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of the visible, historic throne, had become the custodian of the sacred people, one of whose seers interprets to him its meaning. It must needs therefore win for the captives unusual respect, while they, through their great representative, fulfil their ancient mission as depositaries of the Divine will, destined in due time to declare it to mankind.

It is a conclusion in harmony with the whole history of this people that this dream really visited the great Babylonian ruler, and that it was, with its interpretation, a true revelation of the counsels of God. No; we have not been sitting at the feet of a pseudepigraphical scribe, we have been listening to the eternal Word.

JOSIAH GILBERT.

ANCIENT CELTIC EXPOSITORS.

ST. COLUMBANUS AND HIS LIBRARY.

THE Acta Sanctorum form an unexplored mine of history, poetry, and romance. The historian finds there authentic records of life as lived amid the beginnings of European civilization. The poet can find there sweet songs—almost always of a sad and plaintive character; while as for romance and fable, they abound on every side. Among the romantic lives of the saints, those dealing with the Celtic missionaries stand pre-eminent. Fable, as we might expect, gathers thick round them. Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba* for instance, abounds with stories, fabulous indeed, but beauteous and touching withal. Romance too lends its charm, and among the most romantic lives, that of Columbanus, the apostle of Burgundy, Switzerland, and Italy, was the most striking and is the best authenticated. I have in another place sketched that career, beginning at

the monastery of Bangor in the County Down, and ending at Bobbio in Northern Italy.[1] To that sketch I must refer the reader desirous of knowing the facts of his chequered life, directing now my attention to Columbanus as he was an expositor of Scripture. Let us first realize his epoch and assign him a local place, a definite era in our minds. Columbanus belonged to the latter half of the sixth and earlier part of the seventh century, the age of Mahomet and of Gregory the Great, and is a connecting link between expositors of the school of St. Patrick in the fifth and Sedulius and writers of his type in the eighth and ninth centuries. We shall use our study of Columbanus to reflect light back upon the darker age to which St. Patrick belongs.

Columbanus was educated at the monastery of Bangor in the County Down, an institution which continued to flourish till long after English power was established in Ireland, though not a vestige of the ancient abbey now remains, and its very site is a disputed question.[2] As soon as he arrived at the years of manhood he was seized with a desire to propagate the gospel. Foreign missions were then the rage in the Celtic Church. Columba was evangelizing Scotland, and another Columba—for Columba, not Columbanus, was the real name of our saint—determined to pursue the same course in Central Europe.[3] He left Bangor therefore with St. Gall and eleven other followers, preached with great success in Central Europe, and founded the monastery of Bobbio, not far from Genoa, among the mountains of the Apennine range in the year 612. From that date the Abbey

[1] See *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, chap. vii.

[2] Bishop Pococke, about the year 1750, describes some few fragments of the abbey then in existence. See his MS. tour in Ireland, now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

[3] What a fine opportunity would have been here for a German rationalistic critic, had these two Columbas been first-century, and not sixth-century missionaries! How easily could their personality have been dissolved in the dove-like (Columba) spirit of the new religion which was spreading over the world!

of Bobbio became a great literary centre, and a chief witness to ancient Celtic culture and devotion to expository studies. As I do not know of any convenient account of this ancient Celtic monastery, I shall be pardoned if I describe its manuscript resources and its still existing remains at some considerable length, for they prove the learning of the ancient Celtic Church to have surpassed that of any other branch of contemporary western Christendom.

