

Hommage de l'auteur.

Saint
BRIOC



A
Celtic
SAINT

Stone Statue
of S. Brioc at
S. Briec-des-Iffs



S. Breock
Cornwall

S. Briec Cathedral
Brittany

"CORNISH SAINTS" SERIES. No. 17.



SAINT BRIOC

*Patron of the parish of S. Brooke, Cornwall, of
S. Briavel's, Gloucestershire, and of the diocese
of St. Brieuc in Brittany.*

BY THE

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Author of

"S. Mawes," "S. Euny," "S. Budoc," "S. Winwaloe,"
"S. Corentin," "S. German," "S. Melaine," "S. Gwinear"
"SS. Mewan & Austol," "S. Feock," "S. Petrock,"
"SS. Docco & Kew," "S. Melor." "S. Carantoc,"
"S. Senan," "S. Nonna," "A John Wesley of Armorican
Cornwall," etc.

*Vicar of Wendron and Examining Chaplain to the
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OLD BRETON STATUE OF ST. BRIEUC

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SAINT BRIOC, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

PATRON OF THE PARISH OF ST. BROOKE IN CORNWALL
AND OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. BRIEUC IN BRITTANY

BY THE REVEREND G. H. DOBLE, M.A.

ST. BRIOC occupies a position of special interest among the Celtic saints of Brittany, Wales and Cornwall. He was the founder, if not actually of the see of St. Brieuc, at any rate of the important monastery which afterwards became the seat of that episcopal see, and so is counted among the "Seven Saints of Brittany": he was a native of Cardigan, and took a leading part in the religious movement which made Cardigan and Pembrokeshire in the VIth century one of the most active centres of Christian work and missionary enterprise in the Celtic world: and a Cornish parish, in a district full of Welsh and especially of Cardigan dedications (the Newquay district), bears his name. He has also given his name to a parish in the Forest of Dean (St. Briavel's) a fact which gives us a glimpse of a Celtic Gloucestershire, a link between Wales and Cornwall. Further, we have a written Life of St. Brioc, of considerable interest and possessing much greater literary merit than most of the "Lives" of Welsh and Cornish saints which have come down to us. The best and most complete manuscript of this Life was found at Rouen,¹ and printed by Dom Plaine in 1883. From

¹ Other MSS. of this *Vita*, less perfect, exist at Angers and in the National Library at Paris.



Église catholique
en Finistère

Document numérisé en 2021

the writing he considered it to belong to the XIth or XIIth centuries. I shall begin by giving a translation of this document.

VITA BRIOCCII.

Here beginneth the Prologue to the Life of Saint Brioccius, Bishop and Confessor.

1. It was the custom of the old historians, first to exalt by words the ancestry of those whom they wished to praise most highly, and so proceeding by degrees from the glorious deeds of the parents, zealously to heap up praises on the lives and works of the children. For this custom had grown up among men as if by a certain natural law, that those whose extraction they found by sure report to be most honourable should be considered as superior in other merits also. Which however does not seem to be true in the laudable life of this saint, of whom we have decided briefly to write as the meanness of our small capacities shall suffer, because, instead of his being exalted by the nobility of his family, he himself rather shed a lustre on the high birth which was already his, by good manners and fortunate and pious actions. How religious and how pleasing to God his life was will be shown (God willing) by the rest of this narrative.

Here endeth the Prologue.

Here beginneth the Life of Saint Briocmaglus, Bishop and Confessor.

2. Saint Briocmaglus, a native of the Coritician region, was born of parents who were noble according to the dignity of the world. His father was named Cerpus, his mother was called Eldruda. Who although they were enchained by the error of heathenism¹, and were completely ignorant of the worship of the true God, yet, being given to works of humanity, were not a little beloved by the inhabitants of that region. For they were richly endowed with great abundance of wealth; and always on the First of January each year they entertained all their friends and neighbours to a notable feast, which lasted three successive days, in which also there was so great abundance of different meats, and they filled the souls of the guests, who were all heathen,

¹ *Gentilitatis errore detinerentur.*

with so great joy of games and songs, that they seemed to bring before their eyes a certain triumphal display¹ of gladness.

3. On a certain night therefore, when, after having passed three days in feasting, the wife of the aforesaid Cerpus had laid down to sleep, by the governance of the Divine Wisdom, which was providing for Itself a chosen vessel² to be born of her, there stood by her in a vision an angel, who spake to her thus: "Arise, O woman, and worship with faith the God of heaven, the Creator of all things, and earnestly implore Him with all thy heart that He may drive away the darkness of error and deign to open the light of truth to thee and to thy husband." When she heard this, the woman, awaking from sleep and terrified with intense fear, knew not in her amazement what to answer.

4. The angel, seeing her terrified, speaks again to her with gentle words as follows: "Fear not, O woman, nor tremble as if at some illusion of fantasy: for I am sent from God to thee to announce what is certainly to happen to thee and to thy husband. For thou art blessed, because the divine clemency has at last looked upon thee, and more blessed shall be the fruit of thy womb, whom God has chosen beforehand to be a temple for Himself. For thou art about to bear a son, dear to God and of great merit, who will be a help to many in the Christian religion by the example of good conversation. For he will be handsome in appearance, holy in his life, conspicuous for chastity, sincere in piety, kind and humane, learned in spiritual doctrine, excelling in the unanimity of charity, and shall be called Brioc. Go therefore and announce these things to thy husband, and admonish him diligently that he break all his idols, which cannot help him, and do thou hasten to adore the true God who is in heaven, by whose goodness he lives, though as yet he knows Him not. Ye shall make therefore three rods; two of them are to be of silver, one for thee, and one for thy husband. The third shall be of gold, for your son, and ye shall lay them up in your treasury against his nativity. And when the child is born, ye shall send him to the city of Paris, to the blessed man Germanus, bishop of the same city, who shall train him in liberal studies, and bring him up in good ways, that he may live well."

¹ *Spectaculum.*

² Acts ix, 15.

5. When the woman heard these words, she arose quickly from her bed, and when it was morning she told her husband all things which had been commanded her by the angel. But he made nought of his wife's words, laughing as if it were mere raving, and answered that he would never forsake the gods which his fathers had worshipped, on account of a vain dream. On the following night the same angel appeared again to the aforesaid woman, and asked if she had told her husband what he had bidden her (tell him). She answered that she had informed him of everything, but that he had treated the matter with scorn; whereupon the angel replied to her, "Go again and repeat it all to him, and add that unless he obey your words, he will be grievously punished."

6. She went therefore and repeated all things to her husband, adding that unless he believed her words he would soon be chastised. But he none the less mocked at her, and altogether despised what she said. And so, on the third night, when the aforesaid Cerpus had laid himself down to rest, behold! the angel we have been speaking of appeared to him, and, after first rebuking him for his unbelief, began severely to scourge him, saying, "Arise, and call on the gods whom thou worshippingst, that they may deliver thee now from this sore strait." But he, overwhelmed with the greatest fear, and awaking from sleep, rises in amazement, confesses that he has sinned exceedingly, and declares himself ready to do most gladly everything which he (the angel) had commanded. And so, when the angel had departed, and day had dawned, Cerpus told his friends all he had seen. He immediately therefore destroyed all the idols he possessed, and prepared to give to God half of all his goods.

7. So he made the aforesaid three rods, and distributed the greater part of his treasures to the poor, and Eldruda his wife after a few days conceived, and bore a son, to whom she gave the name which had been announced to her before by the angel. During his first years, therefore, he is kept at home by his parents, nourished, taken care of, and educated with great diligence. He began, however, even in infancy to show the seriousness of mature years, and would not go to join in the childish games which other little boys of his own age played in the fields, but remaining instead at home essayed as best he could to form letters on writing tablets.

8. His mother indeed, perceiving that the little boy was advancing both in years and in intelligence, remembering

the vision of the angel and what the latter had enjoined upon her, suggested to her husband that he ought now to be sent to Paris to the blessed Germanus. But he rejected the proposal, because he judged it unfitting that his son, whom he had determined to make his successor and the heir of all his honour, should enter the ranks of the clergy. But when the same Cerpus, laying aside the cares of the world for a space, had given himself the following night to sleep, the angel again appeared to him, and upbraided him thus, "Why dost thou retain with thee thy son, whom God has deigned to consecrate to Himself, even from his mother's womb? Go rather and send him without delay to the man of God, Germanus, as I commanded." Cerpus, on awaking, told his friends what he had heard. They rejoiced at the vision and exhorted him to hasten quickly to fulfil what he had heard, and Saint Brioc is sent to Paris, with the three rods before mentioned and great provision, four men being given to him to accompany him and to bring him thither.

9. When therefore they had come to the man of God at Paris, the blessed Germanus, seeing him from afar, before any one had told him who he was, said, "Behold a boy from the nation of the Coriticians, distinguished by nobility of birth, intelligent and discerning, already adorned with good principles though of tender age, predestined also of God to be a leader¹ of sacred religion to the country in which he was born." For as the boy entered the house in which blessed Germanus lived, a certain little bird in the form of a dove went before him and was seen hovering over his head when he knelt humbly at the knees of the holy man. St. Germanus therefore and his pupils, when they had seen so great grace of God in the boy, blessing God with one voice, received him with great joy and with due honour. And although all loved him exceedingly, two however above the rest, Patrick and Heltut, always cherished a special affection for him.

10. Therefore the venerable boy Brioc, being set by the holy man to study letters, learnt all the elements of the Latin language in one day. Also in the space of five months he learnt by heart all the Psalms, and next he applied himself wholly to the study of the Liberal Arts. When however he was ten years old, he was so fond of giving alms whenever he could, that he used to give to the poor, now a cloak (*amphibalus*) now a *lacerna* (kind of cloak), sometimes

¹ *Caput*.

a tunic, and often even a belt when he had nothing else to give. Now one day, when he had gone to draw water from the well to wash his master's hands, behold! certain lepers meet him, and ask for alms. And he, because there was nothing else at hand more suitable to give them, bestowed on them the pitcher which he was taking to draw the water in, and sent them rejoicing home.

11. A certain man of the monastery servants saw this, and, moved by envy rather than by anxiety for the loss of the household property, comes at once to St. Germanus and begins thus to address him, "Knowest thou that Brioc will destroy all the property of the monastery by giving things away to the poor? For he has just given to lepers the pitcher from which the brethren were accustomed to drink." When the saint heard this, he asks at once where he is. Those who were present replied that they did not know, unless he were with those special friends of his, to wit, Patrick and Heltut, with whom he was accustomed to spend most of his time. "Let one of you," he says, "go quickly and look for him." Meanwhile one of the brethren came to Brioc and said to him, "Why, boy, do you give away the utensils of the monastery to beggars, just as you please? Wherefore has thou given away in alms to-day the pitcher which the brethren need?"

12. When the boy heard what he said, he was greatly afraid, as boys of that age usually are, to go at once to his master, and dreading lest his gift should in some way be recalled, he flies in haste to the church, and humbly prostrates himself in prayer before the altar, with tears and much supplication to God. When he had long prayed, rising from the earth, he looked on his right hand and saw a brazen pitcher, which he took, rendering great thanks to God because He had mercifully had respect to his prayers. Going out of the church, he finds one looking for him, and on questioning him hears what the Master had said. He comes before him, confesses that he has sinned, falls at his feet, asks pardon.

13. The saint, as if indignant, says, "Thy words are madness. Wherefore hast thou given to lepers, out of vain-glory, the pitcher which is necessary to the monastery? Arise quickly and fetch it." The boy therefore arises, and going out for a moment, brings to the master the pitcher obtained by prayer, and with face bent humbly towards the ground says, "Is this, sir, the pitcher which you require?"

The venerable man, beholding a vessel of marvellous beauty and understanding by revelation of the Holy Spirit that this noble gift had been bestowed on the boy by God, says, "The boy is more righteous than us, since he is thus filled with divine grace." But he replied, "Nay, sir, but I am dust and ashes, as it is written, *Man is rottenness, and the son of man is a worm*.¹ But I have heard that it is written in the gospel, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*."² All who were present, hearing these words, marvelled at the grace of faith in so small a boy. Indeed, when he was twelve years old, he began to afflict his little body by frequently fasting for two or three days, he desired to live as a hermit, and would, if the weakness of youth had not hindered, have emulated that Martin, who is venerable throughout the whole world.³

14. Now one day it came to pass that a certain young man went out on business to a certain possession of the monastery, and a demon in the likeness of a ravening wolf, meeting him, attacks him with open mouth and fearful howling, as if he would devour him. And he, terrified exceedingly at (the sight of) so great a monster, and fleeing, makes for the forest like a madman and falls half-dead on the ground. And when a man who by chance was close by, tending horses grazing there, saw it, he came quickly and told the brethren. And they, going to the forest, found him half-dead and quivering like one at his last gasp. They all therefore wept to see a strong young man, and one of good birth and parts, thus perishing. But the venerable Brioc said to them, "Do not waste time in lamentations, brethren, but let us all together call upon the Creator of the world and most clement Restorer of fallen man with all the affection of our heart." Having said this, he bade them go aside for a little space. And when they had retired as he commanded, for they all obeyed his least bidding on account of his sanctity, straightway bending himself in prayer, with his eyes lifted up to heaven, and his hands held out in the form of a cross, he prayed most earnestly for the space of about half an hour.

15. When he had finished his prayer, he approached the youth, and humbly chanting over him the psalm in which

¹ Job xxv, 6.

² Matt. v, 7.

³ A quotation from Sulpitius Severus, *Vita Martini*, c. 2: "*Evemum concupivit . . . si aetatis infirmitas non obstetisset.*"

it is written, "The Lord hath prepared His seat in heaven, and His kingdom ruleth over all,"¹ he saith, "In the name of Christ crucified, our God and Lord, I command thee, demon, come out quickly from this young man." Straightway at his voice the enemy of the human race is driven out, and leaving behind him much stench² and crying out, "Brioc casts me out," vanished like smoke. The brethren therefore having been called back, the young man arises unharmed, and together with them returns rejoicing to the monastery. St. Germanus hears of the miracle and gives thanks to God, by whose will he knew it had been performed.

16. The grace of the Lord was daily increased in the lad. Now he would sing psalms, now pray earnestly with tears, now devote himself to study.³ Ever intent on heaven, a stranger to the doings of the world, despising all things transitory, longing with all his heart for things eternal, he was ever mindful of that Gospel precept, *Possess neither gold nor silver*,⁴ and of that other, *Take no thought for the morrow*.⁵ He was indeed, so far as he was able, ever careful that no man might reasonably oppose him, he sincerely loved all men, he respected those younger than himself, he made himself subject to all by serving all, although in merit he excelled all.

