

*à M. le chanoine Pérennès,
Hommage de l'auteur, G.H. Doble.
13 février 1935.*

"CORNISH SAINTS" SERIES, No. 34.

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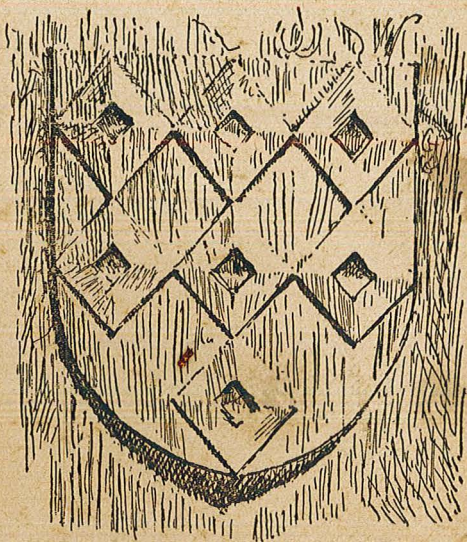
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BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

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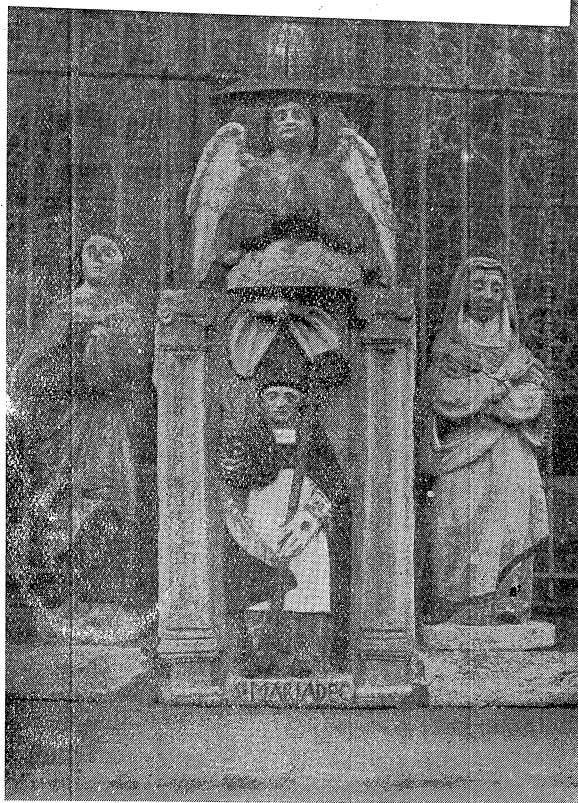
By the Rev. GILBERT H. DOBLE, M.A.,

*Honorary Canon of Truro Cathedral, Vicar of Wendron,
and Examining Chaplain to the Bishop.*



Josselin: Arms of the Duc de Rohan.

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Statue of St. Mériadec at Stival.

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PATRON OF CAMBORNE.

By the Rev. GILBERT H. DOBLE, M.A.,

*Honorary Canon of Truro Cathedral, Vicar of Wendron,
and Examining Chaplain to the Bishop.*

Author of "S. Mawes," "S. Euny," "S. Budoc," "S. Winwaloe," "S. Corentin," "S. German," "S. Melaine," "S. Gwinear," "SS. Mewan and Austol," "S. Feock," "S. Petrock," "SS. Docco and Kew," "S. Melor," "S. Carantoc," "S. Senan," "S. Nonna," "A John Wesley of Armorican Cornwall," "S. Brioc," "SS. Sithney and Elwin," "S. Selevan," "Four Saints of the Fal," "S. Neot," "S. Cuby," "S. Tudy," "S. Clether," "SS. Nectan and Keyne, and the Children of Brychan in Cornwall," "SS. Constantine and Merryn," "S. Symphorian," "S. Decuman," "S. Perran, S. Keverne and S. Kerrian," "S. Augustine of Canterbury in Anjou," "Les Saints du Cornwall," "Les Saints Bretons," "Two Cornish Parishes in the 18th century," "Breage in the 18th century," "Cornish Church Kalendar," "S. Gudwal," "S. Day," "S. Yvo," "S. Hermes," "Miracles at S. Michael's Mt. in 1262."

SAINT MERIADOC, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

There are several reasons why the study of the cult of the patron saint of Camborne possesses a fascination all its own for lovers of Cornish history. Saint Meriadoc is a Celtic saint, whose name is found in North Wales as well as in Cornwall, and who has a cult of remarkable vitality in Brittany, where his bell is still venerated—it is one of the very few instances of the bell of a Cornish saint having been preserved to the present day. (1). But, above all, Saint Meriadoc is the subject of one of the most important monuments of old Cornish Literature that has come down to us—the Miracle Play *Beunans Meriasek*. The *Life of Saint Meriasek* is the sole surviving example on this side of the Channel of a class of vernacular drama once very popular in Cornwall, as in Brittany,—a religious play based on the Life of a saint. It shows an intimate knowledge of Breton traditions and liturgical books which is a valuable link in the chain of evidence proving the continuance of relations between Cornwall and the British colony in Armorica a thousand years after the foundation of that colony. In fact, this 16th century religious drama forms one of the most interesting literary and historical treasures in the records of the Celtic peoples.

The play I have referred to, the discovery of which in 1869 by Mr. Wynne of Peniarth among

(1) And yet Baring-Gould and Fisher make no mention of him in their *Lives of the British Saints*!

the Hengwrt MSS. in Wales, and its subsequent publication by Whitley Stokes, with notes and translation, in 1872, proved an epochmaking event in the history of the revival of the study of the ancient Cornish language, has fortunately given us, in the colophon which comes at the end of the manuscript, both the date of its composition (or transcription) and the name of the writer (or transcriber)—“*Finitur per dominum HADTON anno domini Ml. vc. iiij.*” Now the Rector of Camborne in 1504 was Master John Nans, who resigned his position as Provost of Glasney Collegiate Church to become Rector of “the parish Church of Saint Meriadoc of Cambron” (*Ecclesia parochialis Sancti Meriadoci de Cambron*) on 29th November, 1497, having effected an exchange with the previous Rector, Alexander Penhyle. The College of Glasney was the chief literary centre in mediaeval Cornwall. The other miracle plays which have come down to us were all written there, and the fact that a former Provost of Glasney was Rector of Camborne when *Beunans Meriasek* was written helps us to see where the author got his materials. (See p. 31). We are thus exceptionally favoured with clues to the sources of this play. It will be well first to analyse the Play, and then to examine the Cornish, and especially the Breton, traditions drawn on by its author. (I shall of course deal only with the matters of hagiographical interest which it contains, not with its literary and philological side). (1).

(1) An English version of this extraordinarily interesting Cornish Play was acted by the Guild of St. Nicholas at St. Andrew's, Redruth, under the direction of the present writer, before a large and distinguished audience, on June 12, 1924. The Bishop of Truro was present, and the Bishop of Vannes sent a special message, with his blessing. This was the first time that one of the old Miracle Plays had been seen in Cornwall for several centuries.

I.

BEUNANS MERIASEK.

The play opens in Meriadoc's home in Brittany. He appears as a small child, with his father and mother. The father comes forward (*Pater mereadoci pompabit hic* says the Latin stage direction) and says—

“I am called Duke of Brittany,
And raised from blood royal,
And over the country chieftain
Nearest to the high sovran,
King Conany.
Of his lineage right truly I am

.
A son right truly we have,
Meriasek his name,
To school now put him
I will without fail.”

Meriasek is sent to school, and distinguishes himself by his devotional spirit, praying earnestly, and fasting on Friday. Some years are then supposed to elapse, and the King of Brittany appears on the stage (*Hic pompabit rex conanus*). A banqueting scene follows, at which the King proposes to arrange a marriage between Meriasek and a princess. Meriasek refuses, to the disgust of the King, and the disappointment of his father and mother, who however consent to his taking holy orders, and the English stage direction says “her meriasek weryth a prest ys gown.” The Bishop of Kernou now appears and ordains Meriasek, who immediately proceeds to work miracles on a blind man and a cripple. He then announces his intention of going to Cornwall (1), and embarks on a ship. A storm arises, which he calms by his

(1) The Play calls both the Armorican Cornouaille and the English Cornwall *Kernou*, without anything to distinguish them.

prayers, and he lands in Cornwall (*descendit in cornubia*). He finds himself at Cambron, with the famous chapel of Our Lady in front of him. A *domesticus* appears. Meriasek asks him what the chapel he sees is, and is told that it is the Chapel of Mary of Cambron (*chapel maria cambron*). Meriasek then causes a well to spring up by his prayers, and heals a fever patient and a cripple. He declares that he will build a church "by holy Mary's chapel," and heals a leper.

The next scene shows a heathen tyrant called Teudar.

"Teudar I am called,
Lord reigning in Cornwall.
That Mahound be honoured
Is my charge without fail."

A messenger tells him—

"There is here in Penwith,
Somewhat west of Carnebre,
A priest doing a work,
Healing.... every disease in the world.
Of a god he will not have it to be spoken
Save of Christ Who died."

Teudar sets off with his soldiers, and enters on a long theological discussion with Meriasek, after which he returns home and sends his men to slay him. Meriasek is warned of this in a vision. He announces that he has founded a church near Mary of Cambron's chapel, and that the water of the well he has consecrated will cure insanity.

"Likewise the water of the fountain
For a man insane certainly
I pray that it may be a salve
To bring him again to his senses."

He then hides under a rock, and Teudar's emissaries fail to find him. Meriasek prophesies that the rock in future will bear his name—

"carek veryasek," and immediately finds a ship in which he returns to Brittany. A stone on the shore bows down to receive him as he lands. A huge man-eating wolf, who "has slain many men and children in the country," appears, but becomes tame as soon as Meriasek touches him, and follows him like a lamb. The saint says—

"I will go to the wilderness
There a hermit right truly to be,
That I may be able to worship my God.
And that I may not be tempted
By the folk of the world
Whilst I may be alive.
Here surely by the castle
Called Pontelyne really
On the mountain certainly,
And by the river surely
Of Josselyne,
A chapel I will make
To worship blessed Mary,
Though it is a place wild and cold.
Worship to Christ the Maiden's Son!
A thousand paces surely is the mountain
From the ground."

The stage direction follows "chappell aredy. Her a weryth a rosset mantell and a berde."

[A long extraneous episode, consisting of the story of the conversion and baptism of the Emperor Constantine, is here inserted].

The life of Meriasek is then taken up again, with a scene in which outlaws rob travellers. Then the Count of Rohan appears and says that he is seeking for Meriasek, "who was to me a very near relation," who "went away, forsook his father and mother, and I know not where he went." A messenger tells him that Meriasek is living as a hermit by Pontelyne, and Rohan declares that he will go and try to persuade him

to return to his inheritance. He finds Meriasek, but fails to make the saint leave his cell, and gives up the attempt, and instead asks his help in dealing with the outlaws. Meriasek promises this. In the next scene the outlaws reappear and are frightened by fire falling on them from heaven. One rides away on horseback, the others flee to Meriasek and implore his protection. Meriasek bids them make restitution to those they have robbed. The Count of Rohan returns and thanks Meriasek, and announces that the saint has granted three fairs in the parish of Noyal, on the 6th of July, the 8th of August, "and the third month September Michael's feast, that shall be held in the parish of blessed Noala (*voala*)."

The scene then shifts again to Cornwall. The Duke of Cornwall appears and fights with Teudar, who is ignominiously routed. This ends the first day of the play.

On the second day of the play Meriasek opens the eyes of the blind Count Globus, and cures a demoniac and a deaf man. Then the Count of Vannes appears on the stage, and says that the Bishop of the country is dead. His squire tells him that "rich and poor desire Meriasek to be bishop." The Count proceeds to the College (*ad decanum in collegio*) and advises the Dean to elect Meriasek. The Canons agree, and a messenger is sent to Pope Silvester to ask for bulls from Rome sanctioning the appointment. The Count of Vannes, the Dean and a canon go to Meriasek and ask him to accept the offer of the see. Meriasek refuses. The Bishop of Kernou and "a second bishop," with Count Globus, finally persuade him, and he is taken to be consecrated "in the church of Saint Sampson." The Bishop of Kernou performs the ceremony "yn ye deyn ys church," and Meriasek works further miracles.

[Other incidents not relating to St. Meriasek are here introduced to spin out the time, including the well-known story from the *Golden Legend* (it is found in the chapter dealing with the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary) of the woman who carried off the Child from the arms of Our Lady's statue. This was no doubt considered appropriate on account of the special devotion paid to the Virgin in the "Chapel of Mary of Cambron." The stage direction before line 3171 says "here the son of a certain Woman, as is found in the miracles of the blessed mereadocus, shall parade." This seems to show that the story was bound up with a book containing the Life of the saint, which no doubt belonged to Camborne parish church. The rubric is of great interest, as it is the only evidence we possess for the existence of such a book in Cornwall].

