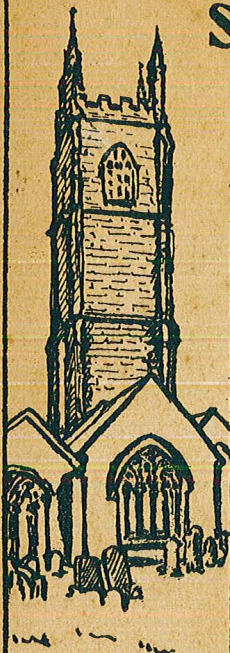


Hommage de l'auteur

G.H. Doherty
20 Dec 1927

S. MELOR.

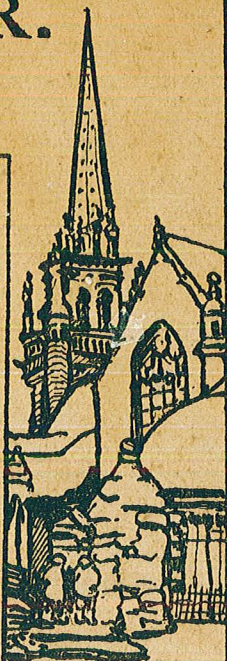
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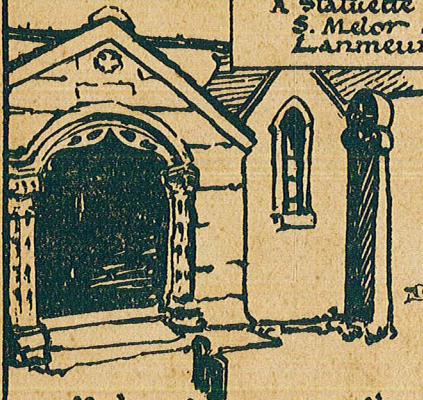
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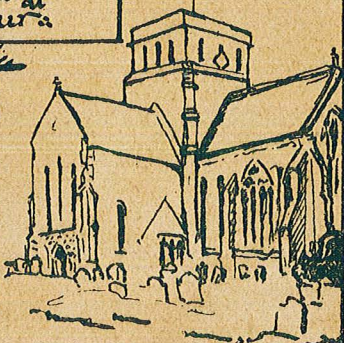
A statuette of
S. Melor at
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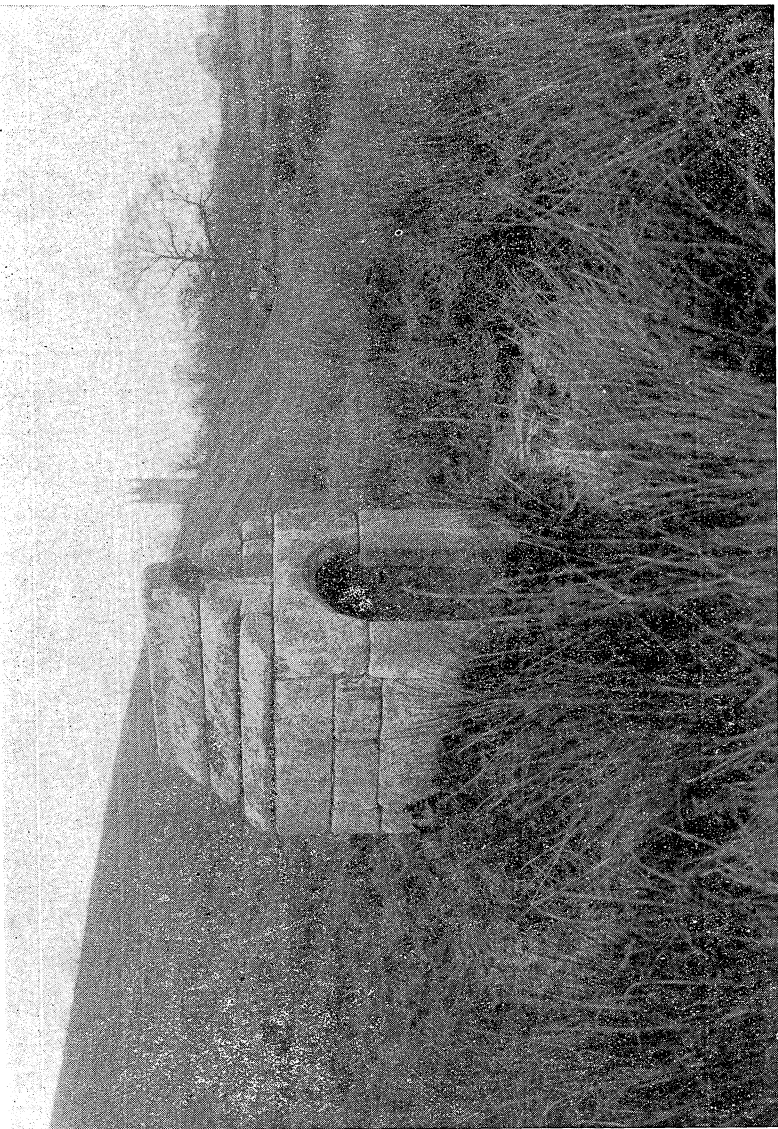
Mylor Cross, Cornwall.



Amesbury, Wilts.

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HOLY WELL OF S. MELOR AT LINKINHORNE.



"CORNISH SAINTS" SERIES. No. 13.



SAINT MELOR,

*Patron of Mylor and Linkinhorne, and
of Amesbury (Wilts.)*

BY THE

Rev. G. H. DOBLE, M.A.,

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,' 'A John Wesley of Armorican
Cornwall,' etc.

*Vicar of Wendron and Examining Chaplain
to the Lord Bishop of Truro.*

With an essay on the cult of S. Melor by the late
M. René Largillière, and notes on the cult of S. Melor
in Cornwall by Mr. C. G. Henderson, B.A.

1927.



THE 'KING'S STONE' PRESS, LONG COMPTON, SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR



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A la memoire de
RENÉ LARGILLIÈRE,
A soldier. A scholar. A Christian.



Document numérisé en 2021



A.M.D.G.

SAINT MELOR.

One of the most curious problems in early Cornish and Breton history is the legend of the martyr Saint Melor, Prince of Brittany, and patron saint of two Cornish parishes—Mylor and Linkinhorne, and of the parish of Amesbury in Wiltshire, as well as of Lan-meur and Loc-Mélard and numerous other places in the north and west of Brittany. He was also (as Mr. Henderson has discovered) patron of a chapel in the parish of S. Martin-in-Meneage near the Lizard in Cornwall, so that his cult was really very wide spread on both sides of the channel. His legend is given us in a Latin "Life of Melorus," which as we have it now was re-written some time in the 11th or 12th century (?) at Amesbury, as it contains some stories about the shrine and relics of S. Melor in Amesbury Church. It is contained in a MS. dating from between 1325 and 1350, which was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1516. I shall begin by placing before the reader a translation of this Life. We will then examine the Cornish and Breton versions of the story, and we will afterwards discuss the historical value of the Legend of S. Melor, and see what light can be thrown on the problem by the study of place-names in Cornwall and Brittany.

I.

DE SANCTO MELORO, MARTIRE.*

In the beginning of the Christian Faith, while the apostolic doctrine was being spread abroad throughout the world among all the nations, the British race was converted to the Faith, and many, believing in the Lord and following the apostolic precepts, shone by

* Printed in Capgrave's *Nova Legenda Anglie*, Ed. Horstman, ii. 183-185.

diverse miracles and virtues, among whom we faithfully believe the blessed Melorus to have been numbered. For the Blessed Melorus was of noble British blood,* and his father Melianus held the duchy of Cornwall† (ducatum Cornubie) : in whose time no rain fell upon the earth for seven years.‡ At length, by the instigation of a malicious spirit, in the seventh year of his rule, when the council of peers (consilium primatum) had been called together to consult for the good of the country, Rioldus came and slew his brother Melianus while the council was being held, and began to reign in his stead. Melianus however had a certain little son, seven years old, named Melorus: whom after his father's death his uncle (Rivold) sought to slay fearing that if the boy survived and came to man's estate he might take the duchy from him. Rioldus therefore deliberating (with himself) what he should do, took the boy with him into Cornwall, where a council of bishops and many others had been gathered together§. And when he would slay the boy, they all prayed that he

* The Vita printed by Dom Morice adds "of those, namely, who held the dukedom of that nation. For the most holy man John was his great-great-great-grandfather, whom the Lord led by His angels out of the parts beyond the sea, with a mixed company of Britons, into Cornouaille (Cornubia). Daniel was the great-great-grandfather of Blessed Melorus. Budicus his grand-father had two sons, Meliavus the father of Blessed Melor, and his brother Rivoltus. And Meliavus took to wife one named Aurilla, of British race, of the land which is called Domnonia, the daughter of Judocus a famous count, who bare him Blessed Melor in the first year of his dukedom." The Vita published by Dom Plaine describes John as "a certain nobleman from beyond the seas, whose name was Law (Lex) or Rule (Regula) (according to M. Loth, this name would be in Breton, *Reith*) a man of royal race and great wealth. This man, after the desolation wrought by the Frisians and Duke Corsoldus, fitted out a fleet, crossed the sea and came to our desolate Cornouaille (Cornugallia) with a great company, took the kingdom, and settled there. His son Budic succeeded him, and Budic had two sons, Meliavus and Rivodius. Meliavus was gentle, Catholic in faith, and just and upright in every way."

might not be slain, but only that his right hand and left foot might be cut off. And so it was done. There were however afterwards made for the Blessed Melorus a silver hand and a brazen foot : and the pious and innocent (child) growing in virtues from day to day, was brought up in a certain monastery of Cornwall, and read divine scriptures until his fourteenth year. For one day in summer the abbot of that place|| gathered nuts and presented them to the boy as to his lord : who began to collect them with his silver hand,** and that silver hand in wondrous fashion became supple as if it was flesh, and he began to stretch out his hand and to draw it in again, as if it was a natural hand with bones, nerves, veins, blood and skin. One day the holy boy took a stone†† and threw it the distance of half a stadium (*i.e.*, about 100 yards) and it fell upon a very hard rock and stuck fast in it as if it was soft wax. And when he had come to that place and drawn it out of the very hard crag (in which it was fixed), most copious waters issued out, and to this day a living spring

† Cornubia in this Life of course always means Armorican Cornwall—Cornouaille.

‡ "Within those years not a drop of rain fell in that kingdom, nor was there snow, nor frost, yet the earth did not cease to bring forth its fruits most abundantly, and a daily dew preserved the soil from summer heats and winter cold, so that it was more fertile than in the surrounding districts." *Vita*, ed. Dom Plaine.

§ The S. Malo Breviary of 1537 says that this council was held "in the land of Cornubia, in a place which is called Gobroidus." This place has never been identified.

|| "On a certain solemn day, at noon, the family of the governor of Blessed Melorus, gathered together and going out into the woods," etc. *Vita*, ed. Dom Plaine.

** "Then, as Tradition relates, he took a large part of the nuts and threw them through an open window" (per apertum veretri foramen seu istii repagulum—apparently some now forgotten game of skill shewing great address on the part of Melor, as the writer says it amazed those who beheld it.) (*ib.*)

†† "A child's javelin (framea) (or sling-stone?) which is commonly called *petraria*." (*ib.*)

is seen to well forth from that place. But when his uncle* had promised his guardian Cerialtanus many gifts and possessions if he killed his pupil, a wicked bargain having been agreed on that Cerialtanus should cut off the innocent boy's head and bring it to Rioldus and receive the promised reward.....(there is a lacuna here—the sentence is left unfinished in the MS.) The boy having been thus beheaded, the son of Cerialtanus at his father's bidding was carrying the martyr's head by the wall of the castle, when by the Providence of God the Just Judge he fell from the wall and broke his neck and died. But the martyr's nurse, coming to the house in which the body was lying, saw both the angels of God and lamps shining with divine splendour. Cerialtanus indeed took the head and fled, and when† he was almost fainting from extreme thirst, said to himself "Woe is me, most miserable of all men, and worthy of every pain and torment! What shall I do? For, afflicted with parching thirst, I am fainting and dying." And when he had many times

