

man. It is only in the Grail Romances that he puts forth many blossoms, and sometimes splendidly ; but even then he does not bear the good fruit after its own kind in anything but the latest texts.

One day Peredur saw three knights, and his Mother said that they were Angels.<sup>1</sup> He decided to become an Angel ; but the questions which he put to them subsequently having obtained a more reliable account, he resolved further to follow their vocation. Finding that she could not dissuade him, his Mother gave him some notable instructions, as, for example, that he should pay court to a fair woman, whether she would or not, and that if he obtained anything precious he should bestow it, and so earn fame for his largesse. In fine, she told him to repair to the Court of King Arthur. He mounted a sorry hackney and began a long journey. Arriving at a rich tent in a glade, he mistook it for a Church and repeated his *Pater noster*, having little else of religion ; but the tent contained a beautiful lady, who gave him refreshment and allowed him to take a ring from her hand.<sup>2</sup> Now, he who was the lord of the glade became angry because of Peredur, and said that the lady, who was his wife, should not rest two nights in the same house till he had visited vengeance upon him.

As the youth drew towards the Court of King Arthur, a Red Knight entered the Palace, and seeing how the Queen was served with wine by a page from a golden goblet, he dashed the liquor in her face<sup>3</sup> and smote her on the face also. But, despite this challenge, such was the unknighthly condition of the Round Table that all present feared to avenge the insult, believing that the aggressor had magical protection ; and so he retired with the vessel. Peredur then rode in, and asked for the honour of Knighthood ; but because of his outlandish appearance, he was treated with indignity by Kay and others of the household. A male and female dwarf, who had dwelt in the palace for a twelvemonth, uttering no word, found their tongues suddenly to praise him as the Flower of Chivalry, for which they were beaten by Kay. When Peredur demanded the accolade, he was told jeeringly to follow the Red Knight, recover the goblet, and possess himself of his horse and armour. He found no difficulty in obeying, and by slaying the Knight he accomplished his first mission of vengeance, which contains a more important implicit than the vindication of Arthur's Queen ; for, unknown to himself, the Red Knight was he who had slain his Father. The removal of the armour he could not accomplish till Sir Owain of the Round Table came to his help, after which he assumed it and mounted the dead man's horse. He restored the goblet to Owain ; but to return and receive Knighthood at the King's hands he refused until he had punished Kay for the insult which he had offered to the dwarfs. In this manner he began his second mission of vengeance, the implicit

<sup>1</sup> Cf. CONTE DEL GRAAL, ed. of Potvin, II, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> The text emblazons the original accounts freely : for example, at this point the Lady is said to be seated on a golden chair, near the door of the tent. Cf. the CONTE, *ib.*, II, pp. 62-67.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the version of Chrétien, in which the King is the victim.

whereof involved his own vindication, because he, too, had been treated injuriously. After various encounters, the result of which is that many were sent to place themselves at King Arthur's mercy,<sup>1</sup> on account of the dwarfs, he met with an ancient man, richly vested, whose attendants were fishing on a lake, and who was therefore the substituted Rich Fisher of the Grail stories.<sup>2</sup>

It does not seem to follow that the servants caught anything; but if they did it was not to our purpose. The ancient man was lame, and he is therefore an alternative of the Maimed King. He retired into a Castle at hand, whither Peredur followed, and being there welcomed he learned that the host was his own Uncle. By him—in the space of a few hours—he was taught Chivalry, was cautioned, for no apparent reason, against asking questions, and was assured that any reproach involved by his silence should not fall on the boy but on himself only. It is as if this uncle said: "Do not explore the Concealed Mysteries: I will account." He accounts so badly, however, that the disgrace is ultimately on Peredur.

The next day the youth reached another Castle, where he found a second Uncle, at whose bidding he smote a great staple three times with a sword, and both were shattered. The first and second time he rejoined the pieces of the sword, and the staple was also made good, as if automatically. The third time neither would unite, and we thus have an alternative of the Broken Sword in the Grail Legends; but nothing follows in the Welsh story, nor is the weapon heard of afterwards. What next occurred at the Castle was a Rite as of a Lodge of Mourning. Two youths entered the hall bearing a mighty Spear, from which poured torrents of blood: and at the sight of this all the Company present fell into grievous lamentation. Two Maidens followed carrying a large Salver, whereon was a man's head; and this, which was swimming in blood, as we have heard previously, caused another great outcry. Peredur, however, had been counselled well, and he asked nothing concerning these marvels, which fact constitutes the Great Mystery of the Voided Question and the prolonged sorrow of the Lord.<sup>3</sup> Now, either the two Uncles are distinct persons inhabiting two Castles, in which case (1) the story identifies them afterwards, although vaguely; (2) the relations are working one against the other, unless there is some cryptic understanding between them; or (3) they are one person strangely confused, while the Castles are one Castle, in which case the lame Uncle himself issues that decree of silence which will delay his healing indefinitely and testifies to his separate existence as the Brother first seen by his guest. Whatever alternative is chosen, the story rests distracting.

On the morning that followed these occurrences Peredur rode away from the Castle, and while still in its vicinity he came upon a beautiful

<sup>1</sup> No less than sixteen Knights are said to have been vanquished in a single week: contrast the comparative sobriety of the French story.

<sup>2</sup> Confused, however, with Perceval's instructor in the CONTE. *Ib.*, II, pp. 86 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 143-150, ll. 4264-4488.

Maiden, who was watching by the side of her dead husband, who has been slain by the Knight in the woodland glade. She told the youth that she was his foster-sister, that he was responsible for his Mother's death because of his desertion, and that he had therefore become accursed.

We shall see in the sequel that he was under interdict after two manners, but in neither case does it appear to carry a consequence. After this meeting, in which he does everything to assist the distressed lady,<sup>1</sup> and to recognise a relationship for which there is nothing to account in the story, he continued his journey and reached yet another Castle, wherein was a high-born Maiden, also in stress and besieged by an earl whom she would not consent to wed. The unwelcome suitor was vanquished by Peredur, who sent him to the Court of King Arthur, restored all her possessions to the despoiled Lady, and after the space of three weeks again rode away. It should be noted that this Maiden is the Blanchefleur of the CONTE DEL GRAAL, the bride-elect of the hero according to Chrétien de Troyes, his wife in the conclusion of Gerbert, and so also in the PARZIVAL of Wolfram.

At this stage, as might be expected, Peredur encountered for a second time the Lady of the Tent or Pavilion, only to find her in sorry straits through her lord's treatment, owing to the intrusion of the youth in the early part of the story. He overcame the Knight in due course, enforced the usual pilgrimage, and pledged him to deal loyally with the Lady in future, she having been at fault in nothing. In the Adventure which next followed, he found that a whole country had been wasted by nine Sorceresses of Gloucester, and they were now attacking the sole remaining Castle, for no object assigned or assignable. Over one of them Peredur prevailed, and she—though aware from of old of all that they must suffer at his hands—invited him to their palace. During three weeks he led a hidden life among them for the ostensible purpose of learning Chivalry, which he knew already by its practice and otherwise by the instruction of his Uncle: it is thus certain that they could teach him little thereof, and of honour or virtue nothing.<sup>2</sup>

By this time Peredur had sent so many Knights as hostages to Arthur's Court, in part to justify the dwarfs, that the King determined to seek for him. The search began accordingly, and after he had taken leave of his imputed instructors, the youth was found by the Companions of the Round Table at the moment when he was wrapped in the now familiar love-trance, thinking of the lady of his heart. Kay, among others, disturbed Peredur rudely, and was chastised with violence. In this manner was accomplished the second mission of vengeance, or rather its implied part. Gwalchmai, who is Gawain, approached Peredur gently and courteously, and so brought him to the King.<sup>3</sup> All went to Caerleon, and there Peredur, who, by inference

<sup>1</sup> He enters the body, overcomes the Knight of the glade and covenants him to marry her whom he has made a widow—thus following but contradicting the CONTE. See *Op. cit.*, pp. 156, 157 and 160-163.

<sup>2</sup> It will be observed that this futile episode is not in debt to the CONTE.

<sup>3</sup> The literal identity with Chrétien's account will be noticed throughout this episode. *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 186-197.

from his trance and a certain period of tarrying, may be supposed to have loved previously the Lady of the Castle, became deeply enamoured of another Maiden ; but seeing that she failed to respond, he vowed himself to silence in all Christendom till she should love him above every man. He left King Arthur's Court and passed through various Adventures, which are devoid of analogy with those of the other Romances. The time came when he yearned to revisit Caerleon and again have the Maiden's society, besides that of the Chivalry. At the Court on account of his silence he suffered further indignity, still on the part of Kay ; but after many signal examples of valour, the Lady of his affections, although she did not recognise him, confessed that if only he could speak, she should love him best of all men, as she did indeed already, his dumbness notwithstanding. So was he delivered from his vow ;<sup>1</sup> and as he had sent many gifts to the male and female dwarfs, after a votive manner, it is to be inferred that his second vengeance was further and fully accomplished by the disgrace which his deeds reflected upon the unworthy Kay.

At a later period, he being again on his travels, Peredur arrived at a Castle, where the Lord was a Black Man who had lost one of his eyes, and it was his custom to destroy every visitor who went to the place unasked. One of the Lord's daughters interceded vainly, when he who at the time of need neglected to question his own uncle demanded now an explanation of the circumstances under which his present host had been deprived partially of sight. For this he was informed that he should not escape with his life. However, in due course, he conquered the Black Master of the House and slew him, after learning his secret. That secret caused him to visit another Castle, the knights in which rode out daily to do battle with an obscure monster, which is termed an Addanc in the story ; their bodies were brought back by the horses, and they themselves were raised up again nightly by the women of the household.<sup>2</sup> Peredur, as will be expected, went forth to destroy the monster and, in return for the pledge of his future love, he was presented by a Strange Woman with a Stone which insured his success. As regards the covenant between them, he was told when he next sought her to seek in the East—that is to say, in India ; but we hear nothing more concerning her. Omitting an intermediate episode on which little depends, he came to the Mound of Mourning, where three hundred nobles guarded a serpent until the time should come for it to die. The explanation is that the tail of the serpent contained that Mysterious Stone to which I have referred already—the Stone of Wealth Inexhaustible—and the intent of the whole Company was to compete for this jewel. Peredur destroyed the serpent, which they did not dare to attempt, and, having compensated the other seekers, he bestowed the prize on a Knight who had been in his service, thus fulfilling

<sup>1</sup> And so ends the second love-episode, left at a loose end like the first : nothing further is heard of either Lady.

<sup>2</sup> See Book IX, § 1, concerning a Scottish Vessel of Balsam and the Cauldron of the Blessed Bran.

one behest of his Mother. He next reached a galaxy of tents, gathered about the pavilion of the Empress Cristinobyl, who was resolved to wed the most valiant man in the world, and him only. This was the unknown Enchantress by whose aid he was enabled to conquer the Addanc. The place was filled with competitors for her hand; but Peredur overcame them all, and was entertained by the Empress for fourteen years, as the story is said to relate: it is the only appeal to some antecedent source which occurs in the whole text—and it has not been identified. In this way the hero's variable affections find their rest for a period—by inference, in such a Land of Faërie as was visited by Ogier the Dane.

Peredur came back at length to the Court of King Arthur, without having attracted apparently any surprise at his absence; and, almost immediately after, the Palace was visited by a Laidly Damosel, through whom it transpired what misery followed the failure to ask the Question at the Castle of the Lame King.<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that so only, almost at the end of the story, does the hero learn anything concerning his omission and the fatality which it involved. He was reproached, as we have seen, bitterly by his foster-sister, but not about this matter; and the inference is that so far he had only reason for satisfaction in having followed the counsel of his first uncle—until the time came when he forgot the injunction at the Castle of the one-eyed Lord. Being now undeceived, he vowed to rest never until he knew the story of the Lance. He departed accordingly, while, at the suggestion of the same visitant, Gawain went in quest of a Castle on a high mountain, wherein it is said that there was a certain Maid in prison, and the fame of the world was promised to him who released her. This is the only instance, and a shadow at that, in which any Quest is allotted to the hero of all gallantry in this story, though his adventures occupy so large a space in the CONTE DEL GRAAL. We hear nothing, however, as to the term reached by Gawain. Peredur, after long wanderings in search of the Laidly Maiden, whom he seems to have regarded as a guide, was accosted by a Hermit, who upbraided him for bearing arms on so holy a day as Good Friday.<sup>2</sup> Recalled to that shadow-sense of religion which he had forgotten apparently, he responded in a becoming manner and received some directions which brought him ultimately to the Castle of Wonders. The first marvel which he saw therein was the inevitable chess-board, whereon automatic pieces were playing the game by themselves. The side which he favoured was defeated, and in his anger he cast both board and men into a lake. The Laidly Maiden appeared thereupon and reproached him. He was set certain tasks, under the pretext of recovering the playthings.<sup>3</sup> They included that Adventure of stag and hound with which we have made acquaintance previously; but the term of all was to bring him for a second time to

<sup>1</sup> Potvin, *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 200–205.

