

Wall, Charles J., Shrines of British Saints. Methuen & Co. London, 1905.  
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## CHAPTER IV [part two]

### SHRINES OF PRELATES AND PRIESTS

#### ST. CHAD

The first tomb of that great Celtic saint, St. Chad, was in the churchyard of St Mary's at Lichfield. He was buried in

“a wooden monument, made like a little house, covered, having a hole in the wall, through which those that go thither for devotion usually put in their hand and take out some of the dust, which thy put into water and give to sick cattle or men to drink, upon which they are presently eased of their infirmity, and restored to health.”

This paragraph from the Ecclesiastical History of the

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Venerable Bede,<sup>1</sup> in dwelling upon the healing virtues of the saint, helps to convey a better understanding of the formation of the primitive wooden shrine in which St. Chad's relics reposed until the church of St. Peter had been built on the site of the present cathedral, when they were translated into it.

When Bishop Roger de Clinton rebuilt the cathedral to the honour of the Blessed Virgin and St. Chad in 1148, he placed the relics of their now patron saint in a shrine worthy of his memory.

There as a priest of St. Chad in the cathedral at Lichfield—evidently the custodian of his relics—to whom, in 1241, a special benefaction was made of certain houses in the city for the proper keeping-up of the shrine.

To accommodate the throng of pilgrims and to yet more highly exalt St. Chad, Bishop Walter Langton built the present Lady Chapel, thereby providing greater space for the shrine in the retro-choir. Between the two piers in this place, in 1296, he erected a beautiful new shrine at a cost of £2,000 (£40,000 present day).

Bishop Robert Stretton, who ruled the see from 1360 to 1386, erected a yet more magnificent shrine at his sole cost. The substructure was of marble and the feretory was adorned with gold and precious stones.

At the dawn of the sixteenth century Bishop Geoffrey Blythe enriched the shrine by a gift of two silver images, one of St. Chad and the other of St. Katherine.

Among other gifts the Sacrists' Roll <sup>2</sup> mentions—

“a morse of pure gold and two gold rings, which were offered that they may be placed in the shirne of St. Chad by Dan Thomas de Berkeley and his wife, and one other as catalogued above, replaced in the coffer ; and Richard the Sacrist now

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says that they are in the shrine of St. Chad ; it is well to enquire of John, his predecessor, as to the truth of this.”

This entry reveals two things—that gifts of jewels were enclosed with the relics, and that the coffer was never opened for such a puerile object as to count the riches within.

In the constitutions of the cathedral the treasurer of the chapter was required to furnish two wax tapers and to keep one lamp perpetually burning before St. Chad's altar at the west end of the shrine.

The festival of St. Chad on the 2nd of March was a veritable feast for the canons, for on that day instead of their usual one shilling they each received ten shillings.

At the time of the Reformation, Bishop Lee pleaded hard with Henry VIII to spare the memorial of their first bishop, the greatest ornament of their cathedral, and probably because that bishop had secretly married the King to Anne Boyeln, his request was favourably received. This was a singular instance of a shrine being spared at that period. It was, however, but a temporary respite, for it was shortly afterwards robbed and demolished.

At which of the translations the head of St. Chad was separated from the body cannot be ascertained ; but it was placed in a *head reliquary* and preserved in the Chapel of the Head of St. Chad. From the Sacrists' Roll <sup>3</sup> we find this *chef* was of painted wood, and for safety was kept in an iron-bound coffer enclosed in another chest. The Chapel of the Head, which was been recently restored, still retains an aumbry for relics and the fifteenth-century stone gallery projecting over the south choir aisle from which the relics were exposed to pilgrims.

In the Chapter Act Books <sup>4</sup> is the following entry :—

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“Two monstrances given to the cathedral, in charge of William Hukyns, the custodian of S. Chad's Head, by Dean Heywood, for keeping relics.”

There is also recorded another gift of an altar cloth to the altar of St. Chad, “in the chapel where his head is wonderfully honoured.”

Relics of St. Chad were preserved in two other shrines, one an arm, the other a portable shrine. Whether these were kept in the great shrine behind the high altar, as suggested by Dr. Cox, enclosed in the great *coopertorium*, cannot be decided ; but probably they were preserved with the other numerous reliquaries in the sacristy.

The story of the subsequent preservation of St. Chad’s relics is found in the *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, edited by Brother Henry Foley, s. j., and is vital to our subject as the connecting link between the desecration of the former shrine and the exaltation of the present one in Birmingham.

It appears that at the ransacking, reforming, and robbery of Lichfield Cathedral, a certain Prebendary Dudley,<sup>5</sup> related to the famous Dudley who was formerly lord or baron, took away St. Chad’s relics for the sake of the honour and reverence due to them, which he entrusted to two noble women, his relations, and of his own name, who lived at a mansion-house named Russell Hall, near the county residence of Dudley.

The prebendary in the course of time dying, these ladies, though still clinging to the ancient faith, became alarmed by reason of the severe laws, and being desirous of not exposing themselves to needless danger, gave the relics to two brothers, Henry and William Hodsheeds, who lived at Woodsaton near Sedgley in Staffordshire, by whom they were duly divided. The portions which fell to the former passed to the Rev. Father Peter

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Turner, s.j., on September 8th, A.D. 1615. This priest, who attended their owner on his death-bed, received his share of the relics from Hodsheed’s wife “wrapped up in a pieced of black buckram.”