17. It came to pass at that time that a certain boy, crossing a hedge, had his foot pricked by a thorn and became lame. This boy came to St. Brioc, where he sat in the oratory, humbly shows him his infirmity, implores his help with tears, is cured immediately by the sprinkling of holy water, and returns home unhurt, giving thanks to God.

18. There came at that time to the man of God, Germanus, two young men, asking to be ordained to the priesthood. Having been questioned by him, as is the custom, as to whether they were learned in the Scriptures, they answer that they have had some instruction in the Liberal Arts. Forthwith the venerable man Germanus commands his pupil Brioc to be summoned. He was called, and stood before the master. Being questioned if he was prepared to receive ordination with the aforesaid young men, with wonderful simplicity and gentleness of humility he answers that he will gladly do whatever his teacher commands him, especially since he

knew for certain that a man of so great industry and holiness would never enjoin anything that was unsuitable either for himself or for any other. Why need I say more? A day opportune for such duties comes round. The three young men are all ordained priests.

19. But this is not negligently to be passed over—what a miracle was divinely shown at their ordination! For when the bishop, chanting the prayers of the orders (conferred), placed his hand upon their heads, there appeared upon the head of Brioc, who was near the bishop, as it were a pillar of fire, reaching to the roof of the church, which was seen by blessed Germanus, and by the deacon who had read the Gospel, the *mansionarius*, and two other brethren only, for all the others who were in the church saw indeed a brightness, but knew not at all what it was. But they who had seen that miracle declared that he (Brioc) was no longer like an earthly being, but as it were heavenly, both by his conversation and miracles. But he, desiring ever to advance to something better, was careful to keep guard over the actions of his life at every moment.¹

20. Then one night when, wearied with vigils, he had laid down to rest, he sees in sleep an angel saying unto him, "Return to thy country, from whence thou camest hither; for thy parents are still alive, whom, with the help of God, thou shalt deliver from the error of heathenism." Therefore when he awakes, he reports carefully to his master all that he had seen. And St. Germanus, hearing the words of his disciple, marvelling greatly in himself, says, "Thou hast a good messenger to summon thee, my son. Go therefore to thy province, as thou art bidden, for thou shalt be great in the sight of Almighty God."

21. When therefore he asks for his blessing, the saint gladly bestows it. And he (Brioc) having received a mission from him, having with him one disciple, takes also one horse to carry the things necessary for him for the office of the Mass, and food sufficient for one day only, and so starts his journey. On the following day, as they were journeying together, and already saw the sea from afar, they found beggars, to whom, on their asking alms, straightway Brioc mercifully gave the horse in the name of Christ. Approaching the sea therefore, he beholds sailors in the port who were waiting for a suitable

¹ Ps. 102, 19.

² cf. *Vita Martini*, c. 24.

³ See *Vita Martini*, c. 26.

⁴ Matt. x, 9.

⁵ ib. vi. 34.

¹ Dom Plaine points out that these words (as also a sentence in c. 16) are borrowed from the Rule of St. Benedict.

hour for sailing and were praying for a prosperous wind to be given them by God. The man of God, perceiving them to be sad, says, "Wherefore, brethren, look ye sadly?" And they replied, "This is the seventh day since we began our voyage. But a contrary wind has detained us here." The saint, hearing this and understanding that they wished to sail to the river Scene, said with a smiling face, "Tomorrow, by God's governance, the sea will become calm, so that we may sail speedily and safely."

22. On the next day truly, rising in the morning and spreading the sails, the sea being calm, and the wind having gone round to the starboard side, they began the crossing. While they were sailing, and were now in mid-ocean, suddenly dolphins and other huge beasts meet them, and rushing at the ship as if they would sink it, surrounded them on all sides. The sailors, being all terrified, implore the help of the man of God. He, beholding them distressed, begins straightway the psalm in which is, "God keepeth all them that love Him, and scattereth abroad all the ungodly,"¹ and says, "Be of good cheer, men, and fear nothing." Then, falling to prayer, he said, "O Lord God, who didst lead the Israelitish people flying from the face of Pharaoh king of Egypt through the midst of the Red Sea dryshod, mercifully deliver this little flock from the attack of these monsters." At his voice forthwith the group of monsters disappeared, and their voyage being hastened in the right course by the will of God, they arrived at the river Scene.

23. Therefore St. Brioc, turning aside to his native country, in the 25th year of his age, with that boy for his sole companion, God so ruling, arrived at his father's house after a prosperous journey. Now there was being celebrated, on the day on which the blessed Brioc reached his father's house, that great and famous feast which he was accustomed always to make on the 1st of January. In which, as we have said before, many vain games and songs were used. The venerable mother therefore, when she saw Brioc her son coming, runs eagerly to meet him, covers him with kisses, embraces him and leads him to his father, saying, "Behold, our dearest son has come, whom we have for so long and with so great desire hoped to see." His father, hearing this, arises in haste, and seeing his son begins to weep for joy and, embracing and

kissing him, could scarce stand on his feet for the immense joy he felt. They sit down therefore, talk together, rejoicing with one another with inexpressible gladness.

24. Being asked by his father to eat with them at that feast, the holy young man refuses. They ask why, and he modestly gives the reason. "It is not fitting, father," he says, "that Christians and those who serve God should eat the food of heathen, unless they are first baptized." As he so spake, and while his father was enquiring what Baptism was, one of the players, who was dancing in an unseemly fashion, fell heavily on the ground, breaking his thigh and his right hand. The others, who were doing the same things, or perhaps worse things, saw it, and forthwith their vain sports were turned into real grief. Then the saint together with his father and many others of the guests came quickly to the place where men were gathered round the half-dead reveller. And while they were wondering greatly at what had happened to the unfortunate man, and some were weeping, others trying to raise him with their hands, the venerable Brioc said, "Why, dearest brethren, will ye continue always in your folly? Why do ye so persist in wicked jests in which God is offended and eternal life despised? Leave these errors, most dearly beloved, I beseech you, and break your idols, which though they seem to have mouth and eyes, ears and noses, can neither hear nor feel anything at all, nor be of any help to anyone."

25. Then, turning to his father, he says, "Look, father, at the heaven above and at the earth beneath; behold all the seas and all the things that are in them; and know and understand that the one supreme Artificer created all these things out of nothing, and beside Him there can be no god." And he added, "Be converted, therefore, all of you, and receive Baptism, confessing your sins, and renounce all idols. For if ye do so, I will forthwith, having called upon the holy name of Christ my Lord and God, heal this man, whom ye and your gods cannot save, and ye shall see the glory of the God of heaven." All the others therefore most gladly promised that they would do whatever he had commanded, but his father alone contended on the other hand that the custom of his ancestors ought rather to be kept. For the use of inveterate custom is with great difficulty changed, and seldom entirely abolished. Then the holy man commands the disciple to bring water mixed with oil. When it was

¹ Ps. 145, 20 (Vulg. 144, 20).

brought, all men departing, he blessed it and sprinkled it upon the dead body of the man who was lying there, and taking his hand, said, "The Lord lifteth up the fallen, the Lord looseth them that are bound."¹ After which words the man straightway arises unharmed. All who were present marvel greatly: they all exclaim and with loud voices declare that He is the true God whom Brioc worshippeth.

26. But he, after immediately giving them the exhortation of salvation, went on to add from time to time the signs of miracles to what he was always carefully preaching. We must therefore relate another mighty work which he performed by preaching. A certain woman brought to him her son, wounded by the bite of a mad dog, in consequence of which he had gone mad, and with tears began to ask him to pity her. Such was the power of the mad fury which possessed him that a just necessity compelled him to be bound hand and foot. For when he could do nothing else the wretched boy tore his tongue with his own teeth. The mother put him down before the feet of the holy man, and since it is the way with the female sex as it were naturally to turn readily to unlawful means to obtain assistance, she asked him if he knew any magic art to save her son therewith. As if indeed by means of a drink itself fatal to life lost health could be recovered, and not rather, when found, be banished, together with life itself, by such a potion! For things wholesome and eternal can never be obtained by unlawful and nefarious means.

27. But he, hearing the suppliant words of the sorrowful woman, who, on account of excessive grief, knew not what she was saying, being himself always most gentle, humbly answered before them all, "I am not a magician, nor from my master did I learn magical arts. But if thou with all thy heart believe Christ Jesus to be true God, thy son can return to health, if He grant it." And when she, according to his word, confessed that she certainly believed, the saint put his finger on the boy's mouth, and commanded him to put out his tongue: he made the sign of the cross on him and blesses him, and restored him to his mother unhurt both in mind and members, all his chains being broken.

28. Then he commands all who sit around that a fast be kept for the space of seven days, and that they should all be gathered together there on the eighth day. Meanwhile

¹ Ps. 146 (Vulg. 145), 7 and 8.

he himself preaches the word of salvation to his father and invites him with caressing words to the true faith. Why need we say more? The eighth day arrives, they are all assembled in the place agreed on, are taught in the faith, and are all alike regenerated in Holy Baptism. Finally, all the inhabitants of that region are, by the preaching of the most holy Brioc, converted in a short time from heathenism and made Christians. Cerpus himself also, when he is made a Christian, dedicates half of all his possessions to God.¹ Eldruda his wife, indeed, most earnestly desired to leave him and all her family and to follow her son St. Brioc for the rest of her life. But her friends and neighbours, crying out that it was most unfit that a woman of such position should live like a widow while her husband was still alive, constantly forbade it.

29. All the other inhabitants of the province therefore having been brought to embrace the Christian religion, the holy man orders churches to be constructed throughout the whole land. And he himself by his own exertions in a short time built a certain place which is called Landa Magna (=The Great Lan), at great expense and no less labour.

30. Then on a certain day, while he was sitting in such a place that he could both hear his disciples reading and watch the carpenters making the timber for the church, the devil stood in front of him in the likeness of a certain Moor, and showing him a man's thumb recently cut off, says, "I have just mutilated one of thy disciples, Brioc." But the holy man, understanding at once by the revelation of the Holy Spirit that it was the devil, saith, "O author of all evils, why dost thou, to increase the pain of thy perdition, always ravail to lay snares for the human race since its creation? Depart, O wicked one, from the servants of God whom thou canst not overthrow while He protects them." Forthwith at the saint's command the enemy fled and never again appeared. Not long after the devil's departure, a certain man comes to him (Brioc) and with grief announces that one of the workmen had cut off his thumb with an axe and moreover had gone mad. The saint arises and hastens to the place, takes the thumb and joins it to the hand. Then, healing the wound with the sign of the cross, the hand is made whole, and the man returns unharmed to his work, without any sign of a wound remaining. All marvel at the miracle, and praise Brioc with one voice. But he turns them

¹ This is a careless repetition of a statement in c. 6.

away from praising himself and powerfully recalls them rather to glorify God, by whose power, he told them, the miracle had certainly been wrought. For the venerable man never ascribed to his own merits what the Lord deigned to work by him, but always to the grace of God.

31. Therefore the fame of his sanctity spreading far and wide a sweet odour of good report, very many men flocked to him from every side, desiring to be instructed by his word and example. And many of them, stedfastly adhering to him, become his disciples. Some of them devoted themselves most studiously to reading, others to frequent prayer, some wrote, some laboured with their hands, faithfully contributing to the common stock whatever they had made.

32. The holy man himself always continuing stedfast in prayer, except at the times when he was compelled to attend a little to the necessities of the body, prayed to God humbly a hundred times a day and the same number of times each night. One morning, when he was praying before an altar, he hears the devil outside the church (*basilica*) uttering many wicked and abominable words, and saying, "Why, Brioc, dost thou introduce this new law and new religion into our country?" Then the saint looking through the window, and seeing him in a horrible form like a Moorish man, forthwith begins the psalm where the verse comes, "Depart from me, all ye that work iniquity,"¹ and holding out his hands, and raising his eyes to heaven, rebuking him (the devil) with many words, bade him speedily depart. And straightway, leaving behind him a horrible stench, to make it clear that it was indeed the devil, he vanished into thin air. Certain of the disciples, hearing voices as in conversation, enquire who were thus speaking. And entering the baptistery, and finding no one but the master alone, they wonder one with another and depart.

33. One day, as he was out walking, a certain tyrant very fond of hunting was chasing a hind with dogs. The hind swiftly fleeing at first escaped pursuit, but at last, exhausted by the long chase, was on the point of being captured. Seeing the man of God standing in the way, she made for him, and falls exhausted at his feet. The holy man, perceiving that she was asking for his aid, raises his hand and makes the sign of the cross against the dogs who are approaching, and commands them to retire. They obey

¹ Ps. vi, 8.

immediately, and when they have departed the hind without fear makes for the wilderness. Although the man full of God preferred to hide this and all his other wonderful works, for the sake of avoiding pride, this incident however he did briefly relate to all (the monks).

34. A famine came, and throughout the whole land many were greatly distressed for want of food, and some poor persons come to him asking for food and shelter for at least one night. The saint commands his steward to bring them into the guesthouse, and to provide abundant entertainment for them. He is told that there is nothing in the house except five wheaten loaves. He commands them all to be distributed. When the evening service (*vespertina synaxis*) is finished, and all have returned to their cells, he himself, as he was wont, spends the night alone in church, repeating psalms and hymns with tears. At dawn, however, the baker and steward (*oeconomus*) come to the saint, and report that they have found twelve baskets full of corn in front of the bakery. All conclude that it had been sent from heaven, since the doors were shut and every entrance barred, so that no one could see how it had been brought in. When he hears what the officials said, he bids that the matter should be kept secret. He commands the poor to be called and their wallets to be filled with grain. The officials carry out his orders; the poor return home rejoicing. The rest is reserved for the use of the brethren. It is distributed daily in sufficient quantities, yet it diminishes not; not being produced by Nature it is increased by faith, the corn is multiplied, so to speak, by being distributed, hunger is driven away by faith, and until fertility returns to the land the brethren never lack nourishment.

35. The blessed man, shining with such and so great miracles, on the holy night of Pentecost, after the completion of Divine Service, when he was resting and sleeping a little in the basilica itself, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, saying, "Thou must needs, O holy man, undertake the labour of pilgrimage as far as Latium across the sea, that thou mayest show to others also the ways of true religion and the example of good conversation." Saying this, and filling the whole church with sweetest fragrance, he departed. Therefore the hero, arising in the morning, tells the brethren what he had heard from the angel. They all exhort him to hasten to fulfil what was commanded him. And straightway, bidding

farewell to the brethren, and taking with him 168 men, he embarks.

