

The PRESIDENT then delivered his

## Inaugural Address.

IT is now nine years since I was first placed by the favour of the Society in the chair which I am to-day again called on to fill. It will, I hope, not be thought disrespectful to the place in which that meeting of nine years ago was held, if I say that, compared at least with the place in which we are now met, it hardly claims a place among the great historic sites of England, or even of Somerset. Chosen President at Crewkerne, I could hardly have filled up the usual measure of a presidential address with a discourse on the history of Crewkerne only. Let me not be understood as at all despising or undervaluing the history of Crewkerne. I have not the slightest doubt that a volume of real value might be filled with the history of Crewkerne, or of any other market-town in this shire or in any other. But such a volume would be a volume

of local detail, of detail out of which the general historian would be able to glean, here and there, matter of real value for general history. It would hardly be a volume full of the records of great historical events, of foundations famous beyond the bounds of this island, of the goings forth and comings in of men whose names are written for ever in the history of our own island and of other lands. It would not supply many of those striking points, of those marked likenesses and contrasts, which form the natural material of such a discourse as that which it is my duty to lay before you to-day. In speaking to you therefore at Crewkerne, I had but little to say about Crewkerne itself. I took the opportunity, as some of the few whose memory may go back over so long a time as nine years may perchance remember, to speak on the general study of those branches of knowledge whose local aspect it is the object of our Society to cultivate. I tried, if I may be allowed to repeat myself, to insist on two special points. Those were, first the proper way of studying local history as a contribution to general history, and secondly the natural connexion between the two branches of study which our Society undertakes, antiquities and natural history. I tried to show that the two were in fact only branches of one study, that he who puts together a record of the strata of the earth, and he who puts together a record of the political changes of England or of any other land, are in truth only working at different stages of one great story. I tried to show that all those studies are joined together by a natural tie, in distinction from certain other studies, studies which we all, I hope, hold in the respect which is due to them, but which have little or nothing to do with our immediate business as a Society for the study of archaeology and natural history. That old phrase of "natural history" is, I think, a happy one. It tells us that the history of the earth itself and of its inhabitants other than man is closely linked, as no separate study but another branch of the same study, with the history of man himself. We have to-day the pleasure

of seeing some among us who have made themselves a name by their researches into those earliest regions of history whose records are to be spelled out among the rocks and the remains which the rocks shelter. I believe—I may say, I know—that they will fully bear me out as to the near connexion which I wish to insist on between their studies and my own.

But if at Crewkerne we were driven by the necessity of the case to think less of the particular spot where we were met, and more of the general subjects of our studies, it is otherwise in the place where we are come together to-day. Here at Glastonbury we have assuredly no lack of work before us, even if we keep ourselves to the history of Glastonbury only. I need not run off from the field immediately before us to lay down general principles of any kind. But I may try to carry out at Glastonbury the general principles which I tried to lay down at Crewkerne. It is not my business to-day to speak of the details of the history of Glastonbury, still less to speak of the details of its buildings. Those duties belong to others. Nor shall I have time to follow the history of Glastonbury for more than a few stages of its long historic being. And, as I feel no call to parade my ignorance by talking about what I do not understand, least of all am I tempted to hold forth on the geological peculiarities of the district. Still the country has natural features which must force themselves even on an untechnical eye, and those natural features are closely connected with the history. More truly they are the key to the history, the causes of the history. I shall do best to keep myself to those features in local history and legend which are most distinctive, which are in truth altogether unique, and which give the spot on which we stand an historic character unlike that of any other spot.

We will ask then first of all, What is the history of Glastonbury? Every one can answer at once that it is the history of a great monastery. The history of Glastonbury is the history of its abbey. Without its abbey, Glastonbury were nothing.

The history of Glastonbury is not as the history of York or Chester or Lincoln or Exeter; it is not as the history of Bristol or Oxford or Norwich or Coventry. It is not the stirring history of a great city or of a great military post. The military, the municipal, and the commercial history of Glastonbury might be written in a small compass, and it would very largely belong to modern times. The history of Glastonbury is a purely ecclesiastical history, a history like that of Wells and Lichfield, of Peterborough and Crowland. Again, unlike the history of Wells and Lichfield, but like the history of Peterborough and Crowland, it is a purely monastic history. No one who has read the signatures to the Great Charter can fail to know that there have been bishops of Glastonbury; but Glastonbury looked on its bishops only as momentary intruders, and was glad to pay a great price to get rid of them. But even the short reign of the bishops did not affect the purely monastic character of Glastonbury; no one ever tried at Glastonbury, as was tried at Winchester, at Coventry, and at Malmesbury, to displace the monks in favour of secular priests. But again, among monastic histories, the history of Glastonbury has a character of its own which is wholly unique. I will not insult its venerable age by so much as contrasting it with the foundations of yesterday which arose under the influence of the Cistercian movement, foundations which have covered some parts of England with the loveliest of ruins in the loveliest of sites, but which play but a small part indeed in the history of this church and realm. Glastonbury is something more than Netley and Tintern, than Rievaulx and Fountains. But it is something more again than the Benedictine houses which arose at the bidding of the Norman Conqueror, of his house or of his companions. It is something more than Selby and Battle, than Shrewsbury and Reading. It is, in its own special aspect, something more even than that royal minster of Saint Peter, the crowning-place of Harold and of William, which came to supplant Glastonbury as the

burial-place of kings. Nay, it stands out distinct, as having a special character of its own, even among those great and venerable foundations of English birth which were already great and venerable when the Conqueror came. There is something at Glastonbury which there is not at Peterborough and Crowland and Evesham, in the two minsters of Canterbury and in the two minsters of Winchester. Those are the works of our own people; they go back to the days of our ancient kingship; they go back, some of them, to the days of our earliest Christianity; but they go back no further. We know their beginnings; we know their founders; their history, their very legends, do not dare to trace up their foundations beyond the time of our own coming into this island. Winchester indeed has a tale which carries up the sanctity of the spot to Lucius the King and Eleutherius the Pope; but legend itself does not attempt to bridge over the whole space, or to deny that, whatever Lucius and Eleutherius may have done, Cenevalh and Birinus had to do over again, as though it had never been done. The mighty house of Saint Alban, in its site, in its name, in the very materials of its gigantic minster, carries us back beyond the days of our own being in this land. But it is only in its site, in its name, in its materials, that it does so. If the church of Roman Alban was built of Roman bricks on the site of Alban's martyrdom, it was built by English and Norman hands; it was built because an English king had of his own choice thought good to honour the saint of another people who had died ages before his time. But there is no historic or even legendary continuity between the days of Alban the saint and the days of Offa the founder. It is at Glastonbury, alone among the great churches of Britain—we instinctively feel that on this spot the name of *England* is out of place—that we walk with easy steps, with no thought of any impassable barrier, from the realm of Arthur into the realm of Ine. Here alone does legend take upon itself to go up, not only to the beginnings of English Christianity, but to the