Father Turner says :—

“Both Henry and myself thought that this was the same cover in which those relics had been wrapped at the time they were laid in a silver reliquary in the Church of Lichfield. From the above-named cover I took out the sacred bones and placed them in a wooden box, 19 or 20 inches long, 6 inches deep, and 6 inches broad, together with the cover separately folded, and I sealed the box with small seals of wax.”

This was attested by Father Turner under his hand, and it was witnessed by the Rev. William Atkins, s.j., Francis Cotton, Thomas Wilkinson, and Richard Vavasour.

On October 1st, 1652, the Rev. Father Francis Foster, English Provincial of the Jesuits, inspected the relics of St. Chad, and approved of them (he being an apostolic notary). The acts were placed in the archives of the Society of Jesus.

Father Turner dying on May 27th, 1655, these relics, with the approbation of Father Edward Bedingfield, were placed with John Leveson, because he belonged at that time both to the district and to the College of Blessed Aloysius. The cover above mentioned, being old and tattered, was burnt by William Atkins, s.j.

On the feast of St. Andrew, 1658, certain soldiers and others entering the house of Father Leveson, opened the box, broke one of the bones, and carried off others.

The end of a declaration, still kept at Mr. Fitzherbert's, of Swynnerton Hall, stands thus :—

“I, William Atkins, on March 2nd, 1664, removed these sacred relics from the box which the soldiers had broken, into another box lined with silk.”

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Thomas Weld Blundell, Esq., of Ince-Blundell Hall, Crosby, has written :—

“Before the opening of the Catholic Church at Birmingham, I understood that the bones of the saint had been discovered in the following way. A key was found at Swynnerton to which was attached a label, and on the label was written a statement that the key would open the chest in which the relics of St. Chad had been placed ; and that the chest for greater security had been removed to Aston Hall. On searching Aston Hall the chest containing the relics was found, and the key opened it.”

At the consecration of the new (papal) cathedral at Birmingham in 1841, these relics of St. Chad were borne into the sanctuary, and now repose in a feretory of oak, highly enriched with painting, gilding, and jewels, in an honoured position above the high altar, and beneath a beautiful baldachino.

#### ST. ACCA

A part of the shrine—or tombstone—of that energetic Saxon prelate St. Acca has been excavated from oblivion, and it is hoped, by the perseverance of Bishop Browne, that the remaining fragments of this memorial may yet be found. Besides his oversight of the sees of Hexham and Candida Casa, or Whithorne, St. Acca was diligent in exalting the relics of saints and their shrines to places of honour, and it behoves us to again raise his memorial from debasement, even though it be but a stone.

“Blessed Accas, Actas, and Arcas, Bishop of Hexham in England and of Candida Casa in Scotland,” is commemorated in the Scottish Kalendar of Camerarius on January 16th.

When Acca died in 740

“his body was buried on the outside of the wall, at the east end of the church of Hexham. Two stone crosses, adorned with

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exquisite carving, were placed, the one at his head, the other at his feet. On one, that at his head, was an inscription stating that he was there buried. From this place, three hundred years after his burial, he was translated, in consequence of a divine revelation made to a certain priest, and was placed within a shrine in the church with becoming honour. As a testimony to all of the merit of his sanctity, the chasuble, tunic, and sudarium, to which were placed in a tomb with his sacred body, preserve to this day, not only their form but their original strength. There was found upon his breast a wooden tablet in the form of a portable altar made of two pieces of wood joined with silver nails ; on which is the dedicatory inscription, ‘Alme Trinitati. agie. sophie. Sanctæ Mariæ.’”<sup>6</sup>

The relics of St. Acca were again translated in 1154, and the bones were separated from the dust of the body and enshrined in another casket. Then the church of Hexham had two shrines to the one saint.

Of these two shrines all trace is lost, but two pieces of the shaft (one with a portion of the head remaining) of the original cross set over St. Acca’s first grave were recently dug out of the churchyard at Hexham, and at Dilston, near Hexham, a stone used as the lintel of a doorway proved to be another portion of this cross. These massive fragments have now been put together and form the complete shaft of the cross with the exception of a piece about four feet long, which has temporarily been supplied with a wooden substitute.

The following is taken from Bishop Browne’s enthusiastic descriptions of this wonderful find :— The face and two sides are covered from top to bottom with beautiful scrolls and bunches of grapes and tendrils. On the back, it is supposed, the sculpture has all been chiselled off, leaving it bare and battered in appearance ; but on careful examination the remains of an inscription were discovered,

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in letters two and a half inches long. Across the very top of the shaft is A . . A *sanctus huius ecclesiæ*, evidently reading “Acca, holy, of this church [bishop].” Two or three feet lower down is *unigeniti fili Dei*, as though some profession of Acca’s faith was inscribed on his head stone, possibly in connection with the reason why he was for a time suspended from his bishopric.

The Bishop of Bristol, Dr. Brown, tells us that he hopes to find the missing portion, and that he was reason to believe the cross which stood at the foot of the grave is in existence beneath certain buildings, and that he has taken steps to have excavations made when the lease of that building falls in.

## ST. ERKENWALD

Londoners were justly proud to have in their midst the entire body of their third bishop, Erkenwald ; and the chapter of the cathedral church of St. Paul looked upon it as their greatest treasure.

