

conspirasse. Qui sub ea tempestate qua rex occubuit apud nepotem suum Arturum in Britannia fuit. Fratris uero nece audita, Chinonem uenit cum paucis; misitque statim ad episcopum, in burgo supradicto consistentem, et repatriandi commeatum prestolantem, suppliciter^a exorans quatinus suam ei celerius exhibere dignaretur presentiam. Ad cuius sibi occurrentis in uia conspectum, ille gaudio gauisus immenso, admissis equo, ei relicto comitatu uniuerso obuius processit; eumque ueneratus rogauit ut ab eo minime discederet set pariter secum reuersurus in Angliam, in partibus transmarinis con-
 tubernium sibi exhiberet indiuiduum. Quod ille se nequaquam facturum prolatis rationibus insinuans, uenit tamen cum eo usque Samur, cum prius uisitassent apud Fontem Ebraldi busta regalia, patris scilicet et fratris illius.

Vbi que tunc gesta sunt, cum sint notitia et imitatione digna, non uidentur desidioso silentio suppressenda. Cum enim nouus ille tantarum gentium dominus, plurima stipatus nobilium turma, ad hostium chori manu propria diutius pulsans ingredi uellet, ut sepulchra uideret predictorum seque orationibus sancte illius commendaret congregationis, responsum accepit a duabus reuerende grauitatis sanctimonialibus quia nulli mortalium liceret aut conuentum inspicere aut septa interiora adire nisi sub presentia abbatis sue. 'Illius,' inquit, 'reditum operiri^b uos oportet que mox de itinere speratur reuersura. Nec durum reputet excellentia uestra quod nec illius intuitu ordinis nostri statuta infringimus. In hoc potius diue^c memorie genitor uester uobis imitandus censeatur qui in uiris religiosis id quam maxime uenerabatur si tradita sibi maiorum

^a simpliciter B
^c clare Q; digne X

^b aperire X

Arthur in Brittany. On learning that his brother had been killed, he came to Chinon with a few attendants, and immediately sent a message to the bishop who was in the same town, awaiting his companions in order to return home, begging him that he would soon do him the honour of visiting him. When they met in the street, as soon as he caught sight of him he showed immense pleasure and, spurring on his horse, he left all his companions behind and came towards him. He asked in most respectful terms not to think of leaving him but to return with him to England, and give him his company whilst he was on the continent. Hugh gave many reasons why it was impossible for him to do this, but nevertheless went with him to Saumur, after they had visited the royal tombs of his father and brother at Fontevault.

It would be wrong to pass over in silence what occurred there, as it is memorable and worthy of imitation. When the new ruler of so many peoples, accompanied by a vast throng of nobles, himself knocked at the door of the choir which he wished to enter in order to see the tombs and commend himself to the prayers of the devout community, two nuns of mature age answered that no human being could see the convent or enter its enclosure unless the abbess were present. 'It is hoped that she will shortly return from a journey,' they said, 'and you must await her return. Your highness must not be offended that we do not break the statutes of our order at your wish. Rather your father ought to be imitated in this matter, since what he especially admired in monks was that they should observe strictly and with undeviating devotion the customs handed down to them by their founders.' With these words, these wise virgins repelled and shut out the prince who had knocked, and

instituta rigida et inuiolabili deuotione obseruantur.^a Hiis ita^a prolatis, uirgines ille prudentes pulsantem principem compescunt et excludunt; clausisque diligenter foribus ad socias reuertuntur.

Is uero ad episcopum conuersus, rogabat eum quatinus petitionem suam pro suffragiis illarum apud Deum optinendis ancillis Christi exprimeret, plurima etiam bona que eis conferre disponebat eisdem pro-palaret. 'Nostis,' inquit, 'quia satis auersor omne mendacium; cauebo igitur michi ne labiis^b promissa uestra enuntiem nisi hoc certissime a uobis implenda^c presumam.' Iurat ille se non modo que tunc promittebat impleturum set pro tempore et loco hec se habundantius cumulaturum. Quod episcopus sanctimonialibus, ipso astante, exposuit; eiusque auspicia precibus illarum meritisque commendans, data uniuersis benedictione, una cum ipso discessit. Cui plurima iam de pietate in Deum, de clementia in subditos, de iustitia in uniuersos disseruerat.^d Qui ad omnia se paratum, animoque prouum ac deuotum contestans, ei tamquam patri et preceptorum se ex integro semper pariturum affirmans, totius sui moderationem eius sanctitati attentius commendabat.