<sup>2</sup> CONTE, *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 254 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, Wauchier's continuation, IV, pp. 76–83.

the Castle of his maimed Uncle and to the end of his Quest. Thither Gawain had preceded him; and in this manner, as in several of the Grail Romances, the Knight of earthly courtesy is somehow connected with the Quest—whether he has undertaken it himself, or by accident, as in this instance.

Peredur found no Lance, and we have seen that he asked no Question; but he was told by a yellow-haired youth, who begged the boon of his friendship—since they two were Cousins—that it was he who in the far past carried the Ensanguined Talisman, that he bore also the Salver, and—at the end of Peredur's long years of Adventure, long years of Faërie Life—that he appeared as the Laidly Maiden. As the Question had passed into the limbus of desuetude and, all his vow notwithstanding, as he asked and learned nothing concerning the Lance, it is possible, as I have suggested, that the opportunity of asking and of receiving knowledge was not granted a second time to the seeker. With these things also withdrew the Foster-Sister of Peredur, his dubious alternative Uncle and the first Lady of his Love. No one thought further about them, though the seeker did learn that the Head on the Dish of Blood was that of another Cousin, who was killed by the Sorceresses of Gloucester. It was they also who lamed his Uncle, and for this he was to wreak vengeance upon them. Here therefore was the third and final Vendetta which Peredur accomplished, with the assistance, curiously enough, of Arthur and all his Household, by the destruction of the nine Priestesses of Evil Magic. Whether this restored his Uncle or relieved the land and the people is not told in the story, nor do we learn anything further concerning the hero, or what, in fine, became of him. Perhaps in the Castle of his Uncle he completed a third period of hidden life.

I have not entered into the Quest of the Holy Grail for the unsatisfying purpose of reproducing the Romances in full Synopsis, all repetition notwithstanding, and those more especially which are outside the issue of my real concern. But because of the claims which were once advanced respecting it, as the last reflection of some primordial type of Quest, and because of that later criticism which rejects such earlier findings, the Welsh Perceval has called for adequate analysis. It is a story without an end, even as its French model, the CONTE DEL GRAAL. It reproduces Chrétien's story, in combination with material drawn from Welsh sources now unknown, producing an inextricable jumble: it contributes nothing therefore to the understanding of the Grail subject. From my own point of view, the fact is perhaps regrettable, as it can never be unprofitable to find the beginning of a Myth or even an earlier state and stage. As things are, we are left with the CONTE DEL GRAAL of Chrétien as the first record in literature regarding Perceval le Gallois. I could do better, as it seems to me, with an early Celtic Saga behind his story.

## II

THE ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCE OF  
SYR PERCYVELLE

WE have seen that the non-Grail Quest of Peredur does not contain the fibrous roots of a Legend which is earlier than the Grail period of literature. There is, however, the English poem of SYR PERCYVELLE, which belongs to the late fourteenth century, being therefore long posterior to the MABI-NOGION of the RED BOOK, though there is said to be an Italian story which is even later still.<sup>1</sup> A similar claim to antiquity has been made and maintained on behalf of this text and, as will be found, with the same result in the last conclusions of scholarship. From one point of view there is of course no question that it is in the position assigned thereto: that is to say, the poem is a *circa* 1370 presentation of an older story, being the CONTE of Chrétien, modified there and here, and brought briefly to a suitable conclusion. For the rest, its elements are those of a plain tale, primitive and characteristic as such of the period to which it belongs. It is less disconcerting and aimless than the Welsh PEREDUR, is, moreover, in perfect harmony with itself, has a conclusion proper to its beginning and intervening incidents which so work together that the term indicated at the start is brought consistently to pass.

It is the antithesis of any of the Grail Romances: there is only the shadow of a Quest, and it is found at the end of all; moreover, there is no Question; there are no Hallows of any kind, either Lance or Sword or Cup; and, finally, there is no Enchantment of Britain. It is a savage story—naked and not ashamed: it calls on the kingdom of blood to be manifested about the hero, and he ensures its coming.

The mere skeleton of the poem will exhibit its points of contact with Chrétien and the Welsh Peredur, as also its variations therefrom. The Father of Perceval, who bore rather curiously an identical name, was married for his valiant deeds to a Sister of King Arthur. She gave him only the one son; for a great tourney was held to celebrate the birth, and thereat the Father was slain by a Knight in Red Armour. As in the Grail Romances, his widow fled into the wilderness, taking the child with her, so that he should know nothing about deeds of arms. He was brought up in the fell and the wild wood, with wild beasts for his companions. However, as the boy grew up the Mother allowed him a small Scotch spear, and with this he became so dexterous that nothing could escape him. He was clothed in skins, and for a long time seems to have been reared as a heathen; but it came about at length that the

<sup>1</sup> I have failed to trace this story, nor does it perhaps signify. Prof. E. G. Gardner says in another connection that the sole allusion in Italian literature to Perceval's failure over "the fateful Question" occurs, so far as he has found, in a poem of Guittone d'Arezzo, who belongs to the thirteenth century.

Lady taught him some prayers to the Son of God,<sup>1</sup> and shortly after he met with three Knights of King Arthur's Court, namely, Gawain, Yvain and Kay. He inquired which of them was the Great God about whom his mother had taught him, and threatened to slay them if they refused to answer.<sup>2</sup> He was told who they were, and then asked whether King Arthur would knight him also. Being referred to the Monarch himself, he seized a wild horse, took leave of his Mother, and rode to Court clothed in skins of beasts, nourishing a firm resolution to destroy the King if he would not grant his request. At parting the Mother had given him a ring to be kept as a token, and had promised that she would await his return. On his road he reached a Pavilion wherein was a Lady asleep. He kissed her and exchanged a certain ring which she wore for the one that had been presented to himself. He arrived at the Court of all Chivalry, and King Arthur recognised the boy's likeness to that older Perceval who had received his own sister as wife. The King, however, and apparently the whole Chivalry had been reduced to recurring distress through fear of a Red Knight, who came regularly to rob the Monarch of the Cup out of which he was drinking. Perceval's arrival was coincident with another visitation of this kind, being the fifth during as many years. The Cup was of red gold, and it was seized while the Royal Feaster was in the act of putting it to his lips. Perceval, who was a witness, offered to bring back the vessel if Arthur would knight him, and the King promised to do so on his return.<sup>3</sup> He went to fetch armour for the child ; but Perceval in the meantime departed. The Red Knight did not wish to do battle with so sorry an opponent ; but in the end there was a momentary combat, Perceval slaying the Champion by throwing his dart, which passed through one of his eyes. For what it is worth, we have here a fortuitous shadow of that Vengeance Legend, examples of which in the Grail Literature have been studied with zeal by scholarship. I have said that Perceval slays the Red Knight ; but, as in the WELSH PEREDUR, he does so without knowing that the victim was responsible for his Father's death : his sole and simple object is to wipe out an affront offered to the King. After the encounter Perceval, with the assistance of Gawain, who had followed and come upon the scene, stripped the body of the armour, and the youth was clothed therein. He did not return to claim the promised reward of Knighthood, and Gawain was the bearer of the Cup to the Palace. Perceval's next office was to destroy a witch who was the mother of the Red Knight, and on account of his armour he was taken then and subsequently for that personage himself. He was entertained later on at the Castle of an old Knight, to which there came presently from the Maiden Land a Messenger who was on his way to

<sup>1</sup> The poem says that this took place at the age of fifteen.

<sup>2</sup> He supposed Christ to be a person who could be met, as natural man meets man.

<sup>3</sup> It would seem that the High Order of Chivalry was acquired rather quickly and cheaply in those days and at that Royal Court, for Arthur was proposing to confer it upon Perceval in the midst of a daily meal when he was prevented by the intrusion of the Red Knight.



King Arthur, entreating assistance for his Mistress, the Lady Lufamour. She was being oppressed by a "Sultan" who desired her for his wife, and because of her refusal he had not only slain her father and brother but had wasted her lands, so that she had only one Castle left in which to take refuge. To this retreat Perceval asked his way, with the intention of destroying the "Saracen"; but the Messenger preferred to continue his own road and get help from the King. Perceval, on his part, determined to discover it for himself, and three sons of his host insisted on accompanying him, which they did for a certain distance, after which he contrived to shake them off. Meanwhile the Messenger reached the Court and had a very indifferent answer from Arthur, who, together with his Chivalry, appears in a pitiful light throughout all the early portion of the story. The King, in fact, tells him that there is no Lord in his land who is worthy to be called a Knight. However, on hearing a description of the valiant youth who was seen by the Messenger from the Castle on his road to Court, the King concluded that this was Perceval, whereupon he called for horses, arms and three Companions of his Table<sup>1</sup> to follow in quest of the hero, fearing that he might be slain before they could reach him. By this time Perceval had arrived at the Maiden Land, and found a host of pavilions marshalled about a city. He set to and slew many, his ingenuous warcry being apparently that he had come to destroy a Soldan. He slept in the open field, with his dead strewn about him. The Lady Lufamour came to survey the slaughter from the height of her walls, and descried the knight whom she supposed to have effected it. She sent her Chamberlain to bring him into the city: therein she made him good cheer, and fell in love at first sight. He returned to do battle in her cause, she promising herself and the Kingdom if he destroyed the Soldan. He behaved in a manner which recalls the worst combats in Spanish Romances of Chivalry, wherein one Knight scatters a thousand Paynims. Meanwhile, King Arthur and his Companions arrived, but were mistaken by Perceval for enemies, and he fought with Gawain. However, ultimately they recognised each other and embraced. All proceeded to the Castle, where Arthur recounted to the Lady the early history of Perceval. The next morning he was Knighted by the King, and again went forth against the Soldan, whom he slew finally. He was made King of the country, and wedded Lufamour. Being still in the first year of his marriage, he remembered his Mother, and rode away to find her. This is the Quest of the story, and on the way he had to champion the Lady of the Pavilion, who had fallen into the hands of her husband for the business of the ring.<sup>2</sup> He reconciled

<sup>1</sup> They are those whom he met in the forest, namely, Gawain, Yvain and Kay.

<sup>2</sup> He heard the cry of a distressed woman and found her tied to a tree. He who was her Lord, otherwise, the Black Knight, had so done because, twelve months since, as she lay on her bed, one whom she did not see came into her pavilion and took her ring in exchange for his own. It was a ring of many virtues and whosoever wore it could not suffer death or be maimed. Perceval knew then that this was his doing. Subsequently the Black Knight would have died at his hands; but the Lady begged for his life and it was granted on the condition that she was forgiven freely, as one who had done no wrong.

them *vi et armis*, and learned that the ring which he borrowed had strange magical powers. He proposed to exchange again; but the husband had given that which was Perceval's to the Lord of the land, a Giant of whom none would dare to ask it. He was, indeed, the Brother of the Soldan, and there is no need to say that Perceval in due course not only defeated but dismembered him. He recovered his ring at the Giant's Castle, and learned from the Seneschal that his master had offered it to a Lady whom he besought in marriage; that she recognised it as her Son's ring, and, supposing that he had been slain by the Giant, she fled distracted into the forest hard by. Perceval was now close on the track of his Quest-object: he assumed a garment of skins, that she might know him the more easily; and it was not long before Mother and Son met and were henceforth reunited. They repaired to the Giant's Castle, till the Lady was restored to health and sanity. In fine, he carried her home, where she was welcomed by his Queen and the Great Lords. This was the good end of Perceval's Mother; and in this way the story describes its perfect circle. The end of Perceval himself was in the Holy Land.

It will be seen that the English SYR PERCYVELLE is not what is called an Exile and Return Story, nor is it in any legitimate sense to be regarded as a Tale of Quest. It is so manifestly another variant delineation, *plus* an original completion, of Chrétien's CONTE that it has been deemed unnecessary to illustrate the fact by recurring annotations. The poem is another and original way of recounting the same Saga. It belongs to the Romance of Adventure rather than to Myth. If the Great Fool Story is behind the CONTE—as it is presumably—it is also behind SYR PERCYVELLE at a much later stage. And having reached this point in respect of our Welsh and English texts it seems opportune to clear the issue by adding that the far-spread Saga of the heroic simpleton is like its two late reflections—of no purpose to the Christian Mystery of the Holy Grail, which is the one and only subject of our present research. A misguided person—an American, I think—once wrote a book about Sixteen Crucified Saviours, and there may have been as many or more; but the research concerning them is of no purpose to those who are seeking the life of high experience in the Mystical Christ.



BOOK IX

CRITICAL APPARATUS IN RESPECT OF THE GRAIL  
CYCLES: CELTIC HYPOTHESIS



## THE ARGUMENT

I. THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE LEGEND IN FOLK-LORE.—Summary of the Past Research—Proposed Apparatus of Criticism—Pre-Christian Folk-lore Hypothesis—Forerunners of Grail Talismans—Present Position of Proposed Grail Antecedents—Irish and Welsh Legends—The Tuatha de Danann—The Irish Avalon—The Myth and its Talismans in Wales—The Cauldron of Bran—Folk-lore and Grail Talismans—The Legend of Perceval and the Lay of the Great Fool—The Welsh Mabinogion—The Peredur Story—Survival of Old Mysteries in Christian Britain—Revival of Welsh Literature—Celtic and Latin Rites—Folk-lore Transmutations—Of Celtic Christian Hagiology.

II. THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE GRAIL LITERATURE.—That which encompassed externally the Grail Subject—Heritage of Minstrels and of Druids—Power and Portent of the Latin Church—Great Doctrinal Debate on the Eucharist—Of Reservation—Of Communion in One Kind—The Grail as a Symbol of Catholic and Christian Faith—Theory of Transubstantiation—The Grail as a Reliquary—Hallows of Other Relics—Relics of the Precious Blood—Legendary Chalices—The Fable of Fécamp—The Sacred Lance in Legend—The Crown of Thorns—The True Cross—The Sacred Nails—The Shroud of Christ—A Word on Apocryphal Gospels—The *Sudarium* of Veronica—The *Volto Santo*—The Sword of St. John the Baptist—Caput Johannis—Other Environments of the Grail Subject.

III. THE HOLY GRAIL IN THE LIGHT OF THE CELTIC CHURCH.—A. A POSSIBLE ORIGINATING CENTRE OF THE WHOLE MYSTERY.—The Celtic Church as an environment of the Grail literature—Its traces of Eastern influence—Of the spirit of the East in the Grail Legend—Its implicits as reflections of the Celtic Church—The source of British Christianity independent of Rome—Reference to the Johannine Rite—Certain considerations which would determine the present inquiry.

B. THE FORMULÆ OF THE HYPOTHESIS SCHEDULED.—Of Britain as a microcosm of the world—An analogy from the Apocalypse—Celtic religious sympathies—The hypothesis under review—Celtic origin of the Grail Legend—The Legend as an ecclesiastical growth—The Grail Church—St. David and his miraculous Altar—The Fish Symbol and the Rich Fisherman—The Secret Words as an evasive reference to the Epiclesis Clause—Nature of this Clause in Eucharistic Consecration—Celtic Hereditary Keepers of Relics—General characteristics of the Celtic Relic—Of Mass Chalices—Of Mystic and Holy Cups—Of the Columbarium and the Grail Dove—The disappearance of St. David's Altar—Withdrawal of the Celtic Rite—The Celtic Church and the Druids—Cadwaladr and Galahad—The return of the British King—Claims connected with Glastonbury—The substitution of Joseph of Arimathæa for St. David—Further concerning Fish Symbolism—And concerning Mass Chalices—Of Mystic Bells—A Church consecrated by Christ—Super-Apostolical Succession—The House of Anjou—A Mystery of the Celtic Mass—Summary of the whole matter—The Dream of a Secret

Mass-Book. C. IN WHAT SENSE THE PLEA MUST BE HELD TO FAIL.—Some Preliminary Admissions—The Secret Tradition of the Epoch—Further concerning Super-Apostolical Succession—The Church in Britain—Absence of Passion-Relics in the Welsh Church—The Epiclesis Clause does not explain the Secret Words—Greek Mode of Consecration—Distinctions between Cadwaladr and Galahad—Fantasy of the VIR AQUATICUS—The Altar of St. David a false ground of comparison—Substitutes for the Sacramental Cup—True position of the Glastonbury claims—No substitution of Joseph for St. David—The Second Joseph—Another light on King Arthur's Chalice—And on the Mystery of the Celtic Mass—Further concerning a Secret Book of the Mass—The Pan-Britannic Church and the Grail Literature—The Celtic Church and the Literature. D. THE VICTORY OF THE LATIN RITE.—Of Rome and the other Assemblies—Why Rome prevailed—The conclusion that we must go further.

## BOOK IX

### CRITICAL APPARATUS IN RESPECT OF THE GRAIL CYCLES: CELTIC HYPOTHESIS

#### I

#### THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE LEGEND IN FOLK-LORE

**W**E have now passed in review every text constituting and belonging, directly or indirectly, to the Grail literature, including two late documents which scholarship has connected therewith, though the Grail itself does not appear therein. My next task is to present the apparatus of criticism on the Grail subject, including the various hypotheses by which it has been sought to account for the origin of the Mythos and to explain its meaning. On the surface it is a Christian Mythos, and in the Cycle-General of Northern France its central Palladium and most of the other Talismans which are grouped about it are Relics of the Passion of Christ. It is otherwise with the German Cycle, the chief text of which was supplemented, however, by another poet who, many years subsequently, restored to the Grail of Wolfram that place in Christian Legend from which it was removed in the *PARZIVAL*. All this notwithstanding, it has been contended that the origin of the Grail and the Quests which arose therefrom are to be found in folk-lore rather than in Christian story, whether or not the latter should be regarded as pious legend, fable or parable. It has been held in particular to have originated in folk-lore of the Celtic race, even if the peculiar *matière Celtique* proves on examination to have its independent analogues somewhat widely distributed. As this hypothesis was adopted and favoured for a considerable number of years, it is that which calls for consideration in the first place. But seeing that at the present time the fashion of it seems passing away, I am tempted at the beginning of this section to assure my readers that it shall be approached on my own part in no spirit of prejudgment, more especially as my position in respect of the Grail and its literature remains unaffected by the hypothesis itself and by any conclusion which may be reached on its validity.

The beginnings of literature are like the beginnings of evolutionary life: they are questions of antecedents which are most commonly past



finding out, and we may come perhaps to see that they do not signify vitally, because the Keys of many Mysteries are to be sought in the comprehension of the term of these rather than in their initial stages. Textual and literary scholarship was disposed for some decades to lay great and almost exclusive stress on alleged Celtic forerunners of the Grail Talismans and on certain Welsh and other supposed prototypes of the Perceval Quest in which the Sacred Vessel does not appear at all. As regards such affiliations, whether Welsh, Irish or English, I do not think that sufficient allowance has been made for the following facts: (1) That every archaic fiction and every Legend depends, as suggested previously, from prior Legend and fiction; (2) that such antecedents are both explicit and implicit, intentional and unconscious, just as in these days we have wilful and undesigned imitation; (3) that the persistence of Legends is frequently by the way of their transfiguration. We have done nothing to explain the Ascension of the Grail to Heaven and the Assumption of Galahad when we have ascertained that some possible centuries before there were Myths about a Cauldron of Ceridwen and that of the Dagda, any more than we have accounted for Christianity if we have ascertained, and this even indubitably, that some Ecclesiastical Ceremonial is an adaptation of pre-Christian Rites. Here, as in so many other instances, the essence of everything resides in the intention. If I possess the true Apostolical Succession, then, *ex hypothesi* at least, I do not less Consecrate the Eucharist if I use the Latin Rite, which expresses the words of institution in the past tense, or some Oriental Rite, by which they are expressed in the future, and which includes, moreover, the EPICLESIS Clause, being an Invocation of the Holy Spirit.

There is in any case no question that the Grail antecedents in folk-lore have been reduced to very slender proportions by late findings of research. Were it otherwise, I should be the last to minimise their consequence, after their own kind, just as I might not feel called to abandon some particular Official Church because I have been received into the Greater Church which is within. There was a time when I thought that certain old Myths were taken over for the purpose of Christian Grail Symbolism under the influence of a special although inexpressed motive and that subsequently to such appropriation they assumed importance. This is still an intelligible proposition, having regard to the third fact enumerated above; but opinion has fluctuated of recent times to such an extent that even the antiquity of the Myths themselves seems under an implied challenge, as will be seen later. I am convinced also, with others who have preceded me,<sup>1</sup> that the faculty of invention was militantly alive in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and that it is folly to account for its creations by the prodigal multiplication of supposititious lost texts which were held to contain the inventions in some variant or identical

<sup>1</sup> The most recent and fullest exponent of this view is Dr. J. D. Bruce, though he was preceded by other writers whom he cites in brief.

form. Subject to these qualifications, I proceed to place my readers in possession of the bare elements which were held to have been carried over from pre-Christian times into the Grail Mythos, as follows.

I. We hear of an Irish Legend concerning a Cauldron of the Dagda, from which no Company ever went away unsatisfied.<sup>1</sup> It was one of the four Talismans which a certain godlike race—that of the Tuatha de Danann—brought with them when they first came into Ireland.

The Talismans were a great Treasure according to an old Irish BOOK OF INVASIONS, which, however, in its present form has been referred to an undetermined date in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> The Talismans in question were (1) the LIA FAIL, otherwise, CLACH-NA-CINAANHUINN, the Stone of Fate or Destiny, now as alleged the Coronation Stone in Westminster Abbey, brought thither by Edward I.<sup>3</sup> (2) The Sword of Lug the Longhanded, Luga of the Long Arm, the Invincible Sword, and he who wielded it was called the Redeemer of his people.<sup>4</sup> (3) The Magic Spear, and this was the Spear of Lug. (4) The Cauldron of the Dagda, who is termed the good god<sup>5</sup> and the head apparently of the Irish Olympus.<sup>6</sup> The variations of its Mythos confer upon it many magical properties. Hosts of men might be fed therefrom without impairing its content.<sup>7</sup>

The Tuatha de Danann came from very far away, for according to one of their Legends, during the course of their wanderings, they learned Magic in Greece and thereafter migrated to Lochlann on the shores of the Baltic—Denmark and South Sweden—thence to Scotland and to Ireland in fine.<sup>8</sup> An alternative account says, on the authority of Tuam—that in all probability they came from Heaven.<sup>9</sup> Another story and one which might apply in either case speaks of a magic cloud by virtue of which they were wafted to Erin in a state of invisibility.<sup>10</sup> All testimonies agree that they were skilled in Magic, besides being excellent builders, poets and musicians. Their breed of horses could not be surpassed in the world, being moreover shod with silver and having golden bridles: no slave was allowed to ride them.<sup>11</sup> The Tuatha de Danann Knights are described as a splendid cavalcade: seven-score horsemen, all sons of Kings, wearing green mantles fringed with gold,

<sup>1</sup> See Nutt, *Op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> W. Ralph Hall Caine: ANNALS OF THE MAGIC ISLE—that is, the Isle of Man, 1926, pp. 69 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Nutt, *Op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> Hall Caine, *Op. cit.*, p. 68. Luga was King of the Tuatha de Danann. See Alexander Macbain: CELTIC MYTHOLOGY AND RITES, p. 168.

<sup>5</sup> Nutt, *Op. cit.*, p. 185.

<sup>6</sup> According to Edward Clodd, he was the god of fire, and his Cauldron was the vault of the sky. Quoted without reference in ELDER FAITHS OF IRELAND, I, p. 347.

<sup>7</sup> Hall Caine, *Op. cit.*, p. 69. As regards the variations mentioned above they are not only those of the Cauldron *per se*, for we must include also those of the folk-lore Cup, the lore of which belongs to the same root. The Vessel and its content are said by Campbell to be common in Celtic Traditions: they are Cups taken from fairies, Cups giving all kinds of drinks, the Cup of Fionn which healed diseases and was analogous of course to the Hidden Cauldron of the Feinne and the Vessel of Balsam.—POPULAR TALES OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS, IV, p. 351.

<sup>8</sup> P. W. Joyce: OLD CELTIC ROMANCES, 1879, p. 401.

<sup>9</sup> Hall Caine, *Op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*, p. 69.

<sup>11</sup> See Lady Wilde's ANCIENT LEGENDS OF IRELAND, 1888, p. 93.

having golden helmets on their heads, greaves of gold about their limbs and golden spurs on their heels.<sup>1</sup> There is a Legend of Edain, the King of Munster's Queen, which tells of the sorcery in their music.<sup>2</sup> They overcame the Firbolgs and drove them to Innismore, one of the chief Western Islands. The Firbolgs were dark and the Dananns fair, warlike, energetic but acquainted also with the healing art and skilled in Druidism. From these two races the Faërie Mythology is said to have sprung.<sup>3</sup> But after two hundred years the Dananns were overcome by the Milesians, whereupon they transformed themselves into Fairies, having escaped annihilation solely by their magic art and the consequent veil of invisibility. It is said that they retired to lonely places, but their repute as magicians followed them, and they were held to live in splendid palaces, hidden in the interior of pleasant green hills.<sup>4</sup> This catastrophe occurred in the age of the world 3500=1029 B.C. Another version speaks of their life in caves as continuing to this day and as destined to go on without death intervening until the Day of Judgment.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the twelfth-century BOOK OF LEINSTER contains the Myth of Oengus, one of the Tuatha de Danann, who has a faërie palace in the Irish Avalon called Tir-na-n-Og, or Tairrngire, the Land of Promise, the Land of Never Ending Youth, in which Oisín once dwelt for three hundred years. It is sometimes identified with the Isle of Man.<sup>6</sup>

II. The Myth travelled to Scotland or some of its analogues arose independently therein. There also, as in Ireland, we find sometimes a Vessel which brings the dead to life and in one case is in the keeping of an old woman. It is then a Vessel of Balsam.<sup>7</sup> It is otherwise a Cauldron which is filled with plants, and a King's son is put therein. He has been clothed with a magic shirt, which becomes now a great encoiling serpent: it is destroyed by virtue of the stew, and this destruction liberates the Prince from the spell.<sup>8</sup>

III. The Myth and its Talismans passed also into Wales, and the Cauldron recurs frequently in the poems which are extant under the name of Taliesin.<sup>9</sup> Among other properties, it gave melody to Bardic lays.<sup>10</sup> The Cauldron of Awen is the Cauldron of that Goddess. But there was also the Cauldron of Ceridwen, which was full of melodious

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. F. Campbell: THE CELTIC DRAGON MYTH, quoting the *Geste* of Fraoch, which mentions lances like candles, having knobs of burnished gold and spear-points of inwrought carbuncle, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Wilde, *Op. cit.*, pp. 93-96.