The bishop's body had been buried in the crypt, and as we learn from the *Nova Legenda Angliæ*, the vault above the tomb was decorated with paintings.

In the great fire of 1087 – 1088 the cathedral was destroyed, but it is said that the shrine was untouched.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 1148, the body of St. Erkenwald was translated to a position near the high altar, close to the shrine of St. Mellitus—Dugdale says to “the east side of the wall above the high altar” ; while in the inventory *Haec duo sunt collateralia in mango altari* evidently means that the shrines of the two saints stood side by side, probably on the altar beam, as certain reliquaries are seen in the drawing of St. Augustine's monastery (page 20).

In an inventory of the Treasury of the year 1245 we

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have a description of the feretory. It was of wood, covered with plates of silver, and enriched with images, and precious stones to the number of one hundred and thirty.

In 1314 Bishop Gilbert de Segrave laid the first stone of a new shrine to which the relics of St. Erkenwald were translated twelve years later. This must refer to a fixed structure on which the feretory was placed, and was the commencement of that shrine which stood until all such monuments were reformed away. To contribute in making the shrine worthy of so great a saint one of the canons, Walter de Thorpe (following the example of a former dean who had fastened to the feretory his gold ring set with a sapphire), bequeathed all his gold rings and jewellery, and five pounds for the work. Soon after this the dean and chapter decorated the feretory with precious metals and stones ; which, however, when the gifts warranted the outlay, was quite eclipsed by the work done upon it in 1339.

William de Meleford, archdeacon of Colchester and canon of St Paul's, in 1335 had given forty pounds for the ornamentation of the shrine. Three London goldsmiths were retained for a whole year for the work, beginning at Candlemas, the master smith had eight shillings and the other two at five shillings a week each.

The sumptuousness of the shrine and the reported increase of miracles caused it to become one of the most popular resorts of pilgrims. St. Erkenwald was the fashion. The end of the fourteenth century saw riches pouring into the coffers of the humble Saxon bishop. The captive monarch King John of France made an offering of twelve nobles ; and among other gifts Richard de Preston, a grocer in the city, gave his best sapphire stone, which was to remain on the shrine for the cure of infirmities in the eyes, and its virtues were publicly proclaimed. Thomas Samkyn, squire to the Abbess of Barking, also gave a silver girdle.

The position of the shrine may be better understood by the aid of the accompanying diagram. It stood against the east side of the high altar screen, with the attached altar of St. Erkenwald eastward of that, so that the priest would face west when saying Mass.

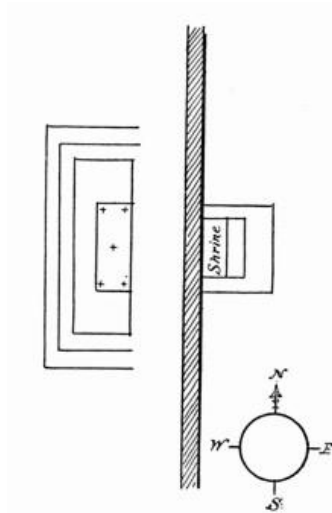


Illustration: Shrine diagram.

In Hollar's plate is a representation of this altar, with an elevation of the east end of the feretory, in which the lack of depth of the railings must be attributed to defective delineation, although Dugdale states that it was taken from the original draft. And in this view nothing can be seen of the numerous images with which the shrine was adorned. It only gives us the delicate form of the feretory, in shape like a church, supported on either side by a kind of flying buttress ; the ridge of the roof was cruciform, and in the elevation, beyond the foremost or eastern gable, are seen the roofs of the transepts. For the details of this beauty the inventories must again be requisitioned, and however perfect the feretory was thought to be, these documents reveal a further lavish outlay from the munificence offerings.

“Fait a remember, que ceuz sont les parçels faitz per John Grantham, orfiour, sur le tombe de St. Erkenwald, le XXII jour d’Ctobre, 3. Hen. 4.

Enprimes pour le poys d’argent, outré l’argent deliverie a mesme la John .

. . . XVII. VS. IIIId.



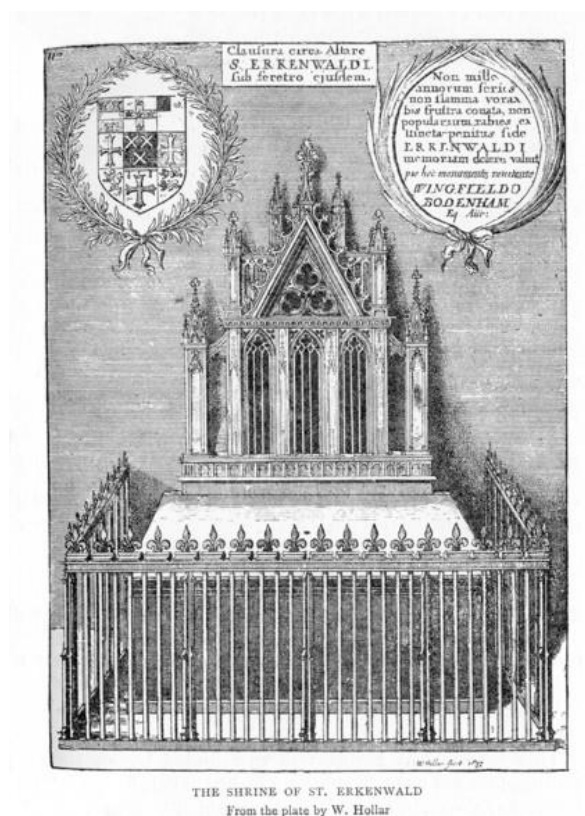


Illustration: Shrine of St. Eckenwald

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Item pour l'endorreur d'une ymage de St. Erkenwald

XXXVIIS. IIId.