The life of Meriasek is once more taken up. He heals a madman. Jesus sends Michael and Gabriel to feed him with heavenly food. Meanwhile "organs or syngyng" are heard. A rubric telling us that the saint received this miraculous nourishment every day proves to be a quotation from a Latin *Life* of the saint (*Sumens cibum cum laudibus diuinis epulis quotidie sentit se refectum*). (1).

After one more scene from the *Life* of St. Silvester, Meriasek is introduced "lying in his oratory." He tells the Dean that the hour of his death is come. He prays that all who seek his help may be healed by God of every disease, and says—

"In Cornwall I shall have a house
By Mary of Cambron.

To see me whoever comes thither

I will absolve him at once,

Though my body be in another place.

(1) This lost Latin *Life* has just been discovered at Paris.

In that same place whoever shall pray,
 By Jesus he will be heard,
 And his petition fulfilled
 If it be, truly, right lawful."

He then observes that it is Friday, and adds
 "My festival shall be surely
 In the month of June,
 The first Friday
 For ever,"

and dies with the words "In manus tuas domine
 spiritum meum commendo."

The Count of Vannes, the Bishop of Kernou, Globus, a canon, and others recount the virtues of the departed saint, and describe his edifying end, and among other things the Dean of Vannes tells us that each day and each night he used to kneel a thousand times. Then follows the funeral. He is buried in the cathedral. The peasants flock into Vannes, the clergy sing, Meriasek's body is laid in the grave, and the Play ends with the Count of Vannes turning to the people and saying—

"To you the blessing of Meriasek,
 And of sweet Mary of Cambron,
 The blessing of the apostles!"

He bids the pipers to play, and invites the audience to drink and dance.

II.

The traditions about St. Meriadoc which the author of the Play found in Cornwall seem to be scanty. There was little besides the existence of the holy well, with its reputation for curing insanity, and of the rock bearing the Saint's name, the tradition that he had founded the parish church of Camborne, and the fact that his feast was observed there on the first Friday in June. The words placed in the Saint's mouth on 14297 ("though my body be in another

place") plainly admit that there were no relics of Meriadoc at Camborne. (See previous page).

We have seen that there was a book of "Miracles of Meriadoc" kept at Camborne. Did this book contain the name of Teudar? Teudar is the traditional tyrant of Cornish folklore. He appears in the *Vita Petroci* as "a cruel and fierce man, who, to punish thieves and criminals, had, with savage cruelty, caused serpents and all kinds of noxious worms to be collected in a marshy lake," (1) and in the *Vita Guigneri* (2) and *Life of Saint Kea* (3) as a persecutor of saints. (It is to be observed, by the way, that the parish of Gwinear is the next parish to Camborne, and that there is, as we shall see, a connection between the two saints). Mr. Henry Jenner, in an article on "King Teudar" in "Tre, Pol and Pen" (1928) has made the very interesting suggestion that "the introduction of the name of *Teudar* as that of the villain of the piece was a sly hit at Henry VII, who was not a *persona grata* with the Cornish." If the reader will turn to Canon Taylor's *Saint Michael's Mount* (4) he will understand why Henry VII was not popular in Cornwall, and the 184 "manucaptors" representing nearly every parish in Cornwall who had to pay heavy fines to the King in connection with Perkin Warbeck's rebellion must have been pleased to see "Teudar" routed on the stage in 1504. References to current political events in "Enterludes" and "Plays," to the "derogation, depraving or despising" of the Government's measures, are forbidden by the Act of Uniformity *Primo Elizabethae*, printed at the beginning of the

(1) "Cornish Saints" Series, No. 11.

(2) *ib.*, No. 9.

(3) *ib.*, No. 20.

(4) Cambridge University Press, 1932, pp. 142, 143, 176—190.

Book of Common Prayer of 1559. I think that the existence of a political innuendo in *Beunans Meriasek* is very likely, but apart from this the question whether the story of Teudar's persecution of the saint, and the other incidents in the part of the Play where the scene is laid in Cornwall, were in the "Miracles of Saint Meriasek" or were invented by the author of the Play, must remain a matter of conjecture.(1).

III.

We are on surer ground when we turn to the parts of *Beunans Meriasek* which deal with the Saint's career in Brittany. We shall find that the author of the Play followed closely the *Life* of the saint as it was given in the liturgical books used in Brittany during the Middle Ages. The celebrated Breton Dominican, Albert Le Grand, in his *Vie de Saint Meriadec* which he gives in *Vies des Saints de la Bretagne Armorique*, printed in 1636, has summarized these breviary lections, so I shall give a literal translation of his work(2).

(1) It is worthy of note that a place-name in Crowan parish, on the border of Camborne parish, BOSTEEDAR, near Pendarves, seems to contain the name of Teudar. The Name is spelt *Bostydyr* in 1397, *Botydyr* in 1414, *BOTUDER* in 1419, *Boteedar* in 1600, *Bosteedar* in 1603. (There is also a *Camduder* in St. Just-in-Roseland; and in the parish of St. Keverne, besides the *Lestowder* mentioned in "*Beunans Meriasek*," there is a *Vounder-tudor*).

(2) It might seem unnecessary to give Albert Le Grand's *Vie de Saint Meriadec*, now that we possess, in the newly-discovered *Vita*, the ultimate source of nearly all the materials from which it was composed. I have decided however to retain it, as it is an interesting example for the student of how Le Grand used his materials, and to what extent he added to and "improved" on them. It has also useful information about the cult of the saint in the 17th century. (For the average English reader it is much more attractive than a translation of the 15th century *Vita*, with its huge masses of shameless "padding," and corrupt and doubtful passages, would be).

"THE LIFE OF SAINT MERIADEC,
Confessor, Bishop of Vennes, the Seventh of June.

SAINT MERIADEC, who was a native of Armorican Brittany, of the Royal race of Conan Meriadec, first Catholic King of that country, was born about the year of grace 758 [the Bollandists suggest this is a slip for 578 or 587]. His parents, wishing to give him a good position in the world, made his education begin at an early age; &, as soon as he had left school, sent him to the Court of the King of Brittany. To please them, Meriadec consented to go, & stayed there five whole years, living among the other Courtiers without defiling himself with the vices common at the Court, as the Salamander lives in the fire without being burned. He was devout toward God, whom he served faithfully; he heard Mass every day; said his prayers on his knees; showed great respect to Churches & Ecclesiastics; went to Sacraments & Sermons; &, rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, was so courteous & affable, that he was loved & cherished by everyone & even by the most debauched & vicious, who respected his virtue.

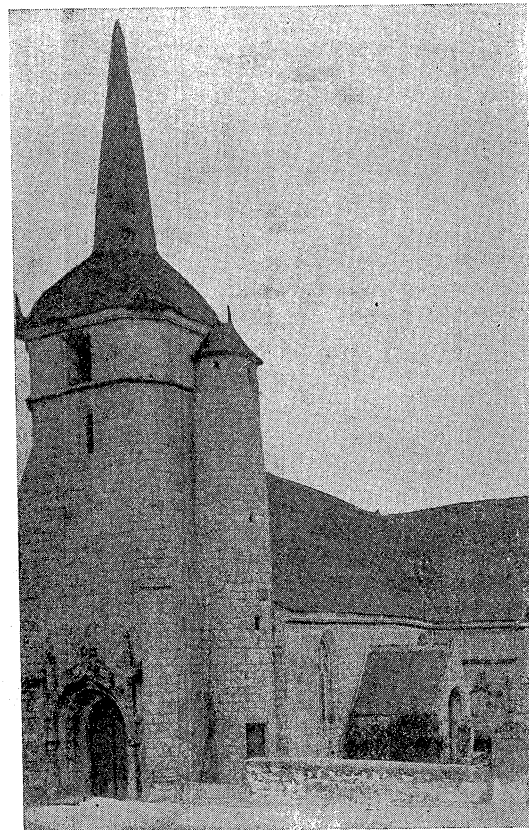
II. After passing five years at the King's Court, he took leave of His Majesty, who was exceedingly grieved to lose such a Man & rewarded him liberally for the service he had rendered to him. When he had returned to his father's house, a proposal was made to arrange an advantageous marriage for him; but the saintly young man would not agree, telling his parents that he had chosen the Church, and asking them affectionately to say nothing more to him of Marriage. His father found this resolution of Meriadec's hard to stomach, and endeavoured to dissuade him from it by every means he could think of; but, seeing that all

was of no use, he allowed him to assume the cassock (1), &, in a short space of time obtained for him so many Benefices, that he became the richest Ecclesiastic in Brittany. He received all the Orders [of the ministry] up to the priesthood inclusive from the hands of the Bishop of Vennes, Saint Hincweten (2). When he had sung [his first] Mass, he decided that the worthiness of the ministry he had received required of him a more exalted life than that which he had hitherto led; & resolved at once to retire to some solitary place, and to live there for the rest of his days in the service of God.

III. His Parents, hearing of his intention, sought to turn him from it & had recourse to the influence & authority of the Lord of Rohan, his near kinsman, & even to that of the King and the principal people at his Court [to induce Meriadec to change his mind]; but the Love of God had so filled his heart, that he was deaf to all attempts to persuade him. He resigned all his Benefices into the hands of the Bishop of Vennes, his Prelate, & having sold his patrimony he distributed the money to the poor; then, having received the Bishop's Benediction & taken leave of his parents, he withdrew into a very remote and solitary place, in the viscounty of *Rohan*, not far from the town of *Pontivy*, where there is now a greatly-venerated Chapel bearing his name. Here he had a little Chapel built, &, close by, a Cell, where he shut himself up with

(1) *il le fit vêtir de long*. The stage direction in *Beunans Meriasek* "her Mariasek weryth a prest ys gown" (see p. 7) is the exact equivalent of this.

(2) Nothing is known of any such saint, but Albert Le Grand may have found the name in the Legendary of St. Jean-du-Doigt, as Dom Lobineau says he was the predecessor of S. Meriadoc. An Abbot of St. Méen called Hincweten lived in the first quarter of the 11th century. A St. *Guenganton*, Confessor, was honoured at St. Méen on 2 May.



Chapel of St. Mériadec at Stival.

a simple Clerk, who served him at Mass & administered to his necessities. He was simply dressed; lived very plainly; passed his time in prayer, reading holy Scripture, or in giving counsel to those who came to consult him about their spiritual needs. Among his other austerities & self-mortifications, he was accustomed to fall on his knees to worship God a thousand times

during the day & an equal number of times each night. His sanctity was so famous all over Brittany that the people flocked to his Hermitage from every direction to share in the graces & favours which God bestowed upon them by his merits.

IV. The Viscount of Rohan, his near kinsman, having gone one day to see him, Saint Meriadec complained to him of the daily harm done to the neighbouring Parishes by certain robbers, who, issuing from caverns in the adjoining forest, attacked the open country & committed great crimes & brigandages on the poor people there, who suffered greatly thereby, exhorting him to command Justice to be done upon these robbers & to clear the country of them. The Viscount replied that he desired it with all his heart, but that he could not easily do so. Then the Blessed Saint Meriadec replied to him: "Cousin, grant me three free Fairs for the Parish of *Noyal*; one (1) before the Nones of July (which is the sixth of the month); the second on the sixth of the Ides of September (the eighth of the month); the third on the first day of October, & I will exterminate them so effectually that the country shall never more be troubled with them." The Viscount acceded to his request, & within a few days, the Saint fulfilled his promise, & by his prayers, delivered the country from the spoliations of those brigands; and when the Lord of Rohan saw this, he returned thanks to God & to Saint Meriadec & granted the said three Fairs, and had the grant confirmed by the King & published throughout all Brittany.