* "After he had worked this miracle by the aid of divine power, the report of Melor's sanctity began to grow and spread day by day, and his uncle Rivoldus was constantly hearing of it. Grieved at which, and fearing lest his father's honour might be restored to the boy, he called Cerialtanus and communed with him, and said to him, 'If thou wilt slay thy pupil, I will enrich thee with great gifts of lands and herds of cattle, and I will give thee whatever thou canst see from the top of Mount Coci,' (or *Scoci*, or *Cuti*. This hill has not been identified. La Borderie, *Hist. de Bret.*, I. 379, suggests the Menez Hom, or Mont St. Michel near Braspars. Another version has "from the top of the highest mountain in Cornubia.") "Cerialtanus returned home and told his wife all that Rivoldus had promised him if he would slay his ward, and she said "Go and confirm the bargain and get as good terms as thou mayest." He set out again from home and returning to Rivoldus proceeded to cement the agreement, and stayed with him a week. But Melor's nurse, fearing lest the innocent boy should be slain by wicked men, fled with her ward, while her husband was staying with Rivoldus, from Cornubia to Domnonia, where his father's sister, the daughter of Budicius, lived with Count Commorus her husband in his castle in the country of Poucastel (in Pago castelli) which is called *Boccidus*, (i.e., Beuzit, from the Latin Buxus=box, about a mile W. of Lanmeur.) The Count and his wife with all their family rejoiced greatly at his arrival, and Count Commorus said to him "I will give thee this castle in which I now reside, and will see carefully to thy upbringing until thou art of age." The news spread that the

repeated these words, the boy's head burst out into human language and spake thus,—“Cerialtanus, fix the staff thou art carrying firmly in the ground, and thou shalt see a fountain of water rise suddenly from the earth, with which thou mayest be amply refreshed and escape the danger of dying by thirst to which thou art exposed.” And when he had fixed the staff in the earth, it took root there and was turned into a most beautiful tree and brought forth branches and fruit, and from its root an unfailing fountain began to well forth, and Cerialtanus, refreshed by drinking (therefrom), carried the head to Rivoldus. Who, receiving it with great joy, said to him, “Arise and go up to the top of the mountain,‡ and all the neighbouring lands which thou canst see from it I will gladly give thee to possess.” So he ascended the mountain, and just as he thought to look round him, he lost both his eyes, and overtaken by sudden death perished, and “his flesh melted like wax at the presence

most Blessed Melorus had escaped from Cornubia to Domnonia with his nurse. Hearing which, Rivoldus was greatly cast down, always fearing what might happen. Again he sent for Cerialtanus and repeated his promises, and bade him kill Blessed Melorus, saying “Arise and quickly pursue after thy ward, and haste thee to slay him, and I will give thee forthwith what I promised thee.” Bidding farewell therefore to Rivoldus and setting out in haste with Justanus his son, he came into Domnonia, and found Blessed Melorus with his nurse staying at the aforesaid castle. And when Blessed Melorus saw his guardian, he embraced him as if he were his father, and rejoiced greatly, and trusting them entirely he wished to sleep in the same bed with them. But his nurse, who suspected their malice and foresaw what would happen, forbade him to do so, and renewed her prohibition next day. But the third night the pious and simple-minded boy earnestly asked leave (to give this proof of his confidence) and his nurse affectionately kissing him said ‘Go, I commend thee to the power of the holy and undivided Trinity, and may Almighty God do whatever is pleasing to Him concerning thee.’ When night was come, the pious and innocent boy lay down to rest between them. But they, when all men slept, turned upon him in the silence of the night and slew him like an unresisting lamb, and cut off his head and departed.” (*ib.*)

† “When he had come to the place which is called “The Monks’ Court” (Curia Monialium, i.e., Lannéanou, see p. 43), fainting through bodily weakness, and the pangs of conscience, and almost dead with extreme thirst.” (*ib.*)

‡ “Mt. Coci.” (*ib.*)

of the fire.”* The holy body (of S. Melor) however† was buried in the place of his martyrdom, but next day it was found on the surface of the earth. And when, after the body had been buried in three different places, the same thing happened, they (presumably the neighbours) take council and place the holy body upon a cart to which two untamed bulls had been attached, and let it go without a driver whithersoever the power of God might will to direct it. And behold ! the bulls, suddenly become gentle, carried the body

* A quotation from Psalm 68 (67) v. 2, Vulg. “The third day the same thing happened to Rivoldus himself.” (*ib.*)

† “Meanwhile the noble Count Commorus and his wife heard what cruelty had been wrought upon S. Melorus. And they were greatly grieved, and came to bury him....And it seemed good to them to bury him in the house where he had been martyred.....the third time they bore him to the place which is called Vicus Majoci (Gui-maëc) and buried him there. But, as on the two previous occasions, so the third time also his body was found outside the tomb.” (*ib.*)

‡ “Here the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the sick are restored to their former health. The fame of the miracles which God wrought for His martyr was spread abroad throughout Armorica, through Domnonia and Cornubia and Bro-Weroch (in patria Gueroci, *i.e.*, the region of Vannes) so that the faithful in those parts said, as was meet, ‘Marvellous is God, Who works through this saint signs and wonders, for his sake who was slain in our land by the hands of wicked men in Castle Beuzit, (in castro Boccido.)’ The wicked men (who had slain Melor) having been put to death as they deserved and sent to the punishment in hell which they had merited, the head of the glorious martyr was for a long time in Cornouaille (Cornubia), and, while it was there, many dissensions, hatreds and disputes arose between the men of the two consulates (*i.e.*, Cornubia and Domnonia). At last the religious pontiffs of the two provinces (*i.e.*, presumably the bishops of Cornouaille, Léon and Treguier) and the nobles of the country made a solemn agreement by oath, that the men of Cornubia and Domnonia together, after fasting for three days, should, barefooted, carry the sacred head of the martyr and his glorious body to the Mount Aray, (the Monts d’Arrée) which is on the borders of the two consulates, and should place them at some distance from each other, and that both peoples should pray to the Lord in common that if the martyr should choose Domnonia rather than Cornubia, his head might miraculously join his body, or

to a certain place and stood still. And when the crowd, who did not wish it to rest there, set their hands, arms and shoulders to the wheels, they found the waggon had become by God’s will so fixed and immoveable that by no power of man could it be moved. And when they had repeatedly attempted to do so and failed, giving thanks to God they buried the holy body with honour in that same place ; where, with faith imploring his help, they used to find with gladness the remedy they desired.‡ The head of the martyr was

if he loved Cornubia rather than Domnonia, his body might, without anyone carrying it, come to the head of its own accord. And so the two peoples did, as they had sworn. When therefore they had all knelt and together prayed to the Lord, and poured forth to God supplications, with the Lord’s Prayer, that He would show them His will, in the sight of all men the holy head arose from the place in which it had been laid, without anyone touching it, but by divine power, and sought its body, and remained there with it, as it had pleased God and the saint. The Domnonians therefore, unable to contain themselves for joy, rendered many thanks and triumphal praises to God and the holy martyr, and with hymns and praises carried back to the place where the bulls had first borne it, as was fitting, the so glorious treasure, now complete, and buried it honourably. The men of Cornubia returned in sorrow to their own land. Afterwards however many from both consulates came together to the Mt. Aray and constructed an oratory in honour of Blessed Melorus where this wonderful miracle had occurred. And each year many men of both peoples, seeking the mercy of God and the help of the Blessed martyr, used to come thither and offer many prayers and oblations to God and to the Holy martyr. And this good custom long continued in that country, until the heirs of the land (on which the chapel stood) overcome by cupidity, forcibly seized the oblations which were being offered and disturbed the assembly which each year had come together there, nor could the custom be afterwards revived. And as the oratory, now deserted, became ruinous and disappeared, the men who had seen the aforesaid miracle fixed two stakes in the earth, one in the place where the head, and one in the place where the body had been laid, that all men in ages to come might know how far apart they had been when the head sought its body, and how great a miracle had taken place. And the stakes which were fixed in that place are called to this day “The stakes of S. Melorus.” On account of the aforesaid miracle a feast is held on May 14th in the churches where S. Melorus is commemorated.” (This is the end of the Vita published by Dom Plaine.)

brought into the presence of Riuoldus, and the tyrant touched the sacred head, and three days later died a miserable death. The head was therefore buried with the sacred body by bishops and clerks.

After many years had elapsed, preachers of foreign extraction, carrying the shrine with the relics of Saint Melorus about with them, after travelling through many regions fulfilling their ministry, came at last to Ambrisburia, and put the holy relics upon the altar. When they had discharged their duty of preaching, they tried to take the relics away with them, but in no way was it possible to remove them from the altar, to which they adhered like adamant. Deeply grieved, they (the preachers) accepted much money from the abbess and departed. Certain sons of iniquity, entering the church of Ambrisbury (*sic*) by night, carry off the shrine of Saint Melorus with them, and stripping off the plates of gold and silver (with which it was encased) they throw away the chest with the relics in a certain cave. A certain priest however, rising at dawn, saw a radiant column of light descending from heaven upon the cave, and going to the place he found the shrine and took it back to the church.

Saint Melorus appeared to the sacristan one night, saying, "Godric, get up quickly, behold! the roof of the church is full of gaping cracks, it is shaking, and menaces instant ruin." After repeating the same warning the next night, on the third night he appeared and said, "Godric, rise at once, take the images and ornaments of the altar with thee and get out of the church as quickly as thou mayest; for danger of death is without doubt at thy doors." And when he had gone out (of the church) the whole roof fell behind him, covering the whole space around with ruins.

Leaving the earth however, he (Melor) entered heaven with the crown of martyrdom on the Kalends of October. (1st Oct.)

**Antiphon.*

Let the whole choir of the Church rejoice and exult, as the holy day of victory comes round once more, on which Melor the martyr and athlete of Christ overcame the world and the tyrant by his innocent blood.

**Antiphona.*

Iocundetur et exultet omnis chorus ecclesie,
Recurrente et instante die festo victorie,
Quo Melorus Christi martir et athleta certamine
Mundum vicit et tyrannum innocentia sanguine.

Ÿ Pray for us, S. Melorus.

Rz That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, Who didst bestow on Blessed Melor such a gift of glory that he carried with him the dignity of kingly birth to the brightness of heaven by the passion of martyrdom; make us through his prayers so to please Thee here, that we may rejoice with him in heaven. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, etc.

Such is the Amesbury version of the Legend of S. Melor. Let us next see what was the Cornish tradition about S. Melor in the Middle Ages, before the Reformation had destroyed the local traditions about our Cornish saints.

Mediæval Cornwall was part of the diocese of Exeter. The greatest of the ancient bishops of Exeter, Bishop Grandisson, who was bishop 1327-1369, compiled a *Legenda Sanctorum* for his cathedral, which contains the following version of the Legend of S. Melor. No doubt it was the version used in the churches of Mylor and Linkinhorne.

LEGENDA SANCTORUM.

Saint Melorus, son of Melianus King of Cornwall, when he was seven years old lost his father. His mother (who came) from the Region of Devon, named Haurilla, was of the family of Count Rivoldus, who had formerly come from the parts beyond the seas. (This) most wicked usurper of the kingdom and most abominable fratricide Rivoldus took this *Melorus* and led him before the Peers (Primates) to the council of Cornwall to be condemned. Now there were in their assembly several bishops, and innumerable clerks and

Ÿ Ora pro nobis, beate Melore,

Rz Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

Oremus.

Deus qui beato Meloro tale munus contulisti glorie ut regalis prosapie dignitatem ad celi transferret claritatem per martyrii passionem, fac nos sic ejus precibus hic tibi placere, ut cum ipso in celis mereamur gaudere. Per Dominum N.J.C., etc.

troops of monks (ephabatorium). When therefore Rivoldus sought to destroy his nephew Melorus, the Rulers of the land (Proceres terre) refused their consent. But they could not convert him (Rivold) to the ways of kindness.

Then alas! Saint Melor's right hand is cut off, and his left foot is struck off by his uncle himself; and a silver hand and brazen foot are fastened on to S. Melorus, instead of his fleshly hand and foot. Oh, how strange and altogether hurtful is such an exchange!—instead of a hand and foot of flesh, to give him limbs even of silver! But all men wonder at the miraculous gift (we are now about to relate)—a (gift) given to no other Saint, which we know (to have been given to Melor) by the evidence of most learned men. S. Melorus' silver hand and brazen foot grew, just as the natural members of other boys grow! He was brought up in the monastery (cenobium) of S. Corentin,* till he was fully grown, and, possessed of good accomplishments, did wonders, and became known throughout other provinces.

And when so holy a report about Melorus began to spread through every province, and came (at last) to the ears of the wicked Rivold his uncle, (the latter) began to envy his nephew and to plot his death. And, while he was continually revolving in his mind how he might commit this crime, at the suggestion of the devil he invited the guardian (nutritor) of the most Blessed Melorus to dine with him, and the latter accepted the invitation. While they were dining, he began to talk about Saint Melorus, saying "If thou kill thy pupil Melorus, I will make thee most rich in gold and silver." This he said because if he had willed to slay him openly, he feared lest his own soldiers might attack him, and so he wished him to be

slain in secret. The wife of (Melor's) guardian heard of this plot, and sent the boy secretly to his father's sister. Hearing this, his guardian sets out to seek him, and as if wishing merely to pay his pupil a visit, lodges in the same house with him. They both slept therefore in one bed. But when the boy had fallen asleep, the guardian arose and cut off his head."

It will be observed that Bishop Grandisson gives a somewhat different version of the story, and imagines that Domnonia and Cornubia meant our own Devon and Cornwall. He did not copy the MS. used at Amesbury, but he made considerable use of a very short 13th cent. Life De Sancto Meloro contained in MS. Reg. 8. c. vii. f. 162 (Horstman's edition of Capgrave, I. p. xxv), several sentences of which he reproduces verbatim. He very slightly alters the story however in one or two points. (The short Life just referred to ends with the same collect as on p. 11. The Exeter martyrology mentions that "his relics are venerated in the monastery of Amesbury in the Diocese of Salisbury.")



* "He was honourably received by religious men (monks) in the monastery of Saint Corentin in the country of Cornubia." (St. Malo Breviary of 1537). "The chief minister of Blessed Corentin (Beati Corentini summus minister, i.e., the Bishop of Cornouaille, now called Bishop of Quimper, the see of S. Corentin) took him to a monastery (cenobium) in the borders of his district." Vita cited in Dom Morice, Preuves I. 224). After seven years the abbot who governed this monastery as the Bishop's delegate (procurator pontificis) handed over the young prince to a lay governor (nutritius).