Item a une baas a un ymage all manere d'une enfaunt, loveraing et l'or . .  
. Xs. VIId.

Item pur XIII foille en la part del North, pur l'overaigne et l'endorrur  
. . . . XXVIIs. VIId.

Item pur translation overaynge del fyn en le West, tanque al East . . . .  
XIIs. VIId.

Item pur l'endorrure del majeste, II Angeles et le champ del Coronation de  
nostre dame, ove tous les Verges et appartrignances . . . . VI. XVIIs. IIId.

Item a II overeurs pur V semayns . . . . XXXIIIs. IIId.

Item paye al Burnyshour . . . . . VIIs. VIId.

Item pur cc. copernayll . . . . . XVIIId.

Item a un Payntour, pur painter II ymages . . . . . XVIIId.



Item a une home pur ayder endorrer pur un jur et dim. . . . . IIIs. IIIId.

Item pur le travail dud it John et II autres overeurs pur VI semayns  
. . . . . XLs. IXd.

Item pur endorrur de la graunt coronall, et pur mettre les piers dedeins al  
fyn del Est, et lour purtenances . . . . . LXVIs. VIIId.

Item solutum cuidm Aurifabro pro garnishing XLIII lapides Christallos et  
Berillos deauratos, in dicto feretro impositos, pro qualibet pecia Vd. unde summa  
. . . . . XVIIIIs. XIId.

Item pro garnishynge unius Jocalis, ibidem positi . . . . . XIId.

Item pro VIII ymaginibus emptis pro dicto feretro . . . . . XXs.

Item pro deauratione X ymaginum, positarum circa prædictum feretrum ;  
qualibet pecia IIIs. IIIId. . . . . XXXs. IIIId.

Item solutum Herebright Pictori, pro picture, auro, et aliis coloribus factis  
et impositis in feretro, et circa dictum feretum . . . . . XXVIs. VIIId.

Item pro incarvatione quatuor ymaginum dicti feretri . . . . . IIs.

This magnificent shrine was surrounded by an iron railing, bronzed over,  
five feet ten inches in height, having locks, keys, closures, and openings which  
cost £14 2s. (The modern equivalent is about £225.) In order that

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the grille might be kept in good condition, Thomas de Evere, the dean, in 1407  
bequeathed £100 for building houses in Knight Rider Street, the rents of which  
were to be devoted to their reparation, and for the maintenance of lights burning  
about the shrine.

The cathedral possessed a cross of crystal, which was placed on the shrine  
(probably in the altar before the shrine) on great festivals.

## ST. MELLITUS

St. Mellitus, the first Italian bishop of London, who fled before the revival  
of paganism, had a shine in the same cathedral. He afterwards became the  
archbishop of Canterbury, and was there buried. His shine stood on the south  
side of that of St. Augustine in the monastery outside the walls of Canterbury (see  
page 20), but London gained some relic of him, which was enclosed in a feretory

of wood, covered, on the front side only, with plates of silver and with images, surmounted by the figure of an angel of copper gilt.

Another relic of Mellitus—an arm—was obtained by Bishop Eustace of London, in the thirteenth century, from the monks of St Augustine's monastery. This arm reliquary was of silver set with sixteen crystals, four large, and six smaller jewels.

#### ST. ALDHELM

St. Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne, had died at Doultling in the year 709, but his body was brought to his old monastery of Malmesbury for burial. His life, his writings on virginity, and his acts, especially concerning the differences between the British and Saxon Churches, called forth great veneration from all the inhabitants of the south-west of England.

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About 837 King Ethelwulf made a costly shrine for the bishop's relics. The front was decorated with images of solid silver, and on the back the miracles of the saint were represented in raised metal-work, beaten up on plates of gold. The inscription was in letters of gold on a crystal pediment, and it was adorned with precious stones.

The Danes swept over the land, the body of St. Aldhelm was hidden for safety, and the shine went the way of all things of value. It was great booty the Danes obtained from England.

During the short reign of Edwy he vented his wrath on St. Dunstan by turning the regular monks out of the monasteries and giving those houses to secular canons. At Malmesbury it proved a fortunate innovation, for the intruding canons, while curiously prying over their newly acquired possession, found the missing relics. These were taken from their hiding-place and enclosed in a shrine, to the great joy of all who heard of it, and they regular monks almost forgave the seculars—whom they called “irregular and vagabond men”—for the great service they had rendered to the Church.

Again St. Aldhem's fame spread far and wide, and a troop of cavalry was necessary to preserve order among the enormous crowds of pilgrims who thronged to his shrine on special occasions.

#### ST. BEDE

The memory and the relics of the Venerable Bede will always be precious to the Anglo-Saxon race, not only for his exemplary life, but also for his literary labours. But for him a period of England's history would have been obscured in an unfathomable darkness.