<sup>4</sup> Joyce, *Op. cit.*, pp. 401, 402.

<sup>6</sup> Nutt, *Op. cit.*, pp. 191, 192. Cf. Hall Caine, *Op. cit.*, pp. 108, 109, concerning the Shining Land and the Tree of the Shining Land. Its leaf is breath of life, its bloom is youth and its fruit is fulfilment of desire. The boughs of the Tree seem to be of silver, its blossoms are white and the fruits are golden apples. The Shining Land is the Land of the Living Heart, the Land of Manannan, whose Magical Stone recalls the Cauldron of the Dagda: it was a Stone of Everlasting Store, pp. 202-209. For Manannan mac Lir, see also Nutt, pp. 192-194.

<sup>7</sup> Campbell, *Op. cit.*, I, XLI.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.*, XLVI.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Davies: MYTHOLOGY AND RITES OF THE DRUIDS, 1809, p. 16. Davies at his early period accepted the poems as genuine, notwithstanding their acquaintance with Ovid's METAMORPHOSES, Pythagorean doctrines and reflections of Greek, Roman and Jewish history, to which Macbain calls attention. *Op. cit.*, pp. 102, 103.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.*, p. 21.

song,<sup>1</sup> and is, moreover, a source of mystical lore.<sup>2</sup> It happened that Gwion the Little, having been set to guard the Vessel, found three drops of its water alighting on one of his fingers, when he put it hurriedly into his mouth, as one scalded. It is said that "every event of futurity was opened to his view."<sup>3</sup> The Cauldron itself was divided into two parts, but the whole of its water was poisonous, the drops in question excepted. A multitude of ingredients entered into the decoction, according to the poem called TALIESIN'S CHAIR. Most important of all is the Cauldron of Bendigeid Vran, who is Bran the Blessed, the son of Llyr, whose story is told in one of the Welsh Mabinogion, among other places. Its property was that if a man be slain to-day and cast therein, to-morrow he will be as well as he ever was at the best, except that he will not regain his speech. He remains therefore as if in the condition of Perceval when that hero of the Grail stood agaze in the presence of the Mystery with a spell of silence upon him. It would follow that the Druidic Mysteries, as we find them in Welsh Legends, are like other Initiations: the Candidate is passed through the experience of a Mystical Death and is brought back, as, for example, by the Cauldron of Bran or that of Ceridwen, to a new term of existence; but although in this sense the dead are raised, they are not in such cases restored with the gift of tongues: there is life but no word of life. In other language, the silence of the great pledges is imposed henceforth upon them. The dead rise up, but they do not begin to speak.<sup>4</sup>

The Cauldron attributed to Bran was used by the Irish in their fight about Branwen, and it was destroyed by Evrissyen, who was the source of all the strife. He cast himself into the Cauldron of Renovation, as it is termed in the Saga, rent it into four pieces and burst his own heart in the act. It is on this memorable occasion that Bendigeid Vran, who is Bran, gave orders to the sole seven who survived the warfare that they should cut off his head, carry it to the White Mount in London and there bury it, with the face towards France. But seeing that this would be a long journey, they had licence to feast for seven years in Harlech. The birds of Rhiannon should sing to them the while, and the Head of Bran would be the same pleasant company as when he was alive in the body. Thereafter for fourscore years they should sojourn at Gwales in Penno, the Head being still uncorrupted, and so continue unless and until they opened the door that looks towards Aber Henvelan and Cornwall. They must then set forth for London and bring the Head with them. It was arranged after this manner: they feasted for seven years at Harlech and for fourscore years at Gwales in Penno, remembering nothing of their sorrows.<sup>5</sup> However, at long last Heilyn son of Gwynn, curious to see what might befall and

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 214.

<sup>4</sup> See BRANWEN, THE DAUGHTER OF LLYR, *passim*, from the Red Book of Hergest, edited by Lady Charlotte Guest. There are many editions.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the Crown of Forgetfulness which Morgan, Queen of Faërie, gave to Ogier le Danois in Avalon, where trees are always green, the flowers do not fade, the sun never sets and cometh not storm or cloud. See POPULAR ROMANCES OF THE MIDDLE AGES, by G. W. Cox and E. H. Jones, 1871.

whether it was a true story, opened the door which looked towards Cornwall, thus proving that they did remember one thing at least of the past. They became conscious now of all their old evils and journeyed in great perturbation to London, where they buried the Head in the White Mount.

Except in so far as the Cup of the Grail Legend concerns, as we have found, a Mystery of Speech and its Suppression, it is difficult to trace its correspondence with this Cauldron and that of the Dagda. If such things can be considered as the raw material out of which the Grail story issued in fine, the fact extends rather than reduces the seeming miracle of transformation, whereby the Holy Vessel of Christian Symbolism was brought forth from a Druidic Cauldron, which is sometimes that of Ceridwen and sometimes of Bendigeid, being at once the Fountain of Bardic Inspiration and the provider of a feast of good things.

The Cups and Cauldrons were many in Celtic lore, not to speak of other regions, almost the wide world over. There is the Caire of the King of Alba, which boiled sufficient meat and no more for each given Company, whatever amount of food was put therein;<sup>1</sup> but there is obviously no comparison between this story and that of the Feast-providing Grail, into which nothing was put. We may remember further, at its value, the milk-white cow of the Iolo MSS., which gave enough milk to every person who desired it. Those who drank were healed from all disease, became wise if they chanced to be fools and had wickedness eradicated from their natures. It happened, however, that certain natives in the Vale of Tovey resolved to kill and eat her; but she vanished from their hands and was never seen again.<sup>2</sup> It would serve no purpose to recite further examples or multiply those which correspond to the other Talismans.<sup>3</sup> The Grail Sword, as we have seen,

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> THE IOLO MANUSCRIPTS, 1848. According to Grimm, the Grail cannot be more celebrated than Sampo in the Epic of the Finns. Fashioned by the god Ilmarinen in Pohjola, it was a joy to live in the land that possessed it. The fields were covered with standing corn and hanging fruits. Now, there came a time when the gods planned to retrieve it, and the theft succeeded. But the Princess of Pohjola pursued them in eagle shape and overtook the fugitives on the open sea and strove to regain the Vessel. It fell in the struggle on the water and was broken, the lid remaining in her hands. The result was that wretchedness and famine have reigned ever since in the land. One of the thieving gods found certain fragments on the shore, and these being sown grew into trees, one of them becoming a lofty oak which darkened the sun. Jacob Grimm says: "We gather from all these examples, still far from complete"—he has quoted a cloud of instances—"how under the veil of sensuous images—Spear, Hammer, Hat, Helmet, Cloak, Horn, Goblet, Necklace, Ring, Ship, Wheel, Tree, Rod, Flower, Cloth, Meat and Drink—lay hidden the spiritual virtues of Victory, Happiness, Peace, Healing, Fertility, Riches, and Poetic Art." It is to be questioned whether the lesson arises from the Sampo itself. See TEUTONIC MYTHOLOGY, English Translation, II, p. 873.

<sup>3</sup> The cited and citable examples get further away from Cup and Cauldron notions when a full enumeration is attempted, as the following cases shew: (1) In the KALEVOLA there is a mill which gives a perpetual supply of flour. (2) In the VOYAGE OF MAILDUN and his Companions, the travellers reach an Isle of the Four Precious Walls, where a maiden gives them food from a small Vessel. It looked like cheese, but "whatever taste pleased each person best, that was the taste" he found therein. They had precisely the same experience at the Palace of the Crystal Bridge. (3) There is also the Feast of Gobnann, the Dedanann Smith, instituted by Mannanan Mac Lir. Whoever was present and partook of the food and drink was set free from sickness, decay and old age.

not being a Passion Relic, occupies usually a false position in the sequence, while supposititious analogies in folk-lore connect with these solely as so many further and less or more notable instances of magical weapons. Among these may be mentioned the White Glaive of Light, which MacIain Direach is set to keep in order by command of the Seven Big Women of Dhiurrath, and with which he tries to run away but fails. They are willing to exchange it for the Yellow Filly belonging to the King of Erin. Now this King will part with it only for the King of Farne's daughter; but the hero of the story manages to get the daughter for himself, she abetting, and also the Glaive of Light, the office of which is to keep off foes, presumably by its mere exhibition.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these somewhat phantasmal but still subsistent consanguinities, we have seen at full length that there are two versions of the Quest or Mission of Perceval into which the Mystery of the Grail does not enter as a part, and that in their extant forms they are much later than any of the Grail literature in Northern French. One is the story of Peredur, the son of Evrawc, in the Welsh MABINOGION, while the other is the English Metrical Romance of SYR PERCYVELLE, both of which have been analysed at due length in the immediately preceding section. Scholars have compared them with the LAY OF THE GREAT FOOL, being a Myth of wide diffusion, of which these are the latest developments. This Myth is not alone much older than either but is earlier than the Grail form of the Saga in the CONTE DEL GRAAL. It is in fact a primitive Mythos, a characteristic example of which will be found in Campbell's collection and must be left therein for consultation by those who are concerned. There is no Quest, there is no Question, there is no Wonder Vessel: there is not even a Sword or a Lance in many versions. The relation of this Lay and its scattered variants to the Perceval le Gallois, the Didot-Modena texts, not to speak of the PERLESVAUS, is the relation borne by certain other old fables to some of the Shakespeare plays. In other words, the originals are of no consequence in the light of their developments.

It does not follow from these considerations, so far as they have now proceeded, that the Grail texts had no folk-lore antecedents or that these were other than Celtic. My task has been only to place them in their true light and leave them to stand at their value. Another point arises at this stage, and the most recent view on its subject may be taken to represent the past of independent criticism which lies behind it. It is an old story that there is as yet no certain canon of criticism to distinguish the genuine memorials of Welsh archaic literature from a vast mass of false seeming which wears only the vestures and mask of antiquity. It is now many years since M. Villemarqué, the Breton, illustrated what it was possible to do in the production and extension of Armorican remains, and in the Principality there have been more

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *Op. cit.*, I, XLVI; II, pp. 332 *et seq.* In another version the Glaive of Light belongs to the King of the Oak Windows. I, p. 3. It seems also to give vision before and behind, obviously by casting light in both directions. I, p. 263.

than one Villemarqué—*fabulatores famosi*—whose obtained results, if not calculated to deceive even the elect, have made the specialist wary, sometimes about rejecting but always of accepting anything in the definite and absolute sense. Dr. J. D. Bruce has brought forward the results of his inquiries into all aspects of the subject, and I am proposing to summarise them at this point as practically the latest and certainly the most mature and competent, having regard to his intimate acquaintance not only with the entire field of the Grail subject but with all critical opinion which has unfolded thereupon. It is to be understood, however, that his researches and decisions on the Celtic hypothesis concern me only as belonging to the scholastic apparatus, for reasons which will emerge at the close of the present section.

In respect of the Welsh MABINOGION, it is affirmed that three of these tales are derived undoubtedly, and in the most direct manner possible, from three French Romances, namely, (1) OWEN, or THE LADY OF THE FOUNTAIN, which corresponds to Chrétien's YWAIN, otherwise LE CHEVALIER DU LYON; (2) PEREDUR AB EVRAWC, corresponding to his CONTE DEL GRAAL; and (3) GERAINT AND ENID, which answers to his EREC. Their French origin is unmistakable, in the coherent structure of the stories and the character of the life reflected, its social spirit included, which is that of the twelfth century in France. It is indicated also that in this triad as a whole the localisation is vague and shadowy, whereas in the genuinely Welsh stories the movements of the heroes through the land of Wales can be followed even at this day. Bruce affirms further (1) that in the Chrétien and Welsh trilogies the incidents concur throughout and also in their successive order, with one exception only in the LADY OF THE FOUNTAIN. There is further no need of calling into existence those imaginary and much earlier French sources which were loved by scholarship in the past to account for the MABINOGION cited: Chrétien will suffice.