Let us now glance at the Legend of S. Melar as it is found to-day in Brittany. We shall meet with the story, highly elaborated and turned into a regular romance, in the picturesque pages of Albert Le Grand.

Le Grand was a Dominican of Morlaix, who compiled a monumental work on the Saints of Brittany, the first edition of which was published in 1636. He was the first to take an interest in the subject, and he may be regarded as the father of Breton Hagiography. His work suffers from the limitations one expects in a historical work of the early part of the 17th century, before the science of History was understood, but the writer's enthusiasm, his delightful naiveté, and charming style, atone for his multitudes of anachronisms, and all the mistakes into which faulty methods led him. Here is his

LIFE OF S. MELAIRE OR MELAR.

Prince of Brittany, Patron of the Town of Land-Meur, the 3 October.

The histories of Brittany teach us that after the death of Alan II., surnamed The Long, 11th King of Armorican Brittany, which took place in the year 670, Daniel, surnamed Drem-Rutz, son of John, Count of Cornwall, came to the throne, and was the father of two children, the princes Budic, and Maxence, by the daughter of the Emperor Leonce, or Leo II. Budic shared the kingdom with Macliau Count of Vennes, and took for himself the kingdom of Domnonia, or Lower Brittany, and his wife bore him three sons, Theodoric, Meliau and Rivode. On Budic's death, Maxence his brother seized the kingdom and drove out his nephews, but Theodoric, when he had come of age to bear arms, made war against his uncle Maxence and compelled him to give the kingdom up to himself, and, fearing lest S. Guigner, son of Clito King of Ireland (who had come to Brittany with 300 companions) might come to the aid of Maxence, he put them all to death, and, as a punishment for this massacre, he lost his kingdom, for he had only one son, named Inocus, who became a priest; and so, after his death, the kingdom fell to his second brother Meliau, father of our Saint Melaire, who, having reigned seven years in great prosperity, was treacherously killed by his brother Rivodius. His body was interred in the cathedral church of Coz-gueaudet, where God worked

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Panneau in the chapel of St. Melar at St. Jean-du-doigt.

great miracles by his intercession. He is devoutly invoked in the parish church of *Plou-miliau*, Diocese of Treguer, and *Guic-miliau*, Diocese of Léon.

II. The tyrant Rivode was not content with having committed so abominable a fratricide, and deprived Brittany of a Prince who was the most virtuous and accomplished of his age ; but proceeded to seize on the government of the kingdom, and gave a small pension to Queen Haurille, widow of the dead King, without other dowry. This tiger was not content even with these excesses, but considered it necessary, in order to strengthen himself in the position he had usurped, to kill Saint Melaire, only son of the dead king, for fear one day he might do to him as his elder brother Theodoric had done to his father Maxence. He had continually in view this recent example (of usurpation being punished) which incited his natural cruelty to anticipate the danger he feared by bringing about the death of the young prince ; but, not daring to do so openly, for fear of the Barons, who resented the death of the late king, he assembled the States in the town of Occismor (that is, Saint Paul de Léon) and used every effort to obtain the guardianship of the young Prince ; but Queen Haurille opposed it, and was supported by the Council of Regency of Prince Melaire, her son. This design of the tyrant's being foiled, he corrupted the said Prince's governors and promised them "mountains and marvels" if they would kill him ; and in order to do so more secretly, he gave them poison, which they mixed in his drink and seasoned his meals with more than once, but the saint, making the sign of the cross over them, caused the poison to appear in the sight of all present, which covered the conspirators with confusion. Acknowledging their fault they asked pardon, and promised fidelity in the future ; the saint raised them up and pardoned them with all his heart.

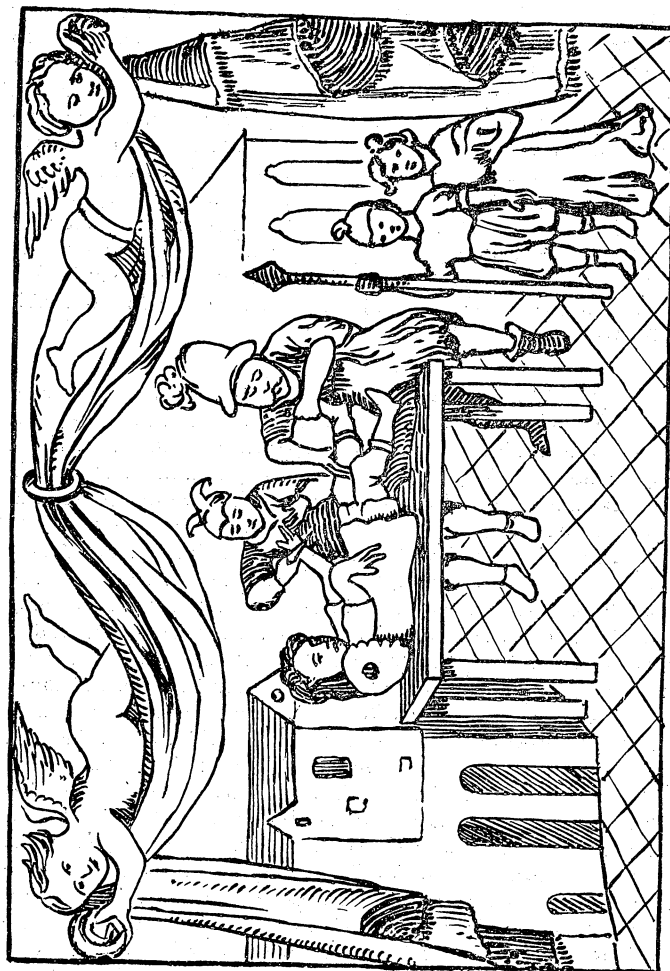
III. The tyrant Rivode, having heard that the poison had produced no effect upon his nephew, and that the murderers he had set on this task had recognized their error and were converted, raised the mask altogether and resolved to have his life at whatever cost ; he armed a party of determined men whom he kept with him, and ordered them to attack the castle where ordinarily the young prince Melaire and his mother resided, and told them that they were without fail to bring his head. The soldiers went, knocked at the

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castle gate and asked to speak to the prince, but as soon as the gate was opened they seized the porter and the keys, and went up to the Prince's chamber, bidding him prepare for death. The holy young Prince replied courageously "that he had long expected to experience his uncle's cruelty, for seeing he had slain his own brother, he was not likely to spare his nephew. His own life had long been threatened by frequent attempts to poison him, and he expected that finally he would be openly attacked ; as for the kingdom, which was the principal motive which induced his uncle to kill him, God had so completely removed from him all affection for the things of this life, that he sought no other kingdom but that of heaven, which he hoped to inherit through the mercy of God." Having said this, he asked them to allow him to make his confession to his chaplain, with whom he entered the chapel, the door of which was guarded by a band of satellites.

IV. While he was making his confession, his mother, Queen Haurille, threw herself at the feet of the captain of this company, and opened her cabinet, beseeching him to take as many of her rings, jewels and money as he pleased, provided only that he saved the life of this poor, innocent Prince. These tigers were softened at the tears of the weeping mother, and, having taken counsel together their captain said to them. "Companions, the intention of Prince Rivode, our master, in ordering this barbarous execution, is to assure for himself the government of the kingdom by the death of this young prince, who alone can contest his claim to it : let us then, instead of killing him, make it impossible for him to put his hand to a sword, or to mount on horseback, or take any part in warfare, and so we shall assure the kingdom for our master, and we shall not make ourselves guilty of such a detestable assassination." This counsel was approved by all, and it was decided to cut off his right hand and left foot. When the prince had finished his confession, and said his prayers, he left the chapel and entered the hall, and having kissed his mother and said farewell to his servants, he stripped off his garments and said to the soldiers "My children, execute the commission your master has given you ; I pardon him freely, and you too." Saying this, he kneeled down, thinking he was to be stabbed, or beheaded ; but the soldiers seized him, tied him to a bench, and cut off his right hand and left foot, without his saying a

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(Mural Painting at Locmity).

MARTYRDOM OF ST. MELOR.

word, during this cruel torment, except the sweet Name of Jesus. After this barbarous deed the tyrant's satellites returned to their master and handed him the members they had cut off, whereupon he showed great displeasure because they had not killed him outright.

V. When this act was known, the people of the whole country were greatly scandalized, they detested the tyrant's barbarity and were disposed to attack him ; so, to avoid a general revolt of the entire nation, he call together the States at the town of *Karhaix*, where before them all he disavowed what had been done to his nephew, and consented that those who had committed the crime should receive exemplary punishment ; but as his nephew was now incapable of reigning, having been thus mutilated, he suggested that he himself should be accepted as king in his stead, being the only remaining descendant of the blood of Daniel *Drem-Rutz* ; he also asked that he should be given the custody of his nephew, promising to produce him at every meeting of the States, whenever he should be summoned to do so. But in vain did he dissemble his guilt and endeavour to excuse himself, the whole assembly was aware of his malice, and refused to commit to him the charge of his nephew Prince Melaire, but gave the latter the Bishop of Cornouaille as tutor, together with Count Kyoltanus, who took charge of him and made themselves responsible for his safe keeping. When the tyrant heard the decision of the States with regard to the custody of his nephew, he was highly displeased, and resolved to carry him off by force, but precautions had already been taken, and the prince was sent to Kemper-Corentin and handed over to the Bishop of Cornouaille.

VI. When his wounds were healed, a brazen foot and a silver hand were made for him, which he used as easily as if they were his natural members, handling arms with his silver hand as skilfully as if it had been one of flesh and blood, and what was still more wonderful, both the hand and foot grew in proportion as the other members of his body grew.

While S. Melaire was in the house of the Bishop of Cornouaille he gave himself up to the study of Holy Scripture, and to Prayer and Contemplation of heavenly things, without mixing with the world at all. Count Rivode, his uncle, who could not forget the refusal of the States to recognize himself as king, and had heard

that his nephew, whom he thought hopelessly mutilated, was using his borrowed limbs quite well, saw the affection which the people had for him, and how they wished for no other king but him, and reflecting that he would soon be of age, he feared lest he would be crowned and himself lose the government; and to avert this he resolved once more to have him put to death, by means of Count Kyoltanus his tutor. He sent for the count one day, and having entertained him to dinner, he led him aside into his closet, and disclosed his designs, and offered him a large sum of money if he would kill the Prince his charge, and promised him, as a reward for this service, to make him the chief person in his court, and to give him all the lands he could see from the top of the neighbouring mountain. The miserable wretch, blinded by covetousness, was pleased with Rivode's offer, and undertook to remove this thorn from his side and to dispatch the Prince.

VII. Having returned home, he took his wife, named Rarisia, apart, and told her all Prince Rivode had said to him, and the offers he had made him, if he would kill S. Melaire. This woman, who was as ambitious as she was avaricious, when she heard of the honours and riches the tyrant offered them, advised her husband to accept these offers and to boldly fulfil what he had promised, saying that it was a sure means to place them for ever in a position of wealth and of favour with Prince Rivode, who would be under an obligation to them all his life. His wife's counsel confirmed Kyoltanus in his designs, but to make assurance doubly sure, he went to consult the president or sovereign judge of the Country, who connived at Prince Rivode's passions, and instead of dissuading him (Kyoltanus) from so barbarous a resolve, and showing him the wickedness of his action, counselled him to execute it as soon as possible, seeing that on this man's death depended the peace of the country, and his own advancement and that of his house. Kyoltanus returned home, fully resolved upon the enterprise, and to prevent the holy young man's suspecting his design, he showed him every attention and overwhelmed him with presents. But God, Who numbers every hair of the head of His elect, so that not one of them falls on the ground without His permission, delivered him this time out of the hands of Kyoltanus: for the latter having gone to the court of Rivode to discuss with him the means of committing the intended

crime, God touched the heart of Rarisia, who, reflecting on the unhappy counsel she had given to her husband, began to detest the avarice and ambition which had been the motives of that counsel, and having first asked pardon of S. Melaire, revealed to him the treachery which was brewing, and besought him, for the love of God, to escape to the house of one of his friends before her husband's return.

VIII. S. Melaire was very surprised at this news, and thanked God for having preserved him from the snares of his enemies, and having thanked Rarisia for her counsel, he followed her advice and took refuge with Count Budicius or Budich, who resided in a castle which belonged to him in (the Bishopric of) Treguer, near the town of Kerfeunteun (at present called Land-meur) where he was welcomed; and Budich, having heard of the treachery of Count Kyoltan and Rivode's conspiracy, asked him to reside in his castle, offering to keep him safe from the snares of his enemies. S. Melaire thanked Budich for this offer, and accepted his invitation to live with him. He had a little pavilion built, near the castle chapel, where he lived in retirement, more like a Hermit or solitary Monk, than a Prince of this world.

Kyoltan meanwhile returned home, and was very surprised not to find S. Melaire. He informed Rivode, who was furious; and the latter, having heard that Melaire had taken refuge with Count Budich, told Kyoltan, who renewed his perfidious designs against the young Prince's life. He pretended to be deeply penitent, and came to the Saint's Hermitage, accompanied by his son Justin and two other ruffians, and began by throwing himself at his feet, shedding feigned tears, confessing his baseness in having consented to such a detestable action, and protesting that he repented of it all with all his heart, and that he would rather endure a thousand deaths than execute so cruel a purpose. In short, he acted his part so well that the Saint lifted him from the ground and pardoned his crime, but refused to return with him, saying that he would do no more than accompany him on his return journey as far as the town of Kerfeunteun.