St. Bede died on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 735, and was buried

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in the south apse of the church of St. Paul, at Jarrow, but his body was afterwards translated to a more honourable position within the same sanctuary.

According to Mabillon, his name was inserted among the saints in the martyrologies long before the title “Venerable” was given to him ; but in the acts of the Second Council of Aix-la-Chapelle in 836 he is called “The Venerable.” Touching this title is a legend that it was derived from a celestial source, which legend may have originated in an attempt to account of the usual epithet *venerabilis* instead of *sanctus*. It was said that after the death of Bede one of his scholars endeavoured to compose an epitaph in a single leonine verse. He began—*Hac sunt in fossa* ; but when he had engraved thus far in the stone he found that his intended conclusion—*Beda sancti or presbyteri ossa*—would not bring the metre aright. Weary with futile attempts he retired to rest, and in the morning, behold ! engraved on the tomb by angelic hands—“*Hac sunt in fossa, Beda Venerabilis ossa.*”

So famed did St. Bede become by his writings that his works were eagerly sought ; great prices were given for transcripts of but small portions of them, and St. Lullus, archbishop of Mentz, after receiving a manuscript copy of one, sent a silk vesture to cover St. Bede’s shrine.

Elfred Westoue, a priest of the cathedral at Durham, was a great collector of relics, with which he enriched the treasury of that church ; the manner of gaining them does not seem to have troubled his conscience so long as he obtained them. From the pen of Symeon of Durham <sup>7</sup> we find that this reverend impostor declared that he had a vision directing him to proceed on a mission for the honour of various saints. He was to go to those monasteries and churches in Northumbria in which reposed the bodies of saints and to exalt them above the ground for

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veneration ; in doing this he appropriated a portion of the relics of each saint, probably by way of a fee, and by such means gathered a large collection which afterwards figured in the inventories of Durham. Elfred had succeeded well, and he now set his mind on obtaining the relics of St. Bede ; but the clergy of Jarrow were jealous of their treasure. To disarm suspicion he resorted to stratagem, to gain by stealth that which he could not honestly obtain.

For many years Elfred visited the shrine at Jarrow on St. Bede’s day, ostensibly for venerating the relics, and regularly returned empty. His devotion never flagged, until on year—1020—after his pilgrimage, he secretly started for Durham at daybreak, an hour he had never before begun his return journey ; this was his last visit, his devotion in that quarter ceased—he had attained his object. When asked what had become of the bones of St. Bede he would answer, “No one knows better than I—let the same coffin which holds the most sacred body of our Father Cuthbert hold also the bones of Bede, the venerable doctor and monk. Let no one seek a portion of his relics elsewhere than in that hospitable chest.” At the same time, although by his answer he had committed himself to no definite

assertion, he enjoined secrecy on the brethren as to what he had hinted, in case their treasures should be rifled.

The description on the opening of St. Cuthbert's coffin in 1104, written by an anonymous monk and printed in the *Act Sanctorum*, records the finding of St. Bede's bones in a small linen sack, resting by the side of St. Cuthbert, and confirms the surmise that they had been obtained and placed there by Elfred.

The bones of St. Bede and of other saints were not replaced in St. Cuthbert's coffin after the translation, but were put in certain wooden receptacles hewn out for the

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purpose. "These are honourably preserved elsewhere in the church in a larger repository expressly made for them."<sup>8</sup> From the description of these receptacles being hewn out of wood they were evidently of the nature of that relic of a past age preserved in the minister at Wimborne—a trunk of a tree with a cavity deeply sunk in its midst.

In the year 1155 Bishop Hugh Pudsey enshrined the relics of St. Bede in a feretory of the purest gold and silver, which he adorned with jewels.<sup>9</sup> They were afterwards removed from the feretory of St. Cuthbert by Richard de Castro Bernardi and placed in the Galilee, between two pillars on the south side, upon a beautiful monument of blue marble, three feet high, supported by five small pillars, one at each corner and one in the middle.

"the uppermost stone whereon St. Bede's feretory stood had three holes at each corner into which irons were fastened to guide the cover when it was drawn up or let down. This cover was of fine wainscot very curiously gilded and appointed to draw up and down over the shrine, as they list to show the sumptuousness thereof."

In the *Rites of Durham* certain lines are recorded which were engraved on the lower slab commemorating the names of the bishop who defrayed the cost and of the skilled workman who constructed the shrine :—

"This coffin doth contain the bones of Venerable Bede :  
Christ to the maker sense did give and to the giver gold.  
One Peter framed the work, the cost Bishop Hugo made ;  
So Peter and Hugo patrons both St. Bede enclosed in mould."

This verse exhibits clear evidence as to the composition having been from the pen of Bishop Hugh Pudsey himself. Another name—of one who used his influence in procuring a more sumptuous shine and more honourable

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position for this one Doctor of the Church of Saxon England—was perpetuated in another verse on the base, although with some confusion of dates :—

“In the year of our Lord a thousand three hundred and seventy  
Richard of Barnardcastle did most earnestly procure  
That the bones of St. Bede lying nigh St. Cuthbert’s shrine  
Should be translated into the Galilee, there to remain,  
Which Richard deceased, for the love he did bear to Bede,  
Caused his own bones to be laid near him under a marble stone indeed.”

