the storms. But after he had spent twelve years there continuously and had entered upon the joy of heavenly bliss, and Felgild the third hermit had begun to inhabit this place, Eadfrith the most reverend bishop of the church at Lindisfarne decided to restore the oratory from its foundations, since it was falling to pieces through age. When the work was finished, many devout persons asked Felgild, the blessed warrior of Christ, to give them some portion of the relics of the holy father Cuthbert beloved of God, or of his successor Aethilwald. He determined to give this same skin to those who asked him, dividing it in pieces. But before he gave it to others, he first tried upon himself what virtue it had. Now his face was covered with a disfiguring redness and swelling, and even before, when he had lived a communal life among the brethren, the symptoms of this illness were clearly seen upon his face. But when he went into solitude he practised

greater abstinence and took less care of his body, and being shut up as it were in long captivity, he enjoyed more rarely the warmth of the sun and the breath of the wind; thus his affliction increased, and the inflamed swelling covered the whole of his face. And fearing lest perhaps, owing to the heaviness of his affliction, he would have to give up his solitary life and take to communal life again, he hoped with the boldness of faith to be cured by the aid of those whose dwelling he rejoiced to inhabit, and whose manner of life he rejoiced to imitate. So he put a part of this same skin into water and washed his face with it, and immediately all the swelling which had covered it and the loathsome scab departed. This was first told me by a certain devout priest of this monastery at Jarrow who affirmed that he first knew Felgild's face in its swollen and deformed state, and afterwards had felt it with his hands through the window after it was healed. And Felgild himself related it afterwards, adding that it took place as the priest had narrated, and that from that time although he remained shut up as before for many years, his face had always been free from this affliction, through the grace of Almighty God who, in this present age, is wont to heal many, and, in time to come, will heal our diseases of mind and body; for he satisfies our desire with good things and crowns us for ever "with lovingkindness and tender mercies".

End of the book of the life and miracles of St Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne. Amen.

The Dream of the Rood

Hwæt, ic swefna cyst secgan wylle,
 hwæt mē gemætte tō midre nihte,
 syðþan reordberend reste wunedon.
 Pūhte mē þæt ic gesāwe syllicre trēow
 5 on lyft lādan lēohte bewunden,
 bēama beorhtost. Eall þæt bēacen wæs
 begoten mid golde; gimmas stōdon
 fægere æt folclan scēatum, swylce þær fife wæron
 uppe on þām eaxlegespanne. Behēoldon þær engeldryhta
 feala
 10 fægere purh forðgesceaft; ne wæs ðær hūru fracodes
 gealga,
 ac hine þær behēoldon hālige gāstas
 men ofer moldan, and eall þeos mære gesceaft.
 Syllic wæs se sigebēam and ic synnum fāh,
 forwunded mid wommum. Geseah ic wuldres trēow
 15 wædum geweorðod wynnum scinan,
 gegyred mid golde; gimmas hæfdon
 bewrigen weorðlice Wealdendes trēow.
 Hwæðre ic purh þæt gold ongytan meahste
 earmra ære win, þæt hit ærest ongan
 20 swātan on þā swiðran healfe. Eall ic wæs mid sorgum
 gedrēfed;
 forht ic wæs for þære fægran gesyhðe. Geseah ic þæt fūse
 bēacen
 wendan wædum and blēom; hwilum hit wæs mid wætan
 bestēmed,
 beswyled mid swātes gange, hwilum mid since gegyrwed.
 Hwæðre ic þær licgende lange hwile
 25 behēold nrēowcearig Hælendes trēow
 oð ðæt ic gehyrde þæt hit hlēoðrode.
 Ongan þā word sprecan wudu sēlesta:
 'Þæt wæs gēara iū, ic þæt gyta geman,
 þæt ic wæs āhēawen holtes on ende,
 30 āstyred of stefne minum. Genāman mē ðær strange
 fēondas,
 geworhton him þær tō wāfersyne, hēton mē heora
 wergas hebban.
 Bæron mē þær beornas on eaxlum oð ðæt hie mē on
 beorg āsetton,
 gefæstnodon mē þær fēondas genōge. Geseah ic þā
 frēan mancynnes
 efstan elne micle þæt Hē mē wolde on gestigan.
 35 Þær ic þā ne dorste ofer Dryhtnes word
 būgan oððe berstan þā ic bifian geseah
 eorðan scēatas. Ealle ic mihte
 fēondas gefyllan, hwæðre ic fæste stōd.
 Ongyrede hine þā geong hælēð þæt wæs God ælmihtig,
 40 strang and stiðmōd; gestāh Hē on gealgan hēanne,
 mōdig on manigra gesyhðe, þā Hē wolde mancyn lȳsan.
 Bifode ic þā me se beorn ymbclypte; ne dorste ic
 hwæðre būgan tō eorðan,
 feallan tō foldan scēatum, ac ic sceolde fæste standan.