IX. The traitor Kyoltanus, judging that, if his prey escaped him this time, he might never have another chance, resolved to strike at once; and when they reached the town of Kerfeunteun, he

asked the Saint to dine at his Hostelry, since he refused to return home with him ; S. Melaire agreed, and dined with them ; then as he was on the point of taking his leave preparatory to going back to the castle, the assassins got him to withdraw into a room with them, as if to tell him something privately, and while Kyoltanus was speaking to him he made a sign to his son Justin, who, drawing his sword, struck the Saint a fearful blow on his head from behind, which stretched him on the ground. (Melaire) lifting up his eyes to Heaven, commended his soul to God, and prayed for his murderers, who, having dispatched him, cut off his head and put it into a leathern bag, escaping by a window fled from the town, and never ceased galloping till they reached Rivode, to whom Kyoltanus presented the head of Saint Melaire all bloodstained, calling upon him to fulfil his promise. Meanwhile Saint Melaire's attendants, observing that he still delayed coming down stairs, went up and knocked at the door, thinking that he must be engaged in conversation ; but as there was no answer they burst in the door, and found the headless body of their master all dabbled in his blood, and in the court was found Justin one of his assassins, who, while jumping out of a window to escape with the others, had broken his neck, and lay with his sword all stained with blood in his hand.

X. Count Budich was informed of this terrible event, and came to Kerfeunteun, took up the holy Body and had it embalmed and carried into the chapel of his castle, till preparations could be made for the funeral. All the Barons and Prelates betook themselves to Kerfeunteun to transfer the Body to the Cathedral Church of Lexobie, where it was to be buried, near his ancestors ; but God disposed otherwise : for the body having been placed on a chariot, covered with black velvet, drawn by six white horses, instead of following the road to Coz-Gueaudet, the horses drew it into the town of Kerfeunteun and stopped in the middle of the great square, where the chariot broke in pieces and the body sank to the ground, from which it was impossible to move it. By this miracle all men were convinced that it was God's will that he should be buried in that place, which was accordingly blessed by the Archbishop of Dol, and the Holy Body was placed in a raised tomb : and since then there has been built over it a beautiful Church dedicated to God under the name and invocation of S. Melaire, by whose merits God

has worked a great number of miracles. His head was recovered by the Bishop of Cornouaille, who placed it in the "treasure" of his Cathedral, where it is reverently kept as a precious relic, and his body, having been raised from the earth, was placed in a coffin of granite which is to be seen above the high altar in the Decanal and Parochial Church of *Land-meur*, Diocese of Dol, in the enclaves of Treguer.

XI. This murder did not remain long unpunished, for Kyoltanus, having presented the head of S. Melaire to the tyrant Rivode, climbed the neighbouring hill to contemplate the lands which had been promised him ; but no sooner had he looked round to behold them than his eyes fell out of his head, and soon after he died miserably ; as for Rivode, he went raving mad and died on the third day of his attack, without having enjoyed the States he had so greatly desired.

This life has been collected by us from the ancient Histories of Brittany, both Printed and manuscript ; from the ancient manuscript Legendaries of Leon and Cornouaille and of the Decanal Church of S. Melar of Land-meur, where the Noble and Discreet Mre Yves Arrel, sieur de Coatmen, grand-vicaire of Dol, in the enclaves of the three bishoprics of Lower Brittany, Dean of Land-meur and Prior of Kernitroun, found the materials for his Life of S. Melar which he made into a book, Printed at Morlaix by George Allienne, in the year 1627 : and from the MSS. memoirs of the Sieur de l'Auberdrière Bridon ; the ancient Breviaries of Leon and Cornouaille have the History thereof in 9 Lessons.

II.

The reader will have noticed two things about the Latin Life of S. Melor printed by Capgrave. First, the obvious gaps in the narrative, indicated by abrupt transitions ; and secondly, the almost complete absence of place-names. Instead we have "a certain monastery," "a certain place," etc. The reason in each case is that the MS. before us is an abridgement of a longer Life, which has fortunately been preserved to us in a French MS. published in 1886 by Dom Plaine. On comparing the two, I find that a great number of phrases and whole sentences are word for word the same. The

original Life has been treated as John of Tynemouth treated the *Vita Petroci*,—it has been ruthlessly abridged, and the scribe has in particular omitted all local Breton matter, as of no interest to his English readers (or hearers,—as I think that this Life was probably read aloud in Amesbury Church before the Reformation.) I have inserted the most important passages he omitted, in the form of notes at the bottom of the page. He must have been an Englishman, an inhabitant of Amesbury—the relics of S. Melor are brought there, he tells us, by “preachers of foreign extraction,” and the stories with which the Life ends are Amesbury traditions.

This brings us to the question of the connection between Brittany and Amesbury. The abbey Church of Amesbury is dedicated to God in honour of SS. Mary and Melorus. How did the cult of the Breton martyr-prince find its way to Amesbury?

William of Malmesbury tells us in his *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*,* written in 1120, that Queen Elfritha founded the abbey of Amesbury to atone for the murder of her stepson. Miss Arnold Foster suggests that she chose the name of S. Melor for her foundation because his fate so closely resembled that of S. Edward the martyr, whom she had had stabbed at Corfe castle. It is more probable, however, that Amesbury owed its dedication to S. Melor to the fact that some time in the 10th century, relics of S. Melor were brought there. There is nothing in itself improbable in the story of the “preachers of foreign extraction” coming there with relics—we have an exact parallel in the visit of canons of Laon to Bodmin with relics on a begging tour in 1110 (see *Cornish Church Guide*, p. 60.) But whether this be so or not, it is certain that the 10th cent. saw a great influx of relics of Breton saints into England, due to the influence of King Athelstan. Athelstan, the grandson of Alfred, was a great friend of the continental Bretons, while being at the same time a great enemy of the Britons of Devon and Cornwall (it was he who definitely conquered Cornwall, and drove the Britons out of Exeter.) It was by his aid that Alain Barbetorte, a Breton

refugee in England, was able in 938 to land in Brittany, which since 919 had been occupied by the Northmen, and expel the invaders. In return he (Athelstan) obtained a large number of relics of Breton saints. “This king was a great collector and a generous giver of relics.” (Dom Gougaud, “Notes sur le culte des Saints Bretons en Angleterre,” from which the following facts are taken.) Thus we find that he gave to the monastery of SS. Mary and Peter at Exeter relics of S. Gudual, S. Winwaloe, S. Guenaël, S. Conogan, S. Melaine, S. Machutus, and S. Tudual. He gave to the abbey of Middleton (Milton Abbas in Dorset) relics of S. Brenwalatr and S. Samson. Through his influence Winchester acquired relics of SS. Machutus and Judoc and a tooth of S. Winwaloe. Later we find at the abbey of Abingdon part of the hand of S. Winwaloe, a rib and a finger of S. Malo, and relics of SS. Samson, Caurentin and Judoc. In the same way Canterbury Cathedral had a bone and tooth of S. Samson, and Salisbury Cathedral relics of SS. Samson, Patern, Petroc, Judoc and Macutus. It was in the time of Athelstan, no doubt, that relics of S. Melor came to Amesbury, where a magnificent and costly shrine was erected to receive them.*

The three Cornish dedications to S. Melor (see below) are probably much older, and go back to a period before the custom of dispersing the bones of saints became general (the practice was unknown in Brittany during the earliest period). Linkinhorn and Mylor claimed no relics. The truth is that the Melor honoured at Mylor, Linkinhorn, and Merther Mylor was, originally, not the martyr-prince whose legend we have been studying, but an earlier saint,—a Pan-Celtic Abbot-Bishop, the same saint as the S. Melor, Bishop, who is still honoured at Tremeloir in Brittany, and was honoured in many other places in that country until he was displaced by the popularity of the Legend of the little prince. It is to be noted that the three places in Cornwall where S. Melor is patron are all on rivers, which were the great means of communication in early

* c. 87 “The monastery of Ambresbury was founded by Elfritha, the murderess of S. Edward...as an act of penitence. S. Melorus lies there, of whose holy life I know nothing.” He can hardly have visited Amesbury, as the *Vita Melori* must have been known there in his time.

* In the parish of Thorncombe, Dorset, which till 70 or 80 years ago was in the diocese of Exeter, is a hamlet called Holditch, the seat of a manor, where is an ancient chapel (now a barn) dedicated to S. Melor. At the beginning of the 13th century Robert Fleming lord of the manor of Holditch, had a quarrel with the Abbot of Ford as to the patronage of this chapel.

times. Mylor is on the shore of Falmouth harbour, Merther Mylor near the Helford River. Linkinhorne is indeed an inland place, but it is close to the river Lynher, up which communication would be possible from S. Germans, which must then have been an important centre.* It is very significant that Merther Mylor is in the Meneage district, which means The Monks' Land, and which stretched on both sides of the Helford River. No doubt Melor the Abbot-Bishop constantly passed backwards and forwards by water between the Helford River, the Fal, the Bay of S. Brieuc and the Bay of Douarnenez. I cannot help feeling that it is remarkable that immediately opposite the Fal we have, on the North coast of Brittany, Land-meur-Melor and Guimaëc (*i.e.* the Village of Mayeuc) side by side, while on the Fal we have side by side the parishes of Mylor and Feock (=Mayeuc), though as M. Largillière shows, we cannot *prove* that there was a Melor honoured at Lan-meur before the time of S. Melor the martyr. In any case, the fact that at Mylor the Feast used to be on the 21st of August (Baring Gould says the 28th) while at Tréméloir the Pardon is still on the last Sunday of August is absolutely decisive as regards the patron of Mylor. The saint honoured at Mylor was originally the Abbot-Bishop, who afterwards, as in so many places in Brittany, was forgotten in favour of the prince-martyr. If the Feast is kept at Mylor in August, the service should be for a Bishop and Confessor.

In Brittany the centre of the cult of S. Melor, Martyr, is Lan-meur. I shall say little about the cult of S. Melor in Brittany, as the subject is dealt with exhaustively in the essay by M. Largillière, which I have been so fortunate as to be able to include in my book. I visited the village of Lan-meur in 1927 and saw the famous crypt underneath the parish Church (which has been rebuilt.) This crypt, with its pillars and capitals covered with archaic carving, is dated by M. Waquet, the archivist of Finistère, as about the 11th century. It contains a small holy well. About the same time I visited Loc-Mélar near Sizun. The very beautiful and interesting Church there has a magnificent east end, with a reredos carved in oak, richly

* It is to be noted that the church of Linkinhorne is only a very short distance from that of Southill, where the patron is S. Samson. Now the S. Melor, Abbot, was "consobrinus Sancti Samsonis." (See p. 50).

painted and gilt, representing five scenes from the Life of S. Melor. In the first Rivode offers a purse of gold to two servants to poison Melor; in the next the poisoned cup is offered to the saint, one of the servants kneels to ask pardon; in the third two assassins cut off his hand and foot; on the gospel side the saint kneels in prayer before a crucifix, while an angel brings him a silver hand and brass foot from heaven; while on the panel behind the altar the prince is murdered, and his murderers are punished—Keraltan's eyes drop from his head, Justan breaks his neck. The parish contains a field,



The Crypt at Lanmeur.

wood and meadow called respectively Parc,* Coat, and Prat Sant Melar, there is also a place called Rochvelar, and a house with the inscription "Maison de Saint Melard, 1637." There is a tradition (also found at Meilars) that it was originally intended to build the Church on a different site, but that the materials were mysteriously transported to where the Church now stands. 10 kil. S. of Loc-melar is a cross called Croas-Melar, near the ruined chapel of

* Parc Sant Melar used to belong to the "fabrique" of the Church.

Lestrémélar. Loc-Melar possesses a relic of S. Melar, which is kept in a reliquary of silver and black wood, surmounted by a little silver statue of the saint. (See Bull. d' Hist. et d'Arch. du Dioc. de Quimper, Mars et Juin 1924.) There is a Fountain of S. Mélar at Boscornan, 1,500 m. from the churchtown, with a statue of the saint. The principal Pardon is on Ascension Day, but another is held on the 1st Sunday in October.

In 852 Nominoë, King of Brittany, gave relics of S. Melar to S. Convoyon, who placed them in the abbeys of Redon and Lehon. When the relics of the saints were carried into France in 919 to prevent them being destroyed by the Normans, relics of S. Melor were taken to Paris, and kept at S. Jacques-du-Haut-Pas and at the Abbey of S. Magloire, from whence some passed to Orleans, and to the Abbey of N. D. de Châte at Meaux, where the Canons Regular of S. Augustine observed 2 feasts in honour of S. Melor, on 6th May and 3rd October. They had a Vita, and Proper Office of the Saint.*

We have seen how the Life written by the Amesbury scribe was abridged by him from a version corresponding to that published by Dom Plaine in 1886 from a MS. in the Abbey of N. D. de Châte, (Another version is in the National Library at Paris, MS. Lat. 13789, f. 53, and yet another has been printed by Dom Morice.) We have examined the story of S. Melor in the Exeter Legendary. Other versions were used by Albert Le Grand (see p. 23). I need not point out how his Life of S. Melor is full of false chronology and sham history, embellished after his manner with innumerable details supplied from his own vivid imagination. Albert Le Grand's book

* Deus, tuorum militum
Digne coronans meritum,
Ad Melori praeconia
Cor tange, pande labia !
.....
Childebertus, rex Francorum,
Tot auditis virtutibus,
Locum auxit marmoreum
Melori donis pluribus.

of Lives of the Breton Saints is simply a collection of delightfully written historical novels. (He drags Maxentius and the Emperor Theodosius, whom he identifies with the Cornish tyrant Tudor ! into the story of S. Melor, and he thinks that the Roman cathedral city of Lexovium, which is really Lisieux in Normandy, once stood on the Breton coast near Tréguier !)