The debt of the Galahad Quest and the PARZIVAL to the folk-lore Bowl of Plenty is qualified by the considerable doubt which is cast on the antiquity of the Irish TUATHA DE DANANN Tradition, with its Cauldron of the Dagda, Stone of Destiny, Spear and Sword of Lug: it is pointed out that we know of this grouping only through the seventeenth century Irish historian Keating, who, moreover, does not define their nature, saying only that the Stone of Destiny was that which was brought by Edward I from Scone in Scotland and is now in Westminster Abbey. It is suggested that the other Talismans may have been no more marvellous. On this question of date it will be seen that the whole problem of Celtic influence on Grail literature is thrown open to debate. So also Bruce says that "the debt of the French Romances to Irish sources seems to . . . have been greatly exaggerated".<sup>1</sup>

As regards the PEREDUR story, Campbell said of old that it exists in many languages, including Icelandic,<sup>2</sup> which is certainly true in respect

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 46, 47, 71, 94, 270, 273, 274.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, *Op. cit.*, IV, p. 281.

of the Great Fool Saga. He was an admirable and enchanting scholar for his period, but the connection which he instituted between the PEREDUR and the CONTE DEL GRAAL as between root and branch has passed utterly away. Nutt was his disciple and followed him till he was corrected by Zimmern and abandoned the point of view.<sup>1</sup> It follows that there is no older system shining through the MABINOZION "as clearly as these shine through the French and English Romances," and much less that their "ultimate source is in the East".<sup>2</sup>

When the Celtic hypothesis was most flourishing as an explanation of Grail origins, and when it was presented by some of the later exponents, like Miss J. L. Weston, with an assurance recalling the triumphant dogmatism of Professor Tyndall's Belfast Address, it left the great texts of the Grail literature unaffected, since the fact remained that Secret Words of Eucharistic Consecration and the Arch-Natural Ordination of Joseph II owed nothing to pre-Christian Celtic lore and dream. Above all and more than all the last Grail Mass at Sarras and the last Communion of Galahad had no root in such sources. It remains, however, to say that notwithstanding the change of view on the part of more recent and fully equipped scholarship, summarised in the name of Bruce, the story of the Great Fool is suggested most assuredly by Chrétien's first Romance of PERCEVAL LE GALLOIS, though I am disposed to think that the prototype was little more than a vague and floating recollection in his mind. So also the Magical Cauldron is not only of Irish, Welsh and Scottish Tradition, for its independent stories are all the wide world over. There is every reason to think that some of them were abroad in Northern France at the Grail period, but that which follows therefrom is less than little. We can still agree with Bruce that no one as yet has brought forward a folk tale, Celtic or otherwise, corresponding in incident and setting to the Grail story;<sup>3</sup> that the debt of Arthurian Romance to Celtic Sources has been exaggerated greatly; and that "personal invention was the most important factor" in its creation.<sup>4</sup> It was not the reflection of a great body of Oral Tradition "in any essential degree". Bruce cites Foerster and Golther as predecessors who took this view. In a word, the authors of the Romances "were primarily poets, not transcribers of folk tales". In final conclusion on this theme, the last words of Bruce, in which the Celtic folk tale origin of the Grail Legend is set aside as unsatisfactory,<sup>5</sup> may be compared with my own detached and reasonably moderating position. After all the moils and batterings, something remains to be said for reflections brought over from the past and corresponding broadly speaking to the Celtic hypothesis which has held the field so long. It is difficult to believe that the Grail Dish or Stone of Plenty owed nothing to the Cauldron of the Dagda, Cauldron of Ceridwen, Stone of Mananann, so on and so forward, supposing that on the question of date they could have been known to the veiled

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, *Op. cit.*, IV, p. 277.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, pp. IV, V, 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, p. 275.



author of the Galahad Quest and to Wolfram von Eschenbach, failing which something may have come to them from much further away. Alternatively, those who invented so much may well have invented more, and having regard to their theme it would be almost of necessity in the likeness of those who had preceded, but with due allowance for variations in mode and form and purpose.

Supposing therefore that certain antecedents of folk-lore passed into the literature of the Grail, undergoing—as they did assuredly—some great transmutations, so also did more than one element of old Druidism merge into Christianity. Rite and Myth and Doctrine were tinged by Tradition and Doctrine and Rite; for things which co-exist may tend to dovetail, at least by their outer edges; and there are traces, I think, of a time when the Priest who said Mass at the Altar was sometimes a Druid at heart, and in his heart saw no reason for the Druid to be less a Priest. Long after the conversion of the Celt, enigmatical fables and mystical Rites lingered in Gaul and Britain. There were Masters of Lesser Mysteries, old arts and pseudo-sciences, whose knowledge, it has been claimed, was perpetuated under the shadow of the Celtic Church and even within the pale thereof. By the evidence of some who spoke on its part of old, the Bardic Sanctuary opposed no “Precious Concealed Mysteries”; and the Church not improbably received into its general alembic much that was not of its matter, expecting to convert it therein and turn it out in a new form.<sup>1</sup> In the fourth century there were Professors at Bordeaux who had once at least been Druids, and for the Doctrines of their later reception the heart of their old experience may have been also an alembic. St. Deuno in his last moments is recorded to have exclaimed: “I see the Trinity and Peter and Paul, and the Druids and the Saints”—a choir invisible, the recognition of which would, if known, have imperilled his canonisation, supposing that its process had been planned at Rome.

At a much later period, even in the twelfth century, we have still the less or more vague intimation of perpetuated Mysteries, and there is no doubt that the belief in these was promoted generally by the Bards. The twelfth century saw also the beginning of a great revival of literature in Wales. I have cited certain Iolo Manuscripts which are late and of dubious authenticity; but accepting their evidence under all necessary reserves, they refer the revival in question to Rhys ap Idris, who assumed the sovereignty of South Wales, bringing with him “the system of the Round Table, as it is with regard to Minstrels and Bards”. And when the time came for the last struggle between the Celtic and Latin Rites over the independence of the British Church, I can believe well enough that all which remained, under all transformations, of that old mixed wisdom of the West was fighting also

<sup>1</sup> It is an old story that Pope Gregory the Great counselled Augustine on the eve of his journey to Britain that what it was possible to take over and adapt should so be suffered and treated, rather than destroyed. Doubtless a similar course was followed instinctively by those who came previously to convert the land and the islands. Doubtless also it has been a key of conquest in the hands of other religions.

for its life. When pseudo-Taliesin prophesied the return of Cadwaladr, who had passed into the unmanifest like Arthur, and like Arthur was destined to come back,<sup>1</sup> I believe also that this allegory of rebirth or resurrection, if it referred on one side to the aspirations of the Celtic Church, did not less embody on another the desirable notion of a second spring for the Mysteries which once dwelt in Wales, which even after many centuries were interned rather than dead.

We can imagine—though perhaps at a far distance—what kinds of medley resulted from such interpenetration of Doctrine and Practice as I have here indicated: the shadowed sacrifice of human victims in Ceremonial Observances on the one side; the Eternal Sacrifice of the Victim Who is Divine and Human on the other; the renovation of the Candidate as the term of Symbolical Ritual; and the Resurrection of Christ as the first-fruits of the redeemed in the signal degree. With these as the analogies of or between opposites, there were meeting-points and enough in the Lesser Mysteries, while encircling as an atmosphere there were, on the one hand, the presages, the signs, the omens, the vaticinations, the inspirations dark and strange of Seers and Bards; but on the other there were the Great Consecrations, the Holy Objects, the Sacred Traditions, the Inspired Writings and all the Annals of Sanctity. In fine, against the Solemn Pageants of Pagan Ceremonial Performances there was the Great Mystery of the Faith in Christ, the White Sacrifice, and the Clean Oblation of the Eucharist. I confess that if there were otherwise any evidence, it might be imagined that Secret Words, exceeding *ex hypothesi* all Words of Institution in the Ordinary of the Official Mass-Book, and strange claims of a Priesthood which had never been authorised at Rome, might issue from so enigmatic and dubious a Sanctuary.

Speaking still in my detached manner, the earlier Welsh literature, whatever its dates, is a little like the wild world before the Institution of the Sacraments; the poem of Chrétien is a little like the natural world with its interdict just beginning to be removed: it is also like the blind man restored in part to sight, seeing all things inverted and devoid of their normal proportions. The LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL, or PERLESVAUS, occupies a middle position between the Great Quest and Wolfram: the Enchantments of Britain—as if Logres were this visible Nature—have dissolved: Grace is moving through Nature; the Great Mystery is being declared and testified to everywhere. In the PARZIVAL the things which are without suffer a certain renewal; and yet the German Epic is in no sense a near correspondence and equivalent of the Galahad Quest.

From all this matter of fact, matter of aspiration and high matter of dream, we can infer that wherever the cradle may be of the Grail and its root Legend—Gaul, Armorica or Wales, but the last as a possibility

<sup>1</sup> Cf. IOLO MSS., p. 525. Cadwaladr the Blessed lies buried in Rome, and when his bones are brought thence to the Isle of Britain, then shall the Cymry regain their crown and sovereignty.

apart in a world of shadow—there was at work, less or more everywhere in the Celtic region, what I have called the alembic of transmutation. I care not what went therein—Cauldron of Ceridwen, Cauldron of the Dagda, Head of Bran and Poisoned Spear which smote him, Lay of the Great Fool, Expulsion and Return Formula, Visitations of the Underworld, and so forward for ever and ever—for that which came out was the Mystery of Faith manifested after a new manner, and the search for that Sanctuary wherein, among all waste places of the cosmos, the evidence of things unseen became palpable to the exalted senses of the Great Quest. Little and less than little does it matter how that began which reaches this high term; and for us therefore, who “needs must love the highest when we see it”, we can only guess the beginning which brought the term we find. However, its work is done, and it is not a living concern of ours.

In our childhood we passed through the sorcery of fables, from Bidpai to La Fontaine; but these were not everlasting dwellings. In our youth there may still have been some of us who looked to see great lights in *L'ORIGINE DE TOUS LES CULTES* and in *THE RUINS OF EMPIRES*; but again there was no abiding place. At this day it seems weariness, and is almost idle, to go back to the scrolls of Mythologies, or otherwise than with great caution to folk-lore, when in far different flights we have touched the hem of His garment. I do not propose to include the study of folk-lore in the same category as the imaginings of Dupuis, Volney and Godfrey Higgins; but unless we can presuppose a certain enlightenment it may prove a morass sometimes rather than a pathway. However this may be, in seeking for a new scheme of interpretation, it is necessary rather than desirable that we should make a beginning by doing justice to old schemes, the office of which is at once recognised and reduced by the entrance of an overlord into his proper patrimony. It must be said otherwise that the old appeal of scholarship to the derivation of Grail Legends from folk-lore and the anxious collection of fresh data from this source have acted in the past upon several groups of students like the head of Braid's lancet on his hypnotic subjects. They are pretexts which entranced them. There was never an occasion in which folk-lore was more important at the beginning—if only to get out of the way—and mattered in finality so little; it is a land of enchantment, withal somewhat dreary, and through it the Unspelling Quest passes laboriously to its term.

An old metaphorical maxim of one of the Secret pseudo-Sciences once said: “The stone becomes a plant, the plant an animal and the animal a man”; but it did not counsel its students to consult the stone that it might better understand man, though the stone remains a proper subject of investigation within its own limit. I leave readers who are after my own heart and within the classes of my proper school to apply this little parable to the question that is here at issue respecting the Grail in folk-lore. It remains to be said otherwise that one field of Celtic Research has been neglected so far, and it is that

precisely which may—by a bare possibility—throw light on the Christian aspects of the Grail Legend apart from the aspects of old non-Christian Myth. If there are analogies in the root-matter between the Hallows of Cup and Glass and folk-lore Talismans, there are others which are far more intimate between the lesser matters of the literature and Celtic Christian Hagiology. It seems a commonplace to add at the moment that particular Christian Tradition has for its environment the general Traditions of Christianity; and for explanatory purposes that may be best which lies the nearest: at least it enters reasonably into any full consideration of the whole subject.

Apart from the fixed purpose in the direction which I have specified—that purpose which having exhausted, and this too easily, the available fields of evidence, begins to imagine new; apart from the thousand and one things which, by the hypothesis, might be referable to folk-lore if the wreckage of that world had not been disintegrated by the mills of the centuries; the antecedents of the Grail in folk-lore have been a wide field for patient research: it has offered also an opportunity for great speculations which go to prove that the worlds of enchantment are not worlds which have passed like the Edomite Kings; but as it is certain that there was a King afterwards in Israel, I have concluded at this point to abandon those quests which for myself are without term or effect and hold only to the matter in hand, which is the development of a cosmos in literature out of those strange elements that strove one with another in pre-Christian Celtic literature.