beginnings of Christianity itself. Here alone do the early memories of the other nations and other Churches of the British islands gather round a holy place which long possession at least made English. Here alone, alongside of the memory and the tombs of West-Saxon princes who broke the power of the Northman, there still abides the memory, for ages there was shown the tomb, of the British prince who, if he did not break, at least checked for a generation, the advancing power of the West-Saxon. The church which was the resting-place of Eadgar, of his father and of his grandson, claimed to be also the resting-place of Arthur. But at Glastonbury this is a small matter. The legends of the spot go back to the days of the Apostles. We are met at the very beginning by the names of Saint Philip and Saint James, of their twelve disciples, with Joseph of Arimathæa at their head. Had Wells or even Bath laid claim to such an illustrious antiquity, their claims might have been laughed to scorn by the most ignorant; at Glastonbury such claims, if not easy to prove, were at least not easy to disprove. If the Belgian Venta claims ten parts in her own Lucius, the isle of Avalon claims some smaller share in him. We read the tale of Fagan and Deruvian; we read of Indraetus and Gildas and Patrick and David and Columb and Bridget, all dwellers in or visitors to the first spot where the Gospel had shone in Britain. No fiction, no dream, could have dared to set down the names of so many worthies of the earlier races of the British islands in the *Liber Vitæ* of Durham or of Peterborough. Now I do not ask you to believe these legends; I do ask you to believe that there was some special cause why legends of this kind should grow, at all events why they should grow in such a shape and in such abundance, round Glastonbury alone of all the great monastic churches of Britain. And I ask you to come on to something more like history. Elsewhere even forged charters do not venture to go beyond the days of Æthelberht. But Glastonbury professed to have a charter dating, as far as chronology

goes, only from the days of Æthelberht, but which claimed, truly or falsely, to belong to a state of things which in Kent would carry us back before the days of Hengest. In one page of his history William of Malmesbury records a charter of the year 601 granted by a king of Damnonia whose name he could not make out, to an abbot whose name—will our Welsh friends, if any are here to day, forgive him?—at once proclaimed his British barbarism.<sup>1</sup> Then follows a charter of 670 of our own West-Saxon Cenwealh. Then follows one of 678 of Centwine the King, then one of Baldred the King, then the smaller and greater charters of Ine the glorious King. Except the difficulty of making out his name, there is nothing to hint that any gap parted the unknown Damnonian from Cenwealh wider than the gap which parted Cenwealh from Centwine, Baldred, and Ine. One to be sure is King of Damnonia, another is King of the West-Saxons. But that might be a mere change of title, as when the King of the West-Saxons grew into the King of the English. The feeling with which we read that page of William of Malmesbury's History of Glastonbury is the same as that with which we read one of those lists of Emperors in which Charles the Great succeeds Constantine the Sixth, with no sign of break or change. It is the feeling with which we read those endless entries in Domesday from which we might be led to believe that William the Conqueror was the peaceful successor of Eadward the Confessor. In this, as in ten thousand other cases, the language of formal documents would by itself never lead us to understand the great facts and revolutions which lurk beneath their formal language.

But we must stop to see what legends and documents prove as well as what they do not prove. We need not believe that the Glastonbury legends are records of facts; but the existence

(1). See the alleged charter in Gale's edition, 308. Hearne, 48. The date is given as 601; the king is described as "Rex Domnoniæ," and it is added, "Quis iste rex fuerit scedulæ vetustas negat scire." There is a curious marginal note in Hearne's edition.

of those legends is a very great fact. I will not as yet search into the genuineness of either the Damnonian or the West-Saxon document. They are equally good for my purpose, even if both of them can be shown to be forgeries. The point is this. Compare Glastonbury and Canterbury. We have no legends tracing up the foundation of Christ Church or Saint Augustine's to the days of the Apostles, or to the days of any Roman emperor or British king. Instead of such legends we have a bit, perhaps of genuine history, at all events, of highly probable tradition, which seems to show that, in setting up new churches for men of English race, some regard was paid to the still remembered sites and ruins which had once been the churches of men of Roman or British race.<sup>1</sup> In most places we do not find even this much of remembrance of the state of things which had passed away; at Canterbury we do find this much. But this is widely different from the absolute continuity of the Glastonbury legends, in which Joseph of Arimathæa and Dunstan appear as actors in different scenes of the same drama. So again, at Canterbury no monk of Christ Church or Saint Augustine's, not the most daring forger that ever took pen in hand, would have dared to put forward a charter of Vortigern in favour of his house, immediately followed by a charter of Hengest. In Kent at least the temporal conquest of the Briton by the Jute, the spiritual conquest of the Jute by the Roman, were too clearly stamped on the memories of men, they were too clearly written in the pages of Bæda, to allow of any confusion about such matters. There at least men know that, if the reign of Woden had given way to the reign of Christ and Gregory, the reign of Christ and Cæsar had once given way to the reign of Woden. There at least the great gulf of Teutonic conquest still yawned too wide for either legends or documents to bridge it over. But here, in the isle of Avalon, legends and documents go on as if no such gulf had ever yawned at all. The truth is that

(1). See Bæda, i. 33.



this unbroken continuity of legends—it matters not whether true or false—of documents—it matters not whether genuine or spurious—is the surest witness of the fact that in the isle of Avalon Teutonic conquest meant something widely different from what it meant in the isle of Thanet. In our Glastonbury story Teutonic conquest goes simply for nothing. My argument is that it could not have gone for nothing, even in the mind of an inventor of legends or a forger of documents, unless it had been, to say the least, something much less frightful on the banks of the Brue than it was on the banks of the Stour. I argue that the coming of our forefathers was not here, as it was there, something which made an utter break between the days before it and the days after it. It was a mighty change indeed, but still a change through which men and their institutions might contrive to live, not something before which they had simply to perish or to flee away, leaving behind them only feeble memories or shattered ruins.

The simple truth then is this, that, among all the greater Churches of England, Glastonbury is the only one where we may be content to lay aside the name of England and fall back on the older name of Britain. It is the one great religious foundation which lived through the storm of English conquest, and in which Briton and Englishman have an equal share. At no other place do we so fully stand face to face with the special history of the land from the Axe south-westward. Nowhere else can we so fully take in the fact of the living on of a certain Celtic element under Teutonic rule, the process by which the Britons of this land were neither wholly slaughtered nor wholly driven out, but were to a great extent, step by step, assimilated with Englishmen. Nowhere else in short do we so clearly see the state of things which is pictured to us as still fresh in the laws of Ine, but which had come to an end before the putting forth of the laws of Ælfred. The church of Glastonbury, founded by the Briton, honoured and enriched by the Englishman, is the material memorial of the days when

Briton and Englishman, conquered and conqueror, lived under the same law, though not an equal law, under the same protection, though not an equal protection, on the part of the West-Saxon king.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is there the same unbroken continuity, at all events of religious life. At Canterbury Christ was worshipped by the Englishman on the same spot on which he had been worshipped by the Briton. But there was a time between, a time in which, on the same spot or on some spot not far from it, Englishmen had bowed to Woden. But there never was a moment when men of any race bowed to Woden in the isle of Avalon. Men had doubtless bowed, in days which in Cenwealh's days were ancient, to the gods of the Briton and the Roman; but no altars ever smoked to our Teutonic gods within the shores of the holy island or on the peak of the holy hill which soars above it. The cause of the difference is a simple one. We read in the Chronicle thirteen years before that fight at the Pens which made this land English—"Her Cenwealh wæs gefullod."<sup>2</sup> The Teutonic conqueror of Avalon was one who had been himself washed, enlightened, made whole, in other words baptized into the faith of Christ. Those whom he conquered were his brethren. He came therefore not, as Hengest and Ælle, simply to destroy. In other parts of the West-Saxon realm the coming of Cerdic and Ceawlin had been as fearful as the coming of Hengest and Ælle. But Avalon and the coast thereof, the land of the Sumorsætan from the Axe westward, was the prize of a conqueror who was Hengest and Æthelberht in one. Under him the bounds of English conquest were still enlarged; but English conquest no longer meant death or slavery to the conquered, it no longer meant the plunder and overthrow of the temples of the Christian faith. The victor of Bradford and the Pens had, before he marched forth to victory, done

(1). This is the character of the laws of Ine as regards the relations of the two races. I hinted at this characteristic of his stage in West-Saxon history in my article on "The *Shire* and the *Gá*."