Bobbio was founded in 612. Its position—twenty-four miles S.W. from Piacenza in the valley of the Trebbia—is even still a lone and solitary one. Two centuries ago, when Mabillon visited it, he describes his journey thither as rough and difficult, over lofty mountains and through lonely valleys. And here, in passing, I may remark that with all our modern advances and discoveries, the true student will have much to learn from those chatty volumes, the *Diarium Italicum* and the *Iter Italicum* of the great French Benedictines Mabillon and Montfaucon. Sir James Stephen, in his *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, has given a very charming account of Mabillon and his literary tours; but it is only when one turns to the volumes themselves that we can at all realize the marvellous erudition of these monkish students, now so seldom consulted. The library of Bobbio is in some respects the most interesting, to us at least, in the world, for there we can learn the state of education and culture existing in our western islands more than one thousand years ago. Bobbio was founded by Celtic monks from Ireland, and during the first three centuries of its existence, down to the close of the ninth, it was continually replenished by Irish, or as they were then called, Scottish emigrants. We have too another most interesting point in connexion with Bobbio. Muratori, in the third volume of his great work on Italian antiquities, has preserved a catalogue of the Bobbio library, drawn up in the tenth century. It is a marvellous proof of the

erudition of the members of that monastery, filling several of Muratori's pages with lists printed in the closest possible order. The Irish monks were no narrow students; their minds ranged over every branch of literature. In their catalogue we find patristic literature, Greek and Latin, the works of Augustine, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Eusebius, Hilary, Origen, and Cyprian; Latin and Greek historians, poets and orators, Homer, Virgil, Horace, Lucan, Juvenal, Cicero, Fronto; geographers, mathematicians, musicians; while they were not forgetful withal of the country whence they had come out, they were not forgetful or incurious about their own, but duly installed in the place of highest honour the works of their founder Columbanus, the Hymn-book of their parent monastery of Bangor, commonly called the Antiphonarium Benchorense, the writings of Adamnan, the Abbot of Iona, and the encyclopædic volumes of the Venerable Bede. I have spoken of this library as still existing, and indeed its history is almost a romance. It continued to flourish all through the Middle Ages, preserving even in the darkest periods a flavour and reminiscence of its ancient culture. Its contents seem to have been frequently surveyed, as Peyron, in the beginning of this century, discovered another catalogue made in the year 1461, in addition to the tenth-century one already known. In the early years of the seventeenth century the library changed its locality. Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, a munificent patron of learning, was then presiding over the see of Milan. It was an age marked all over Europe by a devotion to studies and a prodigal liberality in their encouragement. Kings like our own James I. and Henry IV. of France pensioned learned men, such as Casaubon, that they might have time to prosecute their researches. Prelates like Laud and Ussher spent their revenues in scouring Oriental monasteries for ancient manuscripts, maintaining agents in Smyrna, Constantinople, and Alexandria for that purpose.

It is to that age we owe the discovery of some of our most valued treasures and the foundation of some of our greatest libraries. It was just the same in Italy, where Cardinal Borromeo spent vast sums in building the Ambrosian library, and furnishing it with books and manuscripts. With this end in view, he cast his eye upon Bobbio, bestowed rich gifts upon the monastery, and in exchange became possessor of the greatest portion of its famous library, leaving behind only about one hundred volumes, which Mabillon saw and inspected on the occasion of his visit to Bobbio. In the Ambrosian library the Bobbio collection was often visited during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Irish manuscripts were a puzzle to the antiquarians of the last century. The Celtic monks were good Latin and Greek scholars, but they, like many a modern student, often interspersed their books with marginal notes couched in the Irish language, glosses, explanations, prayers to favourite saints—especially St. Bridget —and notes upon even the most trivial matters, the time of day, the hour of dinner, or the state of the weather.[1] These Irish glosses and notes greatly puzzled French and German scholars. They ascribed them to the Anglo-Saxons, and called them Anglo-Saxon characters. They credited them to the Lombards, and never dreamt of tracing them to the right source. We, however, cannot wonder at this. The knowledge of Celtic is even now not widely spread. Fifty years ago its possessors could be counted on the fingers. A century and a half ago it was regarded as a barbarous jargon unworthy the attention of civilized men, devoid of a literature or of a history. Still something valuable was brought to light. Muratori discovered the Muratorian Fragment, the oldest historical witness to the gospel canon, copied by an Irish monk in the seventh century from some early Christian manuscript. He found, too, the

[1] See Zeuss, *Gram. Celt.*, præf., pp. xi., xii.