The Dream of the Rood

Hear while I tell about the best of dreams
 Which came to me the middle of one night
 While humankind were sleeping in their beds.
 It was as though I saw a wondrous tree
 Towering in the sky suffused with light,
 Brightest of beams; and all that beacon was
 Covered with gold. The corners of the earth
 Gleamed with fair jewels, just as there were five ^{jewels}
 Upon the cross-beam. Many bands of angels, ^{5 wounds}
 Fair throughout all eternity, looked on.
 No felon's gallows that, but holy spirits,
 Mankind, and all this marvellous creation,
 Gazed on the glorious tree of victory.
 And I with sins was stained, wounded with guilt.
 I saw the tree of glory brightly shine
 In gorgeous clothing, all bedecked with gold. (ART)
 The Ruler's tree was worthily adorned
 With gems; yet I could see beyond that gold
 The ancient strife of wretched men, when first
 Upon its right side it began to bleed. (As Tree of Life)
 I was all moved with sorrows, and afraid
 At the fair sight. I saw that lively beacon
 Changing its clothes and hues; sometimes it was
 Bedewed with blood and drenched with flowing gore,
 At other times it was bedecked with treasure.
 So I lay watching there the Saviour's tree, ✓
 Grieving in spirit for a long, long while,
 Until I heard it utter sounds, the best
 Of woods began to speak these words to me:
 'It was long past - I still remember it -
 That I was cut down at the copse's end,
 Moved from my roots. Strong enemies there took me,
 Told me to hold aloft their criminals,
 Made me a spectacle. Men carried me
 Upon their shoulders, set me on a hill,
 A host of enemies there fastened me.
 And then I saw the Lord of all mankind
 Hasten with eager zeal that He might mount
 Upon me. I durst not against God's word
 Bend down or break, when I saw tremble all
 The surface of the earth. Although I might
 Have struck down all the foes, yet stood I fast.
 Then the young hero (who was God Almighty)
 Got ready, resolute and strong in heart.
 He climbed onto the lofty gallows-tree,
 Bold in the sight of many watching men,
 When He intended to redeem mankind.
 I trembled as the warrior embraced me.
 But still I dared not bend down to the earth,
 Fall to the ground. Upright I had to stand.

warrior speaks

The Ruler's
Tree of
glory...
(later)

VISION

Tree
speaksviolated
of
tree
toRood - The Cross
view of crucifixion thru eyes of cross