(2). See the Chronicles under the year 646.

over again what men fondly deemed to be the work of Lucius ; he had timbered the old church at Winchester.<sup>1</sup> He was therefore ready to spare, to protect, to enrich, to cherish as the choicest trophy of his conquest, the church which he found already timbered to his hand in Ynysvitrin.

And now what will be said if, after all this, I go on to tell you that I am strongly inclined to the belief that Glastonbury, with all its long legendary history, is not a foundation of any astounding antiquity? I believe that, in mere point of years, it may very likely be younger than Christ Church at Canterbury. Such was the idea which was thrown out by Dr. Guest at Salisbury in 1849, and at which I hinted at Sherborne in 1874.<sup>2</sup> If ever anything bore on the face of it the stamp of utter fiction, it is what professes to be the early history of Glastonbury. It is going too far when the tale brings in such an amazing gathering of saints from all times and places to shed their lustre on a single spot. Setting aside the Apostles and Joseph of Arimathæa and King Lucius, the object is too apparent by which Patrick and David and Columb and Bridget and a crowd of others are all carried into the isle of Avalon. It is too much in the style of the process which invented a translation of Dunstan's body from Canterbury to Glastonbury, which I think that Dr. Stubbs will back me in setting down as pure fiction.<sup>3</sup> It is too much in the style of that amazing Joseph-worship which sprang up in the fifteenth century, while in the earlier legend Saint Joseph holds a very modest place among the other worthies of the spot. This legendary history will be found in two works of the same writer, in the first book of William of Malmesbury's *History of the Kings* and in his special treatise on the *Antiquity of the church of Glastonbury*. The main story is much the same in the two, but there is a good

(1). Chron. 643.

(2). Proceedings of the Archæological Institute, Salisbury Volume, pp. 58, 59. Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society for 1874, p. 38.

(3). Stubbs, *Dunstan*, lxvi.

deal of difference in the way of telling it, and also in many of the details. The *History of the Kings* was written apart from any special Glastonbury influences, and it gives the legend in a comparatively moderate shape. The tale contains plenty that is purely fictitious; but fiction is as it were kept in some degree of order by being imbedded in a work of which the main substance is historical. But the treatise on the Antiquity of the church of Glastonbury is a work of another kind. It is, beyond all doubt, a case of history written to order, with a well defined object. But that object was not the simple setting forth of the genuine truth. The writer's business was to put in a clear and attractive shape such stories as the Glastonbury monks of his day told him. Wonderful things, to be sure, they did tell him; but I want you specially to remark that they did not tell him the same things which they would have told him a very few years later. The object of the stories which they told him was to exalt the glory and the antiquity of Glastonbury; it was not to exalt the glory of Arthur, or in any way to connect Glastonbury and Arthur together. A few years after William of Malmesbury wrote, the wonderful tale of his younger contemporary Geoffrey of Monmouth had come into vogue. But, when William of Malmesbury wrote, the tale of Geoffrey had not yet come into vogue, if it had been written or thought of at all. As we see from several passages in the *History of the Kings*, the fame of Arthur was great and growing; but it had not yet reached its full height. When it did reach its full height in the hands of Geoffrey, we see its effect at Glastonbury. Not long after the complete legend of Arthur had been invented, the tomb of Arthur was fittingly invented also.<sup>1</sup> The version of the early history of the place which William of Malmesbury had written when the object was to exalt the glory of Glastonbury, but not specially to connect it with Arthur, no longer suited those who had an

(1). See the account of the invention of 1191, in Roger of Wendover, 348; Ralph of Coggeshall, 36; Giraldus de *Instructioe Principum*, ix. p. 192.

interest in the new form of the story. His original work, wonderful enough in itself, was further interpolated to suit the new local creed. The name of Arthur appears in the *History of the Kings*, in several passages which have no reference to Glastonbury, but in no passage which has a reference to Glastonbury. Least of all does William, in the *History of the Kings*, look on Glastonbury as the burial-place of Arthur, for he distinctly says that the burial-place of Arthur was unknown.<sup>1</sup> We must, then, I think, unhesitatingly cast away, as the interpolation of some Glastonbury monk, a passage in his *Glastonbury History* in which he is made to assert the burial of Arthur at Glastonbury. For this directly contradicts the deliberate statement of his graver work. But I shall not object, if any one chooses to claim as a genuine piece of William of Malmesbury a passage in which Arthur appears simply as one prince and one benefactor among others, where he is made to found certain monks in memory of the valiant Ider who overthrew the giants who infested Brent Knoll—then doubtless, like our other knolls great and small, an island, and which, it seems, was then known as the mount of frogs.<sup>2</sup> Such a story is very silly, very mythical, it sounds very much like an interpolation; but it is just possible that William of Malmesbury may have heard it at Glastonbury and written it down; for at least it does not contradict anything in the *History of the Kings*. We must carefully distinguish between two sets of legends, both of which are about equally untrustworthy, but which are put together with quite different purposes. It is the more needful to distinguish them, because the second set of tales comes so very closely upon the heels of the first. William of Malmesbury and Geoffrey of Monmouth were both alive, very likely they were both writing, at the same moment. But William, while he had his own stories of Arthur, knew nothing

(1). *Gesta Regum*, iii. 287.

(2). Gale, 307; Hearne, 47. "In montem ranarum, nunc dictum Brentecnoel, ubi tres gigantes malefactis famosissimos esse didicerat."

of those more famous stories of Arthur which Geoffrey presently gave to the world.

I look then on the Glastonbury History of William of Malmesbury, even as he wrote it, as essentially legendary; but I do not at all deny that these legends, like other legends, may very likely, contain here and there some kernel of truth. But, if we are in search, not of mere kernels of truth, but of direct statements of fact, we may safely cast aside everything earlier than the first year of the seventh century. We may see our first bit of anything savouring of real history in the grant of the Damnonian King whose name so puzzled William of Malmesbury, but which Dr. Guest, with the greatest likelihood, supplies as *Gwrgan Varvtrwch*.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Guest holds that Glastonbury did not become the head sanctuary of the Britons till after the loss of Ambresbury. It is hard to rule such a point; but do not let any one think that, if this date of 601 should be accepted as marking the beginning of the greatness of Glastonbury, it therefore necessarily marks the beginning of the existence of Glastonbury, even as the place of a religious foundation, much less as a place of human dwelling. We may be sure that such a site as Glastonbury, a site which had so many attractions in early times, was inhabited from a very early time indeed, though ages may have passed before its name found a place in history or legend. I might not have thought it needful to give this warning, had I not seen some pains taken to prove that the site of Taunton was inhabited before Ine. It certainly never came into my head that the fact that *Æthelburh* was the first to found a town and fortress there<sup>2</sup> could be taken as meaning that no human being had ever lived there before. I certainly did not rate the common sense of the Britons so low as to think that, if they had a chance of occupying Taunton Dene, they would not gladly take advantage of it. In the like sort, I was once greatly

(1). *Archæological Journal*, vol. xvi. p. 129.