In 1528 William Watsonn, *alias* William Wyloume, the Master and Keeper of the Feretory, was also the deese prior or sub-prior, whose duties at the shine at this time are thus related in the *Rites* :—

“The deece prior had the keys and the keeping of Saint Bede’s Shrine which did stand in the Galilee, and whensoever there was any general procession then he commanded his clerk, giving him the keys of St. Bede’s Shrine, to draw the cover of it, and to take it down and did carry it into the Revestry. Then it was carried with four monks about in procession every principal day, and when the procession was done it was carried into the Galilee and set up there again, with the cover led down over it and locked, the keys brought by the clerk to the Master of the Feretory again.”

In the account of the procession on “Hallow-Thursday” we are told that every monk had on a cope, and among other things was carried St. Bede’s feretory borne on the shoulders of four monks.

The estimate in which the reputation of the two saints Cuthbert and Bede were respectively held by a French bishop is thus related by Camden. As the bishop returned from Scotland he came to the cathedral of Durham, and kneeling at the shine of St. Cuthbert offered a bawby (the smallest Scottish coin), saying, *Sancte Cuthberte, is sanctus sis, ora pro me*—St. Cuthbert, if thou art a saint, pray for me. But afterwards coming to the shine of

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St. Bede he offered a French crown, with the invocation, *Sancte Beda, quia sanctus es, ora pro me*—St. Bede, because thou art a saint, pray for me.

The shrine of St. Bede was destroyed in the visitation held by Dr. Lee, Dr. Henley, and Master Blythman at Durham. In November, 1541, John Symson was paid two shillings for four days’ work removing the shrines of Sts. Cuthbert and Bede ; and another fifteen-pence was paid to Rayffe Skelis and three others for taking away the fragments. One account says that the bones of the Venerable Bede were scattered, another says they were buried within the plain, high tomb, still called “the tomb of Bede.” In 1831 the tomb was opened and the relics examined ; after being enclosed in a lead-lined chest the bones were replaced in

the tomb with a document recording the proceedings. At the same time the couplet already quoted was sculptured on the uppermost slab

In the *Rites* it is said :—

“There is two stones that was of St. Bede’s Shrine in the Galilee, of blue marble, which, after the defacing thereof, was brought into the body of the church, and lyeth now over against the eastmost tomb of the Nevills joined both together. The uppermost stone of the said Shrine hath three holes in every corner, for irons to stand and to be fastened in, to guide the covering, where it was drawn up or let down, whereupon did stand St. Bedes’ Shrine. And the other is a plain marble stone, which was lowest, and did lie above a little marble tomb, whereon the lower end of the five small pillars of marble did stand, which pillars did also support the uppermost stone.”

Dr. Kitchin, Dean of Durham, has kindly measured these stones, which still lie between the fourth and fifth piers on the south side of the nave. The lower stone is 4 feet 4 1/3 inches long by 2 feet 7½ inches wide, and has two holes—both filled with lead—about one-third down the length of the stone, the meaning of which is not

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apparent. Probably the under side of the stone contains the marks of the bases of the five pillars, but it is not known to have been removed since it was placed there in 1541. The slab on which the feretory rested is placed in the pavement with its upper surface exposed. It measures 4 feet 7 inches by 3 feet 10 inches ; the twelve holes in which the irons were fixed are filled with lead.

From these two fragments and the descriptions from Symeon and the *Rites* it is quite possible to conjecture the general appearance of St. Bede’s shrine (see Frontispiece).

## ST. GUTHLAC

From the little knowledge we have of the shrine of St. Guthlac, the hermit of Croyland, it appears to have been somewhat different in character from the greater number of premier shines.

When Guthlac, who had been trained at Repton monastery, died at Croyland in 714, in the monastery he had there founded, Eadburga, abbess of Repton, sent him a sarcophagus of Derbyshire lead and shroud, in memory of his former connection with her abbey.

Amongst the pilgrims came Wiglaf, king of Mercia, and his devotion to the saint was so great that from 833 he omitted not to visit the shine at least once every year, each time offering some jewel of great value ; but they were all stolen by his successor Bertulph. The reputation of the healing powers of St. Guthlac, however, increased the number of offerings so rapidly that by the year 851 the riches of the shine far exceeded those before the spoliation.

King Ethelred's tribute resulted, in many monasteries, in the seizure of reliquaries and the stripping of shines, but at Croyland Abbot Osketul avoided such an indignity to St. Guthlac by paying 400 marks.

From the fury of the Danes and from fire, the feretory of St. Guthlac was repeatedly rescued, and it was not until the twelfth century that a fitting shrine would be erected according to the most perfect skill of the times. At last the relics were translated, in 1136, into a rich shrine of wood covered with plates of gold and silver, encrusted with jewels, which had been given to St. Guthlac by Robert de Grandineto.

Abbot Robert de Redinges, in 1175, made a new front to the shine of greater beauty, evidently that part which was seen above the high altar.

In 1195 the relics were again translated. It was determined to build a shine of greater height to contain the feretory, and it was to be of the most beautiful workmanship, worthy of so great a saint.

On the 5th of the Calends of May, being a Saturday, after the singing of lauds, the feretory was taken down, and the convent stood around singing, while the leaden coffin, given by the Abbess Eadburga, was examined. It was bound with iron and then sealed with lead in six different places, after which it was placed on a new altar which had been built above the steps of the sanctuary, until the shine was again ready to receive it.