Bangor psalter, composed in the seventh century, whence the most popular hymn-book of the Church of England has derived the hymn, beginning—

> "Draw nigh and take the Body of the Lord,
> And drink the holy Blood for you outpoured,
> Saved by that Body and that holy Blood,
> With souls refreshed, we render thanks to God."

The period of almost romantic discovery was, however, yet to come for the ancient Bobbio library. Cardinal Mai was one of the greatest scholars the Church of Rome has produced during this century. The volumes he published are well-nigh numberless. His various collections, in their very titles—the *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio*, the *Spicilegium Romanum*, and the *Nova Patrum Bibliotheca*—sufficiently indicate the industry and learning of that eminent prelate. In later life he was the librarian of the Vatican. In earlier life he was the librarian of the Ambrosian library, where he made discoveries which give us a glimpse not only of the learning but also of the straits and poverty of the ancient Celtic monks, and show us at the same time what invaluable manuscript materials they possessed. While all Europe was convulsed by the Napoleonic wars, Mai was studying the Bobbio books, and in the course of his investigation ascertained that a good many of them were palimpsests. The Celtic monks in the seventh and eighth centuries were sorely in want of writing material. The supply of papyrus from Egypt had ceased since the Saracen conquest,[1] but they possessed a large supply of ancient books written on vellum. These they took, rubbed off the ancient writing, or washed it away, and then wrote their own Christian documents which they esteemed more important than the original text. The disciples of Columbanus must have been in sore distress when they thus treated some of their ancient books, for they preserved the vast majority

[1] See Scrivener's *Introduction*, p. 24.

most carefully. And some of them were very ancient and very precious too. Orations of Cicero, lost for ages to the modern world, were thus treated by the monks, and recovered by Mai. The monks took a Cicero originally written in the second or third century, and in the eighth century wrote over Cicero's brilliant periods, which they partially erased, the devouter sentiments of the Christian poet Sedulius, who flourished in the fifth. The works of Fronto were similarly treated, and similarly restored by the learned cardinal. Fronto was the friend, tutor, and associate of the imperial philosophers Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, with whom Fronto maintained a very lively correspondence. His letters were collected and published in a volume some time in the third or fourth century, a copy of which found its way to Bobbio. The monks of the eighth century had no special interest, however, in the correspondence of pagans, so they took the fourth-century volume, rubbed out the writing, and inserted instead a copy of the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 457, which were of much more interest and importance to themselves. Mai's discoveries created a great sensation at the time. Great expectations were raised, and people thought they would have received most valuable light upon the history of the second century from the imperial and philosophic correspondence. The pure classical scholar, forgetting his vast obligations to the monks and the monasteries for all they had preserved, saw in their conduct a typical instance of narrowness and stupidity. And yet Wisdom was justified, in this instance at least, of her children, for when the letters were published they were found to be of almost trivial importance, and the judgment of the sons of St. Columbanus was amply vindicated. I cannot now indeed enlarge further on this point, which relates to the discovery of classical palimpsests, and belongs rather to the region of the *Classical Review* than to that of THE EXPOSITOR. The work, however, begun under Mai's

auspices, has been since continued, and of later years under the direction of Ceriani, Ascoli, and other learned men, has produced some remarkable results in various directions of scholarship. I may just mention for the advantage of the diligent student whose curiosity may have been aroused, that a very interesting account of Mai's discoveries will be found in the preface to that learned prelate's *Ciceronis Opera Inedita*, published some seventy or eighty years ago. One point, indeed, is plain and manifest, and it is a most important one. The Bobbio library in the seventh century possessed a number of documents dating back to the year 200 A.D., some of them classical, others of them sacred and ecclesiastical like the Muratorian Fragment, or rather the work of which it originally formed a part. If that could only be discovered what a treasure we should possess! The Bobbio library preserved for us in fact some remnants of the ancient libraries of North Italy. We often wonder what has become of all the gold and silver ever coined since money became current with the merchant. People often wonder what has become of all the books ever printed, and if they only knew the true state of the case, they would wonder even still more at what has become of all the libraries which existed in ancient times. It is a common notion that books were few and far between, because in ancient times there were no printing presses; while, on the contrary, books seem as a matter of fact to have been quite abundant. Every city and large town had a public library, some towns quite a number of such institutions. Every rich man's house was furnished with a library as a necessary part of its equipment, often as little used, and as really unnecessary as in more modern mansions. Seneca rebukes the rage of his day for heaping together a vast quantity of expensive books, "the very catalogues of which their owner has never read in his whole life"; while that bitter scoffer Lucian, a century later, laughs heartily at the uneducated rich for their