(2). See the *Chronicles*, 722.

taken to task for speaking of the first appearance of Bristol in history in the eleventh century, as if I had meant to fix that time as the date of the foundation of Bristol. Now that first historical mention of Bristol set it before us as being already an important haven, and it did not come into my head that it could be needful to explain that a place does not become an important haven all in a moment. But, to avoid any more such misunderstandings, let me explain that the first time when a place is mentioned in history—unless its first settlement is the thing which is mentioned about it—is no more likely to be the time of its first settlement than the time when a man is first mentioned in history is likely to be the time of his birth. And yet I am not sure that there may not be some need to guard against this last error. We do in a manner often practically think that a man was born at the moment when we first hear of him. We forget that he must commonly have done many things, that he must have done those things which did most to form his character, before he did the things which won him a place in history. Who connects the name of Archbishop Laud with the reign of Elizabeth? Yet he passed thirty years of his life under her reign, and those thirty years must have been mainly the time which made him what he was. So if I fix 601 as the likely date for the beginning of a great monastery on this spot, let me repeat that no one need take me as fixing that year as the date of the coming of the first human being, of the coming of the first Christian man, or even as the coming of the first monk. I only say that this entry of 601 is the first which has any likeness of historical truth. And indeed this first entry, if we can at all trust its words, points, not to the setting up of anything absolutely new, but to the enlarging and enriching of something which was there already. The king—Gwrgan, we will say—is made to give Ynysvitrin to the old church.<sup>1</sup> Now the “old church” may

(1). The words are “*Terram, quæ appellatur Yneswitrin, ad ecclesiam vetustam concessit, quæ ibi sita est, ob petitionem Worgret abbatis, in quinque cassatis.*”

simply mean old in the time of William of Malmesbury, not old in the time of Gwrgan. But the grant of Ynysvitrin, that is, of Glastonbury itself, strikes me as having a special force. Gwrgan may have found a church, he may have found a monastery, already in the island. But it is he who is represented as giving the monastery its great temporal position; it is he who first makes the island itself a monastic island. Now this kind of statement has at least a negative force. It fixes our date one way. The document may be forged; the grant may be imaginary; the position bestowed by the grant may not have begun till much later. But we may be quite sure that it did not begin earlier. I am inclined to attribute to the document a higher value than this. Let it even be a forgery: I do not believe that anybody would go forging charters of Gwrgan—they might have forged charters of Arthur—unless he had seen or heard of a real charter of Gwrgan. And a forger would most likely have written the name of his king clearly enough for William of Malmesbury to read it. I am therefore disposed to attach some positive importance to the entry of 601. But in any case it has a negative importance; it gets rid of all earlier claims of the monastic house of Ynysvitrin to have held the temporal possession of the soil of Ynysvitrin.

There is another quite independent legend which seems to me to fall in with a belief in the earlier existence of Ynysvitrin, but which sets Ynysvitrin before us in a state quite unlike that of the seat of a great monastic body. This is the story contained in the *Life of Saint Gildas*.<sup>1</sup> The date and author of the piece are uncertain; but, as Mr. Stevenson remarks with great force, it must be older than the great days of the fame of Arthur; that is, it must be older than Geoffrey of Monmouth. It gives us a familiar part of the Arthurian story in a much earlier and simpler shape than that in which we are used to see it. In this story, Arthur is not conqueror of the

(1). P. xxxix, ed. Stevenson.



world; he is not even King of all Britain; he is simply "tyrant" in Cornwall and Devonshire. His overlord is Meluas, who is king in the "æstiva regio," that is surely in Somerset. We must of course take the word "tyrant," neither in its old Greek sense nor in its common modern sense; it must be taken in that later Latin sense in which it means a rebel prince, one who has set himself up against a lawful emperor or king. And so, directly after the place where he is called tyrant, Arthur is yet more distinctly called "rex rebellis." But the lawful king has done the tyrant a great private wrong by carrying off his wife Guenever. He has carried her off to Ynysvitrin, to keep her safe in the inaccessible island, where he is presently besieged by the tyrant Arthur with a countless host of the men of Cornwall and Devonshire. At this moment Gildas comes to the island, an exile, driven by the pirates of Orkney—wikings put a little out of their place—from his hermitage on the Steep Holm, where for seven years he had lived on fish and birds' eggs. He wrote, as we know, a "*Liber Querulus*;" one might expect that, if it was during this time of his life that he wrote it, it would be a "*Liber Querulus*." He now sails up to Ynysvitrin; he is there received by the abbot; he reconciles the two kings by persuading Meluas to give up Guenever; they become sworn brothers, and promise for the future to obey the abbot.

Now I hold this Life to be purely legendary, if for no other cause, yet for this, that it represents Gildas as having a great deal to do with Arthur. Gildas himself, while speaking of so many other British princes, has not, in his extant writings, one word to say about Arthur. The tyrant of Cornwall, even if he won the fight of Badbury, was clearly, in the eyes of Gildas, a much smaller person than Maelgwyn of Gwynedd, the great dragon of the isle of Dywyganwy. Giraldus indeed gives a good reason for this silence. He explains how Gildas actually wrote a book of the acts of Arthur; but, having a private

quarrel with the King, he threw his book into the sea. I venture to look on this as simply an attempt to account for the silence of Gildas about Arthur,<sup>1</sup> and I look on any story which brings Gildas and Arthur together as legendary on the face of it. But this legend, like many other legends, preserves unconsciously a kernel of truth. I must not hide the fact that there is another passage in the *Life* which speaks of Arthur as “*rex totius majoris Britanniae.*”<sup>2</sup> But this only makes the other passage more precious. The two descriptions come from different sources. The writer, clearly writing in days when the fame of Arthur was growing but had not yet reached its full height, preserved, without marking the inconsistency, an older story which painted Arthur in a much lowlier guise. The tyrant Arthur, in rebellion against the king of the “*æstiva regio,*” is something which neither the biographer of Gildas nor any one else would have invented; it must be a bit of genuine tradition. And that tradition represents Glastonbury as a place to which a king who carried off the wife of one of his under-kings was likely to carry her. This is not the picture of Glastonbury to which we are used. If any later king, any of our West-Saxon kings, had designed such a crime as that of Meluas, he would not have chosen Glastonbury for the scene of it. The wildest scandal-monger did not make Eadgar take Wulfthryth or Ælfthryth to the old home of Dunstan. The story indeed brings in an abbot; but the abbot is most likely brought in simply because men could not conceive Glastonbury in any age without an abbot. The value of a tale of this kind always lies in those parts which are most likely to have happened, because they are least likely to have been invented. I am very far from pledging myself to the historical truth of the statement that Meluas carried off Guenever wife of the tyrant Arthur, and hid her in the isle of Avalon. But I do say that that statement belongs to a

(1). *Descriptio Kambriæ*, ii. 2; vol. vi. p. 209, ed. Dimock.