## II

### THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE GRAIL LITERATURE

**I**T is impracticable to approach the literature of the Holy Grail for any purpose of special consideration in the absence of a working acquaintance with that which encompassed it externally in History, in Church Doctrine, in Popular Devotion and in Ecclesiastical Legend. As an acquaintance of this kind must not be assumed in my readers, I will take the chief points involved as follows: (1) The doctrinal position of the Church in respect of the Holy Eucharist; (2) the passage of Transubstantiation into dogma, and other circumstances which led up from the date of its definition to the Institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1264; (3) the Cultus of the Precious Blood; (4) the mind exhibited by the higher life and the mystical literature of sanctity; (5) the status of Minstrelsy; (6) the horizon filled by coincident Schools of thought within and without the Church; (7) the state of the Official Church itself, and more especially (8) the position of the Church in Britain, including its connection with the ambition of an English King; (9) the Legendary

History of certain Relics ; (10) the voice of Catholic Tradition regarding Joseph of Arimathæa ; (11) the aspects of coincident heresies which have been connected with Grail literature ; (12) the discovery of the SACRO CATINO in 1101 ; (13) the Invention of the Sacred Lance at Antioch ; (14) the Traditional History of certain Imputed Relics of St. John the Baptist.

The consideration of some of these points must be reserved for the time being ; but the particulars hereinafter following will enable an unversed reader to approach the literature with a knowledge of several elements which entered into its creation and were concerned in its development.

A great literature may arise in part or otherwise out of folk-lore, primeval fable and legend ; but albeit in this sense it will have antecedents in that which was at first oral and passed subsequently into writing, it does not happen that development can proceed without taking over other elements. That such elements were incorporated in the case of the literature of the Holy Grail is too obvious to call at this stage for further recitation in the absence of a particular motive. Those who in the later twelfth and the early thirteenth century produced the body-general of the Grail Cycles—being makers of songs and endless tellers of stories—knew something, as we have seen, at however far a distance of Celtic wonder-lore. It was the heritage of the Minstrel from long antecedent generations of Druids and Scalds and Bards. But there had come to them the hints and reflections at least of another and higher knowledge—a Tradition, a Legend, the rumour of a Secret perpetuated, possibly from far away ; above all and more than all, there had come over them something of the divine oppression, the secret sense of a Mystery which lies behind the open symbols of Christian Doctrine. Let us take in the first place the power and the portent of the great Latin Church, with its abiding presence of the Sacraments, its unfailing growth of Doctrine, its generation of New Doctrine, not indeed out of no elements, not indeed by the simple *fiat lux* of the Seat of Peter, for the Councils were many besides those which laid claim on an Œcumenical Title ; but in the Western countries of Europe—at so great a distance from the centre—the growth may have been almost unsuspected and often seemingly unprefaced, as if there had been spontaneous generation. Ever magnified and manifold in its resource, there was the popular devotion, centred about a particular locality, an especial holy person and this or that individual holy object. Under what circumstances, and with what actuating motives, we have to learn if we may ; but it can be understood in the lesser sense how far the singers and the songs which they drew from the past underwent a great transformation ; how the Bowl of Plenty—if this indeed had preceded—became the Chalice of the Eucharist ; how the Spear of many battles and the Sword of destruction became the Lance which pierced our Saviour and the weapon used at the martyrdom of His Precursor. I set it down that these things might

have intervened naturally as a simple work of causation which we can trace with comparative ease ; but they would not for this reason have assumed the particular complexion which characterises the Cycle at large of the literature : we should not have its implicits, its air and accent of mystery, its peculiar manifestation of Sacred Objects, or its insistence on their final removal. For the explanation of these things we shall have to look further afield ; but for the moment I need note only that the writers of the literature have almost without exception certified that they followed a book which had either come into their hands or of which they had received an account from some one who had seen or possessed a copy. We can trace in the later texts and can sometimes identify the particular book that they followed respectively ; but we come in fine to the alleged document which preceded all and which for us is as a centre of research.

Amidst the remanents of mythical elements and the phantasmagoria of popular devotion, the veneration of Relics included, there stands forth that which from Christian time immemorial has been termed the Mystery of Faith, the Grace not less visible because it is veiled so closely, and this is the Real Presence of Christ—after some manner—in the material symbols of the Eucharist. Seeing that the literature of the Holy Grail is, by the hypothesis of its Hallow-in-chief, most intimately connected with this Doctrine and the manifestation thereto belonging, it is desirable and essential before all things to understand the Eucharistic position at the period of the development of the literature. We have plenary records therein of two schools of thought, though the evidence of the one is more clamant than that of the other : they are respectively the School of Transubstantiation and that which is alternative thereto, namely, the Spiritual Interpretation of the Grace communicated in the palmary Sacrament of the Altar.

The great doctrinal debate of the closing twelfth and the early thirteenth century was that which concerned the Mystery of the Eucharist, and in matters of Doctrine there was no other which could be called second in respect thereof. It filled all men's ears, and there can be no question that the Sodality of Minstrelsy was scarcely less versed than the outer section of the Priesthood in its palmary elements. Of this debate France was a particular centre, while Languedoc, in the person of the Albigenses, was a place of holocaust, the denial of the Eucharist being one of the charges against them. As regards the debate itself, its *terminus ad quem* was reached when the Doctrine of Transubstantiation was decreed by the Council of Lateran in 1215, under Pope Innocent III. The words of the Definition are : " The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are truly contained under the Species of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament of the Altar, the Bread being transubstantiated into the Body and the Wine into the Blood ".<sup>1</sup> Long anterior to this promulgation there can be no doubt that the Doctrine represented the mind of the Church at the seat of its authority

<sup>1</sup> C. G. Coulton : FIVE CENTURIES OF RELIGION, Vol. I, p. 104.

and power. In contradistinction thereto were the views of the protesting sects, and there was the feeling of a minority which held, so long as it dared and could, to a spiritual interpretation of the Real Presence and yet, so to speak, was at work within the Sanctuary.<sup>1</sup> The external devotion to the Eucharist which was manifested more and more by the extremists on the side of the Church would be checked scarcely by the exponents of a middle way. At the dawn of the thirteenth century the Consecrated Elements were beginning to be elevated for the adoration of the people: the evidence is regarded as doubtful in respect of any earlier period. It must have become a custom in 1216, for a constitution of Honorius III speaks of it as of something which had been done always.<sup>2</sup> In 1229 Gregory IX devised the ringing of a bell before Consecration as a warning for the faithful to fall on their knees and worship Christ in the Sacrament.<sup>3</sup> Still earlier in the thirteenth century, Odo, Bishop of Paris, regulated the forms of veneration, more especially when the Sacred Elements were carried in procession.<sup>4</sup> Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, had taken similar precautions at the end of the twelfth century.<sup>5</sup> It seems to follow from the Constitutions of Odo that some kind of Reservation was practised at his period, and it is possible that the custom had descended from earlier times. There is nothing, however, in the Romances to shew that this usage was familiar: the Perpetual Presence was for them in the Holy Grail, and apparently in that only. Church and Chapel and Hermitage resounded daily with the Celebration of the Mass. In one instance we hear of a Tabernacle on the Altar or some kind of receptacle in which the Consecrated Elements reposed.<sup>6</sup> The most usual mediæval practice was to reserve in a dove-shaped Repository which hung before the Table of the Lord. The GRAND SAINT GRAAL has one noteworthy example of Reservation, for it represents a Sacred Host delivered to the custody of a convert, one also who was a woman and not in the vows of religion. It was kept by her in a box, and the inference of the writer is that Christ was, for this reason, always with her.<sup>7</sup> The reader who is dedicated in his heart to the *magnum mysterium* of official faith may

<sup>1</sup> Berenger combated the theory of Transubstantiation as far back as 1050.

<sup>2</sup> There is no trace of it in the Gallican Mass, as described by St. Germain de Paris (Migne: PATROLOGIA LATINA, tom. LXII) or in Warren's invaluable attempt to reconstruct the Ritual of the Celtic Church.

<sup>3</sup> The PERLESVAUS tells us on the authority of its mythical Josephus (1) that there was no bell in Greater or Lesser Britain during the days of the Grail; (2) that people were called together by a horn and other devices; (3) that King Arthur rejoiced when he heard a bell apparently for the first time; (4) that he heard one daily on his pilgrimage to King Fisherman's Castle; (5) that a bell was in evidence also at the Grail Mass in the Castle. Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 227, 249, 250. HIGH HISTORY, Branch XX, Titles 6, 7; XXII, 2, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Having regard not only to the devotion of the period but to the passion for spectacles, those which were connected with wealthy Churches must have been decorative and impressive sights. Some of the Grail Pageants may embody reminiscence as well as invention. It will be observed that these Processions in public imply Reservation.

<sup>5</sup> Not only on account of the crowd of witnesses but the crowd which followed.

<sup>6</sup> They were reserved for the use of the sick as well as the absent in the Celtic Rite. See F. E. Warren: THE LITURGY AND RITUAL OF THE CELTIC CHURCH, 1881, pp. 138, 139.

<sup>7</sup> LESTOIRE DEL SAINT GRAAL in Sommer, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 70.

be disposed to regard this as something approaching sacrilege, and I confess to the same feeling ; but it was a frequent practice in the early Church, and not, as it might be concluded, a device of Romance.

As regards Transubstantiation, the voice of the literature in the absence of an express statement on either side seems to represent both views. The Vulgate Chronicles of the Grail are as text-books for the illustration of the Doctrine ; but it is absent from the Lesser Chronicles, and outside this negative evidence of simple silence there are other grounds for believing that it was unacceptable to their writers, who seem to represent what I have called already a Spiritual Interpretation of the real Presence, corresponding to what ecclesiologists have termed a body of Low Doctrine within the Church.<sup>1</sup>

There was another question exercising the Church at the same period, though some two centuries were to elapse before it was to be decided by the central authority. It was that of Communion in both kinds, which was finally abolished by the Council of Constance in 1415, the decision then reached being confirmed at Trent in 1562. The ordinance of Communion in one kind was preceded by an intermediate period when ecclesiastical feeling was moving in that direction ; but there was another and an earlier period—that is to say, in the fifth century—when communion under one kind was prohibited expressly on the ground that the division of the Great Mystery could not take place without sacrilege. As a species of middle way, there was the practice of the intincted or steeped Host which seems to have been coming into use at the beginning of the tenth century, although it was forbidden at the Council of Brago in Galicia, except possibly in the case of the sick and of children. The custom of mixing the Elements was defended by Emulphus, Bishop of Rochester, in 1120, and Archbishop Richard referred to the intincted Host in 1175. All these problems of Practice and Doctrine were the religious atmosphere in which the literature of the Grail was developed. There were great names on all sides ; on the side of Low Doctrine there was the influential School of Berengarius ; on that of Transubstantiation there was the name of Peter Lombard, the Master of Sentences, though he did not dare to determine the nature of the conversion—whether, that is to say, it was “ formal, substantial, or of some other kind ” : on the side of communion under one element there was that of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angel of the Schools, in connection with which it is to be observed that there is no instance throughout Grail literature of Wine being administered to any Knight of Quest on those rare occasions when he was permitted to receive the Bread.

With an environment of this kind it was inevitable that Poetry and Legend should take over the Mystery of the Eucharist, and should exalt

<sup>1</sup> After what manner it was related to and distinguished from that of Berengarius, which was condemned, cannot be discussed here. It is to be observed only (1) that when the Vision of Christ in the Tower explained the Symbolism of Mass Vessels to Joseph of Arimathæa, he heard nothing concerning Transubstantiation, nor (2) does it appear in the EARLY MERLIN OF DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL.



it and dwell thereon. In any case, from the moment that the Eucharist entered into the life of romantic literature, that literature entered after a new manner into the heart of the Western peoples. Very soon, it has been said, the Grail came to be regarded as the material symbol of the Catholic and Christian faith, but in the proper understanding it was really the most spiritual symbol: I believe that it was so considered, and the statement does little more than put into English the inspired words of the Ordinary of the Mass. In the middle of the mistaken passion for holy wars in Palestine; through the monstrous iniquity of Albigensian Crusades; the ever-changing struggle notwithstanding between Pope and King and Emperor; within the recurring darkness of interdict, when the Sacraments were hidden like the Grail; the Legend of the Holy Grail grew and brightened, till the most stressful of Adventurous Times, the most baleful of all Enchantments, shone as it seemed in its shining, and a light which had been never previously on the land or sea of literature glorified the Spirit of Romance. It was truly as if the Great Company of singers and chroniclers had gathered at the High Altar to partake of the Blessed Sacrament and had communicated not only in both kinds but in elements of Extra-Valid Consecration. The thesis of this section is that God's immanence was declared at the time of the literature through all Christendom, by the Mystery of Faith, and that the development of Eucharistic Doctrine into that of Transubstantiation was only an extravagant recognition of the corporate union between Christ and His people. That immanence was declared also by the high Branches of Grail Romance, even as by the quests of the mind in philosophy—after which manner Romance, in fine, became the mirror of Religion, and the literature testified, under certain veils, to a Mystery of Divine Experience which once at least was manifested in Christendom.

As the theory of Transubstantiation did not pass into dogma till a late period in the development of the canon of the Grail, so it can be said that romantic texts like the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, the LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL and the GALAHAD QUEST, but the last especially, which contains the Higher Code of Chivalry, were instrumental in promoting that dogma by the proclamation of a Sacrosaintly Feast of Corpus Christi maintained for ever in the Hidden House of the Grail, till the time came when the Festival of Exaltation and the Assumption into Heaven of the Sacred Emblems was held in fine at Sarras. There was thus a correlation of activity between the two sides of the work, for it was out of the growing dogma that the Grail Legend in the Vulgate Chronicle assumes its particular sacramental complexion.