V. In the mean time, while all Brittany was ravished with admiration of the Sanctity of St. Meriadec, it came to pass that Saint Hincweten, Bishop of Vennes, died. After his obsequies had

(1) He means "on the day before the Nones of July."

been celebrated, the Clergy & People assembled to elect a Pastor worthy to possess this See & unanimously agreed on our Saint Meriadec, who was elected & declared Bishop of Vennes, & four Canons were deputed to go and find him & inform him of his election, being charged expressly to listen to no excuse on his part, but to bring him to the city. They found him in his Hermitage & made known to him their errand. He was greatly disconcerted at the prospect of leaving his beloved solitude & returning to the society of men, & would not agree to their request, refusing to take upon him so heavy a burden and responsibility, too weighty, he said, to be laid upon his shoulders. The Messengers, seeing that their prayers & arguments availed nothing, took him by force & brought him to Vennes, where all the people received him with exceeding joy, & never left him, for fear he should escape, till next day when all the Bishops of Brittany having assembled in the Cathedral Church of Vennes, he was declared Bishop of the said City, & soon after, was Consecrated in the Church of Saint Samson at Dol, by the Archbishop of the said place, Metropolitan of Brittany, & lived several years in this Prelacy, fulfilling all the duties of a good Shepherd towards his Flock. He was most compassionate & merciful towards the poor and afflicted, hard & austere to himself, gentle & benign to his neighbour. Finally, having governed his Church with great Sanctity, he passed from this mortal sojourn to immortal glory. His holy Body was buried in his Cathedral, where God has worked several miracles by his intercession, as also in the place of his Hermitage. There are several Churches in Brittany dedicated to Saint Meriadec; among others the Chapel of the Castle of *Pontivy*; & in the parish of *Plou'gasnou*, Diocese of *Treguer*, there was formerly a Chapel of Saint Meriadec, in the

place where now stands the Chapel of *Saint John* called of the *Finger*, & the valley where the said Chapel is situated is called *Traoun-Meriadec*, that is to say, the valley of *Meriadec*.

This Life has been compiled by us from the Proper of Saints of Vennes and from an old manuscript Legendary kept in the Church of S. John Traoun-Meriadec (called of the Finger) in the Parish of Plou'garnou, Diocese of Treguer; Claude Robert, in his Gallia Christiana, among the Bishops of Vennes; Jean Chenu, in his Chronological History of the Bishops of France, among those of Vennes; and the Reverend Father Du Pas, in his list of the Bishops of Vennes, at the end of the Genealogical History of the Illustrious Houses of Brittany."

Albert Le Grand's *Vie de Saint Meriadec* is a very good summary of the traditions about the saint which could be found in Brittany at the end of the Middle Ages. The reader will recognize the Breton stories utilized by the author of *Beunans Meriasek*,—the tradition of his belonging to the family of King Conan, the stories of his ordination, and withdrawal to a hermitage near Pontivy (1), the legend of his kneeling a thousand times each day and night (2), the incidents in which the Count of Rohan first tries to persuade him to leave his hermitage, and afterwards grants the three fairs at Noyal-Pontivy, and the

(1) The *Pontelyne* of *Beunans Meriasek* is a blunder for *Pontivy*; and the "mountain a thousand paces high" is a misreading of the Latin *Legendary* which said that the hermitage was "a thousand paces from Pontivy."

(2) This is an attempt to improve on the edifying practice attributed to S. Patrick,—the apostle of Ireland is said to have genuflected 100 times each day and night. The author of the Anglo-Saxon homily on S. Neot appropriates the anecdote for his own hero, and the mediaeval biographer of S. Meriadec follows his example, increasing the number to 1,000. Dom Lobineau gravely points out that it is a physical impossibility.

stories of his election as Bishop of Vannes and consecration at Dol. It will be necessary now to discuss the origin of these traditions.

Le Grand tells us where he found the materials for his *Life*. They were mainly, he says, the lessons for the feast of St. Meriadec in the 1630 *Proper* of Vannes, and a manuscript *Legendary* preserved at the famous Chapel of St. Jean-du-Doigt near Morlaix. The other authorities he quotes only contain brief references to him as one of the early Bishops of Vannes (12th or 13th). He has, as usual, added a few edifying touches, and a date (for which of course he had no real authority) and other "précisions pseudo-historiques" (to use the words of M. Duine). Otherwise he has faithfully copied from the sources he mentions.

The three lessons of the second nocturn at matins on the feast of St. Meriadec in the *Proper* of Vannes published in 1630 are as follows:—

"I. Meriadocus, who belonged to the illustrious stock of Conan, King of Lesser Britain, devoted himself from a child to the pursuit of all the virtues: and, following the footsteps of Christ the Lord, he was humble even amid luxury. When he reached full age he received Holy Orders, and spurning the vain honours of the world, which men wonder at, and which encourage young men [to follow the world], he renounced all possessions and honours, and withdrew to a certain place, not far from the castle of Pontivy, where he lived alone, in a life of undisturbed peace, and security from the dangers of the world.

II. Here he restored to health many sick persons who resorted to him for healing. And when the fame of his virtue and holiness had spread abroad, the people of Vannes call a council and implore the Chapter and all the Clergy to

elect Meriadocus in place of the Bishop who had just died. They agreed, and certain Canons were commissioned to inform Meriadocus that he had been chosen Bishop by the prayers of the people and the consent of the Clergy.

III. And although he asked to be excused the burden laid upon him, yet at last he gave way before the repeated desires of all men. A few days later he is consecrated in the Cathedral Church, many Bishops being present, and a vast crowd of people, amid universal acclamation, about the year 659. He was conspicuous for his charity and mercy towards the poor and sick, supplying their needs and watching over their interests. After a pious and holy life, famous with the glory of miracles, he fell asleep in the Lord on the seventh of the Ides of June."

The Legendary of Saint-Jean-du-Doigt, the other chief authority consulted by Albert Le Grand, has perished, but I think we may be sure that it must have been almost if not quite identical with the Legendary of the diocese of Tréguier, the diocese in which the chapel of St. Jean was situated. Dom Lobineau used the legendary of Tréguier for the section on S. Mériadec in his famous book *Les Saints de Bretagne* (1). Tresvaux, in his edition of Dom Lobineau's work (2), tells us that all the archives of the Church of Tréguier were lost during the French Revolution. Fortunately, however, we possess a 17th copy of the 15th century *Vita* used by Dom Lobineau. Since I began this book, I have been enabled, with the help of M. Bourde de la Rogerie, late archiviste of the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, to discover this long-lost manuscript in the National Library at Paris (Mss.

(1) Ed. Tresvaux, Paris, 1836, vol. II. pp. 118—125.

(2) *Ib.*, p. 123.

Lat., fonds franç., No. 22321). (1). I have given it, in the original Latin, in Appendix I, for the benefit of scholars, and will summarize it here, omitting the tedious rhetorical amplifications, except those which have been utilized by the author of *Beunans Meriasek*.

MS. fr. 22321 is the second volume of a set in the National Library labelled *Réformation de la noblesse de Bretagne*, which was formerly in the library of the Blancs Manteaux. It consists of 889 pages. It contains documents relating to the dioceses of Tréguier, St. Briec, Dol, Rennes and Quimper, and includes Latin *Lives* of S. Samson, S. Judicaël, S. Hervé, S. Maudez, S. Trémeur, S. Petroc, etc. On p. 866 begins *Mercadoci* (sic) *episcopi et confessoris*.

I think it is clear that this *Vita Mercadoci* is a copy of that in the old manuscript legendary of Vannes, now lost—a legendary which was used by the compilers of the 1589 Breviary of Vannes for the lections for the feasts of S. Gobrien and S. Mériadec, as is expressly stated in the rubrics placed before those lections. (The lections for the *Propre de Vannes* of 1630 are merely a highly sophisticated version from the same source). The words *illuminans ecclesiam venetensem* of the 1st lection in the Tréguier legendary must have been written at Vannes. The impossible date given for the saint's death, which has greatly puzzled historians, is simply explained if we suppose, with Tresvaux, that the scribe who wrote the 15th century manuscript was copying an older manuscript which had been

(1) Fr. Poncelet, the Bollandist, seems to have seen this *Vita*, as he gives its *incipit* and *desinit* in the 2nd Supplement to the *Bibl. Hag. Lat.* (Brussels, 1911, p. 230). Unfortunately he did not say where the MS was, but M. de la Rogerie found a reference to it in some manuscript notes by La Borderie, the Breton historian, in the Archives at Rennes, which enabled us to trace it. The National Library possesses a 15th century legendary of Tréguier (MS. Lat., 1148) which has no *Life* of S. Meriadoc.

written (no doubt at Vannes) in 1302 (1). He carelessly changed the date of the document he had before him into that of the death of S. Meriadoc! The text of the Tréguier manuscript, as M. Thuasne, who has copied it for me, tells me, is "very corrupt, and has had numerous corrections made on it."

The passages in italics, followed by references to the printed edition of *Beunans Meriasek* in brackets, in the following analysis of the newly-found *Vita*, will indicate to the reader the passages which have been used by the author of the Play. It will become evident, beyond all possibility of doubt, that he had the *Vita* here summarized before his eyes as he worked; he even gives a passage from it as a stage direction, which the reader will see is really *not* a stage direction at all, but a detail which he intended to introduce somehow in the Play.

LIFE OF MERCADOCUS, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

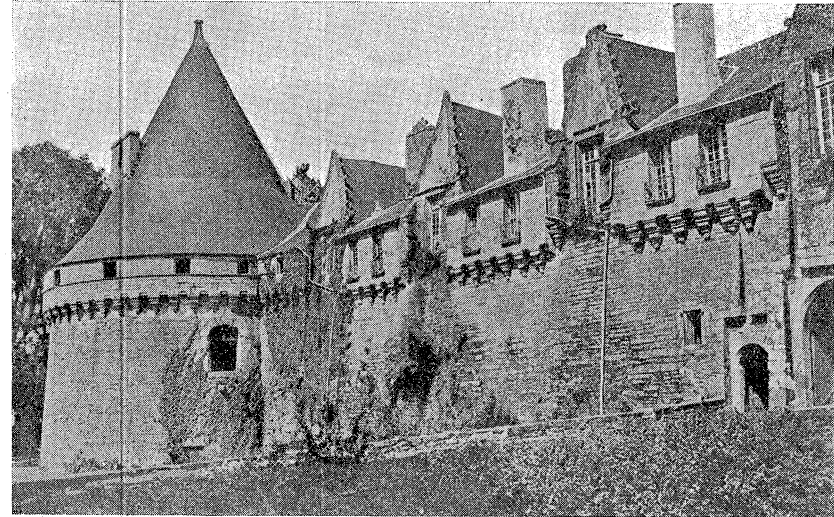
7 June.

LECT. 1. The most blessed bishop and confessor Mercadoc appeared as the morning star among the other stars of heaven, distinguished by his high birth, but more distinguished by his virtues, illuminating the Church of Vannes by numerous miracles.

LECT. 2. Blessed Mercadoc was of the Breton race, and lineally descended from King Conan the Magnificent. [B.M., p. 2, 1. 5]. His father was Duke of Lesser Britain, as is found in ancient chronicles (2). The Viscount of Rohan was held to be his kinsman. [B.M., p. 110, 1. 1939]. He was well educated from his childhood,

(1) Op. cit., p. 123.

(2) The MS. reads *duce*. But the Breviary of 1589 reads *duci*, which no doubt is correct. A scribe's blunder has therefore led the author of *Beunans Meriasek* to transform King Conan from an ancestor into a contemporary!



The Castle of Pontivy.

beloved of God and man, and enriched with a multitude of benefices, dignities and prebends, such as was possessed by none else in Brittany.

LECT. 3. He is ordained presbyter [B.M., pp. 30f.] and contemplates becoming a hermit.

LECT. 4. He gives all his revenues to poor clerks, and distributes his ancestral domains among the needy, reserving for himself only what was strictly necessary. His reputation for sanctity becomes widespread, and fearing that the praises of men may injure him, he retires to a hermitage, choosing a place in the viscounty of Rohan, *a thousand paces from the castle of Pontivy*. [B.M., p. 64, 11. 1138, 1139 & 1147—the writer has altered *Pontivy* to *Pontelyne*, and made *Pontivy Castle* into *Josselyn Castle*]. Here he builds a chapel and lives as a hermit, wearing, instead of the *silks and purple* he had been used to, the plainest clothes [B.M., p. 112, 11. 1965,

1966, *purpur pannov*], eating the simplest food [B.M. ib. 1. 1961], and living in absolute poverty.