(2). P. xxxiv.

stage of Arthurian legend much earlier than any of those to which we are used. I do believe that, whether it does or does not preserve a memory of real facts, it does preserve a memory of a real state of things. It helps us to a picture of the isle of Avalon very different either from the Glastonbury of Eadgar or from the Ynysvitrin of Gwrgan.

We get another incidental notice of early Glastonbury in a better quarter than the *Life of Gildas*. This is in the *Life of Dunstan* by a Saxon from the old Saxony, edited by Dr. Stubbs. We here find that, in the days of Dunstan's youth, Irish pilgrims, learned men from whose books Dunstan himself learned much, were in the habit of coming to Glastonbury to worship at the tomb of one of their own worthies, either the elder or the younger Patrick.<sup>1</sup> It follows therefore that it was believed in Ireland that Glastonbury was the resting-place of an ancient Irish saint. Now such a belief as this could not have taken root, if the connexion between Glastonbury and the elder Celtic Church had been the invention of West-Saxon monks at any time between Cenwealh and Dunstan. Surely nothing but an independent Irish tradition could have led Irish pilgrims across the sea. This tradition clearly sets Glastonbury before us as being already a holy place even before Gwrgan. But it is quite consistent with the belief that it was Gwrgan who raised Ynysvitrin to be, according to the British formula, one of the three great choirs of the isle of Britain.<sup>2</sup>

I am thus, on the whole, strongly inclined to believe, on the one hand, that it was a true tradition, something in fact more than tradition, which connected Glastonbury, as an ecclesiastical foundation, with days before the English invasion, but to believe also, on the other hand, that, at the time of the English invasion, it was not a foundation of any great antiquity. I am inclined to believe, though I would not take upon myself

(1.) Stubbs, *Dunstan*, p. 10.

(2.) See Guest, *Salisbury Volume*, u. s.

at all positively to assert, that, perhaps not the existence, but anyhow the greatness, of Glastonbury as a religious foundation, dates from Gwrgan at the beginning of the seventh century. I am inclined to think that it was then that Ynysvitrin took its place as the great sanctuary of the Britons, to supply the loss of fallen Ambresbury. As a great monastic house then it would have been little more than fifty years old when it passed into West-Saxon hands. It would be, as I said, actually younger in years than Christ Church at Canterbury. But what is younger in years may often belong to an older state of things. I have constantly to insist on this fact in the history of buildings. I have to try to make people understand that the fact that some buildings of the Old-English type are later in date than some buildings of the Norman type is the strongest of all proofs that there was an Old-English style earlier than the Norman style. There are few buildings more deeply interesting than the work of Prætextatus beneath the Roman Capitol, a pagan temple younger than the oldest Christian churches on the Lateran and the Vatican. And may I class with this last my own neighbour church of Wookey, with its chapel built and fitted up for the worship of the days of Philip and Mary, younger therefore than the Cornish church of Probus, built and fitted up for the worship of the days of Edward the Sixth? In the like sort, if, in a reckoning of years, we set down Glastonbury at the beginning of the seventh century as younger than Canterbury at the end of the sixth, yet in historical order, Glastonbury still remains older than Canterbury. If we should accept Gwrgan, not only as the benefactor and enlarger, but as the very beginner, of the house of Ynysvitrin, there still will be no need to unsay a single word of what I said earlier in this discourse. The sentiment of antiquity would doubtless be more fully gratified if we could give the house of Ynysvitrin a British existence of five hundred years than if we give it a British existence of only fifty. But the unique historic position of the place is the

same in either case. In either case Glastonbury is the one great church of the Briton which passed unhurt into the hands of the Englishman. In either case it is, in a way that no other great church is, a tie between the state of things represented by the names of Arthur and Gildas and the state of things represented by the names of Eadgar and Dunstan. In either case we may truly say, as I have often said, that that talk about the ancient British Church, which is simply childish nonsense when it is talked at Canterbury or York or London ceases to be childish nonsense when it is talked at Glastonbury. Nay, as tending to draw the tie still tighter, we can almost forgive the invention of the tomb of British Arthur to match the real tombs of our West-Saxon Eadgar and our two mighty Eadmunds. We can almost forgive the baser fraud which changed the western church, the true church of the Briton, into the freshly devised chapel of Saint Joseph, and which must have gone far to bring down that lovely building by so daringly scooping out a crypt beneath it.<sup>1</sup> And I am not sure that, by accepting the later date, we do not really open a new source of historic interest. There would surely be something striking in the picture of the British king and his people, driven from their elder sanctuary by the advancing tide of English conquest, still keeping up their hearts, still cleaving to their faith, raising or renewing for themselves another holy place in the venerated island, in the very teeth of triumphant heathendom entrenched upon the hills which bounded their landscape. Let us, by the help of the other branch of our studies, call up before us the general look of the "æstiva regio," in the days when Avalon and all its fellows were truly islands in the deep fen. The mount that crowns the holy isle itself looked down, through long months at least, on a waste of waters, relieved here and there by smaller spots of land where alone man could dwell and till and worship. In those days the dwelling-places of man, still almost wholly confined to the

(1). Willis, Glastonbury, chaps. v. vi.

ridges and the bases of the isolated hills, must have occupied very much the same extent which they do still; the change lies in the state of the flats—what we call the moors—between them. Avalon, larger and loftier than its fellow islands, was a shelter admirably suited either for devout monks or for runaway queens. By Gwrgan's day it had become one of the last shelters, at once centre and outpost, of a race and a creed which must have seemed to be shrinking up step by step, till both should pass away from the soil of Britain. That race has not passed away; that faith has won back the lands which it had lost; we are tempted to ask whether Gwrgan, in the summer land, when he bade Ynysvitrin to take the place of Ambresbury, had heard that one realm of the heathen invaders had become the spiritual conquest of teachers from beyond the sea, and that new temples were at the same moment rising for the same faith at the bidding of British and of English rulers. But the Christian Jute was far away; the heathen Saxon was close at his gates. The high ground to the north and to the east, the long range of Mendip, the hills of the Wiltshire border, stood like a mighty castle-wall fencing in the strongholds of Woden and Thunder. At any moment the great march of Ceawlin might be renewed towards new points; the summer land and the long peninsula beyond it might be as land by the Severn and the two Avons; the holy place of Avalon in its island, the strong city of Isca on its hill, might be as Glevum and Aquæ Solis, as Corinium and Uriconium. It was not then as when men hear of their enemies in distant lands or on some distant frontier of their own land. It was as when the Corinthian, jealous of the growth and power of Athens, had but to climb the steep of his own citadel to see with his own eyes the mighty works which were rising on the lowlier height of the rival akropolis. And, from our side too, what was it that kept our fathers from swooping down on the prey which lay before their eyes? Why did they pause for nearly eighty years before they came down from their hill

fortress to make a lasting spoil of the rich plains and islands at their feet? Could it be some dim feeling that Woden and Thunder were gods of the hills, but were not gods of the valleys? Whatever was the cause, the work was not to be done by men who bowed to Woden and Thunder. Gwrgan could build and endow his church in safety, while the gorges of Cheddar and Ebber, while Crook's Peak and Shutshelf and Rookham, were strongholds of heathen men. The Saxon was at last to pour down from his height, to smite the Briton by the Pens and to chase him to the banks of Parret. But the blow was not to come till it was lightened by coming from the hands of men who were brethren in the same faith. The Saxon was to win Avalon; he was to win Isca; but he was not to deal by them as he had dealt by Uriconium and Corinium. Through the long years of watching between the march of Ceawlin and the march of Cenwealh, the Tor of Avalon, the island mount of Saint Michael, not perhaps as yet hallowed by the archangel's name, but standing as the guardian of the holy places, new and old, which gathered at its foot, might look forth day by day towards the threatening rampart, with somewhat of the old note of Hebrew defiance—"Why hop ye so, ye high hills? This is God's hill, in the which it pleaseth Him to dwell, yea the Lord will abide in it for ever."