Passing from the doctrinal matters expressed and implied in the literature to the Sacred Palladia with which it is concerned more especially, we enter into another species of environment. Out of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation and the congeries of devotional feelings connected with it there originated what may be termed a cultus of the Body of God and of His Blood, understood in the Mystery of the

Incarnation, and the instinct which lies behind the veneration of Relics came into a marked degree of operation. Such veneration is instinctive, as I have just said, and representing on the external side, invalidly or not, the substance of things unseen in Religion, it is so rooted in our natural humanity that it would be difficult to regard its manifestation in Christendom as characteristic more especially of Christianity than of some other phases of belief. The devotion which, because of its excesses, is by a hasty and unrooted philosophy termed superstition—which no instinct can ever be—manifested early enough and never wanted its objects. There can scarcely be any call to point out that in the considerations which here follow I am concerned with questions of fact and not with adjudication thereon. The veneration of Relics and cognate objects, to which some kind of sanctity was imputed, became not only an environment of Christianity at a very early period, but it so remained almost to the present day for more than half of Christendom. It may be among the grievous burdens of those ecclesiastical systems in which it prevails and in which it is still promoted, but having said what the sense of intellectual justice seems to require, that it may be exonerated from the false charge of superstition, I have only to add—and this is to lift the Grail literature out of the common judgment which might be passed upon memorials of Relic worship—that the instinct of such devotions, as seen at their best in the Official Churches, has always an arch-natural implicit: it works upon the simple principle that God is not the God of the dead but of the living, and the reverence, by example, for the Precious Blood of Christ depends from the doctrine of His immanence in any memorials which He has left.<sup>1</sup> I need not add that, on the hypothesis of the Church itself, the sense of devotion would be better directed, among external objects, towards the Real Presence in the Symbols of the Eucharist; but in the Grail literature it was round about the Sacramental Mystery that the Relics of the Passion were collected, operating and shining in that light.

We know in a plenary sense that the Sacred Vessel of the Legends was in the root-idea a Reliquary, and as such that it was the container and preserver of the Precious Blood of Christ, though as time went on we hear less and less of the content in its original form, for at the Miraculous Masses it is the Body of God in the human figure of the Christhood which comes forth from the Dish or Chalice. In any case, the romantic passion which brought the Reliquary into connection with the Sacrament which communicated the Christ Life to the believing soul and the doctrinal passion which led to the definition of Transubstantiation interacted one upon another. John Damascene had said in the eighth century that the Elements of Bread and Wine were assumed and united to the Divinity by the Invocation of the Holy

<sup>1</sup> The Grail at the Mass of the Grail in the Great Quest provided the Feast of Food in Christ, and the Reliquary itself, containing the Precious Blood, answered to the ordinary Chalice of Wine which was and still is adored by the laity but of which only the Priest partakes in the Roman Rite.

Ghost, for the Spirit descends and changes.<sup>1</sup> The Venerable Bede has said that the Lord gave us the Sacrament of His Flesh and Blood in the figure of Bread and Wine. And again: "Christ is absent as to His Body, but is present as to His Divinity". And yet further: "The Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are received in the mouth of believers."<sup>2</sup>

For those who out of all expectation translated the problems of Doctrine, as they best could, into the language of Romance—out of the Latin, as they said in their imaginative fashion—the Palladium of all research was that Vessel of Singular Election which contained in their ingenuous symbolism the Blood of Christ. But seeing that they were in haste to shew how those who were worthy of receiving Arch-Natural Sacraments did participate at the Grail Mass in corporeal and incorporeal elements adequate to sustain both body and soul, so did the Reliquary become the Chalice, from which the Christ came down to communicate His Own Life. They collected also, under ecclesiastical and monastic ægis, certain other Relics about the Relic-in-chief. Now, the point concerning all is that most of the minor Hallows were known already as local objects of sanctity no less than the palmary Hallow, but the sanctity ascribed to the latter and the devotion thereto belonging were beginning to prevail generally. It is difficult to trace the growth of this kind of cultus; but as to the worship of spiritual devotion there was offered everywhere in Christendom the Mystical Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, so at many shrines—as if the more visible symbol carried with it a validity of its own, a more direct and material appeal—there was the reputed *sang real* of Christ preserved in a Reliquary. Some of these local devotions were established and well known before the appearance of any text of the Holy Grail with which we are acquainted—probably before those texts which it has been customary to postulate as antecedent to the extant literature.

We have at the present day the Feast of the Precious Blood, which is a modern invention, and perhaps for some even who are within the fold of the Latin Church, it may be classed among the unhappy memorials of the Pontificate of Pius IX. This notwithstanding, it is what may be termed popular, and has in England its confraternities and other systems to maintain it in the mind of the laity. It has the London Oratory as its more particular centre, and it is described as an union and an apostolate of intercessory prayer. Without such assistance in the Middle Ages we can understand that the cultus had its appeal to the devotional side of the material mind, for which flesh and blood profited a good deal, in spite of asceticism and the complication

<sup>1</sup> That is to say—or at least more especially—by virtue of the *Epiclesis* Clause in the Mass Formula of Consecration. It seems obvious that John Damascene was not teaching Transubstantiation.

<sup>2</sup> The citations are interesting in their contrast, for if Christ be "absent as to His Body," the latter is not received "in the mouth of believers." The truth is that no one really knew what happened at the Mass-Consecration till rigid definition intervened, and they contradicted themselves occasionally, as well as others.

of implicits behind the counsels of perfection in the religious life of the age.

The historical antiquity of the local sanctities which centre about certain Relics is shrouded like some Masonic events in the vague grandeur of time immemorial, and a defined date is impossible. Because the Legends of the Grail are connected with the powers and wonders of several Hallowed Objects belonging to the Passion of Christ, it is essential rather than desirable to ascertain whether at the period when the literature arose—and antedating it, if that be possible—there were such Objects already in existence and sufficiently well known to respond as a *terminus a quo* in respect of the development of the Legends. The places which appear as claimants to the possession of Relics of the Precious Blood are, comparatively speaking, numerous; among others there are Bruges, Mantua, Saintes, the Imperial Monastery at Weingarten, and even Beyrout. According to the story of Mantua, the Relic was preserved by Longinus, the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Christ. Within the historical period, it is said to have been divided, and some part of it was secured by the Monastery of Weingarten, already mentioned. This portion was subdivided and brought from Germany by Richard of Cornwall, the brother of Henry III. Fractional as the portion was, it is affirmed to have been a large Relic, and the fortunate possessor founded a Religious Congregation to guard and venerate it. Later on, however, it was divided again into three parts, of which one was retained by the Congregation, one was deposited in a monastery built for the purpose at Ashted, near Berkhamstead, and the third in a third monastery erected at Hailes in Gloucestershire. All these were foundations by Richard of Cornwall; and to explain such continual division, it must be remembered that this was a period when the building of Churches and Religious Houses was prohibited without relics to sanctify them. Now, the story of Richard himself may be accepted as tolerably well founded; but there is much doubt concerning the Relics at Weingarten and at Mantua itself. The alternative statements are (1) that in 1247 the Templars sent to King Henry III a *vas vetustissimum*, having the appearance of crystal and reputed to contain the Precious Blood;<sup>1</sup> (2) that in the same year, and to the same King, there was remitted by the Patriarch of Jerusalem a Reliquary termed the Sangreal, which had once belonged to Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa.<sup>2</sup> Now it is obvious that at the period of Henry III the canon of the Graal literature was almost closed: and these stories are obviously a reflection of that literature; it was also the time when (1) the *Sacro Catino* of Genoa may have begun to be regarded as the Grail, and when (2) a similar attribution was given to a

<sup>1</sup> The story is told by Matthew Paris in his *HISTORIA ANGLIÆ*. See the Paris edition of 1644, p. 493.

<sup>2</sup> The testimony of Matthew Paris shews that the two stories are in reality one; that the authenticity of the Reliquary sent by the Templars, or rather *Magister Templi*, was vouched for by the Patriarch in question as well as by certain Abbots and other "magnates of the Holy Land."

Sacred Vessel which had been long preserved at Constantinople ; but these objects, whether Dishes or Chalices, were not Reliquaries. It will be seen that the claim of Mantua remains over with nothing to account for its origin. Of Beyrout I have heard only, and have no details to offer. But the Relic of Bruges has a clear and methodical history, passing from Legend into a domain which may be that of fact. The Legend is that Joseph of Arimathæa having collected the Blood from the wounds of Christ, as the literature of the Grail tells us, placed it in a phial, which was taken to Antioch by St. James the Less, who was the first Bishop of that city. The possible historical fact is that the Patriarch of Antioch gave an alleged Reliquary about 1130 to a Knight of Bruges who had rendered signal services to the Church in Antioch. It was brought back by him to his native place, and there has remained to this day. One dubious element in the story is the gift of such a Relic under any circumstances whatever, while a point in its favour is that the Vial has the character of oriental work which is referred by experts in ancient brass to the seventh or eighth century.<sup>1</sup>

In comparison with this simple and fairly consistent claim, there is a monstrous invention connected with the Monastery of the Holy Trinity at Fécamp in Normandy. Here there is—or there was at least in the year 1840—a Tabernacle of white marble, decorated with sculptured figures and inscribed : “ HIC SANGUIS D.N., I.H.V., X.P.I.” It is called therefore the Tabernacle of the Precious Blood.<sup>2</sup>

The story is that Joseph of Arimathæa removed the Blood from the wounds of Christ after the body had been taken down from the Cross, using his knife for the purpose and collecting the sacred fluid in his gauntlet. The gauntlet he placed in a coffer, and this he concealed in his house. The years passed away, and on his death-bed he bequeathed the uncouth Reliquary to his nephew Isaac, telling him that if he preserved it the Lord would bless him in all his ways. Isaac and his wife began to enjoy every manner of wealth and prosperity ; but she was an unconverted Jewess, and seeing her husband performing his devotions before the coffer, she concluded that he had dealings with an evil spirit and denounced him to the High Priest. The story says that he was acquitted : but he removed with the Reliquary to Sidon, where the approaching Siege of Jerusalem was made known to him in a vision. He concealed therefore the Reliquary in a double tube of lead, with the knife and the head of the Lance which had pierced the side of Christ. The tube itself he hid in the trunk of a fig-tree, the bark of which closed over its contents, so that no fissure was visible. A second vision on the same subject caused him to cut down the tree, and he was inspired to commit it to the waves. In the desolation which he felt thereafter an angel told him that his treasure had

<sup>1</sup> The Reliquary is in evidence, is carried annually in Procession and Bruges is not far away for those who are concerned with approving or rejecting the views of experts. Whether some of the latter have pronounced counter-views is another question.

<sup>2</sup> See Le Roux de Lincy : *ESSAI SUR L'ABBAYE DE FÉCAMP*, 1840.

come to shore in Gaul and was hidden in the sand near the valley of Fécamp.<sup>1</sup>

I do not propose to recount the various devices by which the history of the fig-tree is brought up to the period when the monastery was founded at the end of the tenth century. The important points in addition are (1) that the nature of the Reliquary did not satisfy the custodians, and, like the makers of Grail books, they wanted an Arch-Natural Chalice to help out their central Hallow; (2) that they secured this from the Priest of a neighbouring Church who had celebrated Mass on a certain occasion, and had seen the Consecrated Elements converted into flesh and blood; (3) that a second knife was brought, later on, by an angel; (4) that a general exposition of all the imputed Relics took place on the High Altar in 1171; (5) that their praises and wonders were celebrated by a Guild of Jongleurs attached to the monastery, which guild is said to have originated early in the eleventh century, and was perpetuated for over four hundred years; (6) that the story is told in a Metrical Romance of the thirteenth century, though in place of Joseph the character in chief is said there to be Nicodemus; (7) that there are other documents in French and in Latin belonging to different and some of them to similarly early periods; (8) that there is also a Mass of the Precious Blood, which was published together with the poem in 1840, and this is, exoterically speaking, a kind of Mass of the Grail; but I fear that a careful examination might create some doubt of its antiquity; and, speaking generally, I do not see (1) that any of the documents have been subjected to critical study; or (2) that Fécamp is likely to have been more disdainful about the law of great inventions than other places with Hallows to maintain in Christian—or indeed in any other—times.