36. But in the middle of the night, while favourable winds were blowing, and half the journey had been prosperously accomplished, the ship suddenly stood still, as if held fast by anchors. The sailors immediately assemble, they examine the ship on every side, they search carefully for the cause of the sudden stoppage and find absolutely none. All are disturbed and frightened, they look upwards and raise their voice to the stars. Yet (at last) they have recourse to the prayers of the holy man, which was the only hope remaining to them; they tell him of the hindrance to the voyage, they earnestly urge him to pray. While therefore he was praying, the look-out, who was lowering a yard to see if an adverse wind threatened them, sees suddenly a demon in the likeness of a beast of wondrous size right in front of the ship. He calls the others, points to the monster; they all look, and all tremble exceedingly, their minds being cast down by sadness into despair. Therefore the saint, having finished his prayer, commands the demon speedily to depart. The adversary obeys his words, though unwillingly; he gives way and vanishes like smoke. The savage enemy, therefore, having gone, the angel of peace appears and becomes a guide to the men whom the enemy had hindered.

37. The venerable man, feeling the presence of the holy angel, admonishes them all to fear nothing, but confidently to sail on. At the saint's voice the men at once pluck up heart, and they all with renewed vigour continue the voyage. The deep is struck by the oars, prosperous winds fill the sails, the ship glides quickly on, they soon cross what remained of the sea to be passed over, and the ship reaches safely the calm of the port they wished for and the land they desired.

38. One day therefore, while the blessed man was sitting in a chariot and chanting psalms (for he could no longer walk far, on account of his advanced age), with the brethren going before him, at eventide suddenly they behold a pack of wolves coming to meet them. They are terrified and take to flight. And the wolves, seeing him left alone in the chariot, rush up and surround him. Yet not being able to reach him, they fell at his feet, as if beseeching pardon. While he remaining fearless recalls the fleeing brethren. They return at once when they hear his voice calling. Yet the wolves formed a kind of barrier between them and their master.

39. While they were in this position, it came to pass that a certain prince (*regulus*) named Conan passed by with his army along that road just after sunrise. Who, seeing the wolves surrounding the chariot, and men standing huddled together in a group on the other side, asks his men in amazement, "What is it that you and I see?" They reply that they see men and wolves and a chariot. They approach therefore the place where the saint was with his men, and diligently enquire what they were waiting for, tarrying there with the wolves. Now Conan was a heathen. And when he hears of the disciples' flight and the holy man's intrepidity, and of how the wolves had first fiercely attacked and afterwards humbly submitted to the saint, forthwith he leaps from off the horse on which he had been sitting on to the ground, falls prostrate on his face before the saint, and humbly asks that all his men may be baptized. The saint regards him with a smiling countenance, and enjoins on him and on his men a fast of seven days. Then he bids him to return home and summon all his family. The soldier is obedient in all things, he fulfils joyfully what he (Brioc) had commanded. Meanwhile the saint orders the wolves to depart, strictly charging them not to dare to hurt anyone. They depart immediately at his command, and like meekest lambs go to the wilderness without doing any harm. When therefore the seven days' fast was completed, Conan, being instructed in the faith by the most holy man, is baptized with all his men.

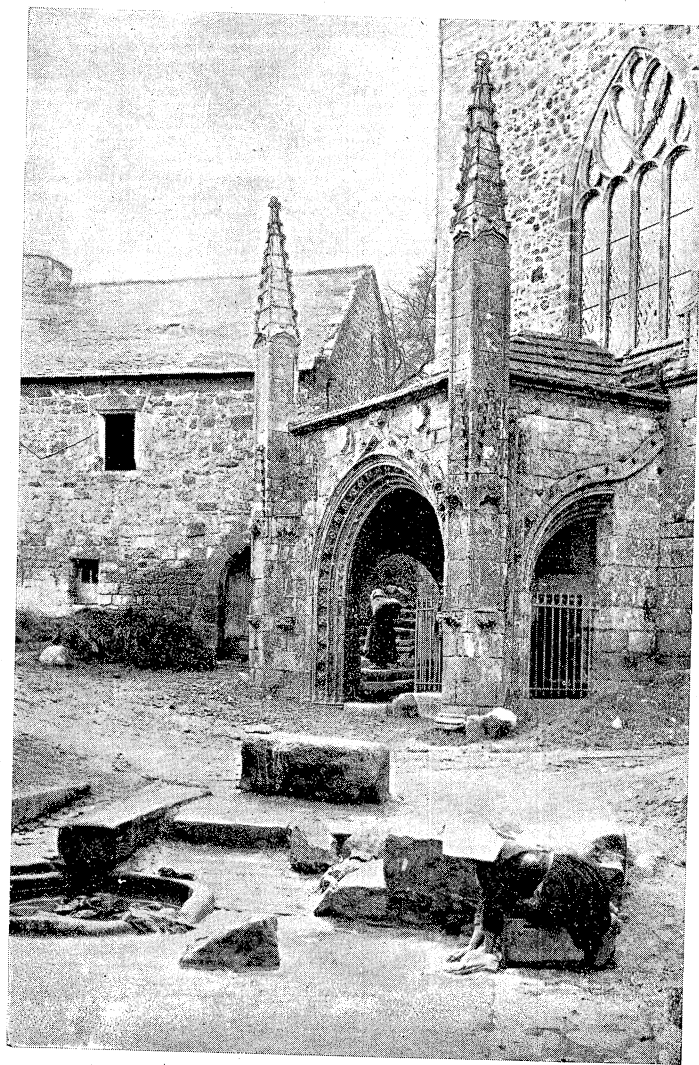
40. Then the venerable man and his companions, sailing over the British sea, came with a straight course to the Armorican region, and leaving their ship in the port which is called Achim, arrive at a certain river called Ioudi. Having chosen therefore, after examination, a suitable site, they begin, after calling on the name of God, to construct a monastery there. The divine assistance is with them, they all devote themselves to labour, the work proceeds prosperously and is quickly finished. A place formerly considered of no account, and uninhabited, now becomes dear to God. The report goes forth among the people, men flock together from every side, Christ works miracles through His servants.

41. Meanwhile a certain messenger, coming from the Coritician region, enquires for St. Brioc, and finds him in a certain place, secretly engaged in prayer. He immediately prostrates himself at his feet; humbly implores him with

tears to revisit his native country, saying, "The whole Coritician region is overwhelmed by a great catastrophe. The inhabitants, deprived of thine assistance, are mourning ; and the one last hope remaining to them of escaping so great a peril is, that thou should'st return to them, and that they may enjoy thy blessing." To this the saint makes reply, in a humble and gentle tone, as usual, and says, "My brother, I, who for the love of Christ once for all undertook a pilgrimage and forsook my native country and my kin, ought not again to entangle myself in fleshly cares and worldly business." On hearing this, the messenger renews his entreaties, but, not trusting now to his own efforts, he obtains the assistance of the brethren. They all therefore approach the saint, they fall at his feet and with one voice humbly implore that he would give his help at such a crisis. They declare moreover, that, since his sole reason for returning to his native country would be the driving away of pestilence and the restoration of health to men, it must needs be a most just reason and pleasing to God. Convinced at last both by argument and by their prayers, he consents, and promises to go.

42. Commending therefore the care of the monastery to his most dearly-loved nephew Papu-Tugual, and with sweet words exhorting all the brethren to study always to go on unto perfection, he starts, with the aforesaid messenger, on his journey, and, the Lord being his faithful companion, he arrives at his native country, and visits his family. His arrival is announced to the others ; a great concourse of people assembles from all sides ; they all eagerly entreat for his blessing and with tears implore him to bestow the remedy of health. And he, raising his right hand on high and blessing them all, says, "Confess (your sins) and have the constancy of true faith, and fear no calamity such as this." Straightway therefore all pestilence is driven away, and the inhabitants of that country never afterwards experienced a danger of that description. Then the saint hastily returned to the place whence he had come.

43. Therefore the brethren of the aforesaid monastery, learning that the most blessed man had returned, are gathered together and come unto him, and weeping for joy and kissing him, they said, "Where, most holy father, hast thou tarried so long ?" For to many of them it seemed a long time if he was away even for one entire day. For it is customary for those who love each other greatly to count it a long time



WELL AND CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF THE FOUNTAIN,
SAINT BRIEUC.

if even for a short space they are absent one from the other. Certain of them however said that it seemed to them unfitting that he should now depose his nephew from the authority he had entrusted to him. But he, understanding their thoughts and yielding to their will—for he was always of a most gentle disposition—departed from them, leaving everyone in peace.

44. And proceeding onward with eighty-four¹ men, he came to the river which by the inhabitants of the country is called *Blood*². And when they had come to shore, they landed and anchor (the ship), collect the ropes and leave the vessel, bare o' all her tackle, lying alone on the beach. Then walking about by the bank of the river, they search diligently to see if, by God's providence, a suitable place for the construction of an oratory might somewhere be found. Therefore, while they were examining with care the huge oakwoods³ and searching through the ancient thickets in every direction, they come into a double valley watered by a copious fountain⁴; and, sitting together there round the edge of the spring, they are giving their bodies a little rest, when suddenly one of the horsemen of a certain Count Rigual comes upon them. Enquiring who they were, and from what country they had come to those parts, he is told that they are men from beyond the sea, and servants and worshippers of the one true God. The horseman returns quickly to his lord, the aforesaid count, and informs him that certain men from beyond the sea, clothed in garments of red skins, had arrived and were sitting down by the well of the Double Valley. The count, hearing his soldier's words, furious and gnashing his teeth, ordered his satellites to go in haste and speedily expel them from his borders.

45. While therefore they are hastening on their way, a messenger unexpectedly speeds after them, crying out, "Rigual has been seized with sudden pains, racking his heart and stomach, so that he can hardly contain himself for agony in whatever position he lies, on the bed or anywhere else." Hearing this, the men who were going to drive away the servants of God straightway return home, and find their lord, whom they had left quite well, tormented with agonizing pains. Now Rigual's house was situated in *iliaco Roboris*,

¹ It is to be noticed that this is exactly half the number of monks in c. 35.

² i.e. the River Gouet, which means *blood* in Breton.

³ *roboreta*, or *arboresc.*

⁴ The Fontaine des Ardents, or Fontaine Saint Brieuc. See A. du Bois de la Villerabel, *Vie de St. Brieuc*, pp. 110, 111, quoting *A travers le vieux St. Brieuc*.

that is, in the Field of Hard Oak (*in campo Roboris*).¹ Therefore the same Rigual, summoning to him the aforesaid soldier, asked again how the men he had seen were habited. He replied that they were men from beyond the sea, wearing rough red garments. The count, on hearing this, immediately orders that the men be invited to appear before him, and speedily one of his household (goes and) addresses the saint and humbly invites him to (visit) the chieftain.

46. The blessed man came without delay, taking with him twelve of his companions, presbyters of praiseworthy life. The said count, again and again beholding him from afar as he was coming, says, "This is my cousin Brioc, the most excellent leader of the men from beyond the sea, and most Christian teacher, through whom by the Lord's help my bodily health shall be restored." Saint Brioc therefore, entering the house and raising with his hand the sick man from his bed, they saluted one another and kissed each other, and talking together most amicably, they praised with one voice the God who had united them. Then the holy man commands pure water to be brought him in a clean vessel, which he took, and when he had blessed it he gave it to the sick man to drink. He drank, albeit with difficulty, being interrupted by sobs: immediately he was delivered from all pain and restored to his former health.

47. Then he handed over to the holy man the hall (*aula*) of the Champ du Rouvre, with all the possessions and rents belonging to it, that there he might build a habitation suitable for the monastic order, to serve God (there) perpetually; and himself removing with all his household to the Hall of Helyon², which was formerly called The Old Stable, lived there from that day forward. After this, the most blessed Brioc, with his most religious company of presbyters, walking through a certain valley, beautifully wooded, finds by divine providence a fountain of purest water.³ where he settles with his brethren, after first praying to God, and himself with his own hands begins to build an oratory. All gird themselves to work, they cut down trees, root up bushes, tear up brambles and tangled thorns, and soon convert a dense wood into an open clearing. The grace of Christ is present with His servants, all things turn out according to their wishes, the basilica is completed.

¹ Now the Champ du Rouvre.

² In Breton this would be Lis Helyon. In the parish of Hillion, east of St. Brieuc, beyond the *anse* or Bay of Yffiniac, is a place called Licelion. (La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*).

³ The Fontaine Notre Dame, or Fontaine Orel, adjoining the chapel of Our Lady of the Fountain.

48. Then all with one accord, intent on study and profitable labour, occupy themselves day and night with spiritual exercises. For they were all most studious in reading, most assiduous in prayer, sober in vigils, in fasts most self-denying. But they also never omitted, according to the apostle's precept, to work with their hands; some cut down timber and trimmed it with axes, others planed planks for the walls of the houses, many prepared the ceilings and roofs, some turned up the sods with hoes. Then the soil was worked carefully with light hoes, and being ploughed with very small furrows,¹ its various produce was placed in due time in the threshing floors.

49. At fixed hours they always used to assemble to perform the Work of God² in the oratory. After the evening service (*vespertina synaxis*) they refreshed their bodies by a meal in common. Then, after Compline, they returned to their beds, always strictly observing the rule of profound silence, and arising with equal zeal about midnight, according to the saying of the Psalmist, "At midnight I rose to give thanks unto Thee"³, they rendered most devout praises to God in hymns and psalms. After finishing which they again slept for a short time. And again at cockcrow, when they heard the sound of the bell (*cymbalum*) they hastily left their beds, and paid their vows to the Lord in morning praises day by day, following the example of the same Psalmist, who thus sings to the Lord, "In the morning I will stand before Thee and contemplate."⁴ After fulfilling these duties, and having spent the whole day until the second hour in prayer and spiritual exercises (*negotiis*), they returned gladly to manual labour. And so day by day, contending most zealously like athletes, they pressed on towards the prize of eternal life along the direct path of good actions, attending to that precept of the apostle, where he says, "None shall be crowned, except he who strives lawfully."⁵ They suffered no moment of time to pass away idly. These, then, were the favourite pursuits of the disciples of St. Brioc, in these the band of monks was continually exercised.

¹ *Minutissimis*. But La Devison read *minutissime* = most finely.

² St. Benedict called the daily Divine Office the *Opus Dei*. St. Bernard, *In Cant.* xlvii.

³ Ps. 119 (118), 62.

⁴ Ps. 5, 3. (not Vulg.).

⁵ II Tim. ii, 5.