Cui etiam, inter amice confabulationis uerba, productum e sinu lapidem inclusum auro et collo suo appensum ostenderat, asserens hunc cuidam suorum progenitorum cum tali fuisse celitus pollicitatione donatum, quod numquam priuaretur a uite dominationis amplitudine quisquis^e successorum suorum ipsum meruisset possidere. Ad hec uero episcopus confestim responderat, 'Non,' inquiens,^f 'in lapide insensibili fiduciam ponatis set tantum in lapide uiuo et uere celesti, domino Ihesu Christo. Huic fundamentum cordis uestri, huic spei uestre anchoram firmissime

^a itaque Q^b + meis X^c impendenda X^d deseruerat B^e si quis X^f inquit X

having shut the doors carefully returned to their companions.

John turned to the bishop, and asked him to beg the handmaids of Christ on his behalf to pray to God for him, and express his intention of conferring many favours on them. 'You must know,' he replied, 'my hatred of lies. I will not therefore allow my lips to make promises for you, unless I can be certain that you will fulfil them.' John swore, not only that he would carry out what he now promised, but, time and place permitting, would do even more. The bishop, whilst he stood by, informed the holy nuns of this, and besought their prayers and good works for his welfare, and left with him, after giving his blessing to the community. He spoke to him for a long time about the fear of God, mercy towards his subjects and justice to everyone. John protested that it was his wish and intention to do all these things, and declared that he would obey him in everything as his father and director, and be at pains always to be guided by his holy counsels.

Whilst they were speaking confidentially together in this way, he drew from his bosom a stone set in gold which was hanging round his neck and showed it to him. This he declared had been given to one of his ancestors, and that God had promised that none of his descendants who were fortunate enough to possess it should ever lose any part of their vast domains. The bishop immediately answered him, 'Do not put your trust in an inanimate stone, but in the living true and heavenly stone, our Lord Jesus Christ. Make Him the centre of your soul, and anchor all your hopes on Him, for He is the firm and living stone which will shatter all who resist Him, and will not suffer those who trust Him to slip, but will

imprimatis. Hic enim solidus et uiuus lapis, ut omnes sibi resistentes conterit, ita sibi innitentes deluere non sinit, set ad altiora semper attollens, ipsos etiam ad ampliora promerenda dilatando extendit.^a

Cum uero ad porticum iam peruenissent ecclesiam ingressuri, ubi species seu ymago extremi examinis quo electi a reprobis secernuntur, eleganter satis pro modulo humani exprimitur artificii opere sculptoris, episcopus comitem futurum in proximo regem manu protraxit ad leuam Iudicis ubi reges cum suis insignibus inter dampnatos, audituri, 'Ite maledicti in ignem eternum,'^b a gehennalibus tortoribus rapiuntur in Tartarum. Tunc ait episcopus 'Horum eiulatus et interminabiles cruciatus uobis indesinenter animus representet; hec perpetua supplicia uobis ante cordis oculos assidue uersentur: horum malorum sedula recordatio doceat uos quanto sui dispendio aliis ad tempus modicum proficientur regendis hominibus, qui seipsos male regendo^b sine fine cruciandi demoniacis subiciuntur spiritibus. Hec dummodo uitare licet semper expedit formidare, ne cum non licet iugiter postmodum contingat tolerare.' Dicebat quoque celaturam seu picturam huiuscemodi in ipsis ecclesiarum aditibus congrua satis ratione pretexti, quatinus intraturi et pro necessitatibus suis Dominum rogaturi hanc summam et supremam necessitatem suam esse sciant, ut impetrent ueniam pro delictis; qua impetrata securi permaneant a penis et gaudeant in deliciis sempiternis.