LECT. 5. His relatives, *cognati et agnati* [B.M., pp. 112, 114 & 118], visit him in his hermitage, some to encourage him, some to try to persuade him to leave it and return to the world. Among them comes the Viscount of Rohan. Meriasek addresses him "shortly" in a long and studied harangue on the advantages of the solitary life, in which he says that "*It is good for me to hold me fast by God* (Ps. 73: 27) [B.M., p. 114, 11. 1998 & 1999] and *to do His will* [B.M., ib., 1. 2001], for *poverty is a removal of cares* [B.M., ib. 11. 2010 & 2011—*remoconn dhen cur*], and *a mother of holiness* [B.M., p. 116, 1. 2013], *life in a hermitage is more noble* [B.M., ib., 1. 2023, *nobyL*], there the *lust of the flesh* is left behind [B.M., ib., 1. 2028], *the world is trodden under foot* [B.M., ib., 11. 2029, 2030], *the property of another is not robbed* [B.M., ib.,] the *cunning of the demons is confounded* and *a way to the heavenly home* is opened [B.M., ib., 11. 2031—2035]. For the *riches of this world* are false and vain glory." [B.M., ib., 11. 2042—2045]. As the Viscount turns to depart, the saint says to him "*In this country there are robbers lurking in caves in the wood, who rob men's goods and carry off their silver and gold and cattle. I beseech thee to extirpate these robbers, and to grant me three free fairs for ever, quit of all toll, of which the first shall be on 6 July, the second on 8 September, and the third on 29 September in the parish of Noala.*" These fairs are given, granted and confirmed to blessed Mercadoc, the Viscount departs, the robbers are extirpated, and the fairs proclaimed throughout Brittany (1).

(1) It will be observed that the author of *Beunans Meriasek* makes the saint, instead of the Viscount, grant the fairs. He has also made a slip and written *August* for September. (6 July is the Feast of Ste. Noyale).

LECT. 6. The parish (plebs) and the merchants rejoice at the granting of the fairs to S. Mercadoc and the extirpation of the robbers. Mercadoc continues his hermit's life, wearing a garment of goat's hair [B.M., p. 112, 1. 1968], eating *herbs* [B.M., ib., 1. 1971], and *drinking pure water* [B.M., ib., 1. 1970], and *eating his food with praises* (to God) *feels himself daily refreshed with divine nourishment* [B.M., p. 224, rubric before 1. 3888].

LECT. 7. Blessed Mercadoc remained long in his hermitage, emulating S. John the Baptist [B.M., p. 258, 1. 4450]. The sick resorted to him daily, he opened the eyes of the blind [B.M., p. 144], gives hearing to the deaf [B.M., p. 152], makes the sea calm and brings sailors safe to port [B.M., pp. 34 & 36], drives away fevers [B.M., pp. 38 & 40], and casts out devils. His fame spreads through all the country, and people from many provinces flock to him. He is *always either praying or reading in the church* [B.M., p. 258, 11. 4461 & 4462], or preaching among men the salvation of the soul, seven times a day praising the Lord and genuflecting a thousand times a day and as often by night [B.M., p. 258, 11. 4452—4456].

LECT. 8. The Bishop of Vannes, of blessed memory (1), dies, and the people of Vannes flock to the church, with the elders of the city, asking the canons to choose Mercadoc for their pastor. The canons of Vannes meet together, with the elders of the city, and unanimously elect Mercadoc. Four canons are sent to the holy man with a letter. He refuses. The canons return amazed. Next day all the canons, with the presbyters, clerks, elders of the city, and all the bishops of Lesser Britain, take him by force and lead him from his hermitage to Vannes, present him before the altar of the Lord and compel him to accept

(1) It will be observed that the writer prudently avoids naming him.

the see, in spite of his reluctance, declaring that *the dignity is a shame more than an honour* [B.M., p. 174, l. 3027].

LECT. 9. He is consecrated in the city of Dol, *in the basilica of S. Samson* [B.M., p. 172, ll. 2983—2984]. He continues his life of charity and wonder-working, clothes the naked [B.M., p. 176, l. 3063], etc. At last he dies, after receiving the viaticum, and kissing the brethren who stood round his deathbed [B.M., p. 256, ll. 4428—4430], and with the words *In manus tuas* [B.M., p. 258, l. 4435] he breathes his last, on the 6th feria of June(1) in the year of the Lord 1302.

We now know where Albert Le Grand and the Cornish author of *Beunans Meriasek* got their information. But this *Vita* in the 15th century Legendary of Tréguier was itself only a late mediaeval adaptation for liturgical use of an older *Life* of the Saint. The Saints' Day lessons in mediaeval breviaries, as is well known, were usually taken from ancient Latin *Lives*. This explains (what would otherwise be so puzzling) the disproportionate place occupied by the incident of the robbers and the foundation of the three fairs at Noyal in the story of the Saint's life as we now have it. In the original *Life* perhaps it was only one among several anecdotes told about his doings while he lived as a hermit near Pontivy. When lessons were needed for the Legendary of St. Jean, and for those of Vannes and Tréguier, the whole *Life* was too long for insertion, a selection from among its contents had to be made, and this particular incident was chosen (2).

(1) This may be meant for "the first Friday (6th feria) in June."

(2) Or the explanation may simply be that the author of the original *Vita Meriadoci*, living at Pontivy, was particularly interested in the fairs of the neighbouring parish of Noyal, and really knew nothing about the true story of the Saint's life.

There was therefore once an old Latin *Life* of St. Meriadoc, which is now lost and is only represented by fragments adopted by compilers of legendaries. When, where and by whom was it composed? Internal evidence will help us to answer these questions.

The date cannot have been later than the year 1199, when the see of Dol finally lost its metropolitan privileges, since the lost *Vita* tells us particularly that the saint was consecrated in St. Samson's church at Dol. (The 17th century lections of Vannes, it will be observed, state that he was consecrated in his own cathedral). The writer must have been a clerk who lived in or near Pontivy and was connected with the great Breton family of the Rohans, since so much stress is laid upon the saint's belonging to that family and being "a near kinsman" of the Viscount of Rohan. The neighbourhood of St. Jean-du-Doigt, we notice, is not referred to, although the Chapel of St. Jean possessed a Legendary with a section on St. Mériadec based on the lost *Vita*. If the compiler of this Legendary had found any mention of his own chapel in the *Vita Meriadoci* he copied, he would certainly have inserted it, whatever else he omitted. Pontivy, Noyal and Josselin (1) are, with the exception of Vannes, the only places mentioned, and they are all in the Rohan country. The town of Rohan itself lies halfway between Pontivy and Josselin. The castle of Pontivy was formerly the residence of the Dukes of Rohan (2), and we note that its chapel was dedicated to St. Meriadoc. (The *Vita*, as we have seen, describing the situation of the saint's hermitage, says that it was "a thousand paces from the castle of Pontivy.")

(1) Josselin only appears in *Beunans Meriasek*.

(2) The Duc de Rohan-Chabot now lives at the castle of Josselin.

An interesting comparison may be made between the *Vita Meriadoci* and the *Life* of another Vannes saint—St. Gobrien. St. Gobrien is the patron saint of the parish church of Rohan, and his *Vita* (now known to us, like the *Vita Meriadoci*, only through breviary lections extracted from it) so closely resembles the *Life* of St. Meriadoc that we may conclude that they were both the work of the same author. Several passages are word for word the same in both (1). Both mention the fabulous King Conan, from whom the Rohans claimed to be descended (2). Both make their hero die Bishop of Vannes, *after being consecrated at Dol*.

We may conclude, then, that in the 12th century a *Life* of St. Meriadoc was written at Pontivy. Lections were taken from it for the Legendaries of Vannes, Tréguier and St. Jean-du-Doigt (which was in the diocese of Tréguier) (3). It must have been from one of these Legendaries that the author of *Beunans Meriasek* obtained his materials for the Breton parts of his Play. (No Breton manuscript, it is to be observed, refers to any visit to Cornwall, which was an invention of the Canon of Glasney who wrote the Play). He was clearly using a written document, not hearsay information. This is made certain, not only by the extremely circumstantial nature of his statements and by their tallying so closely

(1) See *Saint Gobrien* in M. Duine's *Saints de Brocéliande* (Paris, Le Dault, 1904) pp. 15 & 16.

(2) See Appendix III.

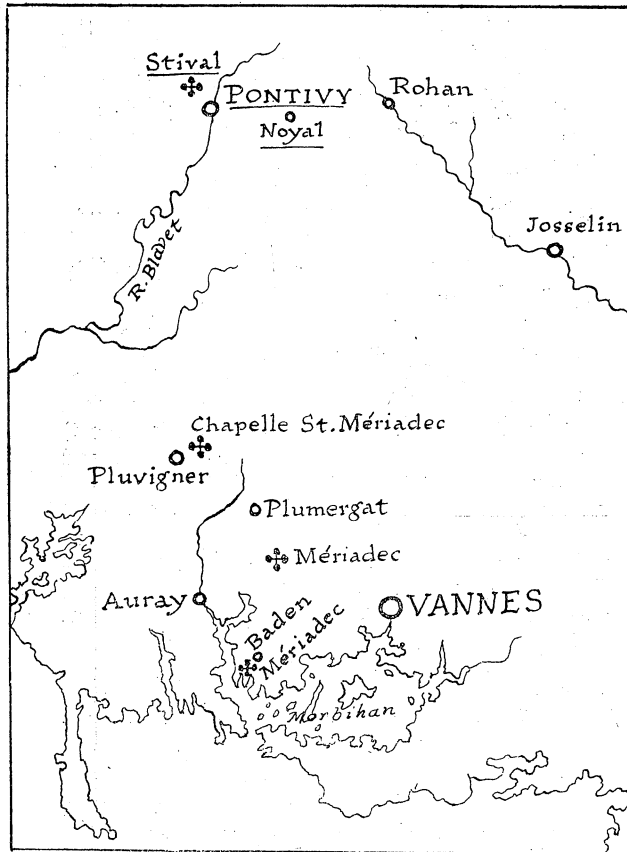
(3) The manuscript Breviary of Tréguier (15th century) inserts S. Meriadocus, Bishop, on 3rd June, with 3 lessons. Dom Lobineau says that according to the Legendary of Tréguier the saint died "on the sixth feria of June." He also says that an old Breviary of Nantes contains his name on 7 June, but I cannot find his name in any of the liturgical books analysed by Duine in his *Inventaire Liturgique*, except in those of Vannes and Tréguier.

with the actual expressions used by the Breton liturgical books we have referred to, but by the fact that in copying the name of the parish of Noyal he misread its *n* as *u*, the letters as written being alike, and since *u* stood also for *v*, he writes "in plu wyn voala" (1.2202). (1). We know from the complaint of a Truro custom-house officer (Alexander Carvannel) in 1537 that in that year a party of Cornishmen, accompanied by the Vicars of Newlyn and St. Agnes, went on a "pope-holy pilgrimage" to "Lantreger" (Tréguier) and no doubt such visits were common before the Reformation. On one such pilgrimage a canon of Glasney may well have seen, either at Tréguier or St. Jean-du-Doigt (a famous pilgrimage chapel, and situated on the coast) one of the Legendaries we have described and made a copy of it.

IV.

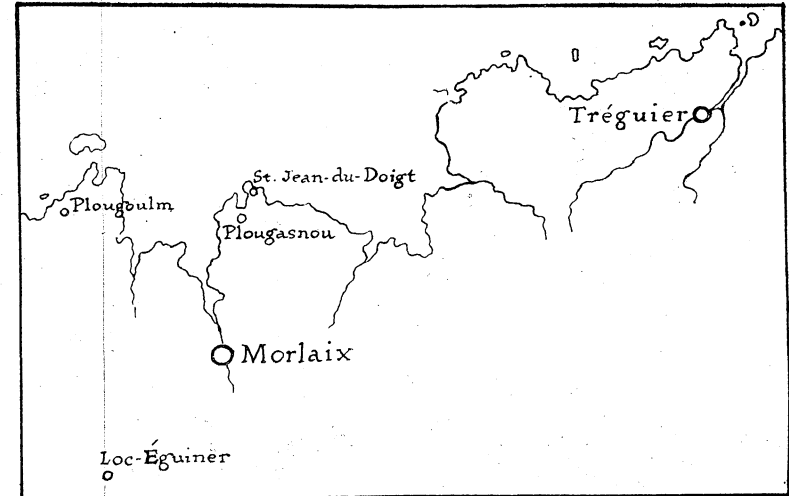
But though the twelfth century may seem to us a fairly remote period, it was really so long after the time in which the saint lived that we can hardly expect a *Life* written then to show much genuine knowledge of his doings. Fortunately we have a more trustworthy source of information. The celebrated maxim of the

(1) Mr. R. Morton Nance, who pointed this out to me, has kindly sent me the following note:—"The Breton saint's name Noala being given in its Latin form, and not docted of its *a*, it seems sure that it was not recognised as a familiar name in Cornwall [some modern authorities have tried to identify the name with the Cornish S. Neulina] but the scribe who added the English stage directions added the word *wyn*, which he puts before *voala*, "in plu wyn voala sensys," which Whitley Stokes translates "in the blessed parish of Noala." As *Noyal-Wen* or *Nolwen* is the Breton form of the name it seems possible that the scribe merely added his *wyn* in the wrong place, and that we should read "in plu Noala-Wyn sensys," i.e. "in the parish of Saint Noala." *Plu voala* has had no addition made in 1.2078."



late M. Loth is specially true in this case,—that “in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, it is not the Lives of the Saints that tell us most about the existence of the saints and the national organization of Religion, but the *names of places*.”