50. But the most blessed man himself, now ninety years of age, adorned to a sublime degree with the great merits of his virtues, began to devote himself constantly to contemplation, to persevere in long prayer with tears, to spend the night unwearyingly in vigils and holy meditation, and to wear out his body with fasts prolonged beyond what either nature or his advanced age could endure; always intent on heavenly things, all earthly things had become to him of no account. Resplendent with frequent signs, and most famous by the power of miracles, ever full of kind thought for all, he was always distributing to the poor and needy what food they required, and, ever careful to attend to the sick, he very often bestowed upon them the remedies of health. Having thus briefly touched on these things by the way, let us now return to the narration of what remains of the deeds of the holy man as accurately as I may.

51. At the same time two men, carrying in a litter a third man who was lame and blind, by chance lost the way home to his house, and, wandering hither and thither, they could by no means, as night was now approaching, reach it. They began to lament loudly, and at last came upon the saint. They show him the sick man, explain that they have lost their way, ask for shelter and hospitality for one night. And he, beholding them weeping, moved with compassion says, "Leave the sick man to me for this night, and do you depart in peace to your own house." Then, lifting his hand, he points out to them the way. And they, rejoicing, leave the sick man there. Then they depart and return to their own house by a quick and direct way. Meanwhile the saint, as was his wont, enters the church, gives himself wholly up to prayer, assaults Heaven with supplications, with tears calls upon Christ. Christ is present at the prayers of His servant, hears his petitions, and grants his requests. The sick man recovers the use of all his members; his long-lost sight returns. All men marvel, beholding him suddenly sound and whole whom they had shortly before left a cripple. They bless God with one voice, and extol with immense praises the merit of the holy man.

52. It came to pass at the same time that Count Rigual fell ill, and was confined to his bed with grievous sickness. And as each day the malady increased, being now at death's door, he sends messengers humbly to entreat the venerable Brioc to visit him. For the same Rigual had said that he

could neither die nor recover his health unless he had first seen the blessed Brioc. For he had vowed to receive communion from no hand but his, and, if he died, he wished his funeral rites to be celebrated by no other but him. Now the holy man was already very aged, and could not go far except in a chariot or on horseback. The saint therefore, having heard the Count's words, quickly gets into his chariot and starts out to visit the sick man. And as he was proceeding, chanting psalms as was his wont, a multitude of monks going before and following him, suddenly he heard the sound of singing (*spiritualis organi sonum*) in Heaven and beckoning with his hand bade them all stand still. And straightway informing them of what he had heard, he commands the sign of the holy cross to be made and fixed in the same place. And afterwards in that place many cures are reported to have been wrought on them that were diseased. Therefore, reaching the sick man, he without delay fortified (him against) his departure by giving him the viaticum of Holy Communion. And he (*i.e.* Rigual) handing over to the holy man and his monks his own house, with all the settlement (*colonia*) and the whole *plou*¹ pertaining to it, to be held by them for ever, and humbly commending himself to their prayers, rested in peace.

53. Therefore, after these things, the most glorious man Brioc, knowing that his own last day was approaching, calling all the brethren together, and first exhorting them with many words, ends by saying to them, "Brethren, during these next six days we must devote ourselves more earnestly than usual to (the recitation of) psalms and prayer, since it is the time in which the Almighty Lord has decreed to recompense His servant with the reward of his labour, as He promised." And they most faithfully obeyed his commands, and he, after a short illness, having once more called the brethren, and having been fortified by the Lord's sacraments, peacefully ended his days. After his death so sweet an odour filled the whole house where the most sacred body lay that it never ceased to be perceived by those celebrating his funeral rites until the members of the most holy man, reverently anointed with spices, had been laid in the grave. The body therefore of the blessed man, having been with due honour committed to the earth amid hymns and praises, frequent miracles performed at his tomb witness that his spirit enriched with blessed merits is living in Heaven.

¹ *Plebe universa*. In Brittany and Cornwall *plets*=parish.

54. On the very day indeed of his death the following revelation was divinely manifested to a certain Marcan, a religious presbyter who feared God greatly, as he prayed: he saw four angels in the form of eagles, glittering with fiery wings, bearing the soul of the blessed man in the form of a dove, making their way with great joy into the secret recesses of Heaven.

55. Also a certain Simaus, surnamed Simorus, a disciple of the holy man, was in his native land of Coriticia when the day came of his master's death. This man, when he had laid down to sleep that night, saw in his dreams Brioc climbing a ladder which seemed to touch heaven, a company of angels singing hymns going before and following him. On awaking next morning he starts for Brittany. And when at midnight he was crossing that British sea, the devil approaches to suffocate him as he sleeps on the stern. But (Simaus) putting him at once to flight by twice calling on the name of his master (Brioc) by God's merciful providence had a good passage and arrived safely on the eighth day after (Brioc's) death at the port which is called Seson.

56. Disembarking, therefore, with his companions, still ignorant of his master's death, he made his way to the monastery. Hearing of his arrival the brethren go at once to meet him, they embrace him, and with tears they kiss each other. Then, beginning to talk to one another, with deep groans and frequent sighs and sobs at last they find their voice and tell him of the father's death, and so they reached the monastery (*coenobium*). Simaus therefore, after partaking of some refreshment, told all the brethren at length the whole story of the vision of his master he had seen in a dream, and of what had happened during the passage. And they, rejoicing exceedingly at the great merit and great grace of their father, bless with one voice the God whose gifts they were, and praised Him with like devotion day and night.

57. Now one day, when the feast (*solemnitas*) of the blessed man was approaching, there assembled from all directions a great crowd of diseased folk with the hope, partly of recovering health, and partly of receiving alms from the people. Therefore, while all were observing with great earnestness the vigils of the sacred night, there was present, among the rest, one man so crippled that the calves of his legs clave to his thighs; and his hands, though they hung from his arms, could touch nothing. This man, encom-

passed with misery so great, was loosed by the prayers of the saint, so that his feet completely recovered power to walk freely, and his hands their former usefulness. The aforesaid Simaus afterwards declared that he was present at this miracle, and saw him, a cripple at first, and afterwards walking in perfect health.

58. Therefore the most blessed Brioc, delivered from the burden of mortal flesh, by (his) happy merits liveth ever in the heavenly places. For by the invocation of his holy name, and faith in his glorious merit, at his most sacred tomb the infirm recover health, the blind receive sight, those possessed by devils are perfectly cured, the palsied are able to walk steadily, and all who ask with due faith obtain (the fulfilment of) their wishes, our Lord Jesus Christ granting this, to whom with God the Father and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

¹An inscription which is certainly found, written in antique characters upon the stone (*marmore*) that had long ago been placed over his most sacred body, bears witness that the most blessed Brioc was a bishop, though the story of his life which has come down to us says nothing whatever about it.

What his manner of life as bishop was, or over what city in particular he ruled, this inscription does not expressly state. This only does it mention—that a certain king of the Britons, Respoius by name², translated his most sacred bones to the city of Angers, and there buried them with due honour in a certain basilica of the martyrs, SS. Sergius and Bacchus, which is situated near the walls of the aforesaid city; but does not give any further information as to who was the bishop or what prince [presumably what king of the Franks is meant] was reigning at that time. Wherefore we also have thought it better to be entirely silent than to relate to the faithful anything uncertain or fictitious, since heavenly truth has no need of earthly falsehood.

Here endeth the Life of St. Brioc.

¹ This appendix is found only in the manuscript of Rouen and is written by the same hand and in the same characters. But it does not belong to the writer of the Life of St. Brioc. (Note by Dom Plaine. See however p. 45).

² i.e. Erispoe, son of Nominoe, who reigned in Brittany 851—857.

EPILOGUE

(Found in the Rouen manuscript, but unaccountably omitted by Dom Plaine).

To excuse somewhat my audacity in presuming, inexperienced as I am in navigating the ocean of literature, to embark on this work—a sea, so to speak, which might well be dreaded even by men of much greater wisdom, though I know not either how to guide the skiff of composition (?) nor how to avoid the Carybdis of barbarisms nor the barkings of the Scillas of solecisms, this reason alone is my justification, viz., that I have been compelled thereto by the command of the lord Abbot. And when I attempted to defend myself with the shield of my inexperience, he forthwith produced from the authority of the Rule the weapon of obedience. And as soon as my heart was pierced by that health-giving wound, I felt it my duty to sacrifice my modesty and consciousness of my inexperience to his command. For such gravity underlay his words, such awe-inspiring authority his commands, that I had no heart to struggle or excuse myself further. And so, preferring to avoid incurring the blame of disobedience rather than hoping not to fall into the snare of vainglory, and not so much presuming on my knowledge of letters as yielding to the order of him who commanded, at last I put my hand to the work. I have done, therefore, though not what I willed nor what I ought, yet at any rate what I could. Wherefore I humbly beseech the reader—if, that is, anyone shall deign to read or look at my work, and not immediately he has seen it despise it and throw it from his hands—that when he perchance finds the order of the narrative disturbed by an unskilful arrangement of the parts, he will forgive the error, and pardon the ignorance, which, I make bold to hope, the master's command will easily excuse. Nor let him wonder that the version is not word for word a rendering of the old text (*codex*), since the extremely corrupt writing of the manuscript and above all the idiom of the foreign tongue (in which it was written) prevented it. Yet let him remember, whosoever he be who thinks perchance that this little work is to be contemned, that it is written that the Kingdom of God consists not in eloquence of speech but in the power of the Spirit.¹ Nor

¹ cf. 1 Cor. 4 : 20, 2 : 4.

is the virtue and glory of the saint less (when written by an unskilful hand) than if the history of his life had been woven out of oracles of rhetorical skill. Wherefore let the silent page not reveal the author's identity, lest it bring contempt upon the usefulness of the work if the name of the author be inserted. But since we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves, let the reader know for certain that, whosoever the author be, he is a man and has lived in the Catholic Faith, sinner though he be, among the members of Holy Church. Yet in Holy Scripture every man is called our neighbour. And so the author of this little book, because he is a man, is a neighbour, and, because he is a neighbour, without doubt he is to be loved. Let the reader therefore treat him as he desires to be treated himself, let him ask of God for him the pardon of his sins, that he himself may find the same. Amen.

This Life of St. Brioc was written, Duine thought,¹ by a clerk of Angers (where the body of the saint was preserved from the IXth century down to the French Revolution in the abbey of SS. Sergius and Bacchus), probably in the XIth century. The epilogue distinctly states that it was written at the command of an abbot (the abbot of SS. Sergius and Bacchus must be meant). The writer must have come from St. Brieuc, as he knows the neighbourhood so well. It became the standard Life of the saint, and the chapter of St. Brieuc Cathedral possessed a copy in the XVIIth century. In 1621 the Bishop of St. Brieuc, Mgr. André le Porc de la Porte, rewrote it in order to provide lessons for the feast of the saint and its octave. The old Breviary of St. Brieuc had been abandoned and the Roman Breviary introduced, and the clergy had no special lessons for the feast of the chief patron of the diocese. The bishop published a new proper office of Saint Brioc, and rewrote the Life of the saint in more classical Latin and more in the taste of the XVIIth century. The Bollandists published

¹ *Memento*, No. 62.

this version in Vol. 14 of the *Acta Sanctorum* (the 1st Volume for May, pp. 93-97), but of course it has not the interest of the original, and (like John of Tyne-mouth, who rewrote so many Lives of saints in England in the XIVth century), the bishop has omitted names of places and many of the most interesting details of the old Life. Six years later, in 1627, a canon of the cathedral, L. G. de la Devison, published a French Life of St. Briec. This delightful little book, written with a *naïf* enthusiasm and in a strong vein of piety after the style of St. Francis de Sales, was beautifully reprinted in the original spelling by M. L. Prud'homme at St. Briec in 1874. The canon tells us that he followed the "Ancient Chronicle" belonging to "Messieurs du Chapitre," and which was clearly word for word the same as the version in the Rouen manuscript which I have translated (except that, as we shall see, it omitted cc. 38 and 39) as he quotes many passages from it and they are all exactly as in the Rouen text.

The unknown author of the *Vita Briocci* writes with an easy pen and a smooth style. His work is free from the barbarisms which disfigure so many of the Latin Lives of Welsh and Breton saints. He has read the classical writers, especially Virgil, he has some idea of literature. Unfortunately however there is more literature than history in his work. The Life of St. Brioc is a "literary" composition, based on a few hints from an older Life, but largely made up from the writer's own head and adorned with numerous quotations from the books he had studied, sacred and profane. He tells us that he had made use of an ancient Life of Brioc,¹ badly written, and in a foreign tongue

¹ If this original Life spelt the name of Brioc's relative and benefactor *Rigualts*, it cannot, by the rules of philology, have been older than the Xth century. (Duine).

(*peregrinae linguae idioma*=which may mean Breton). But he has embellished the story, now with elaborate descriptions of angelic visions, now with reminiscences of the *Aeneid*,¹ or quotations from the Bible—his fondness for placing suitable passages from the Psalms in the mouth of his hero is particularly noticeable, and also with references to the Lives of St. Martin, St. Samson, and other saints. Our task (and it is not an easy one) is to try to disentangle the original story from all these embellishments.

I think we may assume that the names of *places* in this Life of Brioc are part of the original story (the place-names of the St. Briec neighbourhood may be derived from local tradition). The names of *persons* inspire less confidence—the writer seems to have dragged in the most brilliant names he had read of without considering that they belonged to different periods.²

Our author knows that the complete form of the name Brioc is Brio-maglus, originally Brigo-maglo-s. (The complete form of the name of St. Budoc in the same way was Bud-mail, from Boudi-maglos). The hypocoristic name is Brioc=Brigacos.³ Baring Gould and Fisher attempt to derive the name Brioc from Brychan, the founder of Brecon, and state that the name=speckled, or tartan-clad. In Irish *breac* or *brec* does mean *speckled*, and a similar name means *trout*, "but it cannot have meant *tartan-clad* in the Vth century; the reason being that there is no evidence

¹ E.g. expressions like *Mane surgens heros* (c. 35), *Membra soporare, Ad sidera tollunt voces*, betray at once the student of the Latin poets. *Optati portus potitur littore* (c. 37) sounds like a reminiscence of Aen. I. 172, and *accinguntur omnes operi* of Aen. II. 235 (*Accingunt omnes operi*). In c. 35 the Angel tells Brioc to go to *Latium*, as if he were Aeneas!

² "Les synchronismes sont formés de noms brillants et ne concordent pas, comme dans les pièces tardives." Duine, *Memento*, No. 62.

³ Loth, *Noms des Saints Bretons*.

for tartans at the time.”¹ Fr. Grosjean points out that “there was a curiously frequent use of the Irish root *broc* (=badger) in the name of certain families from southern Ireland which are known to have had Welsh connections. I am not aware that anybody has quoted *à propos* of this the remark of Fr. Fidel Fita, S.J., *Revue Celtique* t. XXX. (1910) that “people with protruding teeth seem to have been called *Broccus*.” This is confirmed by modern use in certain Romance dialects: the Walloon of Liège still says “broques” for protruding teeth, especially the canines. I think this explanation more likely than an alleged connection with the badger as totem”.