Rōd wæs ic āræred; āhōf ic ricne Cyning,
 45 heofona Hlāford. hyldan mē ne dorste.
 Ðurhdrifan hi mē mid deorcan næglum, on mē syndon
 þā dolg gesiene,
 opene inwidhlenumas. Ne dorste ic hira ānigum sceððan.
 Bysmeredon hie unc būtu ætgædere. Eall ic wæs mid
 blōde bestēmed,
 begoten of þæs guman sidan siððan Hē hæfde His
 gāst onsended.
 50 Feala ic on þām beorge gebiden hæbbe
 wrāðra wyrda. Geseah ic weruda God
 þearle þenian; þýstro hæfdon
 bewrigen mid wolcnum Wealdendes hrāw,
 scirne scīman sceadu forðeode,
 55 wann under wolcnum. Wēop eal gesceaft,
 cwīðdon Cyninges fyll. Crist wæs on rōde.
 Hwæðere þær fūse feorran cwōman
 tō þām ædelinge; ic þæt eall behēold.
 Sāre ic wæs mid sorgum gedrēfed, hnāg ic hwæðre þām
 secgum tō handa,
 60 ēaðmōd elne mycle. Genāmon hie þær ælmihtigne God,
 āhōfon Hine of ðām hefan wite, forlēton mē þā
 hilderincas
 standan stēame bedrifenne; eall ic wæs mid strælum
 forwundod.
 Ālēdon Hine ðær limwērigne, gestōdon Him æt His
 lices hēafdum,
 behēoldon hie ðær heofenes Dryhten, and Hē Hine ðær
 hwile reste,
 65 mēðe æfter ðām miclan gewinne. Ongunnon Him þā
 moldern wyrcan
 beornas on banan gesyhðe, curfon hie ðæt of beorhtan
 stāne,
 gesetton hie ðæron sigora Wealdend. Ongunnon Him þā
 sorhlēod galan
 earmes on þā æfentide. Þā hie woldon eft siðian
 mēðe fram þām mæran Þeodne, reste Hē ðær mæte
 weorode.
 70 Hwæðere wē ðær grēotende gōðe hwile
 stōdon on staðole, stefn up gewāt
 hilderinca; hrāw cōlode,
 fæger feorgbold. Þā ūs man fyllan ongan
 ealle tō eorðan; þæt wæs egeslic wyrd.
 75 Bedealf ūs man on ðeopan sēape; hwæðre mē þær
 Dryhtnes þegnas,
 frēondas gefrūnon,
 gvredon mē golde and seolfre.
 Nū ðū miht gehýran, hæleð mīn se lēofa,
 þæt ic bealuwara weorc gebiden hæbbe,
 80 sārra sorga. Is nū sēl cumen
 þæt mē weorðiað wide and side
 menn ofer moldan and eall þeos mære gesceaft,
 gebiddaþ him tō þyssum bēacne. On mē Bearn Godes
 prōwode hwile; for þan ic prymfæst nū
 85 hlifige under heofenum, and ic hālan mæg
 āghwylcne ānra þāra þe him bið gesa tō mē.

A rood I was raised up; and I held high
 The noble King, the Lord of heaven above.
 I dared not stoop. They pierced me with dark nails;
 The scars can still be clearly seen on me,
 The open wounds of malice. Yet might I
 Not harm them. They reviled us both together.
 I was made wet all over with the blood
 Which poured out from His side, after He had
 Sent forth His spirit. And I underwent
 Full many a dire experience on that hill.
 I saw the God of hosts stretched grimly out.
 Darkness covered the Ruler's corpse with clouds,
 His shining beauty; shadows passed across,
 Black in the darkness. All creation wept,
 Bewailed the King's death; Christ was on the cross.
 And yet I saw men coming from afar,
 Hastening to the Prince. I watched it all.
 With sorrows I was grievously oppressed,
 Yet willingly I bent to those men's hands,
 Humbly. They took up there Almighty God,
 And from the heavy torment lifted Him.
 The soldiers left me standing drenched with moisture,
 Wounded all over with the metal points.
 They laid Him down limb-weary; then they stood
 Beside the corpse's head, there they beheld
 The Lord of heaven, and He rested there
 A while, tired after the great agony. *(still alive)*
 The men then made a sepulchre for Him *or will return 2 days*
 In sight of me. They carved it of bright stone,
 And set therein the Lord of victories.
 Next, wretched in the eventide, they sang
 A dirge for Him; and when they went away,
 Weary from that great Prince, He stayed, alone.
 Yet we remained there weeping in our places
 A good long time after the warriors' voices
 Had passed away from us. The corpse grew cold,
 The fair abode of life. Then men began
 To cut us down. That was a dreadful fate.
 In a deep pit they buried us. But friends
 And servants of the Lord learnt where I was,
 And decorated me with gold and silver. *7 velics*
 Now you may understand, dear warrior,
 That I have suffered deeds of wicked men
 And grievous sorrows. Now the time has come
 That far and wide on earth men honour me,
 And all this great and glorious creation.
 And to this beacon offer prayers. On me
 The Son of God once suffered; therefore now
 I tower mighty underneath the heavens,
 And I may heal all those in awe of me.