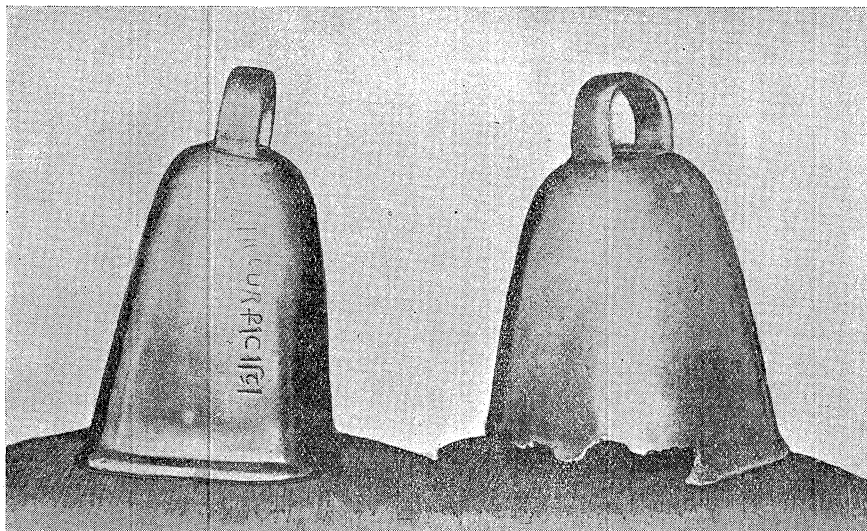
Let us see, then, what topography and the study of place-names has to tell us about the



career of St. Meriadoc. We will begin with Brittany, as St. Meriadoc is predominantly a Breton saint.

The principal centre of the cult of St. Mériadec is the neighbourhood of Pontivy. He was the patron saint of the chapel in the castle of Pontivy, obviously because, according to his legend, he belonged to the Rohan family. (1) At Noyal-Pontivy, a short distance to the east, there is a mutilated stone statue of the saint, dating from the 15th century, in the sacristy, and a granite sarcophagus (scheduled as a “Monument historique”) in the churchyard, popularly known as the “Tomb of St.

(1) Mlle Le Berre, in an article in the *Revue des Saints* (Bonne Presse) for June, 1934, says that “the family of Rohan has faithfully preserved the memory of S. Mériadec by naming children after him. In 1769 Ferdinand-Maximilien-Mériadec de Rohan-Guéméné, son of Hercule-Mériadec, was Archbishop of Bordeaux, and gave the name “Saint-Mériadec” to a square in the city, which is still called *Place Mériadec*.”

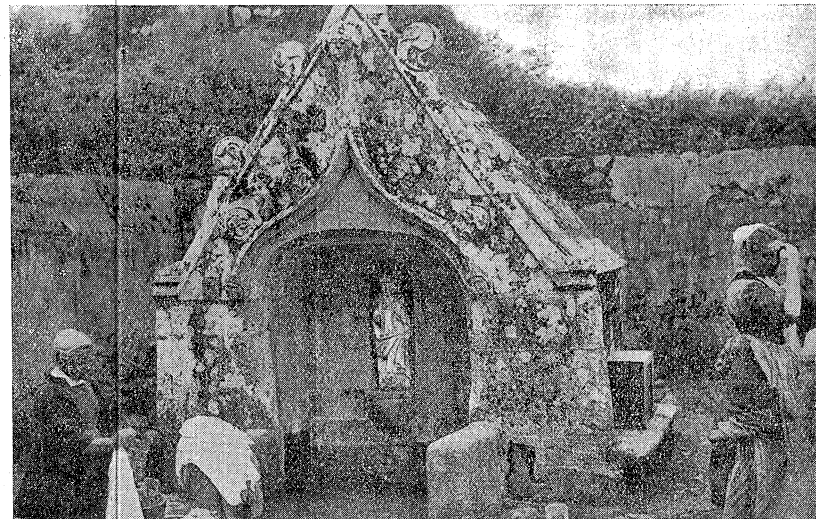


Bell of St. Mériadec.

Mériadec." (1). At Stival, three kilometres N.W. of Pontivy, on the site of the hermitage we have heard so much about in the documents we have been examining, is a beautiful 16th century church dedicated to our saint, which was formerly a chapel under Pontivy. There is a statue of St. Mériadec on the south side of the church, and a very curious carved *lec'h*, (2) called "St. Mériadec's prie-Dieu." In the sacristy is kept a very ancient bell, called "St. Mériadec's bonnet," covered, when not in use, with a dress of white silk. It is placed upon the head of persons suffering from headache and deafness and made to ring. It has an

(1) See Rosenzweig. *Rep. Arch. du Morb.*, 124.

(2) The *Lec'h* is said to bear the imprint of the foot of a goat, sent by the devil to distract the saint in his prayers. Driven away by the latter, it left this mark on the stone.



Holy Well at Stival.

enigmatic inscription in uncial letters upon it. The words apparently are PIR TURFIC IS TI, which have been explained by some as Latin for "Pirtur made me," by others as Breton for "Thou soundest sweetly," but both interpretations are extremely doubtful. The bell is 0m 24 high, including the handle. It is venerated by great numbers of pilgrims each year. In the choir are a series of paintings of the beginning of the 19th century, representing scenes from the Life of St. Mériadec. (1). A

(1) Stival was *Estival* in 1314. See Albert Le Grand (ed. 1901) pp. 221, 222; Le Mené, *Hist. des Paroisses du diocèse de Vannes*, II, 495—497; Duhem, *Eglises du Morbihan*, 150, 151, Rosenzweig, *Rép. Arch. du Morb.*, 119—121. It was sad, on revisiting this very interesting place in 1933, to find that a vandal municipality had demolished the wall of the churchyard and the chapel of St. Peter (on the site of the former parish church of St. Peter) which it contained, and that the church is in urgent need of repair.

hundred yards or so away, by the side of the road to Pontivy, is the saint's Holy Well: it has a beautiful little building over it, in the flamboyant style, on which may be seen a shield bearing the 9 mascles of the Rohan family.

Some distance to the south of Pontivy, a little to the N.E. of Auray, lies another group of chapels dedicated to St. Mériadec. In the parish of Baden is a village on the shore of the estuary of Auray called Saint-Mériadec, with a chapel of the saint, rebuilt in the 19th century. In the parish of Plumergat, which adjoins Baden on the north, is a *trêve* called Mériadec of which the chapel is dedicated to our saint. It is an interesting building, finished in 1383. (1). Dom Lobineau says that this chapel is "almost as much resorted to as that of Stival." Still further north, in the great parish of Pluvigner (i.e. Parish of Gwinear) is a 16th century chapel of St. Mériadec (the remains of an older chapel may be discerned) where there is a great devotion to the saint, as shown by the existence of a "gwerz" or Breton hymn in his honour, specially appropriated to this sanctuary ("Kannen sant Mériadek, er perhindet bras, é chapel sant Mériadek é parréz Pleuignér"). (2). It must surely be more than a coincidence that in Cornwall the parish of Gwinear adjoins that of Camborne, while in Brittany St. Gwinear and St. Meriadoc are honoured in the same parish. I do not think this remarkable fact has ever been pointed out before. It is, to my mind, most

(1) Duhem (op. cit.) p. 144. Le Mené (op. cit., II. 199, 200) says that this chapel has been served by a resident priest for centuries. There are two *lec'hs* close by. Rosenzweig (p. 9) says that on the south altar are 3 quartz pebbles with which the peasants rub their foreheads to obtain relief from headache. The reader will notice that this is everywhere a special feature of the cult paid to St. Mériadec. (For the Auray chapels, see Appendix IV).

(2) Duine, *Mém.* No. 37.



Silver Bust with relic of St. Mériadec at St. Jean-du-doigt.

significant as suggesting a link connecting the Christian origins of Camborne with those of Gwinear. (1).

The Mériadec dedications of the Auray neighbourhood are clearly related to those of Pontivy and its district, which must have been the saint's last foundations. The chapel in Plougasnou is much further away. This magnificent building, erected in 1440 to contain the relic of the finger of St. John the Baptist, contains a 17th century statue of St. Mériadec, representing the saint in cope and mitre, with crozier, in the act of blessing, and a silver reliquary in the form of a bust, within which is a portion of the saint's skull. At the Pardon on 24th June it is placed on the heads of pilgrims. (2). There is some

(1) For St. Mériadec in Pluvigner see Duhem (op. cit.) p. 148, and Rosenzweig p. 49, and Appendix IV.

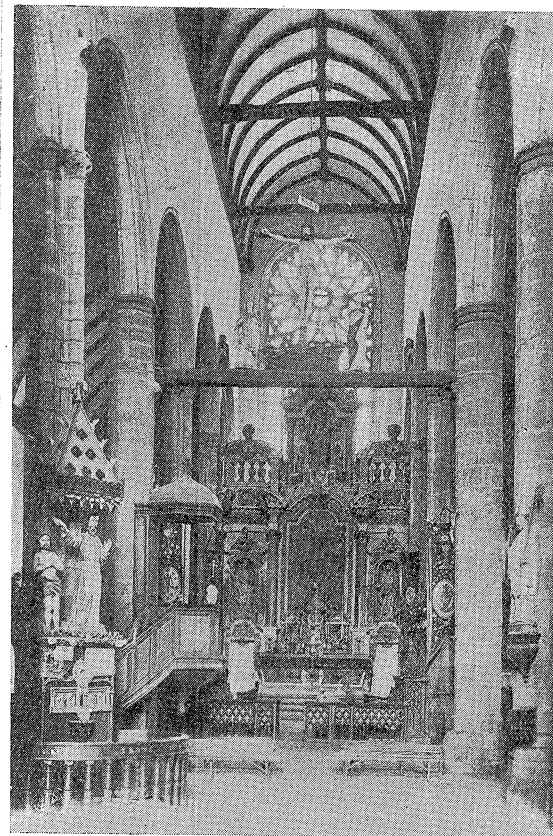
(2) Note by MM. Thomas and Abgrall in A. Le Grand (ed. 1901), p. 222. They add that there is a Holy Well of St. Mériadec close by, ruined but still frequented. The Chapel Accounts for 1599 mention the statue of St.

local folklore about the saint, recorded by Anatole Le Braz in *Au Pays des Pardons* (Bk. III. c. 1, pp. 132, 3 of the English translation). Like other late Breton folklore, invented long after the time when the true story of the saint had been forgotten, it represents St. Meriadec as the brother of another saint, St. Primel, who has a chapel close by, and disputing with him where each was to settle. "Said Meriadec to Primel—'I am the elder, I have first choice; I should like to stay here. As for you, brother, go where God leads you, and peace be with you.' As Primel bowed his head in acquiescence, he saw a round stone lying at his feet. Picking it up, he brandished it aloft, and threw it in front of him. As it touched the ground it began rolling along like a ball towards the sunset, and Primel followed, only stopping where the stone finally stopped, on the rocky shore of Plougaznou."

In Cornwall S. Meriadoc has no dedication outside the parish of Camborne, where, as we have seen, he is the original patron of the parish church and of the holy well. In the Episcopal Registers of Exeter the Rector of Camborne (1) is called "Persona Ecclesie Sancti Meriadoci de Cambron" in 1329 (14 Aug.), and

Mériadec, and inventories of the 17th century describe "la teste de Monsieur saint Mériadec . . . enchassée en argent." The beautiful reredos of the altar of St. Mériadec was the work of Olivier Lespaignol in 1723 (cf. M. Bourde de la Rogerie, *L'Eglise de Saint-Jean-du-Doigt*, Quimper 1910). M. Le Guennec tells me that a noble family bearing the name of *Mériadec* lived at Plougaznou. It is still a family name in Finistère. A Morlaix captain in 1500 was called *Mériadec de Guicaznou*.

(1) The old (and correct) spelling *Cambron* is found as late as 1816 in the Sithney Overseers' Accounts. The late Mr. Charles Henderson says that the oldest form of the name is *Cambron* (Pipe Roll of 1181). He had found the church called "the church of St. Martin or Meredoc Martin" in 1343.



Chapel of St. Jean-du-doigt.

the church is still "Sancti Mereadoci" in 1426 (16 Aug.), but in 1448 (19 Oct.) and 1449 (4 Oct.) we find "Sancti Martini." The famous saint of Tours has now completely ousted the old Celtic founder of Camborne church (1), but the

(1) The Parish Feast is now on 11 Nov., the F. of S. Martin.