At Llandefaelog, near Brecon, is an inscribed stone with the words BRIAMAIL FLOU (*The Welsh People*, p. 568.) The Rickardston Hall stone, near Brawdy, has BRIAC FIL. . . On an inscribed stone now in the Clayton Museum, near Chesters, on the Roman wall, is BRIGOMAGLUS. (*Revue Celtique*, XI. 344). Baring-Gould & Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, I.

Brioc's native country is *Coriticia* *regio*. La Devison took this to be Cornwall, because (he says) he had heard of Cape Cornwall and of the tin of Cornwall, but of no other name in Great Britain sounding like Coriticia; and Albert le Grand, who copied him, says “the Province of Insular Cornwall, now called the Principality of Wales”! Dom Plaine suggested Kerry in Ireland. La Borderie rejected the obvious identification with Cardigan because the *Vita* makes the parents of Brioc pagans, and he thought (quite erroneously) that the whole of Wales was Christian at this period: consequently he suggested the Lowlands of Scotland (a part of the Roman province of Valentia) where in Roman times there had existed a town called Coritiotar. There can however

¹ Fr. Grosjean, S.J.

be no doubt that the Coritician region is Cardigan, the old name for which was Kerediciaun.¹ In Cardiganshire there is a parish bearing the name of Brioc, —Llan-dy-friog (*f* is of course a usual mutation for *b* in Celtic languages, and the *dy* is the *de* or *to* found in Landewednack, Towednack, etc.). In Cornwall the parish of St. Breock is found close to other parishes bearing the names of Cardigan saints (see p. 51). Brioc evidently visited Gloucestershire, which, of course, adjoins South Wales (see p. 52), and the connection between Wales and Brittany was very close at this period, while there is no evidence of any connection between Brittany and countries so far distant as Scotland or the west of Ireland.

The names of Brioc's father and mother present some difficulty. Our author tells us his father was called *Cerpus*. Fr. Grosjean suggests that “perhaps originally some form of the common Irish name Cairpre was written Cerp, and the abbreviation misread.” *Eldruda* has the appearance of being an English name. It is to be noted that the patron saint of Treflez on the coast of Léon in Brittany, within the ancient archdeaconry of Ack, where our author makes Brioc land on his first vi it to Brittany, has St. Edeltruda as patron. She is identified with the East Anglian St. Etheldreda, and the pardon is on 23rd June, one of the festivals of St. Etheldreda, though by Breton-speaking people she is usually called St. Guentroc or Ventroc, because she is thought to cure the colics (in Breton *gwent*).² She is also patron of a chapel in Loc Brevalaire, a few miles to the south-west. Now the cult of a certain number of English saints was introduced into Brittany in the Xth century,

¹ Said to be called after a prince of the name of Keredic. See the *Vita Carantoci*, No. 14 in my “Cornish Saints” series.

² Loth, *Noms des Saints Bretons*, p. 54.

owing to the influence of Athelstan, who befriended the Bretons, and by whose assistance Alain Barbetorte expelled the Northmen from Brittany in 939. Athelstan was a great collector, and also a generous donor, of relics of saints, he gladly received a large number of relics of Breton saints, thereby introducing (or re-introducing) their cult into this island, and at the same time he gave his Breton friends relics of purely Anglo-Saxon saints. It was thus that a Yorkshire saint like St. John of Beverley gave his name to St. Jean-Brévelay near Vannes. In some such way the name of St. Etheldreda must have come to Brittany, and crept by some mistake into the Life of St. Brioc.¹

The story of the three rods in c. 4, is clearly borrowed from the *Vita Samsonis*, c. 3, where the father and mother of Samson, desirous to have a son, after consulting a wise man make three silver rods equal in length to the future mother, who is saluted by the wise man in the very words which the angel makes use of to Eldruda, "Blessed art thou . . . and more blessed is the fruit of thy womb." The explanation of the story has been given by Mr. Gaidoz in *Y Cymmrodor*, X. (1889), p. 1f. The idea is that of a ransom consisting in an offering in gold or silver equal in weight to the person ransomed. It is found in the folklore of Germany and Ireland. In the Book of Leinster King Cairpre Cendcait offers to ransom his son, whom he had had thrown into the sea and who had been saved, by giving the weight of the child in silver, and in addition the third of his weight in gold. In Brittany Duke Salomon, having made a vow to go on pilgrimage to Rome, sends instead a golden statue of the same size as himself. Silver wands also appear in the *Mabinogi* of Branwen, daughter of Lyr.

¹ In the old calendar of the Abbey of Landevennec, under 23rd June, is *natalis sanctae Hildetveudae Virginis*. The Dol Breviary of 1519 has *Etheldride Virginis* (Duine, Memento, No. 137).

The youthful Brioc is sent to the school of St. German of Paris, where he finds Patrick and Heltut (Illtyd) as fellow-pupils. As St. German, Abbot of St. Symphorian at Autun, Bishop of Paris 555-576, was born about 496, and Patrick died in 461, we cannot regard this statement as historical. Desperate efforts have been made to explain the discrepancy. Dom Plaine assumes that the writer meant to say St. German of Auxerre (died 448) and that *Paris* is a slip of the pen, though he tells us more than once that he means German of Paris. Baring Gould introduces a third German "of Armorica," who, I fear, never existed. The XVIIth century Bollandists suggested equally shadowy Irish Germans, supposed pupils of Patrick. It is possible that the original Life used by the writer of the *Vita Briocii* mentioned German of Auxerre, as the Life of St. Samson, with which (as we have seen) our author was familiar, states that "Eltut was a disciple of St. Germanus" of Auxerre. German of Paris seems to have replaced German of Auxerre in more than one instance. At St. Germans in Cornwall, for example, the fair is on 28th May, the Feast of St. German of Paris. William of Worcester also found St. German honoured at Bodmin on 28th May.

There is nothing very remarkable about the miracles attributed to Brioc while under the care of Germanus. Like the youthful Winwaloe and Samson, he learns the alphabet in one day. Praying with the arms held out in the form of a cross (c. 14) was a Celtic practice. The necessity of three for an ordination seems a reminiscence of the Life of St. Samson (c. 43) as does the miraculous manifestation when Germanus lays his hands on Brioc, though in this case it takes the form of a pillar of fire instead of a hovering dove. The summons to go and convert his parents may be imitated from the Life of St. Martin. The hindrance

experienced during the voyage owing to the machinations of the Devil is a favourite idea of our author—he relates a similar incident in two other places (the constant introduction of the Devil into the story is characteristic of the *Vita Briocii*).

The ship in which he crosses the Channel disembarks him at the River Scene. *Scian* in Irish means a *knife* or *sword*. Now the River Cleddau, which flows into Milford Haven, has the same meaning; the Life of St. Aiduus (Rees's *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints*, p. 236) speaks of "*fluviu qui dicitur Gladius*." *Cyllell* (a river close by) also means *knife*: Leland tells us how "one beyng requirid wher he lay that night, answerid that he lay having a swerd on eche side of hym, and a knife at his Hart, alluding to the 3 Ryvers in the middle of whom he lay al night."¹ We may then conclude that Brioc landed in Milford Haven, only a few miles from his home in Cardigan.

Brioc reaches home when the ancient pagan festivities of the first of January are being celebrated. St. Samson abolished the observance of this custom in the island of Lesia or Guernsey (see *Vita Samsonis*, Pt. II. c. 13), and our author may have learnt of its existence from the Life of St. Samson. He has worked up the idea and made it into one of the chief features of his story.

The most interesting detail in the description of Brioc's evangelization of Cardigan is his building of *Landa Magna*=The Great Lan (Monastery). No doubt this was in the older Life our author copied, and we may feel sure that we have here at last a real incident in the saint's life. There is a Llan Fawr (=Great Lan) in the parish of Eglwys Wrw, Pembrokeshire, but it must have been a fairly common name. (Lan-meur near Morlaix in Brittany, the centre of the

cult of St. Melor, is the same word). The practice attributed to Brioc of praying a hundred times each day and night may be part of the original Life, and is quite possibly authentic, though on the other hand our author *may* have borrowed it from the Life of St. Patrick.

The incident of the stag in c. 33 reminds us of the story of the hunter Constantine in the *Vita Petroci*; but of course similar stories abound in the Lives of the saints (*e.g.*, in that of St. Giles). The word *tyrannus* may be suggested, as Dom Plaine says, by the Welsh *tyern*=lord.

The angelic vision in church on the vigil of Pentecost (c. 35) seems clearly imitated from the story in the *Vita Samsonis* of the angel who appeared to Samson in the church of Lan-Iltyd on the vigil of Easter and bade him leave Wales.

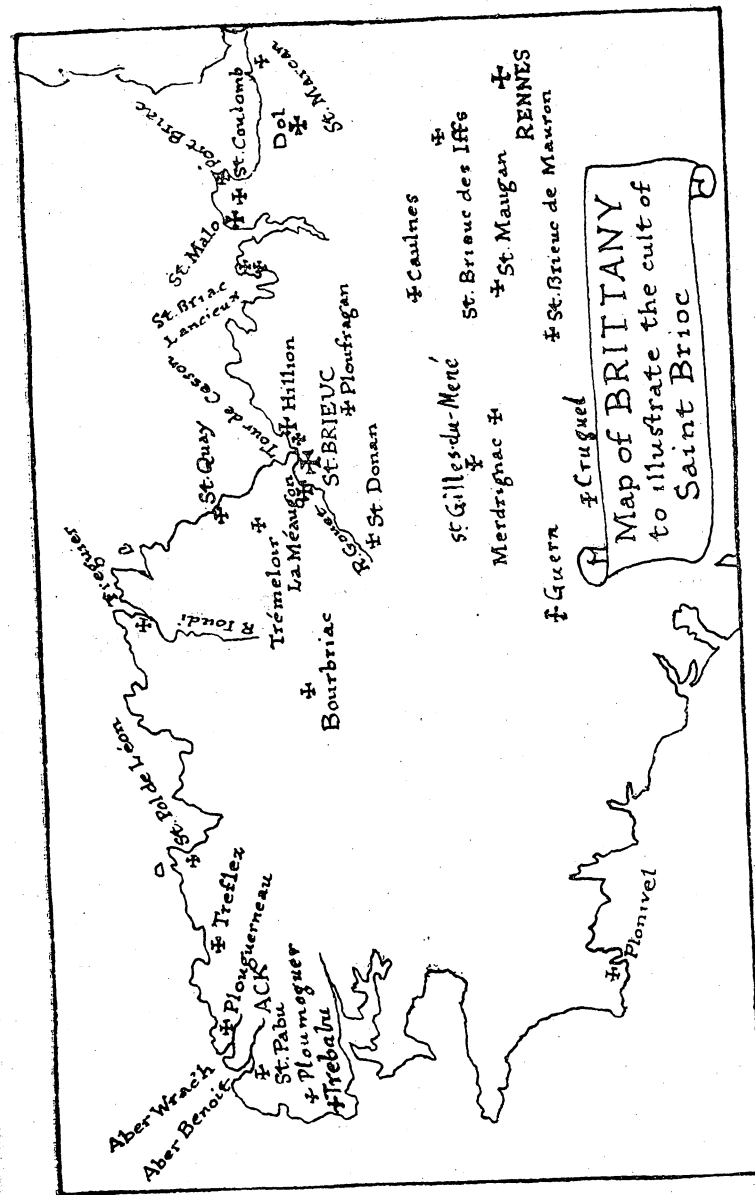
The story of the wolves and of the conversion of Conan (c. 38, 39) is a particularly interesting one. At first sight it seems quite reasonable to suppose with Baring Gould that the scene of this incident is laid in Cornwall, in or near the parish of St. Breock, where he must have stayed for some time on his way to Brittany, and it was (I suspect) at Mr Baring Gould's suggestion, that the little church at Pencarrow was called St. Conan's. Unfortunately, when we examine the episode more closely, we are obliged to come to the conclusion that the story has every appearance of being an interpolation. Chapter 37 ends by saying that Brioc reaches "the port he desired," without saying *what* port, though the angel had bidden him sail for "Latium." In c. 38 the story of the wolves begins with extraordinary abruptness, and without a word of explanation as to where Brioc was and why he delayed so long to obey the angel's command. It presupposes a lengthened stay in the country where the incident

¹ B. Gould & Fisher, *British Saints*, Vol. I.

happened. And c. 40 looks as if it was originally intended to follow c. 35. So much for internal evidence. External evidence is equally against the story being a real incident which took place in Cornwall on the saint's way to Brittany. The episode is peculiar to the Rouen MS. Every other version omits it. It is not in the MS. *Sancti Sergii Andegavensis*, found in the *Registres des Blancs-Manteaux*, printed by Gaultier du Mottay, which, however, omits the whole of c. 33-49. It is not in the *Vita* as re-written by Bishop de la Porte in 1621; the latter describes the delay on the voyage caused by the Devil (c. 36 of our version) and then goes on straight to c. 40. It is not in Canon la Devison, who again goes on from c. 36 to c. 40 without a break. The incident therefore was not found in the "Ancient Chronicle" belonging to the Chapter of St. Briec. The problem is a difficult one. The story is in the style of our author,¹ yet it is difficult to see any reason for its being cut out of the version possessed by the Chapter of St. Briec, which in every other respect seems to have been word for word identical with the Rouen MS. We may notice that the Count of Brittany when the translation took place of the relics of St. Brioc to a new shrine in the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus in 1166 was called Conan (see p. 48), which may have suggested the name to an interpolator. Further, St. Briac, who (as we shall see) has been confused by our author with St. Briec, is represented on his XVIth century tomb in the church of Bourbriac (which may quite likely be a reproduction of an older one) *with a dog couched at his feet*. (*Iconographie Bretonne*, p. 128). It seems just possible that this may have given rise to the legend of the wolves.²

¹ The seven days' fast may be compared with similar fasts in c. 28 and 39.

² The *Vita Petroci* shows us a *Cynam* at Boconion, originally Bod-Konan, in the parish of Helland, in Cornwall, not far from St. Breock. It is to be noted, however, that Garaby, whose *Vies des Saints de Bretagne* was published in 1839, long before Dom Plaine printed the Rouen *Vita Briocii*, says that "in the territory of Tréguier Brioc converted, it is said, Count Conan, and built, with his assistance and that of the faithful of the country, a monastery at Landebæron." (p. 109).