Rood

True Speaking

True still speaking

(still alive)
or will
return
2 days

7 velics

The Son of God once suffered; therefore now
I tower mighty underneath the heavens,
And I may heal all those in awe of me.

power of velic

lū ic wæs geworden wita heardost,
 leodum lādost, ær þan ic him lifes weg
 rihtne gerýmde reordberendum.

90 Hwæt mē þa geweorðode wuldres Ealdor
 ofer holtwudu, heofonrices Weard,
 swylce swā Hē his mōdor ēac, Mārian sylfe,
 ælmihtig God for ealle men
 geweorðode ofer eall wifa cynn.

95 Nū ic þe hāte, hælēð min se lēofa,
 þæt ðū þās gesyhðe secge mannum,
 onwrēoh wordum þæt hit is wuldres bēam,
 se ðe ælmihtig God on prōwode
 for mancynnes manegum synnum

100 and Ādōmes ealdgewyrhtum.
 Dēað Hē þær byrigde, hwaðere eft Dryhten ārās
 mid His miclan mihte mannum tō helpe.
 Hē ðā on heofenas āstāg; hider eft fundap
 on þysne middangeard mancynn sēcan

105 on dōmdæge Dryhten sylfa,
 ælmihtig God and His englas mid,
 þæt Hē þonne wile dēman, se āh dōmes geweald,
 ānra gehwylcum swā hē him ærur hēr
 on þyssum lānum life geearnap.

110 Ne mæg þær ænig unforht wasan
 for þām worde þe se Wealdend cwyð.
 Frined Hē for þære mænige hwær se man sīe,
 se ðe for Dryhtnes naman dēaðes wolde
 biteres onbyrgan swā Hē ær on ðām bēame dyde.

115 Ac hīe þonne forhtiað and fēa þencap
 hwæt hīe tō Criste cweðan onginnen.
 Ne þearf ðær þonne ænig anforht wasan
 þe him ær in brēostum bereð bēacna sēlest,
 ac ðurh ðā rōde sceal rice gesēcan

120 of eorðwege æghwylc sāwl,
 sēo þe mid Wealdende wunian þenceð.
 Gebæd ic mē þā tō þān bēame bliðe mōde,
 elne mycle, þær ic āna wæs
 māte werede; wæs mōdsefa

125 āfýsed on forðwege, feala ealra gebād
 langunghwīla. Is mē nū lifes hyht
 þæt ic þone sigebēam sēcan mōte
 āna oftor þonne ealle men,
 well weorþian. Mē is willa tō ðām

130 mycel on mōde, and min mundbyrd is
 geriht tō þære rōde. Nāh ic ricra feala
 frēonda on foldan, ac hīe forð heonan
 gewiton of worulde drēamum, sōhton him wuldres

eternal
life

in
dream
Tree
speaks to
warrior
medieval
evidence

Tree gives
task to
warrior

spirit
speaks

Once I became the cruellest of tortures,
 Most hateful to all nations, till the time
 I opened the right way of life for men.

So then the Prince of glory honoured me,
 And heaven's King exalted me above
 All other trees, just as Almighty God
 Raised up His mother Mary for all men
 Above all other women in the world.