Play shows that he had not done so in 1504, and the Rector who exchanged in 1497 with the Provost of Glasney who was Rector when the Play was written is described in the Glasney Register as "Rector Ecclesie parochialis Sancti Meriadoci de Cambron."

At the end of the 16th century Nicholas Roscarrock wrote "There is a chappell in the parish of Camburn in Cornwall dedicated to a saint called Marazaack in Cornishe . . . there is a well wch also bereth that name and is called St. Marazaack's well. Besides there were three particular feasts kept in memorie of this Sainct. The first on 9 of November (1), the second on the Fridaie in Easter week and in the Whitson week as I have been informed . . . there is a feast besydes kept in the honour of this Sainct the first fridaie in June."

At the beginning of the 18th century the first Friday in June, which Meriasek in the Play says "shall be my festival," was still observed at Camborne as "the parish day," for Lhuyd, in some random notes made by him in Cornwall, c. 1700, now at the Bodleian, says of *Cambron*, "The parish day is first Friday in June, which is called Maradzock day, and the feast day and fair day St. Martin." (2). From Hals we learn that, as late as 1736, the saint's name still clung to the Holy Well. This was then so famous that Hals, whose etymologies are always fantastic, thought that *Camborne* was called after it—"its name signifies a crooked or arched burne or well." He says that "young people, and some of the elder sort, make frequent visits . . . in order to wash and besprinkle themselves, out of

(1) If N.R.'s information is correct (about which one can never be sure) this might explain the transference of the patronage to S. Martin.

(2) From an extract made by Mr. A. K. Hamilton Jenkin, and sent me by Mr. R. Morton Nance.

an opinion of its great virtue and sanctity," and adds that the devotees of the well are "called by the inhabitants *Merrasicks*. These again by others are called *Mearagaks*, alias *Moragiks*." It is not easy to understand whether by "these" he means the people who go to the well, or all the inhabitants of Camborne. A writer named Lanyon, quoted by Hunt in *Popular Romances of the West of England* (p. 426), assumes that the latter is his meaning, as he says "According to an old Cornish custom of fixing nicknames on people, the inhabitants of Camborne are called Mearageeks, signifying perverse or obstinate." (1). This famous well has now, alas! fallen on evil days. It is said to have been drained dry by mining operations, and its very site is now uncertain. (2).

(1) Mr. R. Morton Nance, to whom I am indebted for the quotation from Hals, as well as for other valuable help in dealing with *Beunans Meriasek*, has sent me the following note on the spelling and pronunciation of the Saint's name.

"In Brittany they all seem to keep to *Meriadec*, and the forms *Plu Vudhek* and *Beuzec* (for *Budock*) seem to suggest that *oc* turns to *ek*. [I may add that the Welsh form shows that the *oc* is original]. In the Play, though sometimes made *Mer-y-as-ek* for the sake of the rhythm (or perhaps preserving an old pronunciation) the normal pronunciation is *Mer-yas-ek* (accent on 2nd syllable). *Mer-aj-ek* would be the colloquial pronunciation. Lhuyd's *Maradzock* confirms this. Thus the *g* in Hals's *Mearagaks* must be soft." (At the present day, in the dialect of Vannes the *d* is changed into *h*, and the name pronounced *Meriahec*. G.H.D.)

(2) Mr. F. J. Stephens, of Reskadinnick, Camborne, says that within the last generation it was the habit of old miners to place a little image of clay over the first set of timbers on the entrance to a level, and that when the level was begun a curious formula was uttered beginning "Send for the merry curse and the priest." Mr. R. Morton Nance suggests that this may represent the beginning of a prayer addressed to Camborne's patron Saint in Cornish—"Sen Meryasek, ny a-th-pys . . .," i.e. "Saint Meryasek, we pray thee . . ."

A very interesting fact to be borne in mind is the existence of Meriadoc as a personal name in North Wales at an early period. *Meiriadog* is the name of a township in the old parish of St. Asaph or Llanelwy in Flintshire. Edward Lhwyd's *Parochialia* (I. 48) gives a list of thirteen townships, the last being *Meriadog*. He also says (p. 50) that "there is a lead and copper mine in Meriadog," covering 1500 acres. "It probably took its name from a man," writes Mr. A. W. Wade-Evans, to whom I am indebted for this information. It is to be observed that "no saint of the name of Meiriadog figures in Welsh tradition." (ib.). (1).

The study of Welsh, Cornish and Breton topography therefore suggests that St. Meriadoc may have come from Wales, and at any rate bears a Welsh name. He may have been accompanied by Gwinear, also a Welsh name (a *Guinier*, also written *Guiner*, appears as a witness in the Book of Llandaff). (2). The principal places in the Cornish parishes of Camborne and Gwinear which possess religious

(1) In the British Museum is a mediaeval Welsh Romance, called *Vita Meriadoci*. Mr. H. L. D. Ward, in his *Catalogue of Romances in the British Museum* (vol. I. 374, 5) summarises it as follows: "King Caradoc of Wales, whose royal seat is at Snowdon, resigned his kingdom in favour of his two young children, appointing his brother regent. Caradoc is murdered, and his children exposed in the forest of Anglud; but they are saved, and brought up for five years by the huntsman Ivor and his wife Marwen. The boy, Meriadoc, is carried off by Sir Kay to the court of King Arthur, and the girl, Orwen, by King Urien to Scotland. Meriadoc avenges his father's murder. He crosses to the Continent, and succeeds, after many adventures, in rescuing the Emperor's daughter from her ravisher, King Gundebald." The text has been revised by J. D. Bruce, *Historia Meriadoci and de Ortu Waluani*, Göttingen 1913. (I am indebted to Mr. F. Wormald for this information).

(2) This would involve the Irish origin of S. Gwinear being an invention. I fear that most of the *Vita Guigneri* is merely late mediaeval folklore.

associations dating from the Age of the Saints are the two parish churches of S. Meriadoc and S. Gwinear, the Holy Well and inscribed cross of S. Gwinear in the valley of the Conner at Roseworthy, and the sites of the Celtic chapels of S. Derwa and S. Hya at Merther-Derwa (now Menedarva) on the Red River and Fenton-ear at Troon. (S. Hya is mentioned in the *Vita Guigneri* as a contemporary of S. Gwinear). I think that it is clear that all these oratories must have been founded by missionaries who landed at Connerton, the ancient capital of the Hundred of Penwith, where there was once a considerable sea-port, now swallowed up by the sands. (1). Connerton, it is to be noticed, is specially mentioned in the *Vita Guigneri*, which may here preserve a genuine tradition (2). Both Roseworthy and Menedarva (3) are in valleys leading up from Connerton, which I suggest was the centre from which the parishes of Gwinear and Camborne were evangelised. Gwinear church-town, Camborne church-town and Troon are close to the Conner valley. The two saints (4), Meriadoc and Gwinear, after founding churches in Cornwall, may have then gone on to the south coast of Brittany. Loc-eguiner and Traoun Mériadec suggest a visit to the N.W. of Brittany. St. Meriadoc finally fixed his residence at Stival. He may have been a bishop, and, just as St. Gudwal, abbot-bishop of Loccal, and

(1) In Domesday the Hundred of Penwith is called the Hundred of Connerton.

(2) "They arrived at a certain town which is called Conetconia."

(3) Close to Menedarva is the site of the Roman villa of Magor, the only Roman villa yet discovered in Cornwall.

(4) There are numerous cases of dedications to Celtic saints being found in pairs. Thus dedications to S. David adjoin those to S. Nonna, while S. Winnow and S. Nectan, S. Mewan and S. Austol, S. Kea and S. Fili, S. Brioc and S. Marcan, seem to be always associated with each other.

patron of Guer in the diocese of St. Malo, was later made into a "Bishop of St. Malo," so Meriadoc found his way into the lists of the Bishops of Vannes, which, as Duine and Loth point out, are very untrustworthy in their early sections. (1). Topography also shows that S. Gudwal and S. Gobrien dedications often adjoin those to St. Mériadec. His relics were not carried out of Brittany in the 10th century, during the occupation of the country by the Northmen, and consequently his cult is not found elsewhere in France.

COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF SAINT MERIADOCUS.

From the Vannes Proper of 1630.

O God, Who didst deliver Blessed Meriadoc, Thy Confessor and Pontiff, from this famine-stricken world (2), and bring him, through a life of voluntary poverty, to the land of everlasting brightness; Grant, we beseech Thee, that at his intercession, the chains of our iniquity may be broken. Through *etc.*

APPENDIX I.

MERCADOCI EPISCOPI ET CONFESSORIS.

7 Junii.

LECTIO 1a.

Creator et conservator omnium rerum deus globi congerie reserata, et chaos globi in elementis de quibus creantur omnia jam redacto: voluit

(1) Dom Lobineau points out that there were no relics of the Saint at Vannes. Two 15th century Missals of Vannes contain our Saint's name on 7 June. That in the Bibliothèque Nationale has, on 1st June, "the first vacant day of this month the feast of St. Meriadoc, Bishop of Vannes, is celebrated." The Tréguier Breviary (15th century) has *Mercadoci, episcopi*, with 3 lessons, on 3 June.

(2) A reference to Gen. 42: 1, 2?

celum sideribus decorare, quorum etiam fulgore elementa et ea quae sub stellis consistunt recipiunt claritatem. Sic eiusdem dei filius id est idem deus creator omnium in persona filii assumpta carne mortali in virgine, de ipsaque natus virgine non corrupta, per passionem suam corpore eiusdem a patre glorificato et supra sidera jam recepto: voluit mundi plagas per sanctos suos universaliter decorare. Nitore quorum mundus et ea que supra mundum eminent miraculis tanquam celum sideribus decorantur: novem angelorum ordines transcendente semper in conspectu altissimi perlucante, et in secula seculorum in ecclesia choruscante. Inter quos sanctus (1) beatissimus episcopus et confessor mercadocus apparuit quasi Lucifer inter astra: clarus quidem genere, sed vita clarior apparuit: ex lucerna morum gratiaque virtutum assidue illuminans ecclesiam venetensem miraculis copiosis; velut esperus radiis occidentem. Tu autem.

LECTIO 2a.

Fuit itaque beatus mercadocus ex genere britannorum ex recta linea consanguinitatis conani regis magnifici procreatus, patre vero suo naturali duce minoris britanie ministrante, prout in cronicarum sententia reperitur. Vicecomes autem de Rohano, ejus consanguineus habebatur, quem vicecomitem usque ad hodiernum diem successoresque ejus, reperit sic vetustas, de dicti conani recta stirpis linea, omissis aliis britonicis procreari; et licet beatus mercadocus esset de genere nobili, tamen nobilior erat moribus atque vita, et elegantior omnibus videbatur. *A pueritia literis eruditus, gerens in etate tenera cor senile:* (2) tantam vero gratiam contulit Dominus sancto

(1) A mistake for *sanctos*.

(2) These words are a quotation from an antiphon at matins and lauds for the F. of S. Benedict in the Monastic Breviary, which in turn is a quotation from S. Gregory's Dialogues, Lib. II.

suo, ut Deo placens et hominibus, ab omnibus amabatur: ditabatur namque beneficiis, dignitatibus et prebendis ita nullus ipso ditior in britannia poterat reperiri. Tu autem.

LECTIO 3a.

Fuit enim beatus mercadocus opere sanctus, vultu angelicus, sermone nitidus, corpore strenuus, ingenio preclarus, consilio providus, fide catholicus, spe patientissimus, aliis optimus, caritatis incendio sic accensus ut dolores omnium in se gerens, super afflictos piissima viscera deferebat, et quoad omnium operum eius narrationem nec litera potest nec sermo sufficere. Ad ea que de ipso narrare volumus accedamus. Pluribus annorum cūrriculis revolutis, factus vir, presbiter ordinatur: ordine vero suscepto, nichil arrogantia nichil superbia de ejus moribus usurpabant; sed omnibus benivulus agnusque mansuetus: sarcina morum omnium temporalium honerosus in terra positus (1), celestibus se aptum moribus ostendebat; totus namque ejus affectus, totaque intentio videbatur ut securior videretur si posset in heremo conversari.

LECTIO 4a.