St. Brioc lands in Brittany "at the port which is called Achim." There is no port of this name in Brittany now, but the part of the diocese of Léon between Treflez and Landeda, round Lesneven, formed, before the Revolution, the Archdeaconry of *Ack*. The port of Achim might well be on the estuary of Aberwrach, perhaps near Plouguerneau, where there was formerly a *miniby*, with a procession or *troménie* (Largillière, *Les Minibys*, p. 201, note 46)¹ From there the saint goes on to the river Ioudi, now the Jaudi, on which stands the cathedral city of Tréguier. The author of the *Vita Briocii* thus makes Brioc and not Tudual the founder of Tréguier. Later he makes Brioc leave "his most dearly beloved nephew Papu-Tugual" in charge of the monastery there. Tudual is thus placed in an entirely subordinate position. This is flatly contradictory to the ancient *Vita Tutguali*.² Our author, however (so Duine

¹ It is to be observed that there is a parish called St. Pabu on the estuary of Aber Benoit, a little to the west of Aber Wrach. This, or Trebabu, near Le Conquet, might be the site of the first monastery of Brioc and his nephew Tudaul. But both are outside the Archdeaconry of Ack. See note on p. 44.

² It may be well to quote here a passage at the beginning of the 1st Life of St. Tudual. "His mother was called Pompaia, the sister of Count Rigual, who was the first of the Britons to come from beyond the sea, and Tutgual came after him, and with him seventy and two disciples crossed the sea . . . till he came to a port in Ach (*in capite Achimiensis*) where he founded the first place which is called Lanpabu, in the parish (*plebs*) of Macoer. At that time there reigned Count Deroch, a cousin of St. Tutgual, who gave him many parishes (*parochias*) throughout Dammania (Domnonia) for his soul and for eternal life in alms. Then he came . . . where is the great monastery which is called the Valley of Trechor . . . after these things he went away to the palace of King Chiltbert which is called Paris." It will be noticed that the *Vita Tutguali*, like the *Vita Briocii*, makes its hero land in the port of Ach, and afterwards go on to Tréguier. The author of one of these Lives must have been familiar with the statement in the other Life. The 1st *Vita Tutguali* may be a IXth century production, and is of little real authority. Duine, *Memento*, No. 15. Trebabu and Ploumoguer are near Le Conquet.

thinks) is simply exalting the founder of his own diocese at the expense of the founder of a neighbouring and rival diocese, a procedure of which we have many instances in the hagiographical literature of this period.

The visit of Brioc to his native country to assist his fellow-countrymen in Cardigan is one of the most interesting features of this Life, as it is probable that many of the chief Breton saints at this period crossed and re-crossed the Channel continually. It is also particularly interesting to find a lay relative of Brioc, a chieftain named Rigual, already established as a colonist in Armorica, and welcoming the monks in his new home.¹ The majority of the Breton saints seem to have followed their compatriots in this way, to provide them with the consolations of religion and to organize the Christian church in the British colonies in Armorica.²

We have already met with Count Rigual in the Life of St. Tudual, which tells us that he had a son and successor named Deroch. The Life of St. Lunaire (Leonorius) which copies the 1st Life of St. Tutgual (and which has little or no historical authority) makes Riwal the father of the Prince Judual mentioned in the Life of St. Samson. The Life of St. Winwaloe describes a dispute between Fracan the father of Winwaloe and "Riwal, duke of a part of Domnonia," as to the fleetness of their horses, which is followed by a race, in which Fracan's horse wins, but the jockey is injured, and healed by Winwaloe. In the Life of St. Guenaël, the disciple and successor of Winwaloe, a Rigmal or Rigual, king

¹ "What seems to us more interesting is the pan-British character of Brioc, who crosses and recrosses from one shore to another (of the Channel), labouring to destroy paganism in Wales, and favoured in Armorica by a chief who belongs to his family." Duine, *Memento*, No. 62.

² Largillière, *Les Saints et l'organisation chrétienne primitive dans l'Armorique Bret.*, pp. 207, 208, 212—215, 225—230.

of Armorican Cornwall, is introduced, and described as "a man conspicuous for goodness and righteousness, who adorned the same land both by his character and by the good laws he made." We may note there is a parish of *Saint Rivoal* in Finistère, and the same saint is honoured at Trezelan in Begard.¹ Pierre Le Baud, whose *Histoire de Bretagne* appeared in 1638, quoting Ingomar, makes "Riuvallus, a royal count" ask leave of Clothaire, king of the Franks, to occupy and settle in the province of Domnonia.²

The part of the *Vita Briocii* which describes his relations with Rigual contains the most ancient traditions of St. Brieuc as to the foundation of the important monastic settlement which became eventually the cathedral city of what is now a large diocese, and is full of details of undoubted antiquity and of the highest interest. The picture of the band of Celtic monks, with their outer garment of fawn-coloured goat's skin retaining its hair (c. 45), summoned to the offices in church by the abbot's bell (c. 49)—no doubt a bell like that still preserved in the cathedral of St. Pol de Léon³—clearing the forest round the wooden vivid glimpse of the civilizing work of the Breton monastic cells which encircled the first church built on the site of the present cathedral,⁴ gives us a

¹ Loth, *Noms*, p. 110.

² In the Middle Ages there was a family at St. Brieuc called Du Rouvre, who owned the land of Boisboixel, "said by some to be the former residence of Count Rigoual or Rivalon." At the enthronement of each Bishop of St. Brieuc the seigneur of Boisboixel received the bishop at the gate of the town and presented him with "a richly caparisoned mare." He held the stirrup while the bishop mounted, and conducted him to the palace, afterwards claiming the mare as his perquisite. He also served the bishop at the banquet which followed (claiming further perquisites). Ruffelet, *Annales Briochines*.

³ See note 3 on p. 48.

⁴ La Devison tells us that in the XVIIth century the cathedral possessed a piece of tapestry representing Brioc with his monks in the middle of a forest, engaged, with workmen, in cutting down trees, levelling the ground and bringing stones to build with. (Appendix, p. 18).

saints. The story of the stone cross erected in remembrance of the angels' song (c. 52) reminds us of similar stories in the Lives of St. Aeddan¹ and St. Columba,² and shows us the human and poetic interest which (though now forgotten) may once have been associated with the erection of some of the Cornish crosses.

Our author is careful to tell us of the grant made by Rigual to the monks of a large district, which was probably called the *minihy*, as the similar districts at Tréguier and St. Pol de Léon are still called. In a deed of 1555 the canons of St. Brieuc speak of "the *minihs* of the said Church," meaning the property of the Chapter.³ At Bourbriac and Locronan a procession, called a *tromenie*, is still held periodically, to preserve the memory of the exact boundaries of the *minihy* or *monachia*. (Largillière thinks that St. Brieuc originally formed part of the parish of Ploufragan. *Les Saints*, p. 176, note).

We may note in passing that the *Vita Briocii* does not state that Brioc dedicated the holy well and the oratory beside it to our Lady, though for many centuries the spot has been known as Notre Dame de la Fontaine. As Largillière says, "the cult of the Virgin does not appear in the most ancient Breton hagio-

¹ "St. David saw innumerable troops of angels round about the boy as he came. . . . And there a cross was erected which stands to this day." (see *Life of St. David*, trans. by Wade Evans, S.P.C.K., p. 36).

² "Ernan himself, although with faltering footsteps, was attempting with joyous activity to walk from the landing place to meet the saint. But when there was between the two a space of about 24 paces, he was overtaken by sudden death before the saint could look upon his face in life, and fell to earth breathing his last, lest the word of the saint should in any way be made void. Wherefore in the same place . . . a cross has been fixed; and another cross stands to-day fixed in like manner where the saint stood when Ernan died." Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*, c. 45. Mr. Huyshe comments, "It was the custom to mark with a cross the spot where any providential visitation took place."

³ Largillière, *Les Minihys*, Note 67.

graphy.”¹ (The numerous Locmarias of Brittany belong to a later period).

The stories of *Marcan* and *Simaus* seem to indicate a confusion between Brioc and another saint whose name is almost identical—*Briac*. The parish of Lancieux (=Lan-Seoci) adjoins that of St. Briac, and is many miles east of St. Brieuc. St. Marcan is near Dol, and a few miles to the west is an inlet called Port Briac. (We may observe that the parish of St. Marcan is near that of St. Coulomb. Now the parishes of St. Breock and St. Columb in Cornwall are close together). The parish of Bourbriac formerly possessed a MS. Life of St. Briac, used by Albert le Grand, but “entirely without historic foundation.”² It tells us that he was a companion of St. Tudual, and brings him into relations with a king Deroch, whom we have already met with in the 1st Life of St. Tudual. I suppose there is a possibility of Brioc and Briac having originally been the same person. The name *Marcan* is found in Wales in Llanfarchan (Pembrokeshire), and possibly at the abbey of Margan (wrongly written Margam) in Glamorgan, and the parish of Saint-Pabu (Finistère) in Brittany has a Roz Marhan.³ The Feast of St. Marcan is found in the Dol Breviary of 1503 under 21st May. *Simaus* or Siviavus or Seoc is the patron of Lan-cieux (in 1666 *Ecclesia Sancti Seoci*, in the 16th century *Lan-siu*). The Life of St. Paul Aurelian mentions a To-Seocus, surnamed Siteredus, as one of the companions of St. Pol de Léon.⁴ His feast is 26th March, according to

¹ Largillière, *Les Saints*, p. 20.

² Duine, *Memento*, No. 65.

³ Loth, *Noms*, p. 113. cf. note on p. 40. The reader will observe that St. Pabu may be one of Brioc's settlements, and that there was a chapel of S. Margan in the parish of S. Breoke in Cornwall, see p. 62. At Margan Abbey there are several Celtic crosses.

⁴ Loth, *Noms*, p. 113, Duine, *Mem.*, No. 193. *Vita Pauli Aureliani*, c. II. cf. Lan-de-zeoc in Guipronvel (Fin.)

Sébillot, but Garaby (who tells us that he is represented in art as an abbot)¹ says that it is observed on the Sunday nearest the 26th June. His prayers are sought during seasons of distress, public or private. Sébillot (*Pet. Leg. Dor.*, 28–30) has collected a few fragments of Lancieux folk-lore relative to this saint. The spot on the cliff where he was murdered is still stained red; a cross once stood there, but has been moved further inland on account of coast erosion. A rock where he landed bears the name of the Cradle of St. Cieux, close by is a path by which he climbed up from the shore, and a holy well, the water of which escapes in drops called the Tears of St. Cieux. During the Revolution all the statues of saints in the parish church were burnt except that of St. Cieux, which resisted every attempt to consume it in the flames.²

The Port of *Seson* is now called the Port du Légué, near which rises the huge ruin of the feudal Tour de Cesson, one of the most prominent objects in the landscape near St. Brieuc.

Dom Plaine is mistaken in saying that the note (in c. 58) about Brioc's being a bishop is found only in the Rouen MS. It was in the “Ancient Chronicle” used by la Devison, and both he and Albert le Grand who followed him were much perplexed about the matter. They agree to place his “election to the episcopate” shortly before his death, but confess that they know nothing of the circumstances of the creation of the see, or of Brioc's career as bishop. It has been asserted, on the authority of the *Chronicle of Nantes*, that the diocese of St. Brieuc owes its creation to Nominoë, King of Brittany, who, in the middle of the

¹ p. 471.

² It is interesting to note that the ancient name of S. Just-in-Roseland, a Cornish church built on the water's edge opposite Mylor and Falmouth, was *Lansioch*. Here we have another link between Cornwall and Brittany.

IXth century, made the see of Dol into an archbishopric, and created the sees of St. Briec and Tréguier—*Monasterium sancti Brioci sedem constituit episcopalem*. It is certain however that Nominoë did nothing more than turn the already-existing Celtic monastery-bishoprics of Tréguier and St. Briec into ordinary bishoprics of the western type. "Nominoë certainly did not create the bishoprics of Saint-Briec, Tréguier and Dol, he (only) sanctioned the power which the bishops of those monasteries were beginning to acquire, and confirmed the evolution (into diocesan bishoprics) which was taking place."¹ F. Lot (*Mélanges Bretonnes*, p. 84) thinks that both Tréguier and St. Briec continued to be monastery bishoprics long after Nominoë's time. At the beginning of the Xth century we find the Bishop of Tréguier called *Wroët, Abbot of St. Tutgual*, and in the XIth century the see of Tréguier is still called *monasterium*.² "The historical origins of the see of St. Briec remain peculiarly obscure."³ Our author has strictly adhered to the truth in *not* speaking of Brioc as a bishop, though he must have been tempted to follow the example of the *Vita Samsonis* and describe his episcopal consecration. (It must however be observed that the XVIIth century historian, Pierre le Baud, had seen a Life of St. Brioc which represented him as being like St. Samson a bishop consecrated in Great Britain before arriving in Armorica).⁴ Very likely the original Life of St. Brioc was written by a Celtic monk who thought an abbot a much more important person than a bishop. Brioc may have been a bishop, but it is certain in any case that St. Briec was for several centuries after his death only an abbey-

¹ Largillière, *Les Saints*, p. 223.

² The *Chronicle of Nantes* (c. 1050) still speaks of the *Monasterium Doli*, the *Monasterium Brioci*, and the *Monasterium Sti. Tutualis Pabui*.

³ Duine, *Inventaire Liturgique*, 220.

⁴ *Hist. de Bret.*, 1638, p. 108.

bishopric of the Celtic type, without definite territorial limits of jurisdiction. (Ireland, though it possessed more bishops than any other country in Christendom, was not divided into dioceses till the XIIth century. The abbots of the great monasteries were the real leaders of the Church, and were either in episcopal orders themselves, or kept a bishop in the monastery to confer orders). Mgr. Duchesne points out that "no legend exists as to the successors of Brioc in the see of St. Briec." This is a point to be carefully noted.¹

Brioc died in Brittany and was buried in the monastery he had founded. But soon after the end of Charlemagne's reign began the Norse invasions. St. Briec is close to the sea, and was peculiarly exposed to their raids. In consequence the body of the patron saint was taken for safety to Angers in the reign of the Breton king Erispoe (851-857), long before the universal exodus of the relics of all the chief Breton saints from Brittany into the interior of France in 919. It remained in the abbey of SS. Sergius and Bacchus down to the Revolution. It is interesting to note that it was the custom in the abbey every year on the feast of St. Brioc (1st May) for the superior to take his place before the altar of St. Brioc, on the left of the choir, wearing magnificent vestments, and to give a solemn reception to the recently elected Mayor of Angers, together with the *échevins* (aldermen) of the city, to the sound of drums and musical instruments, and to offer them the saint's ring to kiss.²

¹ See Dom Gougaud, *Les Chrétientés Celtiques*, and *La question des Abbayes-évêchés bretonnes* (*Revue Mabillon*). 1922.