The day at last came, the day when one race was to give way to another, but when the transfer of dominion from race to race no longer carried with it its transfer from creed to creed. The founder of Winchester became at once the conqueror and the protector of Ynysvitrin. With the change of race came a change of name, and British Ynysvitrin passed into English Glastonbury. And here I must say a few words on the very puzzling question as to those two names and the other names which this place is said to have borne. I have in this discourse freely used the names Ynysvitrin and Avalon, while speaking of this place in its British stage. I have done so because I needed some name to speak of the place by in its

British stage, and so to bring out more clearly the fact that the place had a British stage. It would not have done to speak of Glastonbury before it became Glastonbury; it would have been falling into the error of those who talk of Cæsar landing in England. But if any one chooses to arraign those particular names of Avalon and Ynysvitrin as lacking in authority, I shall not be over careful to answer him in that matter. I believe that there is no authority for either name earlier than the treatise of William of Malmesbury and the Life of Gildas. And I have already told you what kind of work the treatise of William of Malmesbury is, that it is a work written to order in the interests of Glastonbury, and which has further been largely interpolated. There is something very odd in an English gentile name suddenly displacing the British name; there is something suspicious in the evident attempts to make the English and British names translate one another, in the transparent striving to see an element of *glass* in both. *Glæstingaburh*, it must be borne in mind, is as distinctly an English gentile name as any in the whole range of English nomenclature; *Glastonbury* is a mere corruption; as if to make things straight, the syllable which has taken a place to which it has no right in *Huntingdon* and *Abingdon*, has in *Glastonbury* been driven out of a place to which it has the most perfect right. The true origin of the name lurks, in a grotesque shape, in that legend of *Glæsting* and his sow, a manifestly English legend, which either William of Malmesbury himself or some interpolator at Glastonbury has strangely thrust into the midst of the British legends. *Glæsting's* lost sow leads him by a long journey to an apple-tree by the old church; pleased with the land, he takes his family, the *Glæstingas*, to dwell there.<sup>1</sup> This might almost be taken as a kind of parable of the West-Saxon settlement under Cenwealh. There is no mention of earlier inhabitants; but the mention of the church implies that there were or had been such; in any case the

(1). Gale, 295; Hearne, 16, 17.



Glaestingas settle by the old church—the main work of the middle of the seventh century, as far as Glastonbury is concerned. But there is certainly something strange in the sudden way in which we find the *Glaestingas* so comfortably settled in their own *burh* within the isle which has so lately been British Avalon. The old-world gentile name seems in a manner out of place in a conquest so recent and so illustrious. Gentile names, though hardly to be called characteristic of Somerset, are not uncommonly found there, even in districts which we hold to have been won yet more lately than when Cenwealh drove the Britons to the Parret. Such are Cannington, Barrington, Doddington, Pointington, and that which has the most ancient and legendary sound of all, Horsington. But these are names of small settlements, answering to the names of the Danish settlements in Lincolnshire at a later time and the names of the Flemish settlements in Pembroke-shire at a later time still.<sup>1</sup> There is something unusual in a place of the nature of Glastonbury altogether changing its name, above all in its taking the gentile name of a certainly not famous *gens*. Other chief places which passed in the same manner from British to English rule, if they changed their names at all, did not change them after this sort. Isca, for instance, to take the greatest case of all, lived on under its old name as English Exeter. Taunton under Æthelburh took a new name, an English name; but it did not take the name of an English *gens*. The nearest parallels—and those are not very near ones—are to be found in such changes as those made by the Danes when they turned Northweorthig and Streoneshalh into Derby (Deoraby) and Whitby, or in such later changes still as when Count Robert of Mortain changed Leodgaresburh into Montacute.<sup>2</sup> But we have the fact which we cannot get over, that Glastonbury was already spoken of as an old name at the end of the seventh century or

(1). See Norman Conquest, i. 572, ed. iii.

(2). See Norman Conquest, iv. 170; v. 573.

the beginning of the eighth.<sup>1</sup> And on the other hand, unless we throw aside the whole history of West-Saxon advance, as we have learned it from Dr. Guest, and as, to me at least, it seems to be clearly written in the pages of the Chronicle, we cannot carry our *Glæstingas* to *Glæstingaburh* at any time earlier than the time of Cenwealh.

As for the British names themselves, the two names of Avalon and Ynysvitrin stand to some extent on different grounds; they may be attacked and defended by different arguments, both as regards the names themselves and as regards the authorities on which they rest. There certainly is a degree of suspicion about the name Ynysvitrin and its alleged meaning of *insula vitrea*. It is really tempting to look upon it as simply a name made up as a kind of translation of the supposed meaning of *Glastonbury*. But it is just as likely that it is a real British name, having no more to do with glass than *Glastonbury* has, but on which that meaning was put by the same kind of etymological pun of which we have many examples, and of which the turning of Jerusalem into *Hierosolyma* is a familiar case. It may be that Avalon is a name transferred hither with a purpose after that name had become famous in the legends of Arthur. But it is just as likely that, as there undoubtedly were Avalons in other Celtic lands, so there may have been an Avalon here also. The spot on which we are met may stand to the Avalon of legend in the same relation in which the Olympos of geography stands to the Olympos of legend. As for the external authority for the names, it is much stronger in the case of Ynysvitrin than in the case of Avalon. Yet even on behalf of Avalon I think it may be possible to find a small piece of negative evidence. The most tempting time for the invention of the name of Ynysvitrin, for the application of the name of Avalon to *Glastonbury*, would be when the fame of Arthur had become

(1). Jaffé, *Monumenta Moguntina*, 439. "Regnante Ine Westsaxonum rege . . . Boerwald, qui divina cœnobium gubernatione quod antiquorum nuncupatur vocabulo Glestingaburg regebat."

great, when legend said that Arthur was in Avalon, and when it was deemed convenient that his tomb should be found at Glastonbury. But the name Ynysvitrin at least is certainly older than this. And I think that I see some reason for believing that the application of the name of Avalon to Glastonbury is also older than this. The name Ynysvitrin is not only found in a passage of William of Malmesbury's Glastonbury History which has no relation to Arthur;<sup>1</sup> it is also found in the perfectly unsuspecting History of the Kings, where he not only does not connect Arthur with Glastonbury, but expressly says that the burial-place of Arthur was unknown.<sup>2</sup> It is also found in a note at the end of the Life of Gildas,<sup>3</sup> of which I do not profess to fix the date, but which at least has nothing to do with Arthur or his burial at Glastonbury. If then the name of Ynysvitrin was a mere etymological device of some Glastonbury monk, it was at least a device older than the time when there was most temptation to devise it. It is surely therefore just as likely that it was a real British name which had been handed on. The evidence for Avalon is less clear; it is not found in the History of the Kings; it is found in Geoffrey of Monmouth as the name of the burial-place of Arthur.<sup>4</sup> It is found in two places of the Glastonbury History as we have it, one of which distinctly makes Glastonbury, under the name of Avalon, the burial-place of Arthur.<sup>5</sup> This passage

(1.) Gale, p. 295; Hearne, 17.