Erat enim beatus mercadocus mire simplicitatis et innocentie: ita porro ut populus miraretur. Nam magnus cum magnis, parvus cum parvis, dives cum divitibus, gaudens cum gaudentibus, flens cum flentibus videbatur. Etati omni se cooptans, Domino serviens, nemini displicebat. Redditus suos ecclesiasticos pauperibus clericis erogabat, et de bonis hereditariis victum sibi et suis tantummodo retinebat, et de residuo pauperes sustentabat. Fama igitur per prov-

(1) Fr. Grosjean suggests we should read *honorosa* . . . *posita*. The end of the sentence is corrupt; *videbatur* seems to have been introduced by mistake because it is found a few lines lower.

incias advolante, beatus mercadocus quasi presens in omnium ore habebatur. Nam laus ejus ab ore hominum discedere non valebat. Itaque sanctus percipiens famam suam per patriam evolare timuit laudes mundi; et ne vita sua reperiretur forsitan aliquo *famine maculari*, (1) relictis hereditatibus dignitatibus et prebendis, petiit heremum festinanter, eligens sibi locum in vicecomitatu Rohani juxta castrum de ponte ivii distantem per mille passus: ibi capellam edificans, ubi locus sibi aptus heremi videbatur. Intransque cepit subito mutare corporis vestimentum. Res mira, qui prius serico contextu bissoque purpura pannisque ceteris coloratis solitus erat incedere trabeatus, nunc vili contextu tegmine coopertus, oblitis mundi fastigiis, residens in heremo celum totis visceribus inhiabat, et de victu suo subtrahens verus pauper, pauperibus erogabat. Tu autem.

LECTIO 5a.

Veniebant autem ad beatum mercadocum in heremo conversantem cognati et agnati sui: quidam ipsum confortando, alii si possent ipsum ab heremo subtrahendo. Inter quod (*sic*) (2) prefatus vicecomes accedens ad mercadocum virum Dei, ipsum ne quid sibi deficeret requisivit, cui sanctus breviter sic respondit: "*Mihi adherere Deo bonum est* (3), ut ejus faciam voluntatem quia vere paupertas est curarum remocio, mater etiam sanctitatis; ideo vita securior, vita nobilior, vita beatior est in heremo conversari; nam ibi carnis concupiscencia relinquitur, mundus sub pedibus conteritur, alienum non rapitur, astucia demonum confunditur, celeste solium aperitur. Fallax enim et inanis gloria sunt divicie mundi hujus."

(1) These words are quoted from the hymn at matins for the F. of the Nat. of S. John Baptist, *Antra deserti*.

(2) For *quos*.

(3) Ps. 73: 27.



Hec et alia dicens, cum vicecomite volente discedere. (1) Sic affatur: Sunt in terra ista latrunculi latentes nemoris in speluncis qui bona hominum sic furantur ut nichil relinquentes secum rapiunt aurum, argentum, iumenta, oves et boves eciam universas. Rogo te ut latrunculis extirpatis tres nundinas michi dones quittas ab omnibus in perpetuumque immunes, quarum prima sit secundo nonas Julii; secunda vero sexto idus Septembris, tertia namque tercio kalend. Octobris in parochia de noalo edicendas, ad quas, populo veniente, securior patria videatur. His beato mercadoco datis, concessis et penitus confirmatis: vale dicto ab invicem recesserunt et, latrunculis extirpatis, nundine per Britanniam edicuntur.

LECTIO 6a.

Datis igitur sancto mercadoco nundinis et latrunculis extirpatis plebs cum mercatoribus gratulabatur. Mercadocus autem indutus cilicio, gaudens in heremo conversatur. O quam mira simplicitas latebat in homine qui etiam, relictis pompis secularibus, voluit solus in heremo conversari, qui prius erat dives et prepotens: sibi placet ut cunctis pauperior videatur, et quem prius nobiles sequebantur, nunc autem ab hominibus tamquam vas perditum reputatur: qui autem prius vitam deliciosis epulis sustentabat, nunc vero pollenta (*sic*) liquidum et olera comedit gratiose; et qui prius vina pigmenta et alia poculenta consueverat: nunc autem puram aquam bibere minime dedignatur; qui frequenter cum divitibus in regum pallaciis (*sic*) consueverat cum comitatu nobili residere, nunc autem solus in casa residet paupertatis. Sic sanctus volens contrariis se curare, contraria dereliquit, sumens cibum cum laudibus, divinis epulis sentit quotidie se refectum.

(1) Fr. Grosjean suggests we should read *Haec et alia dicens, cum Vicecomite volente discedere sic affatur.*

LECTIO 7a.

Diu vero beatus mercadocus in heremo perseverans, beati Johannis baptiste emulus videbatur, stratuque suo ciliciis cooperto nichil aliud cogitabat quam Altissimo in omnibus obedire: catervatim egroti ad sanctum cotidie veniebant, quibus susceptis confestim sanitas reddebatur; nam omnipotentis gratia Salvatoris cecos illuminabat, surdis auditum reddebat, claudos curabat, mutos loqui faciebat, mare sedebat (1), nautas ad portum ducebat, febres fugabat, obsessos a demonibus liberabat. Fama Sancti per patriam evolabat, et crescentibus miraculis magis magisque plebs ad Sanctum ex provinciis confluebat. Erat enim in orationibus perseverans, in jejuniis existens, in vigiliis sobrius, in caritate fervidus, in honestateque morum omnium preclarus. Semper orantem aut legentem in ecclesia aut docentem inter homines salutem anime reperies (2), septies in die Domino laudem dicens, de se justitiam exhibebat. Millesies de die flectebat ad terram genua, totidemque de nocte *clamans velut pullus hyrundinis, meditans ut columba*. (3). Tu autem.

LECTIO 8a.

Interea defuncto bone memorie episcopo venetensi, audita fama mercadoci cujus flores redolent dispersi per patrie regiones, et cujus per orbem terrarum et per mare jam notitia habebatur, populus venetensis fluxit ad ecclesiam cum senioribus civitatis, rogans canonicos ut mercadocum postulent in pastorem. Igitur, convenientes in unum canonici venetenses cum senioribus civitatis, vocibus in unum pariter adunatis, nemine contradicente, beatum mercadocum postulant in pastorem. Quo facto,

(1) cf. Golden Legend. *Life of S. Nicholas*.

(2) For *reperies*.

(3) Is. 38:14 (Vulg.) used at Lauds on Tuesday in the Monastic Breviary.

quatuor canonici cum litteris ad sanctum virum quantocius properantes: que gesta sunt beato mercadoco narraverunt, ipso autem renitente onus penitus cum honore. Regressi sunt canonici stupefacti. Altera autem die omnes canonici cum presbiteris, clericis et senioribus civitatis omnibusque episcopis minoris Britannie pariter convocatis, ipsum ex heremo ad urbem veneticam rapientes invitum et nolentem et obnixie etiam reclamantem et sese ad onus indignum, inutilemque dicentem episcopum faciunt qui mox ad altare Domini presentatur, quod onus quasi invitatus suscipiens, sibi videtur talem dignitatem magis esse contumeliam quam honorem. Videt enim de quanta securitate ad quantum dubium sit adductus; videt se portum securum relinquere; nunc navem applicat ad Carinbdim (*sic*): hec cogitans expavescit. Tu autem.

LECTIO 9a.

Pontificatus honore jam suscepto, in urbe dolensi in basilica sancti Sansonis episcopus consecratur; et licet bonus ab etatis principio videretur, tamen suscepto beneficio pontificis in melius commutatur; nam leonis fugiens feritatem, quasi agnus apparuit inter fratres, qui mutans corporis habitum, mores animi non mutavit; et licet habitum mutavit, tamen cilicium semper retinuit subter vestes, statuque suo nobili desuper apparente: pro lintheaminibus ciliciis utebatur, pauperes nutriebat, debiles sustentabat, flebiles confortabat, pupillos et viduas visitabat, nudos vestiebat, et immaculatum ab omni specie peccati se servabat (1), omnia opera misericordie sub clamide claritatis (2) veraciter adimplebat; miracula cotidie faciebat, languidos curabat, et operando miracula copiosa, cotidie se Dei famulum ostendebat. Et quis ejus

(1) James 1: 27.

(2) For *charitatis*.

opera quiret (1) narrare? Quis ejus potest gratiam ponderare, quis ejus potest virtutum opera numerare? Non enim possibilitas nostra sufficit omnia que de ipso sunt referre, cum lingua nequit sufficere neque manus scribere bona quibus Dominus sanctum suum voluit decorare. Ipse enim mercadocus talis reperitur qui in nullo potest ab aliquo reprehendi, cujus cotidie coram Deo sanctitas presentatur et vita coram hominibus exaltatur. Ad ultimam etatis horam beatus mercadocus veniens et corpore Christi se muniens, fratribus astantibus omnibus osculatis, iunctis manibus erectisque ad celum oculis ultima verba dixit: "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum," et, his dictis, reddit in manibus angelorum suam animam pretiosam; cadaverque corporis sui ecclesiastice sepulture. Sexta feria junii anno Domini millesimo tricentesimo secundo, regnante Domino nostro Jesu Christo qui cum Deo patre et Spiritu sancto [vivit et regnat], cui est benedictio et claritas, sapientia et gratiarum actio, honor, virtus et fortitudo in secula seculorum. Amen.

(*Collatum cum schedis P. du Pas. Haec ex Legendario Trec. manuscripto saeculi XV*).*

(1) Fr. Grosjean says "*quiret* seems a word from an older text left here, but altered in the next sentence into *potest*."

*The *Vita* from the Tréguier Legendary should be compared with the lections from the Vannes Breviary of 1589, which followed a better text—that of the manuscript Legendary of Vannes.

MERCADOCUS seems to be a slip for MEREADOCUS, the scribe reading *c* instead of *e*. It is possible however that the scribe may have been thinking of S. Cadoc, a well-known Welsh saint honoured in the diocese of Vannes, and confused the two saints.

The Note at the end of the *Vita* seems to show that it is a 17th century copy from an older manuscript. According to La Borderie, the greater part of Bibl. Nat., Ms. fr. 22321 is "a collection of Lives of Saints made in the 17th century by the Breton Benedictines who were

APPENDIX II.

THE LESSONS IN THE 1589 BREVIARY
OF VANNES.

By the kindness of M. Le Guennec, City Librarian of Quimper, I have been able to obtain from M. l'abbé Blarez, Librarian of the Cathedral of Vannes, the Lessons from the 1589 Breviary. I give them here in the original, for the benefit of scholars, only expanding the abbreviations. (1)

VII IUNII.

Mereadoci episcopi. Oratio.

Deus, qui de mundi huius edia, per inediam paupertatis, beatum Mereadocum confessorem tuum, atque pontificem attraxisti ad patriam claritatis: tribue quesumus, ut ipso pro nobis intercedente dirumpas nostrae vincula pravitatis. Per.

collaborating with Dom Lobineau." (Introduction to *Saint Maudez*, Rennes, 1891). The transcriber has added at the end these words in French: "Le propre de Vannes de 1660 fait la feste de S. Mercadoc le 7 juin avec lecons propres, contenant l'abrégé de ce que dessus, sinon qu'il date son elevation à l'episcopat, apres le P. Albert, circa annum 658, et adioute: *VII idus junii obdormivit in Domino.*"

The reader has already found the name of Fr. Du Paz in Albert Le Grand's list of authorities. Fr. Jean-Augustin du Paz, of the order of S. Dominic, born in Brittany, died at the Abbey of Sainte-Croix de Quimperlé on 29 December, 1631. He published at Paris in 1619 a *Histoire généalogique de plusieurs maisons illustres de Bretagne*, and also left some unpublished writings, now in the National Library at Paris, to which perhaps the Note at the end of the *Vita* may refer.

(1) I have since been able, by the kind permission of the Superior of the Grand Séminaire at Vannes, to examine this interesting breviary at leisure.

Ex legendario manu scripto Ecclesiae Venetensis. (1).

LECTIO PRIMA.

Fuit itaque beatus Mereadocus de genere britannorum, ex recta linea consanguinitatis Conani Regis magnifici procreatus, patre vero suo naturali, duci minoris Britanniae ministrante: prouti Chronicorum sententia reperitur. Tu [autem, Domine, miserere nobis].

LECTIO II.

Viccomes autem de Rohanno, eius consanguineus habebatur: quem vicecomitem usque in hodiernam diem, successoresque eius reperit sic vetustas, quod de dicti Conani recta stirpis linea, omissis aliis Britonicis, procreantur. Et licet beatus Mereadocus esset de genere nobili, tamen nobilior erat moribus atque vita et elegantior omnibus videbatur. A pueritia litteris eruditur, gerens in aetate tenera cor senile. Tu.

LECTIO III.

Tantam vero gratiam contulit dominus sancto suo, ut Deo placens, & hominibus, ab omnibus amaretur. Ditabatur namque beneficiis, dignitatibus, & praebendis, ita ut nullus ipso ditior in Britannia poterat reperi.

LECTIO IV.