² See A. du Bois de la Villerabel, *Vie de St. Briec*, p. 218.

The abbey church of St. Sergius is now a parish church. The tomb of St. Brioc was destroyed some years before the French Revolution, "to stop, it is said, certain superstitious practices which took place there." (Tresvaux's edition of Dom Lobineau). Unfortunately we are not told the nature of these "superstitious practices." But see note at the end, p 59.



"The special glory of the church of St. Sergius," says its Chronicler, "is the honour it pays to the Blessed Bishop Brioc." In 1166 the relics of St. Brioc were placed in a new shrine of wood, while his head was placed in a reliquary of silver-gilt. A solemn service was celebrated in the abbey church by the Bishop of Angers in the presence of Henry II, King of England.¹

In 1210 the Bishop of St. Briec persuaded the Abbot of St. Sergius to give part of the relics to St. Briec cathedral. The story of their translation is given in the Breviary of St. Briec printed in 1548, and has been reprinted in M. Gaultier du Mottay's *Iconographie Bretonne*, as well as in Dom Plaine's work. It runs as follows :

In the year 1210 the relics of Blessed Brioc were translated to his church of St. Briec.² Now at that time Peter, Bishop of St. Briec, a learned and eloquent man, when on his first arrival in his see he was told by the clergy that the body of their most blessed patron Brioc was kept in the church of the Blessed Sergius and Bacchus at Angers,³ answered, "Wait patiently, brethren ; for I believe that, with the help of God, we shall have something of the (body of) of the most holy confessor."

Therefore the venerable prelate, girt with power, trusting in the Lord, hastens to Angers. He was gifted with charming manners as well as great learning, and he gathered together, in the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, the Bishop of Angers, and the abbot and monks of the said church, and all the chief men of the city. To whom he made an oration,

¹ "Henry, King of England, and Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, to all the children of the Holy Church of God, greeting. Know all of you that in the year from the Incarnation of the Lord MCLXVI, and of our reign X, on the day before the Kalends of August (31st July) in my presence the body of St. Brioc, Confessor and Bishop, was translated in the church of the Blessed Sergius which is in Anjou, William, Bishop of Angers, officiating, in the presence of William, Abbot of the same church of St. Sergius, William, Abbot of St. Aubin, Hugo of St. Nicholas, William of St. Maur, William, Abbot of All Saints, and Conan, Count of Brittany."

² Briocensem

³ La Devison adds that he was informed that the only relics they possessed were the saint's mitre and bell.

based on Holy Scripture, in which he made so forcible an appeal, that if he had asked for a large part of the monastery to be given him, the monks would have gladly granted it. For the Lord was with him. At length, having explained the cause of his journey, he added that, if the aforesaid venerable Abbot thought fit to impart to him part of (the relics of) the most holy confessor, patron of his church, the church of St. Briec would enter into a faithful covenant, promising each other mutual assistance, with the church of the Blessed Sergius and Bacchus. Whereupon the two prelates came to an agreement. And lest any scandal (which God forbid) should arise among the brethren of the same monastery, an hour was fixed for the confirmation of the pact when the brethren return to their beds after matins. And when the moment arrived, the parties to the agreement already made appeared.

So the venerable abbot, having with God's help and the assistance of a goldsmith opened the sarcophagus, looked in and saw there the glorious members of the sacred confessor, sewn up in deer's hide, and an altar (stone) of marble, on which were engraved the following words : *Here lies the Body of the most Blessed Confessor Brioc, Bishop of Britain, which Ilispodius King of the Britons brought to this Basilica, which was then his Chapel.* And all marvelled when they saw this, because the name of this king was entirely unknown to them. For his kingdom reached as far as Vindocinum (or Vindotinium) Then a marvellous fragrance of so great a sweetness was wafted to the nostrils of those who were present, as if fifty pounds of ointment of spikenard were poured forth throughout the church.

Immediately the venerable abbot, with the privilege of great love, gave to Peter, the Bishop of St. Briec, two ribs with an arm and a little of the neck of his patron saint. And he, having obtained his wish, placing this treasure in a precious vessel, handed it over to the Treasurer of Angers, his familiar friend, to keep. At length the venerable prelate, setting forth on his journey with his relics, was accompanied by the Bishop of Angers and all his clergy, with hymns and canticles, to the entrance of the city. And having had great joy of their company, he embraced them many times, and departed.

Now St. Brioc appeared in dreams to the blessed man, and said unto him : "My son, cause that my members, which thou takest with thee, be honourably received in my church."

Rejoicing still more over this vision, he sent before him messengers to all the clergy and people of his city, who fixed the day of St. Luke the Evangelist, which was close at hand, for the reception of the relics of their most holy patron.

So, on the day assigned, a huge procession of clergy and a vast crowd of people assembled at Brioc¹, alike eager to meet their patron. The elders, therefore are present, young men run to meet him, old men and cripples with sticks in their hands are carried forward. And the most noble Count Alan,² who then governed that country, was there, who also prostrated himself, adoring the relics, and received them in his arms and carried them into the church, the clergy singing loudly *Te Deum laudamus*. And as he was entering the church, the holy relics gave a leap as if they would come out of their case. For, as it was said, this miracle took place because the saint was rejoicing that his members had returned to where he had had his home when he was alive.

In which place, if the Lord will, they shall be kept till the Day of Judgement. Here many sick recover health, peace is restored to the country, barrenness is driven away, fruitfulness is granted, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen.

In memory of this event the 18th of October was ever afterwards observed at St. Briec as the feast of the Reception of the Relics of the Blessed Brioc, with a proper office, consisting of nine lessons, with proper antiphons and responds, the feast of St. Luke being transferred to the following day.

It remains to see what *the study of place-names* can teach us about St. Brioc. We shall find in this field hints as to his activities which are not referred to at all in the late and highly rhetorical Life we have been studying.

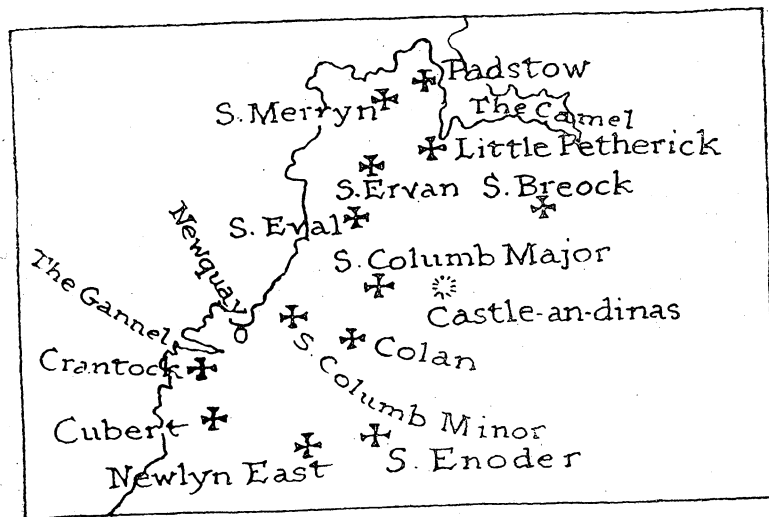
In Wales St. Brioc is patron of the parish of Llandyfriog (= Lan-te-Brioc) in Cardiganshire.³ It is par-

¹ *Brioco*. The city, we are to notice, is called in this document *Briec* and not *St. Briec*.

² Alain I, comte de Penthievre.

³ A Welsh Calendar (the Demetian Calendar) gives 1st May, which is the feast of St. Brioc, as the feast of *St. Tyfri, Abbot*. (Rees calls him *Tyfriog ab Dingad*.)

ticularly to be noted that Llandyfriog is in *South* Cardiganshire, close to Llangranog and Gwbert. Now these two latter places are called after saints who have given their names to two adjoining parishes near Newquay in Cornwall—Crantock and Cubert, which are quite close to the parish of St. Broeke.



The Churches of the Newquay district, Cornwall. (Mawgan should appear half way between S. Eval and S. Columb Minor).

Between St. Broeke and Crantock lies the parish of Mawgan, a Pembrokeshire saint, and the parish of La Méaugon (= Lan-Maugan) is about three miles west of St. Briec in Brittany.¹ I have shown in my

¹ St. Maugan lies halfway between St. Briec-des-Iffs and St. Briec de Mauron. See p. 53. It may be noted that Garaby (*Vies des SS. de Bret.*, p. 520, Nov. 30th), gives "Hoel, King of Armorica" as the father of Tudual, Brioc's nephew. The ancient Life of Tudual mentions his mother Pompaea, but does not tell us the name of his father. Now in the Welsh genealogies Hywel, son of Emyr Llydaw (=Armorica), is the grandfather of *St. Meugant*. At Trémeloir and St. Quay near St. Briec other Cornish saints are commemorated.

book on St. Carantoc (No. 14 in this series) that the saints of the parishes of the Newquay district between the Camel and Cubert are all in some way connected with each other, and are nearly all found on the north coast of Brittany, as well as in Cornwall. We have here probably an indication of an emigration of monks from south-west Wales into mid-Cornwall and later into Brittany. Mr. C. G. Henderson has kindly promised to add a few notes about the early history of the parish of St. Breoke, so that I need say nothing here about the cult of St. Brioc in Cornwall, except to observe that the statement that St. Brioc is the patron of the parish of Lezant is a mistake. St. Breoke is the only place in Cornwall where his cult is found. Leland (1538) definitely tells us that the patron of Breage in West Cornwall is an Irish woman saint, whose Latin Life he had read—he has given us some extracts from it.

In Gloucestershire, in the Forest of Dean, is a parish called St. Briavel's, now pronounced *St. Brevel's*. Briavel, says M. Loth (*Noms*, p. 16), = Brigomaglos (*v* and *f* being Celtic mutations for *m*, as well as for *b*, as in the case of Lan-dy-friog). Mr. St. Clair Baddeley, in his *Gloucestershire Place-names*, had identified St. Briavel with the Norman saint Evroult (Ebrulphus), but has since come to the same conclusion as M. Loth. He tells me that the ancient name of St. Briavel's was *Little Lydney*; it was altered to *Briavel-stowe* by Henry I. "Motives, practical rather than religious, caused Henry I to transfer this saint's name to Little Lydney, a site that from remotest days had command of the best Wye-ford. The original stowe lies North of the site (*cf. Dingestow* (lower Monmouthshire) for *Merthyr Dingad*). In 1086 William Fitz Baderon held *Ledeneia Parva* with a mill and part of a Wye fishery. William Fitz Osbern's

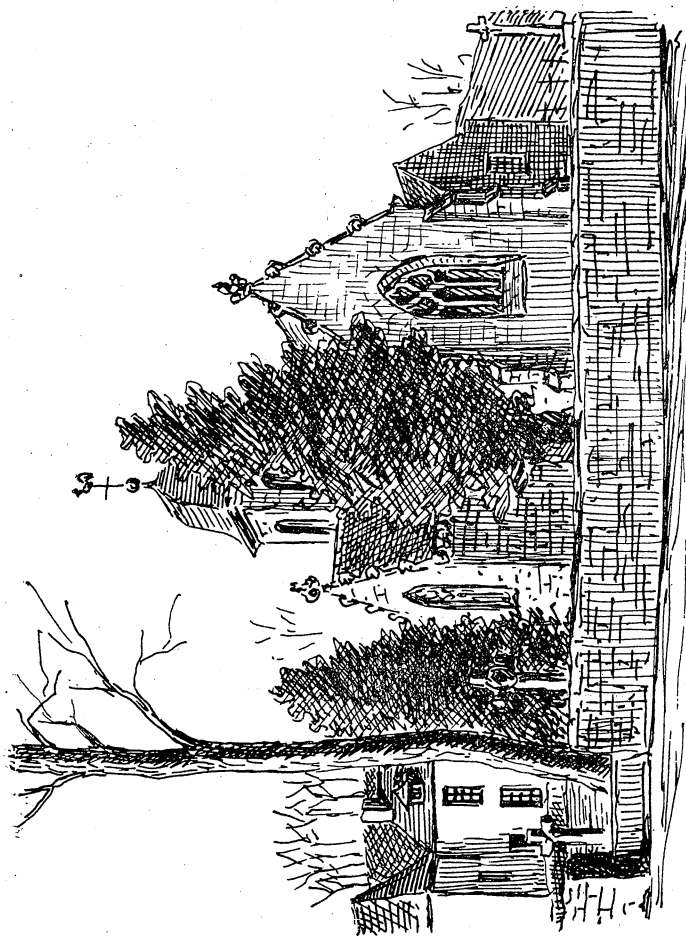
Abbey of Lire had the advowson of the neighbouring parish church. The place occurs as *St. Briavel's* (*Castellum de Sco. Briavel*) in the Pipe Roll of 1135 (31 Hen. I) for the first time. Being a Crown castle, Milo Fitz Walter was constable. In 1166 the village was called *St. Briavel*, and was a *villa regia*. In that year ended an old quarrel over the church between the monks of Saumur and the Abbots of Lire. I fear there is no more documentary evidence of that date."

In Brittany St. Brioc is the patron of the city and diocese of St. Brieuc, and of the parishes of Hillion and Caulnes in the same diocese. He is patron of the parishes of St. Brieuc de Mauron (Morbihan), and of St. Brieuc des Iffs in the department of Ille et Vilaine, and of Plonivel, a former parish now united to Plobannalec, near Quimper.¹

St. Brieuc is the patron of purse-makers, on account of the legends of his great charity. M. Gaultier du Mottay tells us in his *Iconographie Bretonne* (p. 114) that in art the saint used to be represented in the company of an angel. In Dom Lobineau's *Vies des Saints de Bretagne* is a picture of St. Brioc seated, holding a book, and listening to an angel who is speaking to him. An XVIIIth century statue in the cathedral represents him in a surplice preaching, bare-headed and with bare feet. He has chapels at Guern, Merdrignac, and Plouasne, and is honoured at St. Gilles du Mené, and St. Donan (*ib.* pp. 128, 129).²

¹ The Rector of Plobannalec, M. Jézégou, tells me that the local tradition is that the seigneur of the chateau near the church "married a lady who came from the neighbourhood of St. Brieuc. At that moment the church was in ruins. The young lady rebuilt it, but on condition that St. Brieuc became the patron. Hitherto the church had been Loc-Maria de Plonivel. It became Loc-Briec de Plonivel."

² M. le Comte de Laigue has kindly sent me the following notes about the cult of St. Brioc in Brittany: he is patron of Cruguel (diocese of Vannes), and has a chapel at Beuzec Cap Sizun (F.). His festival at Vannes is April 16th, at Rennes April 28th. St. Brieuc de Mauron was formerly a priory of the Abbey of Paimpont. In the chapel of Le Binio at Augan is a statue of St. Berio, "which might well be St. Brieuc, as the peasants pronounce *berton* for *breton*."