(2.) *Gesta Regum*, i. 28. He is speaking, not of Arthur but of the charter which, on Dr. Guest's authority, I assign to Gwrgan.

(3.) P. xli, ed. Stevenson. In the Life itself, where the siege of the island by Arthur is described, the British name seems to be implied without actually using it (p. xxxix); "Glastonia, id est Urbs Vitrea (quæ nomen sumsit a vitro), est urbs nomine primitus in Britannico sermone."

(4.) Lib. vii ad finem. "Inclutus ille Arrthurus rex letaliter vulneratus est, qui illinc ad sananda vulnera sua in insulam Avallonis advectus."

(5.) This is the passage in Hearne, pp. 42, 43, which is strangely mutilated in Gale, 306. It stands thus in full; "Prætermitto de Arturo, inclito rege Britonum, in cimiterio monachorum inter duas piramides cum sua conjuge tumulato, de multis eciam Britonum principibus. Idem Arturus, anno incarnationis Dominicæ *DXLII*. in Cornubia, juxta fluvium Cambam, à Modredo letaliter vulneratus est, qui inde, ad sananda vulnera sua, in insulam Avallonis est evectus et ibidem defunctus in ætate circa Pentecosten, fere centenarius aut circiter." We of course find both names in Giraldus Cambrensis, *De Institutione Principum*, p. 193; the Arthur legend was then in all its glory.

must be an interpolation. William of Malmesbury could surely never have written words which so grossly contradict his own statement in the *History of the Kings*, and the words moreover seem directly borrowed from Geoffrey. In the other place the name is in no way connected with Arthur; it is mentioned in a very strange connexion with Glasting and his sow.<sup>1</sup> I do not greatly care whether this come from William of Malmesbury or from an interpolator. For surely no interpolator writing after the invention of Arthur would have brought in the name of Avalon in so lowly a connexion. This strikes me as going a long way to show that Avalon was known as a name of Glastonbury before the legends of Arthur had taken possession of the name. But I have no wish to insist positively on a matter which is certainly difficult and doubtful. On one point I think we shall all agree; if Glastonbury really be Avalon, we must cast aside the belief that no rain falls in Avalon as a poet's dream.

One thing however may certainly be brought forward as standing in my way, in Dr. Guest's way, in the way of every one who holds that there was in the island something of an ecclesiastical kind before the English conquest. This is the direct assertion of William of Malmesbury in his *History of the Bishops* that Ine was the first to build a monastery at Glastonbury.<sup>2</sup> But in any case this assertion stands in nobody's way so directly as in the way of William of Malmesbury himself, who tells such a different tale, not only in his local work, not only in the *History of the Kings*, but even in a later passage of the *History of the Bishops*.<sup>3</sup> I conceive that

(1). Gale, p. 295; Hearne, 17. The clearly English hogherd is unexpectedly made to talk Welsh. Finding his sow under the apple-tree, "Quia primum adveniens poma in partibus illis rarissima reperit, insulam Avalloniæ sua lingua, id est, insulam pomorum, nominavit. Avalla enim Britonice poma interpretatur Latine." I doubt whether this is good Welsh; but at any rate the lack of apples has passed away. There is no need to search into an alternative derivation from a certain Avalloc and his daughters.

(2). Gest. Pont. p. 196. "Ibi primus rex Ina consilio beatissimi Aldelmi monasterium ædificavit, multa illuc prædia, quæ hodieque nominantur, largitus."

(3). Ib. 354. "Ejus [Aldelmi] monitu Glastoniense monasterium, ut dixi in Gestis Regum, a novo fecit."

in writing the earlier passage, doubtless before he wrote his Glastonbury History or had paid any special attention to Glastonbury matters, he was misled by the words of the Chronicle, which says that Ine *timbered* a minster at Glastonbury, but which do not say that he was the first to *timber* one there.<sup>1</sup> And any notion that Ine was the first founder is set aside by the passage of Willibald to which I have already referred, which speaks, in Ine's own day, not only of an abbot of Glastonbury, but of Glastonbury as an ancient name for the abbey. "Antiquum" may perhaps cover as little space as is covered by the French "ancien"; but it could hardly be applied to a foundation of Ine's own.

The architectural details of the buildings I leave to others. But I must nevertheless say a word or two on one general aspect of those buildings which more directly connects their peculiar character with the peculiar history of the place. There is a special character about the church—to be perfectly accurate, I should say the churches—of Glastonbury, because there is a special character about the history of Glastonbury. I conceive that there was a time when Ynysvitrin had, like Glendalough or Clonmacnois, a group of small churches, the Celtic fashion of building where Roman usage would have dictated the building of one large church. One of these, the oldest and most venerated, the old church, the wooden church, "vetusta ecclesia" "ligna basilica," lived on, and by living on, stamped the buildings of Glastonbury with their special character. It lived on, to be the scene of the devotion and the bounty of Cnut,<sup>2</sup> and to give way only to the loveliest building

(1). "And he [Ine] getimbrade þæt meoster æt Glæstingabyrig." This is in the Winchester Chronicle, 688, but it is described as an insertion from another manuscript. The entry is followed by Florence. It is curious to find in the fuller and less trustworthy form of the Brut y Tywysogion (that published by the Cambrian Archæological Association), in which the acts of Ine are strangely transferred to the British Ivor, the building of Glastonbury is transferred also. Ivor (pp. 4, 5) defeats the Saxons, wins "Cornwall, the *Summer country* (Gevlad yr Haf), and Devonshire," and then "erects the great monastery in Ynys Avalen (y Brodyrny mawr yn ynys y Fallen) in thanksgiving to God for His assistance against the Saxons."

(2). See Norman Conquest, i. p. 439.

that Glastonbury can show, the jewel of late Romanesque on a small scale, the western church, known since the fifteenth century by the forged name of Saint Joseph's chapel. That church represents the wooden basilica; we may say that it is the wooden basilica, rebuilt in another material. But to the east of the ancient wooden church there arose in English times a church of English fashion, a church of stone, built and rebuilt successively by Ine, by Dunstan, by Norman Herlwin, and by the builders of the mighty pile which still stands in ruins. The wooden basilica and the church of Dunstan have both perished; not a stick is left of one, not a stone of the other. But both are there still in a figure. Each has its abiding representative. The great eastern church stands for the stone church of English Dunstan; the lesser western church stands for the wooden church of British Gwrgan, or more likely of some one long before his days. Had the two vanished churches not stood there, in the relation in which they did stand to one another, the minster of Glastonbury could never have put on a shape so unlike that of any other minster in England. Nowhere else do we find, as we find here, two churches—two monastic churches—thrown together indeed in after times into one continuous building without, but always keeping up the character of two wholly distinct interiors. For nowhere but at Glastonbury was there the historical state of things out of which such an architectural arrangement could grow. Nowhere else did the church of the Briton live on untouched and revered by the side of the church of the Englishman.