Interea defuncto bonae memoriae Episcopo Venetensi, audita fama Mereadoci, cuius flores redolebant dispersi per patrie regiones, & cuius per orbem terrarum, & per mare iam notitia habebatur: populus Venetensis fluxit ad Ecclesiam cum senioribus civitatis rogans Canonicos, ut Mereadocum postulent in Pastorem. Tu.

(1) The lections for the Feast of S. Gobrien in this Breviary, which, as I have said, so closely resemble those for S. Meriadoc, are also described as being taken "Ex Legend. MS. Ecclesiae Veneten."

LECTIO V.

Igitur convenientes in unum Canonici Venetenses, cum senioribus civitatis, vocibus in unum pariter adunatis, nemine contradicente, beatum Mereadocum postulant in pastorem. Quo facto, quattuor Canonici cum literis ad sanctum virum quam totius properantes, quae gesta sunt beato Mereadoco narrauerunt.

LECTIO SEXTA.

Ipso autem renuente onus penitus, cum honore, regressi sunt Canonici stupefacti. Altera autem die omnes Canonici cum Presbyteris, clericis, & senioribus civitatis, omnibusque Episcopis minoris Britanniae pariter convocatis, beatum Mereadocum ex eremo ad urbem Veneticam rapientes, quasi invitum, & nolentem, & obnixe etiam reclamantem, & sese ad hoc onus indignum, inutilemque Episcopum faciunt: qui mox ad altare domini praesentatur. Tu.

LECTIO VII.

Quod onus quasi invitus suscipiens, sibi videtur talem dignitatem magis esse contumeliam quam honorem. Videt enim de quanta securitate ad quantum dubium sit adductus: videt se portum securum relinquere, nunc navem applicat ad Carybdim, hec cogitans expavescit. Tu.

LECTIO VIII.

Pontificatus onere iam suscepto in urbe Dolensi in Basilica sancti Sansonis Episcopus consecratur. Et licet bonus ab aetatis principio videretur, tamen suscepto beneficio Pontificis, in melius commutatur: nam leonis fugiens feritatem, quasi agnus apparuit inter fratres. Qui mutans corporis habitum: mores animi non mutavit. Tu.

LECTIO NONA.

Et licet habitum mutaverit, tamen cilicium semper retinuit subter vestes. Stratuque suo,

nobili desuper apparente, pro lintheaminibus, ciliciis utebatur. Omnia opera misericordiae sub Chlamyde charitatis veraciter adimplebat. Ad ultimam vero aetatis horam veniens, ex corpore Jesu Christi se muniens, fratribus astantibus omnibus osculatis, iunctis manibus, erectisque ad coelum oculis, ultima verba dixit. In manus tuas domine commendo spiritum meum. Et his dictis in manibus Angelorum tradidit animam pretiosam: glebamque corporis Ecclesiasticae sepulturae Anno domini millesimo tricentesimo secundo. Tu autem.

(From the *Breviarium ad usum insignis Ecclesiae Venetensis*. . . . per Ioannem Bourrelier *Typographum Veneti commorantem excusum*. M.D. LXXXIX, fol. 5 & 6 of the *Proprium Sanctorum*).

The collect, it will be observed, is, with the exception of a few small alterations, the same as that in the *Proper* of 1630.

The first two lessons dwell on the kinship of Meriadoc with the Rohan family, and his and their descent from King Conan. The reader will notice that Meriadoc's predecessor as Bishop of Vannes is not named: nor is Pontivy mentioned, the words "ex eremo" being the only reference to this part of the saint's career. The author of these lessons, writing exclusively from the point of view of Vannes, has omitted all except the beginning and ending of the legendary he copied.

APPENDIX III.

CONAN MERIADEC AND THE ROHANS.

Nennius is the first writer to mention an expedition supposed to have been made by Maximus from Britain to Armorica in the 4th century. He does not however speak of Conan,

who appears in the *Life of St. Goeznou* as "Conan Meriadocus, a Catholic and a warrior," who emigrates from Britain and settles in Armorica "in the parish of Plougoulm, at the place still called Meriadoc's Castle" ("juxta fluvium Guildonam in finibus Plebis Columbe, in loco qui adhuc dicitur Castrum Meriadoci.") La Borderie thought that this *Life* was the *Vita Goeznovei*, which we know was written by a clerk called William in 1019, and that Geoffrey of Monmouth got the name of Conan Meriadoc from it (he elaborated and popularized the legend in Wales). Duine (*Memento*, No. 53) however shows that William's *Vita* is lost, and that the *Vita* used by La Borderie is later than Geoffrey of Monmouth, and in its present form not older than the 15th century. The source therefore of the legend of Conan Meriadoc, which was well known when the author of the lost *Vita Sancti Meriadoci* wrote, remains uncertain. But from our point of view the important thing to notice is that the name *Meriadoc* was found in Brittany as a secular name in the traditions and place-names of the Middle Ages, when the *Life of St. Goeznou* was written. Perhaps the same chieftain who founded Castrum Meriadoci may have given his name to Traoun Mériadec, (1) which is on the same coast not far eastwards. Afterwards, perhaps, it was thought to be called after Saint Mériadec, and the chapel in the valley consequently dedicated to him. This is however only a conjecture, as St. Mériadec was honoured here as early as the 15th century in any case, as we have seen. (*Mériadec* is found as a personal name in Brittany in 1465,—A Breton called Mériadec handed over Pont-Sainte-

(1) It may perhaps be worth observing that the name *Plougaznou* (where Traoun Mériadec lies) contains a personal name suggesting that contained in the name *Boscathnoe* in Madron parish in Cornwall.

Maxence on the Oise to the Comte de Charolais, before the Battle of Monthléry, in that year). (1).

In the Middle Ages the family pride of the Rohans (who of course do not appear in real history till long after the time of the Celtic saints) led to their claiming to be descended from the ancient Kings of Brittany, and a wholesale falsification of documents was made in order to connect them with the sham genealogy of the fabulous king Conan Mériadec. "Other ancient houses," says M. Bourde de la Rogerie, "have made similar pretensions—have claimed to be descended from Brutus or Hector, etc., but their claims have not been taken seriously. But the persevering obstinacy of the Rohans won a success which was very long-lived. Their (supposed) royal origin is recalled in the letters patent of the King of France erecting their land of Montbazou into a duchy, and they took a place of special honour at the Court of France in the 18th century." The *Vita Meriadoci* was clearly one of the many documents composed for the glorification of the Rohans and the establishment of their claims to royal descent.

APPENDIX IV. THE CHAPELS OF ST. MERIADEC NEAR AURAY.

I visited these three chapels in July, 1934.

Mériadec in Baden is a very pretty and interesting village on a creek of the Auray River. There is a fine worked and shaped *lec'h*, five feet high, by the roadside, and opposite it is a public well surmounted by ancient carved

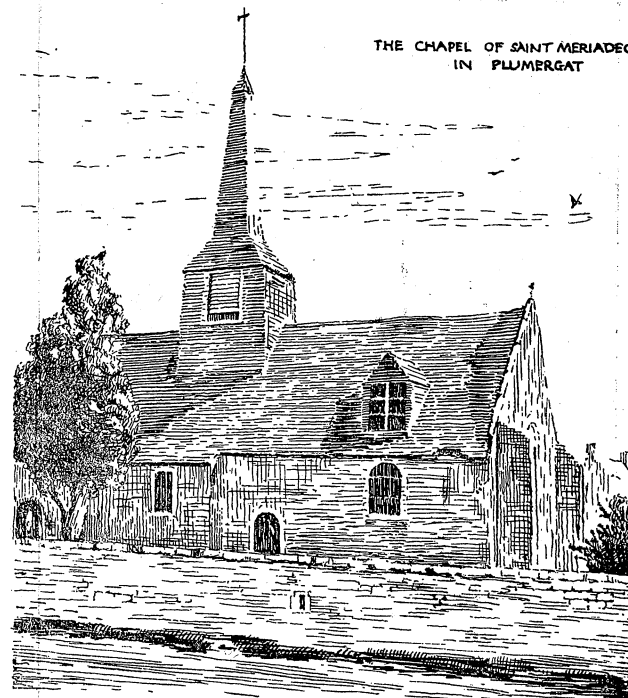
(1) The whole question of the Legend of Conan Mériadec is discussed in detail by La Borderie, *Hist. de Bret.*, II. 441—456.

figures (from a calvary?) The chapel is only a few yards from the water's edge. On the south side is a lawn, with the foundations of a little square building, and on the S.W. edge of the lawn is an unusually deep Holy Well, over which is a massive arched stone structure in the style of the 17th century. Inside the chapel, on the north side of the altar, is an 18th century (?) statue of the saint, under which hang numerous votive offerings from grateful pilgrims (wax limbs, etc.), showing the vitality of his cult here. Behind the altar is a board with an old painting of the saint as a Bishop, holding a bell. At the west end is a very curious *lec'h*, about 3 feet high. The top has been slightly scooped out, to hold holy water, and in the middle, half way up, a very deep and wide horizontal incision has been made round two sides of the stone, as if someone had intended to cut it in half. The caretaker of the chapel told me that the Pardon is on the 2nd Sunday in August. After vespers a procession goes round the village, singing the Breton hymn called "Kannen Sant Mériadec."

This chapel, according to M. Largillière's rule, (*Les Saints*, p. 152f, "Les Chapelles Cotières") must have been the first establishment of the saint in southern Brittany. From it he could easily communicate by water with his foundation in Plumergat, up the creek called Le Bono.

Mériadec in Plumergat has now been made into a separate parish. The ancient chapel is in a very sad state of decay, and even the statue of the Saint is falling to pieces. Instead of repairing it, a new church has been built on the east side of it, and the old one allowed to fall into ruin. I could find no trace of the 3 pebbles referred to by Rosenzweig (see p. 36) and the Rector, who has not been long in the parish, had never heard of them. An interesting portable altar of slate, with five crosses but no

THE CHAPEL OF SAINT MERIADEC
IN PLUMERGAT

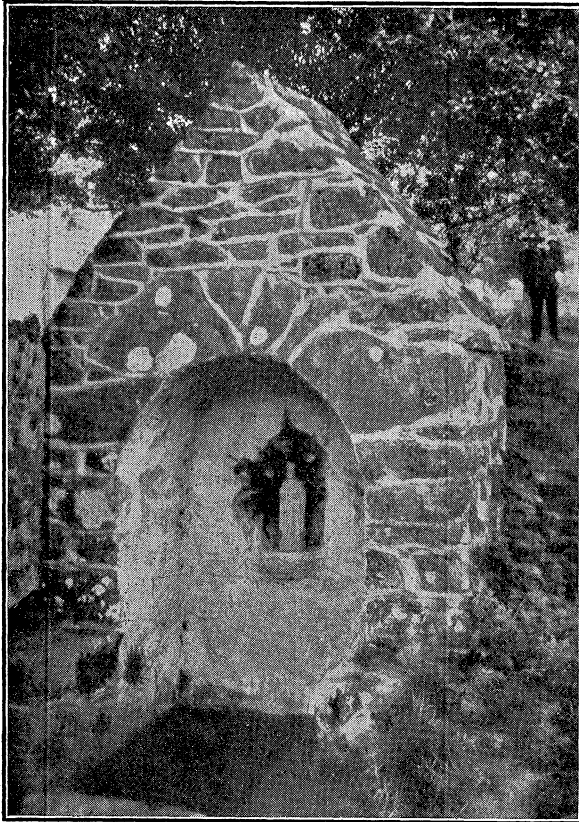


M.H.N.C. Archtley
Lymennec.

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hole for relics, was discovered here by l'abbé Le Bras a few years ago, and is now in the Museum of the Polymathic Society at Vannes. It is described by M. l'abbé Blarez in an article in the *Revue de la Soc. Pol. du Morbihan* (10 mars 1932, 941me séance). It is believed to be of great antiquity. Mlle Le Berre says that there is an annual fair at Mériadec.

The chapel of St. Mériadec in Pluvigner, about 10 kilometres N.E. of the *bourg*, (this part of Pluvigner has recently been cut off, and joined



Holy Well at Chapel of St. Mériadec near Pluvigner.

to another parish), is beautifully situated in a forest, and answers to Wordsworth's description of—

“the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways.”

It has a holy well a few yards to the south, sheltered by an arch, with a niche and statue of

the saint. The Rector of Pluvigner told me that the Pardon, which is of a purely religious character, is held on the first 3 Saturdays in Lent. Pilgrims come from all the surrounding parishes. They walk silently round the chapel, reciting the rosary. At 11 o'clock there is a low mass, during which the “complainte” or “kannen Sant Mériadec,” which is very long, consisting of 49 verses with refrain after each verse, is sung. The pilgrims then return, after praying for the preservation of their animals from sickness.

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