useless extravagance in this direction, in a treatise addressed *Πρὸς ἀπαίδευτον καὶ πολλὰ βιβλία ὠνούμενον*. Italy was in the first and second centuries filled with public libraries. Pliny in one of his charming letters tells us of a man who published his son's life, had an edition of a thousand copies struck off, and then distributed them gratis to all the libraries of Italy. What became of all these libraries and their contents? Making every allowance for fire and loss sustained through barbarian invasions, there must have been vast remains of these ancient collections still in existence when Columbanus founded the Bobbio library.[1]

But here some one may naturally say, This is all very interesting as bearing on the classical learning of the Celtic monks, but what has it to do with them as students of Holy Writ and as expositors of its teachings? In reply I would say that I have brought forward these facts simply to establish the general culture of the ancient Celtic worthies, whose secular studies were never allowed to interfere with their devotion to sacred truth, for they were indefatigable in their multiplication of copies of Holy Scripture and of commentaries upon the same.[2] The followers and disciples of Columbanus were prominent in this great work, and modern learning owes much to their diligence. A

[1] On the subject of ancient libraries, the reader may consult an article on Pompeii, in *Journal des Savants* for July, 1881, p. 406.

[2] The culture of St. Columbanus himself must have been of a very extensive kind, as far at least as classical studies were concerned. His poems, for instance, as contained in all the collections of his works, and accessible in a handy shape in Migne's *Patrologia* or Fleming's *Collectanea*, abound in evidences of his scholarship. His first poem is an Epistle to a certain Hunaldus, one of his disciples. It contains thoughts and expressions drawn from Ovid, Horace, and Prudentius, though it measures only seventeen hexameter lines. The second poem contains allusions to Horace, Seneca, Prudentius, Juvenal, Ovid, Virgil. A study of the other poems, annotated as they have been by Sirmond and Canisius, will yield similar results, proving Columbanus to have been an accomplished classical scholar. Now as he did not leave Ireland upon his foreign mission till he was long past forty, he must have gained this knowledge under St. Comgall at the Abbey of Bangor, where the best classical authors must have been subjects of daily study in the middle of the sixth century.

glance at the Introduction to New Testament Criticism, published by Westcott and Hort, or by Scrivener, will amply prove this statement. They multiplied copies of the Scriptures in Latin and in Greek. The Monastery of St. Gall was founded by a member of the School of St. Columbanus —his disciple St. Gall, after whom it was called. To it we owe the celebrated Codex Sangallensis, still preserved in that monastery; and the Codex Boernerianus now at Dresden, which, however, is only a part of the St. Gall manuscript, this latter containing the Four Gospels, as the Dresden document the Epistles of St. Paul. To the Irish monastery of Reichenau, on the Lake of Constance, is due the Codex Augiensis, which, like the St. Gall MS., is a Greek uncial copy of the Epistles of St. Paul with a Latin version in parallel columns. The Bobbio monks devoted themselves to the multiplication of the Latin translation, such Celtic work being always distinguished, whether in these islands or abroad, by the beautiful capitals with which the writers interspersed their texts.[1] Some of these manuscripts—all of which come from about the same period, the seventh to the ninth centuries—contain most interesting marginal notices, illustrating the history of doctrines and doctrinal changes, or else giving us glimpses of the social life and habits of that distant time. St. Gall, for instance, was an intense Augustinian, and taught predestinarian views in the most extreme forms. He lived in the seventh century, but in the ninth century his followers, like certain moderns, had revolted from his teaching and gone over to the opposite party. This is manifest from some notes which the monks attached to various texts which the predestinarian party quoted in defence of their views or felt as difficulties, as for instance John xii. 39, 40, "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded

[1] See for instance the Books of Durrow and Kells in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.

their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them," and on texts like Romans iii. 5, "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" 1 Corinthians ii. 8, "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," and 1 Timothy ii. 4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," which last of course constituted a difficulty to an Augustinian, because it asserts God's desire that all should be saved and come to eternal salvation.[1] Upon all these and several other verses the St. Gall scribes inserted marginal notes warning their readers against the heretical teaching of Gottschalk, the leader of the extreme predestinarian party in the ninth century. St. Gall's Monastery however has not been the only institution which has thus performed a theological somersault in the course of two centuries and quite reversed the teaching of its founders. All the Celtic monks, we must at the same time remember, did not follow the example of those of St. Gall; for Sedulius belonged to that period and still clung to the ancient Irish view, upholding an extreme Augustinianism which might have satisfied John Calvin or the fathers of the Westminster Assembly.

But the most interesting of the St. Gall notes is one in the document containing St. Paul's Epistles, now at Dresden. This manuscript was, as I have said, once in St. Gall's Monastery, where it was written by Irish monks, as appears from some curious Celtic lines contained therein, which Dr. Scrivener gives on p. 170 of his *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*. They are written in old Irish, and long puzzled the learned men of the Continent till a great Celtic scholar, the late Dr. John O'Donovan, the

[1] See Scrivener, *l.c.*, p. 151.

translator of the Four Masters into English, was consulted, when he at once explained their meaning. Dr. Scrivener gives O'Donovan's translation with corrections by Dr. Todd and the Rev. Robert King. The verses run thus in the English version:

"To come to Rome, to come to Rome,
Much of trouble, little of profit;
The thing thou seekest here,
If thou bring not with thee, thou findest not.

Great folly, great madness,
Great ruin of sense, great insanity,
Since thou hast set out for death,
That thou shouldest be in disobedience to the Son of Mary."

These stanzas were written of course by an Irishman, for they are in the Irish language. Mr. King suggested that they were composed by an Irish bishop named Marcus, who went to Rome on a pilgrimage in company with his nephew Moengal. Upon their return from Rome they called at St. Gall, where the bishop and his nephew remained as residents, bestowing their books on the monastic library, and sending their servants and their horses home to Ireland. This however is a mere conjecture; the lines themselves give us facts.[1] They show us that pilgrimages to Rome were made by monks from Ireland in the eighth and ninth centuries. We know that it was just the same with the Celts two centuries earlier. St. Laserian of Old Leighlin, Cummian a Columban monk, the author of a learned epistle on the Paschal question, still extant, both visited Rome in the first half of the seventh century. And the fashion of pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul never died out in Ireland, though like many an Irishman since that time, the Celtic author of the stanzas quoted above seems to have returned very discontented

[1] The visit of the Celtic bishop and his nephew to St. Gall is an undoubted fact. It is mentioned by a contemporary chronicler, Ekkehardus. See Pertz, *Monumenta* ii., p. 78.

with his Roman visit.[1] He went to Rome doubtless as Luther did, expecting to find it the very centre and seat of holiness incarnate, and in his own emphatic language he found "to come to Rome much of trouble, little of profit." He went to Rome expecting to find God's presence and His peace there specially revealed. The ancient delusion was there dispelled for him that God draws nearer one place than another. Peace with God was at last realized by this ancient Celt as found in the islands of the ocean as readily as in the ecclesiastical capital of the West. The words, "The thing thou seekest here, if thou bring not with thee thou findest not," are an echo of the blessed teaching of the Master Himself to the Samaritan inquirer: "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

GEORGE T. STOKES.

[1] The dedications of the ancient cathedral of Glendalough and of the monastery of Bobbio were the same, in honour of the Apostles Peter and Paul. The usual dedications of ancient Celtic churches were in honour of purely local Celtic saints.