A word must now be said about the historical value of the Legend of S. Melor the martyr-prince. The whole story looks suspiciously like a fairy-tale, and indeed it is described by the late M. l'abbé Duine as "a fable, worked up out of bits of folk-lore and Celtic pseudo-genealogies, in the taste of the hagiographical romances of the 11th and 12th centuries." Still it is just possible that the Legend may have some foundation in fact. The story of S. Melor may be a real incident in the history of Cornouaille is the 8th (?) century. The bloody deeds of an ambitious prince, such as were only too common in those ages of violence, and the sad fate of a helpless boy appealed to the imagination of the Breton people and were never forgotten.* But in any case it is certain that the story has been embroidered and adorned with details partly drawn from the imaginations of the writers of the different Lives of S. Melor, and partly from the store of Celtic folk-lore.

The complete Vita cannot be older than the 11th century, though no doubt it copies an older Life. It begins with an extraordinary blunder—the scribe actually turns the ancient city of Corseuil near Dinan into a Duke ! The genealogy of S. Melor may contain the names of some of the early Counts of Cornouaille, though it differs from that in the cartulary of Landevennec, which is itself of doubtful authenticity. It is to be noticed that it does not mention Grallon, which suggests that it is older than the Grallon legend.

* Kings and princes unjustly or cruelly slain were very often popularly canonized in the Middle Ages—we have an instance in Brittany in the case of S. Salomon, and in England in the case of Edward, King of West Saxons, whose name is still in the Prayer Book Calendar. In the same way Simon de Montfort, and even Edward II., became the objects of a cult after their deaths.

According to the S. Malo Breviary of 1537, Meliau was the son of Fortunatus, son of Daniel, son of Lex or Regula. The number of years he reigned is the mystic number seven, and the country is described as a kind of earthly Paradise during those seven years! Meliau, a prince who reigned in Pou-Alet, appears in the Life of S. Machutus by Bili (c. XXIV.) as bestowing on a hermit called Domnech (cf. S. Dominic in Cornwall) as much land as he can plough a furrow round in one day with a plough drawn by two untamed bulls. (F. Lot, *Mélanges d'Hist. de Bret.*, 123, 4.) The author of the Vita Melori published by Dom Plaine says of Meliavus that "The miracles and mighty powers which the Lord works through him show how great this man's merits are, though I have not thought fit to insert them in this present work." S. Meliau is honoured at Plou-miliau, where is a considerable number of statues of the father of Melor, and at Gui-miliau (famous for its calvary), and at Plonevez-Porzay. The true éponyme of Plou-miliau and Gui-Miliau however is probably an unknown missionary from Great Britain of the 5th century (see Largillière, *Les Saints*, 51 f. 149) who has been replaced by King Meliau owing to the popularity of the Legend of S. Melor.

It is to be noted that the correct form of the name is Meliavus *not* Melianus, which is the mistake of a scribe. The father of S. Melor has therefore no connection with Mullion, S. Mellion, or any other place in insular Cornwall, as Baring Gould suggested. He is a purely Armorican saint.

The silver hand and brazen foot of Melor are typical bits of Celtic folk-lore, and have an exact parallel in the story of the golden breast of Azenor the mother of S. Budoc. The name Ker-ialtan is clearly derived from a place-name. Commorus, who appears in a wholly favourable light in the legend of S. Melor, appears in an unfavourable light in the Life of S. Samson, and in the legend of Ste Triphine, and in fact is the Bluebeard of Breton tradition.

He also appears in the lives of SS. Gildas, Tutgual (1st and 2nd Lives), Machutus (by Bili), Hervé, and Leonorius, and in Albert Le Grand's Lives of SS. Goeznou and Hernin. In the Vita Pauli Aureliani King Marc is also called Quonomor. In this connection it is interesting to note that the inscribed stone which formerly

stood at Castle Dore between Fowey and Lantyan (the residence of Mark King of Cornwall), now at Menabilly, has now been authoritatively pronounced to bear the words, *Drustagni, son of Cunomorus.*" It was clearly a common name in the two Cornwalls. The Cunomor known to Gregory of Tours was killed in 560.

It is strange that Lan-meur is nowhere mentioned in the Vita Melori, while the legends relating to Gui-maëc, Castel Beuzit, Lanneanou, and the Stakes of S. Melor on the Monts d'Arée are recorded. The writer was probably an inhabitant of Lan-meur, and the story with which he ends indicates that in his time Lan-meur claimed to possess the entire body of the saint.

The various differences in detail in the versions of the Legend will have been remarked by the reader, and in particular the entirely different account of the circumstances of the saint's death as given by Albert Le Grand.

The late M. René Largillière, Docteur ès-lettres, Avocat au Barreau de Beauvais, Lieutenant de réserve, Decoré de la Croix de guerre, whose early death on 30th September, 1926, was deeply lamented by all students of Breton history, and whose works on the Breton saints have been eagerly welcomed in France and England as models of patient research and skilled methods of comparison and deduction, left unpublished the rough draft of an essay on S. Melar. His father, M. Henri Largillière, Avoué honoraire at Beauvais, has not only generously permitted me to make use of this essay, but actually copied the whole of it for me! My readers will be as grateful to him as I am myself, for an enormous amount of most valuable material relating to the cult of S. Melar is now printed for the first time, and at least one point of Cornish History—the dedication of Mylor church—is definitely settled by M. Largillière's researches.

SAINT MELAR,

By René Largillière.

S. Mèlar is the patron of Lanmeur. This saint, or at any rate another saint of the same name, has been venerated at Lanmeur from very early times, since an ancient charter calls this parish Lanmeur Melor.*

The tragic story of S. Melar, the unfortunate little prince who died at Lanmeur, and was regarded as a martyr, is well known.

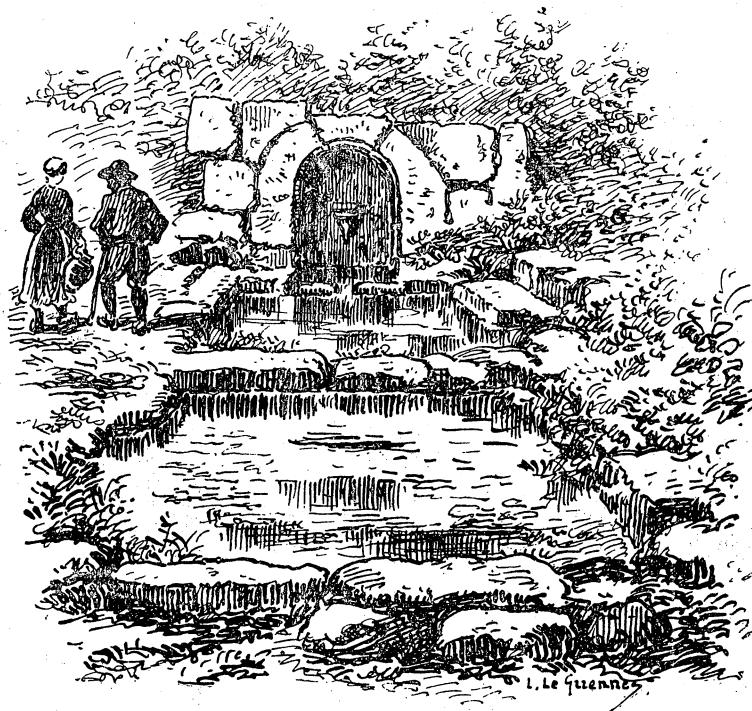
Before going further into the question of the saint of Lanmeur and its neighbourhood, it is necessary to study the name *Mèlar* or *Méloir*, which is found all over Brittany. From the point of view of philology all the different forms of this name are derived from *Maglorius* (Loth, *Noms des Saints Bretons*, pp. 86, 90, 92.) Consequently wherever you find the name Melar, the saint honoured there *may* really be S. Magloire (a Jersey saint believed to have been the predecessor of S. Budoc as Bishop of Dol) or some other saint of the same name.

In the neighbourhood of Dol we find a parish of S. Méloir between Dinan and Lamballe, and S. Meloir in Bourseuil just to the north; S. Méloir-des-bois in Québriac, north of Rennes; and a parish of S. Meloir-des-ondes between S. Malo and Cancale.

There is a parish of Tréméloir, north-west of S. Brieuc. In a charter of 1212 (*Anc. Ev. de Bret.*, III. 232) this parish is called Tref Melar, (possibly it is the same as the Tremeler mentioned in a charter of 1261 in the Cartulary of Beauport, *Rev. Celt.*, XVII. p. 72) Dom Lobineau (*Vies des Saints de Bret.*, ed. 1724, p. 61) tells us that this parish was then called Trémeler. Toward the south of the parish, in Trémuson, a farm bears the name of Malar. (E. M. map). About 15 kilometres from there, in Bringolo, is a chapel of S. Mèlar, called simply Mèlart on the map of the Etat Major. In the Repertoire of the Archives of the Côtes-du-Nord, p. 90, this saint is described as the patron of Bringolo. The S. Meloir of Tréméloir,

* (*Cart. de Redon*, ch. 305, p. 257. Lanmeur is again called Lanmeur Meler in documents of 1235—*La Borderie*, *Nouveau recueil d'actes inédits des ducs de Bretagne*, Rennes 1902, p. 34-37. Documents of 1300 and 1303 have the spelling *Lanmur*. *ib.* pp. 81, 91. The document of 1235 concerns the rights of the Chapter of Dol.)

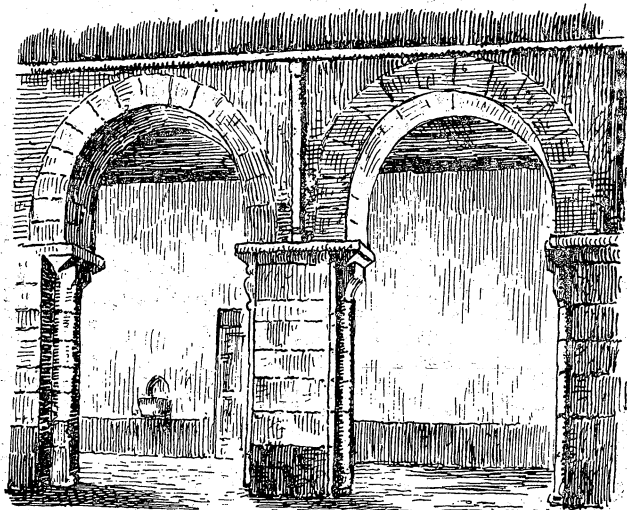
says the Departmental Geography, is a hermit of the 5th century, whose feast is held on the last Sunday in August; and Garaby (*Vies des Saints de Bret.*, p. 239) makes an important observation on this subject,—“We must not confuse S. Méloir the martyr with a holy Bishop of that name.; at Tréméloir near S. Brieuc it is a S. Méloir, Abbot, who is honoured as patron.” Whoever he may have



Holy Well at Lestrémèlar, in Sizun.

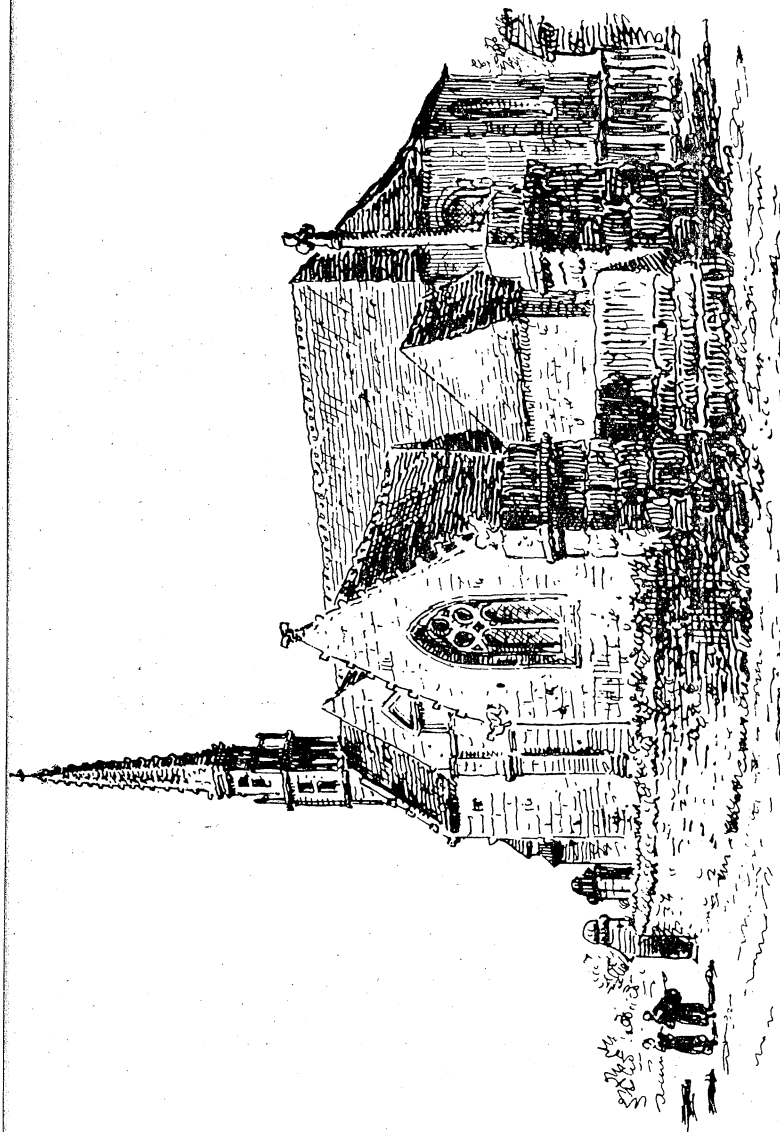
been, we note that at Tréméloir is a Méloir who has never been confused with the little martyr prince of that name. It is significant that this parish begins with a *Tre*—the éponyme of a *Tre* can have no connection with the éponyme of a *Lok*. Elsewhere one finds three

other places beginning with Tre, and followed by the name Meloir,—Lestrémelar in Sizun, in the south of the parish, Tréveller in Motreff, 5 kil. S. of Carhaix, and Tremeler in Neuillac (N. of Pontivy). We find Lan-veler in Kersaint-Plabennec (F.) The map of the E.M. marks a chapel here, and spells the name Lanvelar.