Et quidem episcopus talia prosecutus est. Set o utinam, o Iohannes, qui usque in diem hunc quo annus iam quartusdecimus elabitur ex quo ista dicta et facta sunt, omnia uidetur obliuioni tradidisse^c que illa die

^a + dolores et X
^c dedisse X

^b regentes X

raise them always to higher things, and will exalt and promote them to a loftier destiny.¹

When they reached the porch of the church and were about to enter, there was over it a representation of the Last Judgment showing the separation of the elect from the damned, a magnificent example of the human sculptor's art. The bishop led the count, who was so soon to be a king, to the left side of the Judge where there were kings in full regalia amongst the damned, about to hear the words, 'Go ye cursed into everlasting fire'.¹ These were being carried off, by their demon tormentors into Hell. The bishop then said, 'Fix your mind always on their howls and perpetual torment, and let your heart dwell upon their unceasing punishment; by frequently recalling their misfortunes you will learn the great risks those incur who for a short space of time are set over others as rulers, and who by not ruling themselves are eternally tortured by demons. This fate ought always to be dreaded whilst there is time to avoid it, lest it should have to be endured forever when it is too late.' He said also that such sculptures or pictures were at the entrances to churches for a very good reason, namely that those about to enter and pray to God in their need, should understand what would be their last and final extremity and so would pray for forgiveness for their sins. By such prayers they would be secure from torment and enjoy everlasting happiness.

The bishop continued in this strain. Would that John who, during the fourteen years which have elapsed since the day on which such things were said and done, seems to have forgotten what he saw, heard and promised then, would remember at this late hour what

¹ Matt. 25: 41

uidit, audiuit, promisit, et dixit : o, inquam, quod tunc fecit et dixit utinam uel nunc sero recordetur, et licet id penitus a pluribus desperetur, ad euadendum perpetuum interitum tandem animetur ! Cum enim in Deum et proximum, cum in clerum et populum tanta commiserit ut esse uideatur plaga eius incurabilis et excessus irreparabilis, ipse tamen, oculo mentis obturato, nec que presentialiter patitur sentit, nec que post modicum pati meretur intelligit, confusionis sue atque deiectionis certa dispendia. De quo, iam teste toto pene mundo, impletur illud quod dicit Scriptura, 'Impius cum uenerit in profundum malorum contempnit.'¹ Utinam uero imminens uexatio det ei intellectum ut saltem tunc studeat eternam uitare calamitatem, cum temporalem funditus amittit potestatem, et de sinistra se in dexteram transferat supremi Iudicis, cum experietur quid habeat ponderis iudicium quod paruipendit ecclesiastice seueritatis. Id enim se facturum in loco superius memorato asseruit.

Transiens quippe et manu trahens secum episcopum ad parietem oppositum eique ostendens reges, speciosis insignitos coronis, angelico ductu in gaudium tendentes superni Regis, 'Hos,' inquit, 'domine episcope, nobis potius monstrare debuistis, quorum exemplum atque consortium sequi et assequi habemus in uotis.' Tam uero in gestu et affatu, paucis post hec diebus, humilem se ostendebat et submissum ut uideretur excedere modum. Occurrentibus sibi ob iter^a mendicis ac fausta imprecantibus, corpore incuruato et capite altius demisso gratias diligenter referebat ; salutantes se pannosas etiam aniculas mitissime resalutabat. At uero post triduum letificatos non mediocriter ex hiis, tam epis-

^a ob iter] om B

he on that occasion professed and did ! Although many would deem it impossible, by this means he might be roused at last to do his best to avoid damnation ! The wrongs and enormities committed by him against God and his neighbour and against clergy and laity appear indeed irremediable and irreparable. He however, owing to his darkened mind, does not realize or understand the reason for his present misfortunes, or what he will justly have to suffer after the short span of this life, or the certainty of his shame and damnation. In his case, almost the whole world can observe the fulfilment of the text, 'The wicked man takes no heed, however great the evils which befall him.'¹ Would that the troubles which threaten would give him understanding, and that the complete loss of his temporal power would cause him to take pains to avoid eternal damnation, so that when he has experienced the heavy weight of the Church's censures which he makes so light of, he may endeavour to transfer himself from the left to the right hand of the supreme Judge, as he declared he would do at the place I have mentioned above.

Drawing the bishop with him, he crossed over to the opposite wall and pointed out to him kings, made conspicuous by their splendid crowns, conducted joyfully by angels to the king of Heaven. 'My lord bishop,' he said, 'you should have shown us these, whom we intend to imitate and whose company we desire to join.' For the next few days both in speech and action he made a parade of meekness and humility. When the beggars he met wished him prosperity, he bowed to them and thanked them most assiduously, and graciously returned the greetings of ragged cronies. After three days, how-

¹ Prov. 18: 3