*St Briec-des-Iffs
24. 11. 1901
Bretonne France
St Henri-Frokin de la Messelin
1908
croquis du 31 mars 1901.*

In the Middle Ages a favourite devotion was the Pilgrimage of the Seven Saints of Brittany, called *Tro-Breiz*. The pilgrims visited in turn the churches of St. Corentin at Quimper, of St. Pol de Léon, of St. Tudual at Tréguier, of St. Briec, of St. Malo, of St. Samson at Dol, and of St. Patern at Vannes. Traces of the Pilgrims' Way which they followed may still be seen in some places. A deed of 1346 mentions



Statue of S. Brioc in St. Briec-des-Iffs.

a fountain or chapel "of the Seven Saints" near Dinan. Four times a year, at Easter, Pentecost, Michaelmas and Christmas, the pilgrims started, journeying in bands, for fear of robbers, guided by a priest or experienced pilgrim. At St. Briec they visited the holy well besides the cathedral. In the XIVth century Clisson complained to the King of France that the Duke of Brittany was keeping in prison, on a diet of bread and water, "certain inhabitants who were going on pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Fountain." About the same time we find the Duchess of Brittany going to "the devotion of Saint Briec." The present exquisite little building over the well dates from the XVth century. (See *Vie de Saint Briec*, par A. de Bois de la Villerabel, also *Tro-Breiz*, par le Chanoine Le Roy, Quimper).

The old church of St. Bartholomew in the Isle Notre Dame at Paris possessed some relics of St. Brioc, which are now at St. Jacques du Haut Pas in the same city.¹

Since 1804 the feast of St. Brioc is kept at St. Briec on the second Sunday after Easter, instead of on 1st May. M. Gaultier du Mottay added as an appendix to his *Iconographie Bretonne* the "Ancient Proper Offices of the Dioceses of St. Briec and Treguier." The Breviary of 1532 contained part of the *Vita* I have translated as the lessons for Matins. The office hymn at both Vespers and Matins was :

*Brioci sacri praesulis
Insigniti miraculis
Presens instat celebritas
Laudes feramus debitas, etc.*

¹ There was a chapel of St. Brioc in this church. His relics had been carried there by Salvator, Bishop of Aleth, in 961.

The antiphon to the *Magnificat* was :

*O Brioce
Nos deposce
Tuis sacris precibus
In supernis
Et eternis
Collocari sedibus,
Ut letemur
Et gregemur
Beatorum cetibus. Alleluia.*

The collect was :

*Beatissimi confessoris tui atque pontificis Brioci
quesumus, Domine, precibus adjuvemur, in cujus meritis
semper es gloriosus et vehementer magnificandus. Per
Dominum, etc.*

The hymn at Lauds began :

Lux matutino radiat fulgore, etc.

In 1621 these hymns were discarded, with the rest of the mediaeval office.

In the Missal of 1543 the Sequence was :

*Jocundemur senes et parvuli
Applaudantes beato presuli
Cujus adsunt tanta solemnia ;
Occurramus sancto Pontifici
Spiritalis in laude cantici
Cordis, oris, pari concordia.
Gratuletur Mater Ecclesia, etc.*

The Prose of the 1782 Missal began :

Turpi jugo Gens redempta.

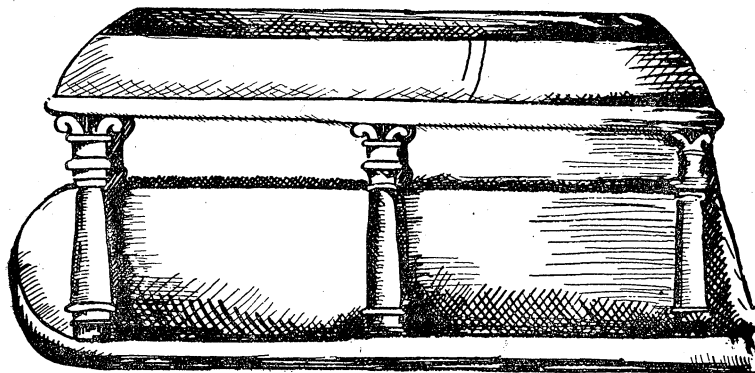
In Father Maunoir's Breton Hymn of the Seven Saints of Brittany the stanza on St. Brioc is as follows :

*Autrou Sant Briec, Patron an Escopti S. Briec,
Besit dre ho carantes ousomp oll trugarec,
C'hui a so tost ha mignon d'hon tat S. Caurintin,
Digacit deomp ho coulmic pa vesimp voar hor fin.*

"Monsieur St. Briec, patron of the Bishopric
of St. Briec,
By thy love, be favourable to us,
You are the good friend of our father St. Corentin,
Send us your little dove when we are near our end."

NOTE ON THE TOMB OF ST. BRIOC.

In June, 1928, I visited St. Serge. The curé-doyen, M. le Chanoine Denéchère, courteously showed me the church, and gave me a copy of *Le Tombeau de Saint Briec dans l'église de Saint-Serge d'Angers*, by Mgr. Costes. This writer says "That each year on 1 May the Mayor of Angers came to St. Serge to do homage, the Hotel de Ville being built on a fief of the Abbey. The Mayor was received by the Prior, who offered him a bouquet of violets. Afterwards they proceeded together to the chapel of St. Briec, to hear Mass, and to kiss the golden ring of the saint. The *fête*, which was also the installation feast of the Mayor, was continued with less seriousness at the Castle, and at other places in the city," where the wildest revelry apparently followed. The ring was of pure gold, flat, marked with a cross, but with no other ornament.



Tomb of S. Brioc in the Church of St. Serge.
(drawing by Bruneau de Tartifume, 1623)

The chapel which contained the altar and tomb of St. Brioc is in the north transept. It is lower than the floor of the rest of the church, and four steps lead down into it. It is now the chapel of our Lady but has a modern stained glass window representing St. Brioc. The tomb, which was a sarcophagus supported by five pillars two feet high resting on a slab of slate $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, stood in front of the altar. A sketch of it was made in 1623 by Bruneau de Tartifume. Around

it, in the XVIIth century, were pictures representing the life of St. Brioc. In one of them his funeral was portrayed—the saint and all the clergy were dressed like Benedictine monks. There was an organ in the chapel. It seems that the present magnificent Abbey-church was built largely with the offerings of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Brioc. Several popes granted indulgences to pilgrims who visited the tomb on May 1st. The Abbey was sometimes even called *Saint Serge et Saint Briec*. It is apparently not the case that the tomb was destroyed before the Revolution. In the evening of 18th November, 1793, six members of the Revolutionary Committee of Angers arrived at the Abbey and destroyed all its monuments, including the tomb of St. Brioc.

It is to be observed that a few yards to the east of the Abbey of St. Serge was an important chapel of the Celtic saint Samson. This chapel still exists—I found it is now the tool-house of the Jardin des Plantes. The road between it and St. Serge was called the *Faubourg S. Samson*, another road was the *Vallée S. Samson*, and there was a *Perrière S. Samson*.

Notes on the Parish of St. Breoke, Cornwall

By C. G. HENDERSON, M.A., Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

In Cornwall there are two parishes bearing similar names—Breage near Helston, anciently *St. Breaca*, and St. Breoke near Wadebridge, anciently *St. Briocus*. The resemblance of name, however, is superficial, for the two Saints were quite distinct, Breaca being a woman and Briocus a man.

St. Breoke Church is beautifully situated in a deep little valley that runs down to join the estuary of the Camel at Wadebridge. A little stream in the valley bed flows along the north wall of the church and floods it in time of spate. It may be generally observed that those churches in Cornwall which were monastic settlements occupy positions such as this,* in the bottom of a valley near a stream, while those churches which took their origin as the oratories of hermits are generally on high ground.†

The "Church-Town," or lands immediately adjacent to St. Breoke Church bear the name of *Nancent*. For this reason the church is styled in 1288 *Ecclesia de Nansant*. In this part of Cornwall there is great confusion between the letters L and N when they occur as initials, e.g., Nanstallan, not far from Wadebridge, is often written *Lantallan*, and Lamail appears as *Nansmail* in old documents. In the case of *Nancent* it is probable that the name was originally *Lan-sant*. We actually find it so written in the earliest reference to the church.

On 24th September, 1259, Bishop Bronescombe dedicated the "*Ecclesia Sancti Brioci de Lansant*," and on 11th July, 1318, Bishop Stapeldon consecrated the High Altar of the Church of St. Breoc of *Nansent*. The first reference is of course to St. Breoke, though it has (by some authorities) been carelessly ascribed to Lezant in East Cornwall which was also written *Lansant*. *Lan*, of course, implies a "monastic enclosure and *Sant* appears to be the adjective "Holy." The "Holy Monastery" does not seem a very distinctive appellation, but *Sant* can hardly be (for the same reason) the personal name of a Saint. Sancreed, near the Land's End, (patron: *St. Sancredus*) was formerly called *Eglos-Sant*, i.e. "Holy Church." This word *Eglos* was generally applied in Cornwall to churches that were not monastic, but St. Breoke is called *Eglos-breoke* in 1538 in a few documents. The whole parish of St. Breoke and the larger part of the Padstow peninsula formed, at an early date, the great Manor of *Polton* or Pawton. The capital of the manor was at Pawton in St. Breoke. This was one of the three Cornish estates seized by King Egbert about A.D. 830, when he defeated the Cornish, and given by him (as representing a tithe of his conquest) to the Saxon Bishop of Sherborne. Edward the Elder, about A.D. 915, transferred them to the new Saxon See at Crediton, and Athelstan, about 930, to the new See of St. Germans. Pawton thus passed to the See of Exeter and was the most valuable of its Cornish possessions for four centuries. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Bishops of Exeter made frequent progresses through the Cornish part of their Diocese, Pawton was regularly visited by them.

* e.g. St. Kew, Padstow, Mawgan, Lanivet.

† e.g. St. Wenn, St. Eval, St. Issey.

Bishop Bronescombe held an Ordination in his chapel there in 1261, and so did Bishops Brantingham and Stafford in 1371, 1375, 1381, 1383, 1400, and 1411. Bronescombe also enclosed a park for deer at Pawton, and the name of Deer Parks is still attached to some fields on the Barton (which claims to be the largest farm in Cornwall—over 1000 acres) Of the Episcopal Palace at Pawton there are but scanty remains. Part of the Tithe Barn with a spiral staircase seem to be the sole relics. There is a piece of ground called the Grave Yard which is superstitiously regarded and is never ploughed.

Pawton, is without question, one of the oldest inhabited sites in Cornwall. The meaning of the name, originally *Polton*, is not clear. The syllable *ton* was clearly an Anglo-Saxon addition, and *Pol* is obviously a contraction; Canon Taylor suggests, for *Petroc*. It seems probable that the whole manor of Pawton belonged to the monks of St. Petroc of Padstow before Egbert seized it. After 835 therefore, St. Breoke has been under the shadow of its great neighbour. The parish, like the seven others in the vicinity, was a *Peculiar* in which the Bishops alone had jurisdiction and were patrons of all the churches, save Padstow.

In 1278 we find that the revenues of St. Breoke were shared by a sinecurist Rector and a Vicar or deputy (as at Duloe). This arrangement enabled the Bishop (as patron) to prefer his Chaplains or Familiars to the Rectory without losing their services, but before 1288 it was at an end, and the Benefice was entire.

The Church of St. Breoke is an interesting old building of a somewhat unusual plan. The XIIIth century church was cruciform and a large part of it survives in the walls of the Nave, Chancel and north Transept. This would be the church of 1259. The Nave is roughly 75 feet long by 18 wide, and the Chancel 35 feet by 18. The Nave is thus exceptionally long and the little Transept (13 feet wide by 9 deep) is exceptionally small. The Tower appears to be of XIIIth to XIVth century date and is earlier than most Cornish towers. Whether any new work necessitated the re-construction of the High Altar in 1318 it is difficult to say; perhaps the Chancel was then lengthened. This date is too early for the south Aisle even if we allow (with Sedding) that the capitals and arches of Bere stone (?) (now supported by the usual XVth century monolithic piers of granite) belong to an earlier arcade of the XIVth century. The south Aisle seems to be purely a XVth century addition and later still is the little south Transept (13 feet by 13) known as the Trevorder Aisle from the estate in the parish to which it belonged. The beautiful little octagonal font of Cataclawse stone (hard, dark blue elvan) has well-sculptured panels of tracery.

The church was unhappily restored by Mr. St. Aubyn many years ago and no traces of the Screen or other old woodwork have survived him.

There were several chapels in the parish. In 1385 the Rector of St. Breoke had license to celebrate Mass in the Chapel of *St. Brueredus* in his parish. This chapel is referred to in the will of Christopher Tredeneck of St. Breoke 1531 as *St. Ruredus*. The same Saint is found as patron of St. Beward parish, ten miles distant. The chapel was probably at Burlawne (anciently *Bodelowen*) Eglos. There is a field called Chapel Park. In 1570 Queen Elizabeth sold (among other lands of desecrated chapels) the Chapel of *St. Veras* in *Burneglose* in St. Breoke. Some fine pieces of carved stonework (XIVth and XVth

century) all of Cataclewse were taken from the site of this chapel not long ago and used in building a hedge.

The chapel itself became a cottage, but it has been demolished, and the site is now a garden. At Pengelly near Burlawne, was a private chapel or oratory for which John Ude had a license in 1383, and John. Pengelly in 1440.*

At Hustyn was another manorial chapel. In 1379 Ralph Hustyn and Alice his wife had license to have Mass celebrated in their chapel of St. Katherine in the parish of *Bowtone* [St. Breoke]. From licenses renewed in 1406—1432 we learn that this stood at Hustyn.

Before the building of Wadebridge (*circa* 1470) a chapel stood on either side of the *Wade* or ford across the Camel. The chapel on the St. Breoke side bore the name of St. Michael, and in 1382 the Rector of St. Breoke had license to celebrate Mass in it. The chapels at Wadebridge were both desecrated at the Reformation and sold by the Crown in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

C. HENDERSON.

* Near Pengelly is a small tenement called St. Morgan [*Seynt Morgan* 1538 *St. Margan* 1600] which must certainly have obtained its name from some Celtic chapel. The old spellings show that the Saint was not the Cornish *Maugan* but the Welsh *Margan* (Breton *Marchan*). This is the only occurrence of this name in Cornwall. Possibly St. Morgan was the chapel for which John Ude had license. See p. 44.

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G. H. D.