Now, my dear warrior, I order you
 That you reveal this vision to mankind,
 Declare in words this is the tree of glory
 On which Almighty God once suffered torments
 For mankind's many sins, and for the deeds
 Of Adam long ago. He tasted death

Thereon; and yet the Lord arose again
 By His great might to come to human aid.
 He rose to heaven. And the Lord Himself,
 Almighty God and all His angels with Him,
 Will come onto this earth again to seek
 Mankind on Doomsday, when the final Judge
 Will give His verdict upon every man,
 What in this fleeting life he shall have earned.
 Nor then may any man be without fear
 About the words the Lord shall say to him.
 Before all He shall ask where that man is
 Who for God's name would suffer bitter death
 As formerly He did upon the cross.
 Then will they be afraid, and few will know
 What they may say to Christ. But there need none
 Be fearful if he bears upon his breast
 The best of tokens. Through the cross each soul
 May journey to the heavens from this earth,
 Who with the Ruler thinks to go and dwell.'

I prayed then to the cross with joyous heart
 And eagerness, where I was all alone,
 Companionless; my spirit was inspired
 With keenness for departure; and I spent
 Much time in longing. Now my hope in life
 Is that I may approach the tree of triumph
 Alone more often than all other men,
 Honour it well; my wish for that is great
 Within my heart, and my hope for support
 Is turned towards the cross. I have on earth
 Not many noble friends, but they have gone
 Hence from earth's joys and sought the King of glory.
 With the High Father now they live in heaven

Virgin
Mary

Cross as powerful
symbol

Cyning,

lifiaþ nū on heofenum mid Hēahfædere,

Act as 'sign' never thing
 here, gives sm thing to sign
 all exists as sign

135 wuniaþ on wuldre; and ic wēne mē
 daga gehwylce hwænne mē Dryhtnes rōd,
 þe ic hēr on eorðan ær scēawode,
 on þysson lēnan life gefetige
 and mē þonne gebringe þær is blis mycel,
 140 drēam on heofonum, þær is Dryhtnes folc
 geseted tō synle, þær is singāl blis,
 and mē þonne āsette þær ic syþþan mōt
 wunian on wuldre well mid þām hālgum,
 drēames brūcan. Si mē Dryhten frēond,
 145 se ðe hēr on eorðan ær prōwode
 on þām gealgrēowe for gumian synnum.
 Hē ūs onlȳsde and ūs lif forgeaf,
 heofonlicne hām. Hiht wæs geniwad
 mid blēdum and mid blisse þām þe þær bryne polodan.
 150 Se Sunu wæs sigorfæst on þām siðfate,
 mihtig and spēdig, þā Hē mid manigeo cōm,
 gāsta weorode, on Godes rice,
 Anwealda ælmihtig, englum tō blisse
 and eallum ðām hālgum þām þe on heofonum ær
 155 wunedon on wuldre, þā heora Wealdend cwōm,
 ælmihtig God, þær His ēðel wæs.

*dream a sign
 of paradise*

And dwell in glory; and I wait each day
 For when the cross of God, which here on earth
 I formerly beheld, may fetch me from
 This transitory life and carry me
 To where there is great bliss and joy in heaven,
 Where the Lord's host is seated at the feast,
 And it shall set me where I afterwards
 May dwell in glory, live in lasting bliss
Among the saints. May God be friend to me,
 He who once suffered on the gallows tree
 On earth here for men's sins. Us He redeemed
 And granted us our life and heavenly home.
 Hope was renewed with glory and with bliss
 For those who suffered burning fires in hell.
 The Son was mighty on that expedition,
 Successful and victorious; and when
 The one Almighty Ruler brought with Him
 A multitude of spirits to God's kingdom,
 To bliss among the angels and the souls
 Of all who dwelt already in the heavens
 In glory, then Almighty God had come,
The Ruler entered into His own land.