Norman pillars in Meilars Church.

The parish of Meilars, near Pont-Croix, in the Cap-Sizun district, has S. Melar for its patron saint. Not far from Meilars, in the parish of Plouhinec, is a hamlet called Meylar. The final s of Meilars is without interest, and is not ancient, but the fact that the form of the name in both these places contains an i or y is most important [cf. *Mylor* in Cornwall.] (Every ancient form of the name of Meilars contains an i—Meliar 1330, Meilar or Meylar 1368, Meillar or Meyllar 157—,—Cart. de Quimper, p. 8, Lorgnon, 34]



Chapel at Loc-Mélar in Plounevéter.

Pouillés de Tours, pp. 299, 304, 309.) These two places may be called after another Melar=Maglorius.*

I have begun by grouping together the place-names in Lan and Tre. They are older than those beginning with Lok, and as a rule the same saints are not found as éponymes of both classes—Lan-Tre and Lok. Now we shall see that there are numerous places called Lokmelar.

First comes Loc-mélar, a former trêve of Sizun, with a feunteun Saint Velar 1500 metres from the Church (Soc. Arch. Fin., 1876, p. 39). The saint is invoked to cure fever and rheumatism.

Next there is a Loc-mélar in Plounéventer (F.) (The E.M. map spells Locmélard, the Iconography notes the presence of a chapel there).

Again there is a Loc-melar in Irvillac, near Daoulas (Soc. Arch. Fin., 1904, p. 40.) There was a chapel there, mentioned in 1804, which has since disappeared.

There is a Lomener in the Ile de Groix (a charter of 1037 speaks of Ecclesia Sti Melorii, and charters of 1114 and 1131 have Lomelaer,—Cart. de Quimperlé, pp. 150 and 303.) There is also a Lomener in Pleumeur near Pontscorff (M).

There remain chapels of S. Melar and place-names like Belart. Belart is in Plonevez Porzay (F.), and so near Plomodiern. (S. Meliau, the father of Melar, is the patron of Plonevez Porzay (the cult of S. Meliau is also found at Lanviliau in Plomodiern, and at the holy well of S. Miliau in Locronan, both adjoining parishes: there is also a Lanviliau at Dirinon not far to the north—Largillière, Les Saints, p. 52, note 15). Here again we note S. Mélar and S. Magloire side by side. There was formerly a chapel of S. Melard in the hamlet of that name near Pontivy, and there is a place called S. Melor in Ploubannalec. The Iconography mentions also a chapel of the saint, now destroyed, at Mael Carhaix.

* The cult of S. Magloire reached this district. He is the patron of Mahalon in Plomodiern (Loth, Noms, 86); there was a chapel (of S. Magloire) in this parish (Soc. Arch. Fin., 1903, p. 177) but his cult may be of very late introduction. A chapel was built to S. Magloire in Langolen (F.) in 1640 (ib. p. 152.) On this cult at Langolen see Rev. des Trad. Pop., 1910 p. 348. He is also patron of Plomodiern, and of Telgruc.

All this does not throw much light on the question. It seems however that Topography does justify the legend according to which S. Melar was a son of Meliau, king of Cornouaille, and that he was protected by the Bishop of Cornouaille, since his cult is found so widely in Cornouaille—but side by side with S. Magloire.



Statue of S. Melar in the Chapel of Moustier in Lanmeur.

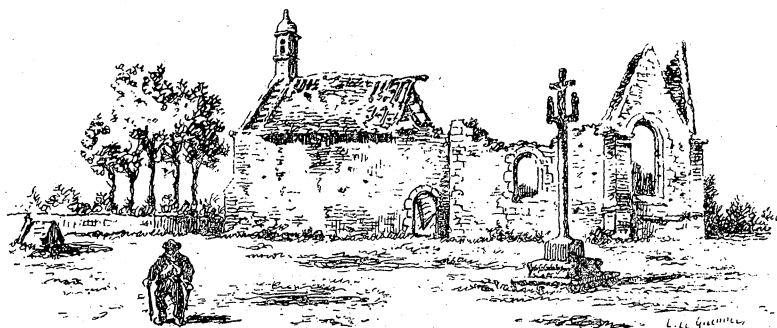
From all this we may conclude that many different personages are concealed behind all these S. Magloires, etc.—Magloire and also our S. Melar. The places beginning with Lan are ancient, and most certainly cannot have Melar (the boy-martyr) as their éponyme.

The places beginning with Lok may have him as éponyme. It seems that there must have been several personages, of whom we know nothing, on whom Legend and the hagiographers have been at work—making one into S. Magloire and another into Mèlar.

The cult of S. Mèlar is very widely spread throughout the whole region of Lanmeur. Unanimous and very ancient traditions fix at Lanmeur the site of his martyrdom. The relics of the young martyr remained at Lanmeur, where his tomb, hewn out of a block of granite in the form of a sarcophagus, was on the high altar of the parish Church down to the 18th century. In a neighbouring house the room where he was assassinated is still shown to pilgrims! In a corner of the room is his statue; some red stains on the walls are regarded as splashes of his blood, (Louis Le Guennec, "Le Prieuré de Kernitron," and Le Braz, *Les Saints Bret. d'après la Trad. Pop.*, p. 415). Some have thought that the square in Lanmeur called The Martray had something to do with the Martyr, but this is a mistake. Martray is found in many other Breton towns, and simply means the Market-place. A big farm at the western entrance to the town bears the name of Parc Mèlar. Near Lanmeur a stone is shown which bears an imprint vaguely resembling a foot mark,—it is called S. Mèlar's Footprint. This stone is in one of the moats of the castle now known as The Doufèjou, the ancient Castel Beuzit or Douvejou S. Mèlar, a triple earthwork west of the Churchtown. There was formerly a chapel of S. Mèlar in Castel Beuzit, where according to one tradition he was slain; a deed of the 16th century mentions a road leading "from Boiseon to the chapel of Monsieur S. Mèlar called La Boixière." There was another chapel of S. Mèlar 4 kilometres from Lanmeur, at the village of Kermouster; it is now in ruins, a gablestone bears the date 1598 (*Soc. Arch. Fin.*,—this Kermouster must not be confused with the Kermousters in Plouezoch and Plougasnou.)

There is a ruined chapel of S. Mèlar at Plouezoch, 5 kil. from Lanmeur, the statue of the saint has been transferred to a neighbouring farm. The pardon was on the last Sunday in September, little children were taken to it to make them walk soon and get over their teething. (Le Guennec, in *Soc. Arch. Fin.*, 1906, p. 63 and 270). This chapel was described as being a very poor one in a list of Churches and Chapels of the diocese in 1813. This

chapel depended on the monks of Kernitron at Lanmeur, and was sold as national property at the Revolution. There was yet another chapel of S. Mèlar at Guimaëc, 4 kil. from Lanmeur, on the road from Plouégat Guerand to Locquirec, it was called The New Chapel, it had been built or rebuilt in 1638. The ruins disappeared 20 years ago. A calvary still exists on the site, and a holy well. Mothers bring their children to drink water in order to make them strong. (Le Guennec, in *Bulletin Dioc. de Quimper*, 1903, p. 36, which contains a complete iconography of S. Mèlar in Finistère.) There is a chapel of S. Mèlar in S. Jean du doigt, a former treve dependant on Plougasnou (a few miles NW. of Lanmeur.) This chapel is

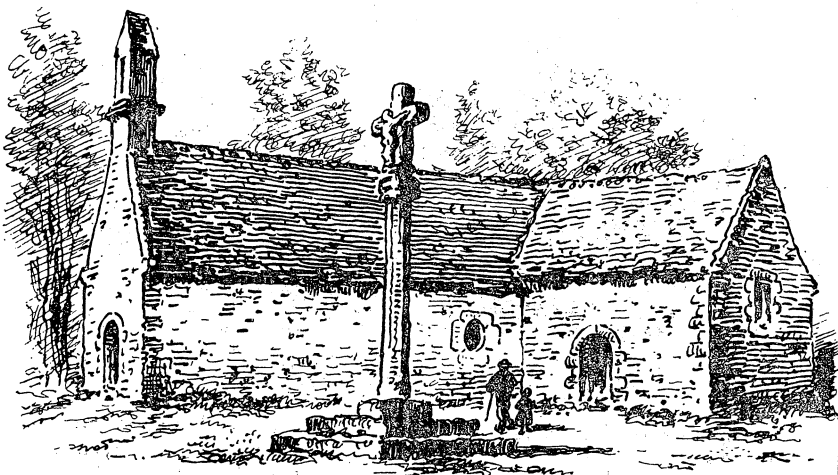


Ruins of Chapel of S. Mèlar in Guimaëc.

mentioned in the accounts for 1641 in connection with a pit dug at the time of the plague. The cadastre calls it La chapelle Mèlar, the hamlet is known as Créach Mèlar, it is the former frérie of Mèlar. There was a chapel of S. Mèlar in Plouegat Guerand. It was sold as national property on the 9 Prairial year III as the Chapel of S. Médard. It was in the hamlet of Keralcun, south of the road from the Churchtown to Morlaix. All this shows the great development of the cult of S. Mèlar in the neighbourhood of Lanmeur. It is a somewhat rare example of the local development of a cult.

At Plouzélambre, about 10 kil. E. of Lanmeur, on the top of a very high hill, is a chapel dedicated to S. Melar. The place is called in Breton Run-ar-Belar. The chapel bears the date 1623. It is 3 kil. from Ploumilieu, and S. Miliau is regarded as the Meliau who was Melor's father. We have already met with the mutation of Melor into Belar at Plounevez Porzay.*

Another chapel of S. Melar exists at Tregrom, and yet another at Plounevez Moedec. The first is mentioned in the "Geography of the C. du N." p. 685, it is still to be seen by the road from the old market at Tregrom, near the hamlet of Kernateriou; it is a pretty



Chapel of St. Melar at St. Jean-du-doigt.

building, apparently of the end of the 16th century, the roof is in ruins. It is pronounced S. Melar, but the official name in deeds is S. Magloire. In Plounevez Moedec is a place called S. Melour or Milour. I believe we have here a different saint, on whom I have written a separate essay.

* There is a curious local legend about S. Melar at Plouzélambre in *Annales de Bretagne*, 1924, p. 72.—G.H.D.

A curious fact is the existence of a tradition at Lanmeur and Plouigneau, resting on a long series of place-names, dealing with the adventures of S. Melar on his journey to Lanmeur just before his death. Kerdanet had collected this tradition and printed it in his notes to the Life of S. Melar in his edition of Albert Le Grand, 1836, p. 617. It is as follows:—S. Melaire had already reached Carhaix and without stopping a moment had continued his journey direct to Lanmeur. There was formerly, it is said, a high road between these two towns. It passed close to a farm in the commune of Pluigneau, named Guerlavrec, and crossed the present road from Plouigneau to Botsorhel, exactly where one leaves this road to go to the chapel of S. Eloi. S. Melar had just arrived at this point when he perceived that he was being followed by two horsemen, whom he recognized as his uncle and cousin. They were almost up with him. The saint saw no hope of safety but in God, he committed himself to the care of Providence and threw himself on the ground. A miracle followed—the ground opened and formed a pit just long enough, deep enough, and wide enough to receive his body and hide him from the view of his persecutors, who passed over him without suspecting how close they were to the object of their pursuit. A chapel dedicated to the saint used to stand on the spot, it has disappeared, but the outline of the site of the walls may be observed on the turf, the grass being of a different colour over the foundations. The pit, miraculous or artificial, where the saint was hidden, is still to be seen, and is called Guelé Saint Velar, *i.e.*, S. Melar's Bed. It was inside the chapel; it is 5 feet long, by 18 inches wide, and rounded at the top, where the saint's head was. The neighbours say that grass never grows there, and that when snow falls there it melts as it falls, however intense the cold may be in the severest winters. I cannot vouch for the truth of the latter statement, but it is certain that grass never grows on that spot, which may be due to various causes, (*e.g.*, certain pious people come and lie down in S. Melar's bed).