On the following Monday the workmen began to excavate beneath the great altar for the purpose of strengthening the foundations, for it must be remembered the Croyland Abbey was built on piles. The work of the altar was finished on the Feast of Sts. Philip and James, after which they erected the shine upon a basement ; pillars of marble supported slabs of the same material, on which the feretory was to rest. The masons diligently

attended to the work, and on the 1st of June a vast multitude assembled to witness the gorgeous ceremonial with which the abbot and convent deposited the relics on their throne.

From the description of this shine the monks of the Fens were evidently following the principles of design displayed in the shine of St. Bede, which had been constructed forty years previous. It was different from the generally followed plans of the great shines, and probably fashions were followed in these matters as well as styles of architecture. In the fancifully depicted shine of St. Thomas in the Canterbury glass—erected some thirty years later—a substructure of pillars supporting the feretory may again be seen. Although it is not a representation of the actual structure of the shine, it exhibits the prevalent idea of an ideal monument.

#### STS. OSWALD AND WULFSTAN



St. Oswald and St. Wulfstan were twin objects of devotion to the pilgrims of Worcester. So great were their combined intercessions considered by King John that he willed the corporeal casket of his own sinful soul should be entombed between the shines of the two saints, which stood one at either side of the presbytery.

St. Oswald died in 992, but his relics were translated from the humble tomb in which he was first interred to a rich shrine by Adulf, his successor in both the sees of Worcester and York. To the latter place the greater part of his relics were afterwards translated. During the dispute between Matilda and Stephen, Worcester was sacked, and the monks barely saved the relics of St. Oswald from profanation, for as they bore the shine from the church the rabble rushed in at the gate.

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St. Wulfstan died in 1095. This last Saxon bishop to rule an English see had no lack of detractors among the Norman prelates, but all their base charges of incompetence and disloyalty were disproved, events which gave rise to the legend that the post-mortem power of St. Edward the Confessor allowed no one to usurp the bishopric from the venerable Wulfstan.

St. Wulfstan was buried in the new cathedral he had built at Worcester, and King William I covered his tomb with workmanship of gold and silver.

King John held St. Wulfstan in so great veneration that more than once he made offerings at his shrine. Another king—Edward I—entertained a “special affection” for St. Wulfstan, and made many pilgrimages to this feretory. After the conquest of Wales he came to this spot (December, 1273) to offer his thanksgivings.

In 1216 the gold was stripped from the feretory and melted down to meet the demand of 300 marks levied upon the convent by Louis, the Prince of France ; but in two years’ time, on the 7th of the Ides of June, the relics of St. Wulfstan were translated by Bishop Silvester to a new shrine, which had been built opposite to that of St. Oswald. So quick a restoration was probably owing to the offerings of pilgrims, which had greatly increased since the canonisation of their revered bishop in 1203. To this translation the bishop invited William de Trumpington, Abbot of St. Albans, and on the return of William to his own abbey he triumphantly bore a rib of St. Wulfstan. There he erected an altar to the saint, above which he placed the rib, enclosed in a goldsmith’s work of great beauty.

#### ST. SWITHUN

Winchester Cathedral, although not so rich in such possessions as those of Canterbury and Lincoln, contained

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many reliquaries of saints. Among them the shine of St. Swithun was of great popularity. The humble-minded bishop was, at his own desire, first buried in the common graveyard outside the minster, where the rain from the eaves of the roof fell upon his grave and where the passers-by might tread. There his body lay for more than a century, and after his canonization and translation a chapel was built over the site of his first tomb at the north-west corner of the church, the foundation of which may yet be seen.

King Edgar had a shrine of great beauty made within the church—a feretory of silver plated with gold and adorned with jewels, into which the relics of St. Swithun were translated in 963 by St. Ethelwold the bishop, who at the same time enshrined the body of St. Birinus, the apostle of Wessex. The latter had been buried at Dorchester, the first cathera [sic] of that province, but his bones had been translated by Bishop Hedda to Winchester when it was made the see city in the seventh century.

Two years after this the good bishop was praying one night before the high altar, above which were the shines of the saints. The chroniclers say he was standing—through more probably he was napping—when there appeared to him three venerable men. The middle one addressed St. Ethelwold thus : “I am Birstan (Brithstan), formerly bishop of this city ; (*then pointing to his right*) here is Birin, the first preacher and priest of this church ; (*and pointing to his left*) here is St. Swithun, the spiritual patron of this church and city. Know also that as you see me with them in your presence, so I enjoy equal glory with them in heaven ; why then am I defrauded of the honour due to me from mortals on Earth, who am magnified with the fellowship of celestial sprits in heaven?” The jealousy of St. Brithstan, that Sts. Swinthun and Birin should be honoured with costly shines while his

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bones remained in a lonely tomb, was appeased by being awarded a similar receptacle ; and his effort in tearing himself from the regions of the blessed to reprimand the bishop was not vain.

The skull of St. Swithun was carried to Canterbury by St. Elphege in the eleventh century and a fragment of it was afterwards taken to Sens, and placed in a head reliquary. The other relics of the patron of Winchester were divided to such an extent that only a very mutilated trunk could have remained in his cathedral. An arm of the saint was one of the great treasures of the minster at Peterborough.