Through the long history of Glastonbury I cannot lead you to-day. My special subject has been those early fortunes of the place which have given it a character wholly unique among the minsters of England. I would fain say somewhat of the stern rule of Thurstan, when the monks were shot down before the altar, because they chose still to sing their psalms after the ancient use of Glastonbury and not after a new use of Fécamp. I would fain say somewhat of the lights thrown

upon the state of Glastonbury and all Somerset by the Glastonbury entries in Domesday. I would fain say somewhat of the long struggle with the Bishops which makes up so great a part of the local history both of Glastonbury and of Wells. I would fain say somewhat of the last scene of all, of the heroic end which winds up the tale which, at Glastonbury as in other monastic houses, had for some centuries become undoubtedly unheroic. The martyrdom of Richard Whiting, following on the ordinary story of an English abbey after abbeys had lost their first love, reads like the fall of the last Constantine winding up the weary annals of the house of Palaiologos. But of one group of names, of one name pre-eminently among them, I must speak. We cannot meet at Glastonbury without in some shape doing our homage to the greatest ruler of the church of Glastonbury, the greatest man born and reared on Glastonbury soil. Earliest among the undoubted worthies of Somerset, surpassed by none who have come after him in his fame and in his deeds, we see, on this spot, rising above the mists of error and of slander, the great churchman, the great statesman, of the tenth century, the mighty form of Dunstan. Not a few famous men in our history have been deeply wronged by coming to be known only as the subjects of silly legends or, worse still, of perverted and calumnious history. So have Leofric and Godgifu suffered; so has Ælfred himself suffered; but Dunstan has suffered more than all. Justice was once done to him years ago by a great scholar among ourselves;<sup>1</sup> fuller justice still has since been done to him by the greatest of all our scholars.<sup>2</sup> Yet I doubt not that to many minds his name still calls up no thoughts but that of one of the silliest of silly legends; or, worse still, it calls up the picture, most unlike the original, of a grovelling and merciless

(1). See the paper by Mr. J. R. Green on "Dunstan at Glastonbury" in the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archæological Society for 1862, p. 122.

(2). See Dr. Stubis's Preface to his Memorials of St. Dunstan, throughout.

fanatic. Think, I would ask you, under the guidance of true history, more worthily of the greatest son, the greatest ruler, that Glastonbury ever saw. Think more worthily of one who was indeed the strict churchman, the monastic reformer, who called up again the religious life at Glastonbury after a season of decay—but who stands charged in no authentic record as guilty of any act of cruelty or persecution, but who does stand forth in authentic records as the great minister of successive West-Saxon kings, of successive Lords of all Britain, in days when Wessex was the hearth and centre of English rule, and when Glastonbury stood first among English sanctuaries, the chosen burial-place of kings. Let us think of him as the friend of Eadmund, the counsellor of Eadred, the victim of Eadwig, the friend and guide of Eadgar the Giver-of-peace. So mightily under him grew the fame of Glastonbury that a greater name than all was drawn within its spell, and men at the other end of England deemed that it was at Glastonbury, and not at Athelney, that Ælfred himself held his last shelter, when the bounds of Wessex, the bounds of England, reached not beyond the coasts of a single island of the Sumorsætan.<sup>1</sup> But in those centuries of West-Saxon greatness, the local history of this spot can dispense with any single word or touch that the strictest criticism would reject. In later times the church of Westminster supplanted the church of Glastonbury as the place of royal burials. Yet we may ask, even by the tomb of the great Edward, if Westminster ever showed a group surpassing that kingly company which lay behind and around the altar of Glastonbury. There, in his own special chapel, lay the king to whose name, alone of all our kings, peace, and that the peace which ever stood prepared for war, has attached itself as an undying surname. By the real resting-place of English Eadgar we may endure the invention of the legendary Briton

(1). See the *Historia de S. Cuthberto*, X Scriptt. 71, vol. i. p. 144 of the Surtees edition of Symeon. Ælfred “tribus annis in Glestingiensi palude latuit, in magna penuria.” See *Old-English History*, p. 127.



and his queen. And on either side of the Giver-of-peace once lay his father and his grandson, each alike terrible in war, but whose swords were wielded only for the defence of England and of Christendom. There lay the elder Eadmund, of whom our gleemen sang how he set free English cities from heathen chains. Here lay his younger namesake in the tomb at which his rival and sworn brother came to worship, the unwearied warrior of the long year of battles, of whom again our gleemen could tell that

Eadmund cing  
Irensíd was geclypod  
For his snellscipe.

And if the historical associations which are called up by the tombs which once were at Glastonbury do not in themselves yield to the historical associations of the tombs which still are at Westminster, Glastonbury has the advantage over Westminster that here there are no meaner objects to disturb and jar upon the mighty memories of the past. There are some incidental gains even in the havoc which has swept over the burial-place of Eadgar and the Eadmunds. In fallen Glastonbury there is at least no place for the abominations of modern Westminster. The idols of heathendom, rampant in the church of the Confessor, have never yet found a footing in the church of Dunstan. If at Glastonbury much has perished, what is left is kept with all care; the carved work of the sanctuary is not here cut away year by year to receive the hideous memorials of men, worthy or unworthy, whose real burial-place is elsewhere. The loveliness of what is left, the memory of what is gone, is not marred by such strange sights as that of the grave face of Sir George Cornwall Lewis peeping out between a naked Indian on one side and a woman suckling a baby on the other. Here at Glastonbury we can muse, and muse without let or hindrance, on the greatest memorials of the great age which made the English kingdom. Yet these memories are all of a kind which are shared, if in a less degree, by other

famous spots within the English realm, by Winchester and Sherborne and Westminster itself. What Glastonbury has to itself, alone and without rival, is its historical position as the tie, at once national and religious, which binds the history and memories of our own race to the history and memories of the race which we supplanted.

The BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS asked to be allowed, in the name of all present, to tender to the President their grateful thanks for the truly eloquent and learned address with which he had opened the proceedings at Glastonbury. It was impossible, in the case of an address, teeming with such a vast amount of varied knowledge, to single out one point more deserving than another of commendation; but they must thank Mr. Freeman for having stirred up in their minds so strong an interest in their local history, and for giving them such good help in reviving old memories attached to the district. He hoped they would all profit by the instruction they had received.

Mr. G. T. CLARK seconded the motion, and, after remarking that the names of Arthur and Avalon were very dear to Welshmen, said he was sure he was expressing the feelings of those beyond the Severn when he observed that Welshmen would feel great pleasure when they learned the line that Mr. Freeman, the eminent Teutonic historian, had taken on the present occasion.

The resolution was carried unanimously, and

The PRESIDENT briefly acknowledged the thanks that were accorded to him.