The danger past, Melar arose, and instead of continuing on the road to Lanmeur, which would not be safe for him now, he took another road to the left, which led to the castle of Boiséon, then inhabited by a seigneur who was a relative of his. But before he could arrive there, he was overtaken by night, and went to ask

for hospitality at a manor house in the parish of Plouigneau, still called Guer-Velar, or Melar's Brook, where he was kindly received. Next day he took leave of his hosts, and fearing to arrive at Boiséon too late to escape from Rivode, he set out without any breakfast. He was already exhausted by the fatigues of the previous day, and on leaving Guer Velar he had to climb a hill—seven or eight minute's walk. He reached the top, but his strength failed him and he fell to the ground, on the spot where a very small chapel dedicated to him now stands, near the métairie of Coat-sao-bell, *i.e.* The wood on the height. Several persons saw the accident and ran to the prince's assistance. He came to himself, and took a little milk which was offered him, and continued his journey—or his "Passion," as the villagers say. He arrived at Boiséon, which is only half a league away. The seigneur received him kindly, and for greater security, lodged him in one of the towers of his castle. Next day Rivode had recourse to a stratagem. Protesting that he was far from any hostile intentions, he deceived the Lord of Boiséon and Melaire, and Melaire followed him to Lanmeur, where he was treacherously assassinated.

This tradition is still vigorous at Lanmeur and at Plouigneau. It was related to me in all its details in September, 1922. I was told about his bed at Guerlavrec, and heard that mothers take their children there to give them spirit and hardihood. I was told also that the little oratory at Coat-sao-Pel is still in existence, and that nearby is a well from which the saint drank. Kerdanet has reproduced the story exactly as he heard it, without embellishing it as Souvestre or Villemarqué would have done. It appears that he got the story from the abbe ilec'h, then Vicaire at Lanmeur, and afterwards Rector of Plougasnou, whom he quotes on p. 615.

To continue in detail the route followed by St. Melar—the most southerly point is marked by a statue of the saint in the church of Lannéanou. The river which separates Lannéanou from Plougonven is called Dour Melar. (M. Le Guennec tells me that he has found this name in a deed of 1485.) 3 kil. S.S.E. of Plougasnou is a hamlet called Le Villart. (This name, which is found elsewhere in Brittany, might have no connection with S. Melar if it were not on the very road he followed.) These points had not been noticed by Kerdanet.

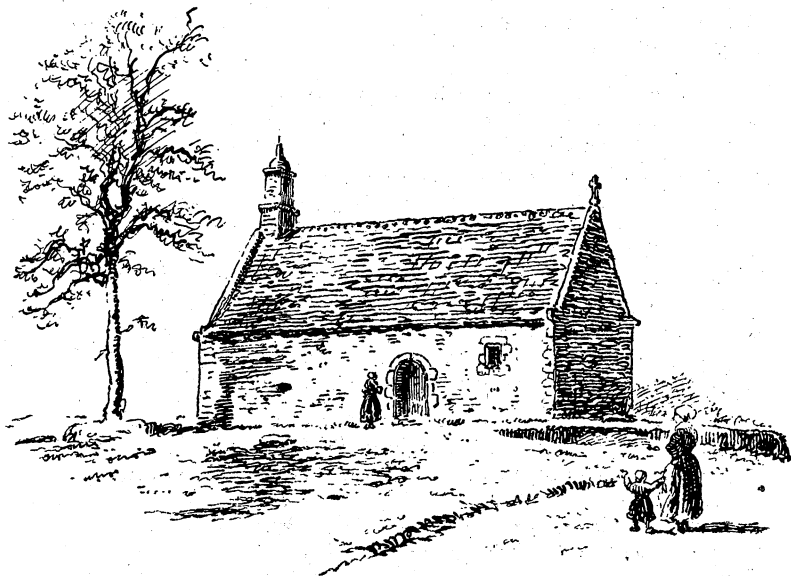
A legend relates that S. Melar's body was at first laid to rest at Boiséon, but he refused to remain there. His body was then placed on a cart drawn by oxen who took it to Lanmeur. There seems to have been a "S. Melor's Way." Another legend speaks of what I call "S. Melor's Way." In the *Vita Melori*, published by Dom Plaine (*Analecta Bollandiana*, 1886, pp. 165-175) this Way is followed by Melar's murderer, escaping with Melar's head to take to Rivode. Just as he reached "the place which is called The Court of the Monks" (*Curia Monialium*) he fell exhausted with fatigue and thirst. Then the head of Melar began to speak and said to him "take thy stick, plant it in the ground, a spring will flow from it." The murderer obeyed and planted the stick in the ground. It became a magnificent tree, and at its feet sprang up a fountain, which still flows there. Le Braz met with a similar legend (*Les Saints Bretons*, p. 435)—the child's head became more and more heavy, the murderers were overwhelmed by its weight and with thirst. Then the head bade them kick a rock, and a well would spring up, which was done. Such was the origin of S. Melar's well, whose waters restore strength to the weary and exhausted. Le Braz published this legend in 1895, he had collected it several years previously and it does not seem probable that the Latin *Vita* published by Dom Plaine in 1886 could have reached the old seamstress Jacquette Craz (who told it to him) even through the medium of a sermon—and it is probable that the local clergy knew nothing of Dom Plaine's publication. (At the same time this "oral legend" seems suspiciously well informed—it relates that S. Melar went to the school of S. Corentin at Quimper. I wonder if Le Braz did not work up this legend after a visit to Lanmeur, and if some confusions with Dom Plaine's *Vita* had not affected his recollection of the story he had heard. It is to be regretted that Le Braz did not leave some indication as to the site of the fountain in question. In any case, however, the two stories, that in the *Vita* and that of Jacquette Craz, relate the same incident, and the details found in the *Vita* help to identify the fountain. Dom Plaine gives this explanation of *Curia Monialium*:—"In Breton Lan Leanou, or Keran Leanou, *i.e.*, The Monks Church or Place, by which name seems to be meant a village not far from the castle of Carhaix, and known as Kerlean or Kerleanou, where there formerly stood a priory and a chapel sacred to S. Melor, as M. Le Men, then keeper of the Archives

at Quimper, since dead, told me in 1878." Le Men's information was correct, but Dom Plaine did not know how to utilise it, and Le Gouvello, who reprinted Dom Plaine's edition of the *Vita*, did not see the mistake he had made. Le Men understood the "*curia Monialium*" to be the present small parish of Lanneanou, formerly Lan Leanou, which used to be a treve of Plouigneau, whose church contains a statue of S. Melar, and which was formerly a priory. Lan Leanou, according to Le Men, meant The Monks' Church. In Middle Breton there was a word *Lear*=monk, which has since dropped out of use. (Ernault, *Gloss. Moy. Bret.*, pp. 355, 6.) Without claiming that this is the real etymology of the name Lan Leanou, it may have been formerly supposed to be the meaning. There remains however a difficulty: the author of the Latin *Vita* says *Curia monialium*,—now *curia* is not the usual Latin word for the Breton *lan*, *curia* would more naturally be the translation of *lez*. This is true, but the hagiographer may very well have translated *lan*, the correct meaning of which may have been unknown to him, by *curia*, and there is no insuperable objection in this detail. We have remarked that the little river which separates Plougonven from Lannéanou bears the name of Dour Melar, and it is from the well in question that this river flows. This shows clearly that there is another legend about Melar's Way. One legend represents him as flying from Carhaix to Lanmeur, pursued by Kerioltan. The other speaks of the martyr-prince's head being carried back from Lanmeur to Carhaix by his murderers. It is to be observed that the legendary Way followed by Melar and his murderers really existed. An ancient road ran from the Lanmeur district to Carhaix, passing by Lannéanou. A series of perfectly straight roads can be seen on the map from Carhaix to Lannéanou.

Such is the topography of the cult of St. Melar in the region of Lanmeur. Leaving on one side the isolated chapels in Plouézoch and Plouzelambre, one cannot but be struck by the view of this long array of placenames stretching from Lannéanou to Lanmeur over a distance of more than 20 kilometres. If the whole story of St. Melar is pure legend, it must be confessed that it is rare to find a legend so thoroughly well localized and agreeing with a series of placenames certainly ancient. If there is a foundation of truth beneath the legend, these placenames may mark the saint's journey, or else

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the journey of his relics. In any case, the cult of this saint is a purely inland one. There is no chapel on the coast (as all the missionary saints have), the series of dedications starts from Lanmeur and goes into the interior of the country. The tradition is that the saint was a native of Armorica, and the cult confirms the tradition by being an inland cult. The point is worth observing.



Chapel of St. Melar at Moustier in Plouézoch.

But the question at once arises—may not the cult of St. Melar at Lanmeur be a case of substitution of one cult for another, as is the case at Ploumiliau, where Meliau, the father of Melar, seems to have taken the place of an older missionary saint from Gt. Britain? May there not once have been at Lanmeur a cult of a Celtic missionary St. Melar, which from the philological point of view is the same name as Magloire, and may not the tragic figure of S. Melar, the little martyr-prince, have later taken his place?

To answer this question we must first examine the value from the philological point of view of the fact that Lanmeur is called, in the (forged) charter CCCV of the Redon Cartulary, *Lanmur Meler*.

If Melar was here the éponyme of a Lan—if Lanmeur was called Lan-Velar, we could definitely say that St. Melar the prince-martyr cannot be the éponyme of a Lan. The Lans, like the Plous and Tres, have old Celtic missionary saints, who came from the island of Gt. Britain and organized religious life in our country, as their éponymes.*

Now it does not appear to me that the name of Melar affixed to that of Lanmeur has the antiquity of one of the early éponymes. Places like Pleumeur (The great parish), Langoat (The monastery in the wood), Pleubihan (Little parish), Poullan (Monastery by the pool), Guiclan (Churchtown monastery), Plounevez and Lannevez (New parish and New monastery) are followed by no saint's name. The adjective meur, bihan, nevez, etc., suffices to complete the name without the addition of a personal name. We may therefore say that the name Meler in Lanmeur Meler stands in a different category to a name like Lan-Velar. Melar is consequently not the éponyme of a Lan, and therefore we cannot assume from the name Lanmeur Meler that there has been a substitution of cult here.

It seems then as if no Melar was known at Lanmeur before the tragic legend of the little prince, which centres round Lanmeur. But to prove this we must dispose of another theory, which is as follows:

Lanmeur was till the Revolution an "enclave" of the Diocese of Dol. St. Magloire was believed to have been Bishop of Dol, and it might be argued that originally S. Magloire was venerated there, and that in course of time the legend of Prince Melar appeared and his cult was substituted for that of Magloire.

We have found the name Lanmur Meler at a period later than the 11th cent. Now the name of a saint whose cult is introduced into a place is not immediately inserted into the name of that place.

* No female saint is the éponyme of a Lan, except at Lanvennok in Pleumeur where Ste. Ninnock is the traditional patron. But as we find at Lignol and Bubry places called St. Nennoc (a male saint) the presence of a convent of nuns at Lanvennok may have turned the patron into a female saint.

Some time is needed for that to happen. We must then suppose that the cult of St. Melar was already ancient at Lanmeur, for it to be called Lanmeur Meler. Now there is no proof that at this time Lanmeur was already an enclave of Dol. In the middle of the 11th century, at the time when the Cartulary of Landevennec was being compiled, Loquenolé, near Morlaix, still belonged to Landevennec and knew nothing of Dol (of which it afterwards became an enclave), (charter XXXVIII.) There is no reason then to suppose that before the time of the Redon charter the influence of Dol had introduced the cult of S. Magloire at Lanmeur. And besides, if the monks of Dol had done so, it would have been impossible to have afterwards substituted for his cult that of the martyr S. Melar. S. Magloire possessed a Latin Life, he was a well known saint (and it is only where a saint has been forgotten that a substitution of cult takes place.)*

(It is true that legends recorded by Albert Le Grand connect the Dol saints, Samson and Magloire, with Lanmeur. According to Le Grand, Magloire was the first Abbot of Lanmeur, the original name of which was Kerfeunteun.) It is most probable that all the Dol legends about Lanmeur are of very late origin. The Vita Maglorii does indeed say that he retired for a time to one of the enclaves of Dol, but does not tell us that the enclave in question was Lanmeur. As a matter of fact, in the time of St. Magloire there were no enclaves of Dol, and the hagiographer probably invented this detail in order to give antiquity to the Dol enclaves of his own day. In the same way, when Albert Le Grand, copying the Latin Life of S. Magloire, relates how the saint arrived from Gt. Britain with S. Samson and was, by the latter, "made Abbot of the monastery of the town of Kerfeunteun," Albert adds as a parenthesis "that is, Lanmeur." There was nothing of the kind in the Latin Vita, which would not have made such a mistake as to the true Kerfeunteun. A transfer into an enclave has been made of a place-name which

* Besides, it may be noted that Dol has never transported into any of its enclaves the name of a saint and imposed that name on places in the enclave. The saints' names in the enclaves are not those of Dol saints,—Loquenolé, Loguivyles-Lannion, Lanvellec, etc., etc. Some enclaves have given up their old éponymes and chosen Dol saints as patrons—Trevon, Treguignac and Robital have S. Samson as patron, Lanvollon has S. Thuriau—but this has not affected place-names in those enclaves.



did not belong to it, to enhance its antiquity. It was widely known that there was a spring in the crypt at Lanmeur, and this helped to gain credence for the suggestion that Kerfeunteun (The Fountain Town) was the old name of Lanmeur. (The real Kerfeunteun was near Dol.) But this identification is a purely literary and antiquarian one. This legend and that which makes S. Samson the founder of Lanmeur, though recorded by Albert Le Grand, were probably not invented by him. Their real author was Yves Arrel, sieur de Coatmen, Dean of Lanmeur, then of Kernitron, grand vicaire of Dol, who in 1627 published at Morlaix a Life of S. Melaire. This holy prelate was an antiquary, he was the author of MS. memoirs on the history of the district, and it is probably he who originated all the Dol legends of S. Samson (at Lanmeur.)