Bishop Walkelyn translated St. Swithun from the old cathedral into the new building in 1150 ; and nearly a hundred years after this (in 1241) the shine was broken by the vane falling from the tower through the roof.

In the inventory of the church goods demanded of the prior and convent by the Vicar-General Cromwell we find an enumeration of the various shrines. That document mentions one of gold, twenty-one of silver, five of copper gilt, two arms, one foot, and seven tables of relics, besides “behind the high altar St. Swithun’s shine being of plate silver and gilt, and garnished with stones.”

From the letter of the commissioners—Pollard, Wriothesley, and Williams—recording the destruction, is the last mention of the shine of that saint, best known in the popular mind by his reputation for continuous rain. This letter, dated September 21st, 1538, proceeds :—

“About three o’clock this Saturday morning, we made an end of the shrine here at Winchester. There was no gold, nor ring, nor true stone about it, but all great counterfeits ; but the silver alone will amount to 2,000 marks.”

This gnome-like work was a deed of darkness, and the demolition “lasted throughout the night.” The visitors

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were assisted in their work “by the mayor with eight or nine of his brethren, bishop’s chancellor, and Mr. doctor [sic] Crawford, with as good appearance of honest personages besides.”

#### ST. OSMUND

In the nephew of our first Norman king, not only Salisbury but England had a prelate who will ever be famed for his greatness and his sanctity. From the date of his consecration to the see of Sarum (1078), St. Osmund gave his life and his substance to the Church and the country.

As a liturgiologist and the compiler of the *Consuetudinariam*, known as the *Use of Sarum*, he influenced the Church’s services through the whole land and for all time.

He died in 1099 and was buried at Old Sarum, where his memory was greatly venerated, and his chasuble and a broken pastoral staff which had belonged to him, are mentioned among the treasures of the cathedral in 1222.

At the removal of the cathedral to the present site in Salisbury (in 1226) his body, and the bones of other prelates, were translated to the new church.

His relics were laid in the Lady Chapel, and he was invoked as a saint for more than two hundred years before he was formally canonised in 1456.

In the process of canonisation numberless miracles were vouched for, and in one case we are told that the sufferer placed his head and his hands “in quodam foramina eiusdem tumbe,” thus imitating to a certain degree the form of this tomb, which was regarded as a shrine and about which lighted tapers were placed. Between the south aisle and the nave is a tomb attributed to Lord Stourton, who died during the reign of Queen Elizabeth ; but it is certainly older than that period by some centuries,

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and it has been suggested that it may form part of the original tomb of St. Osmund.<sup>10</sup> There are three *foramina* or apertures in the side, such as were made

in the shines of saints, and shown in that of St. Edward the Confessor and St. Thomas of Canterbury (see pages 155, 227).

The canonisation was so frequently delayed at Rome and the people flocked in such numbers to the tomb that the canons of the cathedral contemplated exhuming the body, placing it in a shine, and venerating him as a saint without waiting for papal authority.

In 1456 the process was concluded, and the chapter at once began to erect a shine in so stately a manner that it was not finished, or the translation completed, before the midsummer of that following year.

In the same manuscript <sup>11</sup> are certain memoranda relating to the shine ; but the leaves are so mutilated that it is a very incomplete account. From it, however, some idea of the *chef* of St. Osmund may be gained :—

For Saynt Osmundis hede with the garnyshyng  
Whereof is received be an endenture in a . . .  
Item in the Wyghte of certain stonys . . .  
Summa xix li  
And so ther is be hynde of the Weyght  
Summa xviii li  
for the making of the same hede . . .  
for the mending of the gilt silver . . .  
For ii, stonys for the points of the myter . . . iiis.  
For xx grete stonys for the mytre and the fote . . . xiiis. iiiid.  
For xxvi stonys for the mytre . . . . . xiis.  
For xvi stonys for the Crowne . . . . . viiis.  
For a cofyn of Tymbre . . . . . xviiiid.

A curious custom was observed in the order of procession on certain days at Salisbury, when the clergy bearing

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a feretory of relics, among which were probably some of St. Osmund's, took their station at the west door of the cathedral, and held the relics high across the entrance for the procession to pass beneath.

The sole memorial of the shine, and that a doubtful one, is a slightly raised slab of blue stone, with no inscription save the date MXCIX—the date of his death. This slab, removed by the vandal architect Wyatt to the eighth bay of the north arcade of the nave, was in 1878 replaced on its former site in the Lady Chapel.

When Wyatt explored the grave beneath this stone it was found to be empty ; this was probably the first grave of St. Osmund in the present cathedral.

~footnotes

1. L. iv. c. 3.
2. *Catalogue of the Muniments and MS. Books at Lichfield*, etc., by the Rev. J. Charles Cox, LL.D.
3. A.D. 1345.
4. F. 4, A.D. 1481.
5. Arthur Dudley, Prebendary of Colwich, 1531-1577.
6. *Simeon of Durham*, an. DCCXL.
7. c. xliii.
8. Reginald.
9. Simeon of Durham.
10. *The Canonisation of St. Osmund*. By A. R. Malden, M.A., Wilts Record Society.
11. Muniment Room, Salisbury Cathedral.

-end chapter four, part two-