In any case, there is no evidence of S. Magloire ever having been honoured at Lanmeur.

It seems then that we may come to the following conclusions:—In the name Lanmur Meler, Meler cannot be regarded as being identical with the éponyme of a Lan. Consequently we cannot suppose, as I have done in the case of Plou-miliau (see p.30) that the éponyme Meler, an old Celtic saint, has been at some time replaced by another saint of the same name whose tragic history had won the admiration of the people. Lan Mur is a Lan without éponyme, like Lannevez, Langoat, etc. The murder of S. Meler at Lanmeur, long after the foundation of the Lan there, and the presence of the young martyr's relics, were the cause of the addition of the name Meler to that of Lanmeur. There was therefore no Meler or Magloire honoured at Lanmeur before the little martyr-prince. S. Samson and S. Magloire at Lanmeur are false Dol legends of the 16th century. The legend of S. Meler was bound to achieve success. The touching story of the little prince and his cruel uncle and governor appealed specially to the Celtic mentality, always so ready to defend the weak. (Five Breton saints are Royal Martyrs—Salomon, Trémeur, Milliau, Mèlar, Guigner.) It spread rapidly and as it spread it was applied to other Melars whose stories had been forgotten. Hence S. Meler has several tombs, and relics everywhere. His legend is now found all over Brittany, from Dinan, where M. Sébillot met with it (Petite Légende Dorée de Hte Bret., p. 144) to Fégréac, near Redon, where he is the patron of the parish.

(It was for Fégréac that the Vte de Gouvello published a Life of S. Mèlar at Redon in 1879. He says that Mèlar is patron of the frèrie of Botmelas in the parish of Avesac, and of the parish of Melrand in the Morbihan—though the latter name has really no connection with Mèlar.)

The literary associations of this saint are very rich. Besides the different lives of S. Mèlar, there are numerous *gwerziou* or Breton hymns in his honour. Luzel (Rev. de Bret. and de Vendée, 1866) bought one at the Pardon of La Clartè, near Perros Guirec. Le Braz (Les Saints Bret. d'après la trad. pop., p. 415) quotes a *gwerz* of which long passages had been published by Kerdanet in a note to his edition of Albert Le Grand's Vie de St. Mèlar. This *gwerz* was not inspired by Le Grand, as it speaks of Kerialtan and Iustanus, which the latter spells Kyoltanus and Justin, and inserts the detail (omitted by Le Grand) of Justanus breaking his neck as he leaves the castle. Its source of inspiration must have been the Life of St. Mèlar by Yves Arrel (1627) which was largely followed by Le Grand. At St. Meloir-des-ondes a Hymn to St. Mèlar is sung—in French, of course, as it is not in a Breton-speaking district. A hymn—*Kanouen neve en enor da Zant Mèlar mab da Zant Millio ha merzer* is printed together with a hymn in honour of St. Meliau, for use in the parish of Ploumeliau.

Further, we know that the story of St. Mèlar has been dramatized. The parish of Lanmeur was formerly celebrated for its troupe of tragedians. (Le Guennec, Le Prieuré de Kernitron à Lanmeur, p. 13. Le Braz, Les Saints Bretons d'après la Trad., p. 413.)* Luzel could not find a copy of the Mystery of St. Mèlar, but Freminville saw one in 1837,—its title was "St. Mèlar, Prince of Brittany." (This Mystery must not be confused with a Mystery of St. Miliau, also lost; which contained the story of St. Guigner or Gwinear.

* Besides the Mystery of St. Mèlar, the parish had composed and represented a Mystery of "Ste. Tryphine and King Arthur," the scene of which was laid at Lanmeur,—the scenario has not been forgotten even yet in the district. (The character of Kervourien in this play took his name from the manor of Kerbourand in Guimaec.—Le Braz, Le Théâtre Celtique, p. 374. Comanor lived in the castle of La Boissière, —Castle Beuzit, and at Ker-bourand the white chamber in which Ste. Tryphine lived is still shown.)

Luzel refers to it in his description of his travels in Lower Brittany, see Rev. de Bret. et Vendée, 1866, p. 309, but he did not insert the text of this play in his collections.) These dramas of course have not given rise to the legend, but are inspired by it. They date from the 15th or 16th cent., and the legend is found in a Latin Life of the 11th or 12th centuries.

NOTE ON St. MELOIR, BISHOP.

I think we may assume that this personage (see p. 33) is not the same as Maglorius,—St. Magloire, Bishop of Dol and successor of S. Samson. The name Melorius or Melorus appears very early, at a period when, if the name was really Maglorius, it would have been so written. He is mentioned among Breton saints in Litanies of the 10th and 11th centuries. (Revue Celtique, xi. 147) and in three charters of Redon (A.D. 849, 852, 878.) The second of these two charters tells us that the bodies of S. Marcellinus the Pope, of S. Apotheme, and of S. Melorius the Bishop were buried in the abbey. In an Angevin Book of Hours of the 14th or 15th cent. the Feast of S. Meloir, Bishop, is found under 4 Dec. (Duine, Memento,) Dom Lobineau (ed. 1724, p. 63,) adds that⁴⁴ Father Augustin du Paz writes in his Memoirs that in the Martyrology of Lion(Lyons)under 1 October a S. Meler, Bishop and Martyr in Great Britain, is mentioned. The English must have appropriated the Acts of S. Meler (of Lanmeur) to this Bishop and Martyr of Great Britain, exactly as in Brittany the touching legend of the little martyr-prince has everywhere effaced the memory of other Melars and Magloires.

This Meloir must be the éponyme of the parish of Tréméloir near St. Brieuc. (see p. 32.)

There seem thus to have been at least three distinct personages with identical or similar names—S. Magloire of Dol, S. Melar the martyr-prince, and Meloir, Bishop, who was honoured both in Great Britain and in Brittany. The latter must be the saint who, described as a companion of S. Samson (" Sanctus Melorius consobrinus Sancti Samsonis "), is mentioned in a list of relics at the church of St. Magloire in Paris.

NOTE ON THE RELICS OF S. MELAR.

Only a very small portion of the relics of S. Melar are claimed by Lanmeur. The tomb of the saint has disappeared. Albert Le Grand speaks of the body of the saint having been disinterred and placed in a granite coffin which was to be seen above the high altar. In 1667 Guy Le Borgne, at that time bailly of Lanmeur, states that Lanmeur possessed the body of S. Melar. Deric, who wrote at the end of the 18th century, also speaks of this tomb, which probably disappeared about this time, the clergy wishing to replace the old altar by an altar in the style of the period. Even the sarcophagus has vanished. Probably it was empty, or the relics it contained would have been jealously guarded, but it is clear that before the Revolution Lanmeur possessed a sarcophagus which was commonly believed to contain the saint's body.

There were, as we have shown, several persons who bore the name of Melar. The relics of these different saints have travelled widely. The success of the Legend of S. Melar the martyr-prince has finally caused them all to be considered as *his* relics. Whether or not these relics were carried out of Brittany during the general translation of the relics of the Breton saints at the time of the Norman occupation of the country, the cult of S. Melar, and in several places his relics as well, persisted throughout Armorica.

[*End of M. Largillière's Essay.*]

St. MELOR.

By C. G. HENDERSON, B.A.

St. Melor is the patron of two parish churches in Cornwall, Mylor near Falmouth and Linkinhorne between Launceston and Liskeard. From 1223 onwards we find Mylor styled *Ecclesia Sancti Melori*, but the estate of Lawithick (*Lanwythek* 1277) adjoining the Church suggests that its origin was monastic. Lanwithick (now Lehiddick) was also the old name of Colan Church. *Lan-gwithic* suggests affinity with Quethiock, locally pronounced "*Gwithick*" and it is a curious coincidence that the two tallest crosses in Cornwall are at Mylor and Quethiock, fifty miles apart. Another vestige of the old monastic character of Mylor is to be seen in the extent of the old Glebe. Prior to 1288 when Bishop Quivel appropriated the benefice to Glasney College (Penryn), the Rectors of Mylor had a large Glebe on which some very valuable "Sand" (*Sabulo*) or Mineral was found in 1278 which occasioned a furious dispute between the Earl of Cornwall and the Bishop. The dispute led to commissioners being appointed to fix the limits of the "*Sand of S. Melorus*" so as to preserve the rights of the benefice. In 1288 Bishop Quivel as Lord of the Fee of Penryn gave the Church of *S. Melor* to the Provost and Canons of Glasney College who were thenceforth Rectors, only 10 acres being reserved for the resident Curate or Vicar. So extensive was the Rectorial Glebe acquired by the College that it became entitled the "Manor of Mylor" and as such passed to secular hands at the Reformation. Linkinhorne, anciently *Lankynhorn*, is 50 miles from Mylor in the east part of Cornwall. The name implies the Church (*Lan*) of *Cynhoern*, a name found in Welsh Hagiology and in the Cornish place-names Tregonhorne (S. Erth) and Polkinhorne (Gwinear). The earliest reference to S. Melor as patron of Linkinhorne that I have found is dated 1419. The Holy Well of S. Melor on the Vicarial Glebe is covered by a pretty 15th century building of granite.

The only other Cornish shrine of S. Mylor that I have found has not been previously noticed. Near the Church of S. Martin-in-Meneage (Helston) is a farm called Barry-Mylor, anciently *Merther-Mylor*. *Merther* (a martyr) has a secondary meaning of a Chapel in honour of a martyr. S. Melor was certainly a martyr but his martyrdom need not necessarily have occurred at Barry-Mylor.

The fact that there were once two places called Merther-Uny in Cornwall, *viz.*, in Wendron and Redruth, shows that the word *Merther* could not be strictly applied to a place of martyrdom, as has been asserted. The change from *Merther melor* of 1451 to Barry Mylor of to-day is one of these curious corruptions which baffle the philologists, as they conform to no known rules. In 1700 we find *Merther-Myler alias Bara miler* so that there can be no doubt of the identity of the two places.

The proximity of Barry Mylor to S. Martin's Church would lead us to suppose that the latter was the original *Merther* of Melor were it not for the presence of Mathiana (anciently *Merther-Anou*, = The Merther of S. Anou) a forgotten tenement on which the Church actually stood. Professor Loth (*Les noms des Saints Bretons* p. 90) points out that the name of S. Melor is written Meylar in Brittany to-day and suggests that the old form was *Maglar*. We have seen that Barry Mylor was written *Merther-Meylor* in 1451 but the wisdom of Professor Loth is shown by an Anglo-Saxon Charter of A.D. 977 referring to *Trefdewig* (now Trethewy) the farm adjacent to Barry Mylor. In this exceptionally early document, among the boundaries of Trethewy, we find *Penhal-Meglar*, i.e. the Head (*Pen*) of the Moor (*Hal*) of Meglar. From the position assigned to it in boundaries *Meglar* must be Barry Mylor and thus Loth's suggestion of *Maglar* as a probable early form of *Melor* is triumphantly vindicated. There seem to be no traditions or remains of any Chapel or religious association at Barry Mylor to-day.

The name Melor does not appear to enter into many secular place-names in Cornwall. Trevaylor in Gulval (*Treveller* 1249 and *Trevylor* 1544) is probably the Town (*Tre*) of Mylor. It is the only occurrence of the name that I know.

My best thanks are due to M. Henri Largillière, to Mr. C. G. Henderson, to M. Le Guennec, to whose skilled pencil the sketches in this book are due (except the maps, and the cover design, kindly contributed by Mr. R. Morton Nance and Miss Adamson) and who also sent me the Vita printed by Dom Plaine, and to Dom Gougau.

The panneau on page 15 represents Melar presented by his mother to Kerialtan, the latter persuaded by Rivode to murder his charge, Melar escaping in a chariot drawn by oxen, and finally decapitated by Kerialtan and Justin. The other pictures are all described in the text.

S. Melar is found in the Bollandist Acta Sanctorum under 3 Jan., following Ferrarius' General Catalogue of the Saints. His feast at Fégréac is on 4 May, at Redon on 2 Oct. The Sarum Breviary has a memoria of S. Melar on 1 Oct.

The rough sketch on p. 18 is not by M. Le Guennec, but is taken from an article in an old number of the Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, written by the late Mr. Baring Gould, to whom the sketch may be due. It is reprinted by kind permission of the Institution.—G.H.D.