So far as regards the depositions which it might be possible to take in the Monastery concerning its Tabernacle; and there is only one thing more which should be mentioned in this connection. It has been proved by careful research among the extant codices of the CONTE DEL GRAAL that in some copies of the continuation by Wauchier the episode of Mont Douloureux is said to have been derived from a book written at Fécamp.<sup>2</sup> It follows that one important text at least in the literature of the Holy Grail draws something from the Monastery of the Holy

<sup>1</sup> The author just cited is not only the authority-in-chief on the claims of Fécamp, its archives and its history but he is the first, I believe, to connect its Reliquary with the Grail Legend. Heinrich followed after a lapse of fifteen years, so it was a fairly old proposition when Miss Weston took it up with enthusiasm in comparatively recent days, but fared rather badly at the hands of German criticism. The question is naturally unimportant from my own point of view. Fécamp is one of many places which claim the possession of Reliquaries containing the Precious Blood or were in a position to do so in the past. It is not impossible that the sum total of their content would exceed the blood capacity of any human being; but it is quite certain that the question signifies little. Europe was a storehouse of Relics when Grail literature was evolving: it lived and moved and had its being among them, was itself largely a record of Relics drawn into Romance, and in a sense it was in debt to all. There is no reason why Fécamp should be excluded; but it is eminently desirable that its influence should not be exaggerated.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Weston regards the statement not only as made by Wauchier and not as interpolated into certain MSS. but imagines that the alleged book or story was a developed Grail Romance.

Trinity ; but, lest too much consequence should be attributed to this fact, it may be noted in conclusion (1) that the episode in question has no integral connection with the Grail itself ; (2) that the Tradition of Fécamp which I have characterised as monstrous, by which I mean in comparison with other Legends of the Precious Blood, is distinct from that of the Holy Grail in the texts which constitute the literature ; and (3) that this literature ultimately passed out of Legend into the annunciation of a mystical claim. It is the nature of this claim, the Mystery of Sanctity which lies behind it and the quality of perpetuation by which the Mystery was handed on that is the whole term of my quest.

We have seen how at Fécamp there occurred a curious intervention on the part of an Arch-Natural Chalice, being that Vessel into which the Grail passes by a kind of superincursion, if it does not begin and end therein. But there are other Legends of Chalices and Dishes in the wide world of Reliquaries ; and in order to clear the issues it may be stated that the Table of the Last Supper is said to be preserved at St. John Lateran, with no history of its migration attached thereto. The Church of Savillac in the diocese of Montauban has also, or once had, a *Tabula Cœnæ Domini* and the Bread used at that Table. As regards the Chalice itself, there is one of silver at Valencia which the Catholic mind of Spain has long regarded as that of the Last Supper ; but I have no records of its history. There is one other which is world-wide in its repute, and this I have mentioned already, as if by an accidental reference. The *Sacro Catino* is preserved in the Church of St. Laurence at Genoa, and it is pictured in the book which Fra Gaetano di San Teresa dedicated to the subject in 1726.<sup>1</sup> It corresponds by its general appearance—which recalls, broadly speaking, the calix of an enormous flower—more closely to the form which might, in the absence of expert knowledge, be attributed to a decorative Paschal Dish than a wine-cup ; but there is no need to say that it is not an archaic glass vessel of Jewry. The history of so well-known an object is rather one of weariness in recital ; but at the crusading sack of Cæsarea in 1101 the Genoese received as their share of the booty, or in part consideration thereof, what they believed to be a great Cup or Dish carved out of a single emerald : it was about forty centimetres in height, and a little more than one metre in circumference ; the form was hexagonal, and it was furnished with two handles, polished and rough respectively. Now, Cæsarea was near enough to the Holy Fields for the purposes of a pious identification in the hearts of crusaders ; and moreover the vessel had been found in the mosque of Antioch, which might have helped to confuse their minds by suggesting that it was a stolen relic of Christian sanctity. But at the time when the city was pillaged there is no evidence that the notion occurred to the

<sup>1</sup> IL CATINO DI SMERALDO ORIENTALE, GEMMA CONSAGRATA DA N.S. GESU CRISTO NELL' ULTIMA CENA DEGLI AZIMI, etc., published at Genoa in the year mentioned, an exhaustive work and of voluminous proportions.

Genoese, or that it was on some dubious ground of the kind that at the return of some of them it was deposited in their Church as a gift. It may well have been a thank-offering, and this only; but I confess to a certain suspicion that, vaguely or otherwise, they had assumed its sacred character, and that its identification, not certainly with the Holy Grail, but with the Dish or Chalice of the Last Supper, may have begun earlier than has been so far supposed—antedating, that is to say, the first record in history. This record is connected with the name of Jacobus de Voragine, author of the Golden Legend, at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Later on the Grail rumours passed over from France into Italy, with the results already seen. The claim of a Grail connection could not be put forward by the Wardens of the *Sacro Catino*; but its identity with the Vessel of the Last Supper may have originated in this manner, to the increase of its value. The heaviest fines, and even death itself, were threatened against those who should touch the Vessel with any hard object. A cruel but belated disillusion awaited, however, its Wardens when it was taken to Paris in 1816 and was not only broken on the way back but, having been subjected to testing, was proved to be glass instead of emerald.

Second in importance only to the Talisman of the Holy Grail was the Sacred Lance of the Legend, and as in the majority of texts this is also a Relic of the Passion, our next task is to ascertain its antecedent or concurrent history in the life of popular devotion. We know already of the thesis manufactured at Fécamp; and the alleged shaft of the Spear used by Longinus is preserved in the Basilica of St. Peter's. According to Roman Martyrology the Deicide was suffering from ophthalmia when he inflicted the wound, and some of the Precious Blood overflowing his face, he was healed immediately—which miracle led, as it is told, to his conversion. Cassiodorus, who belongs to the fifth century, says that the Lance was in his days at Jerusalem; but this was the head and the imbedded part of the shaft, the rest being missing.<sup>2</sup> He does not account for its preservation from the time of Christ to his own. Gregory of Tours speaks of its removal to Constantinople, which notwithstanding it was discovered once more at Antioch for the encouragement of Crusaders, under circumstances of particular suspicion, even in the history of Relics. This was in 1098. There is also a long story of its being pledged by Baldwin II to Venice and of its redemption by St. Louis, which event brought it to Paris; but this is too late for our subject.<sup>3</sup> A Holy Lance with an exceedingly confused history—but identical as to its imputed connection with the Passion—

<sup>1</sup> See CHRONICON GENUENSE, *cap.* XVIII, in Muratori's RERUM ITALICARUM SCRIPTORES, IX, pp. 32 *et seq.*, Milan, 1726. It may be mentioned that the marvellous Dish was a genuine emerald on the authority of Jacobus. He was Archbishop of Genoa. The earliest reference to the *Sacro Catino* is that, however, of William of Tyre in his BELLUM SACRUM, Bk. X, *cap.* 16.

<sup>2</sup> It is not of consequence from the Reliquary standpoint and could be replaced at need, because the head only pierced the side of Christ.

<sup>3</sup> St. Louis came to the Throne in 1226 and died in 1270. At the period in question, even the TITUREL of Albrecht was in existence, the last text of the Grail canon.



came also into the possession of Charlemagne.<sup>1</sup> That any history of such a Hallow is worthless does not make it less important when the object is to exhibit the simple fact that it was well known in the world before Grail literature, as we find it, had as yet come into existence. According to St. Andrew of Crete, the head of the Lance was buried with the True Cross, but it does not seem to have been disinterred therewith.<sup>2</sup> It is just to add that some who have investigated the question bear witness that the history of the Hallow is reasonably satisfactory in the sixth century and thence onward.<sup>3</sup>

The next Relic which may be taken to follow on our list is the Crown of Thorns; it figures only in one Romance of the Grail, but has an important position therein.<sup>4</sup> The possession of single or several Sacred Thorns has been claimed by more than one hundred churches, without prejudice to which there are those which have the Crown itself, less or more intact.<sup>5</sup> This also is not included among the discoveries of St. Helena in connection with the True Cross, and there is no early record concerning it; but it is mentioned as it stands by St. Paulin de Nole at the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>6</sup> One hundred years later, Cassiodorus said that it was at Jerusalem,<sup>7</sup> and Gregory of Tours bears testimony to its existence. In the tenth century part of it was at Constantinople, which was a general centre, if not a forcing-house, of desirable Sacred Objects. The alleged portion had been there for a great period, as it is affirmed that St. Germain, Bishop of Paris, was in that city and received part of it as a present from the Emperor Justinian.<sup>8</sup> Much later the Patriarch of Jerusalem is supposed to have sent another portion to Charlemagne. In 1106 the treasure at Constantinople is mentioned by Alexis Comnenus. Another Crown of Thorns is preserved in *Santa Maria della Spina* of Pisa.

The Sacred Nails of the Passion appear once in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, and these also have an early history in Relics.<sup>9</sup> Some or all of them were discovered by St. Helena with the True Cross, and,

<sup>1</sup> According to the GESTS OF CHARLEMAGNE in the Hengwrt MSS., vol. II, p. 440, the great King, during his Pilgrimage to Jerusalem visited the Church at Mount Olivet "in which it is believed that the Lord and His Twelve Apostles first said the Lord's Prayer" and received from the Patriarch a certain portion of the "Relics of Jerusalem," namely, among many others, "the Shroud of Jesus Christ, and His Knife and His Cup and one of the Nails that were driven into Him on the Cross; and the Crown of Thorns."

<sup>2</sup> According to the MASS OF GOOD FRIDAY in the Hengwrt MSS., vol. II, p. 620, the Sacred Nails were discovered miraculously long after the Invention of the Cross, but in the same place.

<sup>3</sup> Meaning, of course, that the migrations and duplications of the Lance can be traced from that period.

<sup>4</sup> The PERLESVAUS, that is to say. See the HIGH HISTORY, Branch XIV, Title 2; XXI, 3, 14, 15, 22; XXII, 1. The Crown of Thorns figures also in the Provençal Romance of FIERABRAS, which is as rich in Passion Relics as the Grail story under notice.

<sup>5</sup> It is put up for competition as a complete Relic at a Tournament in the PERLESVAUS, and is borne away by Perceval, who brings it to the Grail Castle.

<sup>6</sup> The growth of Churches as Christianity itself grew promoted the need of Relics, and the need multiplied examples.

<sup>7</sup> Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, Senator, A.D. 490-585, was the author of various works including INSTITUTIONES DIVINARUM ET HUMANARUM LITTERARUM, an encyclopædia of literature and the arts, designed for the use of monks.

<sup>8</sup> Germanus was born circa A.D. 469 and died in 576.

<sup>9</sup> Sommer, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 32, 33.

according to St. Ambrose, one of them was placed by her in the diadem of Constantine, or alternatively in his helmet, and a second in the bit of his horse.<sup>1</sup> In the sixth century St. Gregory of Tours speaks of four nails, and it seems to follow from St. Chrysostom that the bit of Constantine's charger was coupled with the Lance as an object of veneration in his days. As regards the diadem fashioned by St. Helena, this was welded of iron and became the Iron Crown of Lombardy, being given by Gregory I to Theodolinde in recognition of her zeal for the conversion of the Lombard people. Charlemagne, Sigismund, Charles V and Napoleon I were crowned therewith. Muratori and others say that the Nail which hallowed it was not heard of in this connection till the end of the sixteenth century, and the Crown itself has been challenged. Twenty-nine places in all have laid claim to the possession of one or other of the four nails, and there are some commendable devices of subtlety to remove the sting of this anomaly. It is sufficient for our own clear purpose to realise that the Relics, if not everywhere, were in "right great plenty."

It is also in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, and there only, that we see for a moment, in the high pageant of all, a vision of an ensanguined Cross, a blood-stained Cincture and a Scourge or Rod, also dyed with blood.<sup>2</sup> Of the *Crux vera* and its invention I need say little, because its relics, imputed or otherwise, are treasured everywhere, and we shall see that their multiplicity, even at the earliest Grail period, made it impossible to introduce the Cross as an exclusive Hallow in the Sacred House of Relics. The Traditional Loin-Cloth is said to have been in the possession of Charlemagne and was given by him to St. Namphasus, who built the Abbey of Marcillac and there deposited the Relic. It is now in a little country Church called St. Julian of Lunegarde.<sup>3</sup> According to St. Gregory of Tours, the Reed and the Sponge, which had once been filled with vinegar, were objects of veneration at his day in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> They are supposed to have been taken to Constantinople, which notwithstanding an informant of the Venerable Bede saw the Sponge with his own eyes, deposited in a silver cup at the Holy City. He saw also the shorter Reed which had served as a derisive symbol of the Lord's Royalty.<sup>5</sup>

The Shroud also figures in the History of Relics and occupies a

<sup>1</sup> Alban Butler's LIVES OF THE SAINTS, s.v. August 18, may be consulted on the Invention of the True Cross and Nails—obviously, however, from no critical standpoint.

<sup>2</sup> Sommer's edition of the Vulgate Texts, vol. I.

<sup>3</sup> It is not to be supposed that I am concerned personally with the history of Relics as such. My object is to shew how those of the Passion were in great evidence at the Grail period. I have mentioned here and there the recent whereabouts of a few, but am not in a position to affirm whether they are actually in same place at this date. Those who are concerned can satisfy themselves with a little pains.

<sup>4</sup> It is obvious that if Passion Relics were to justify their claims they had to begin at Jerusalem, though it is not less certain that if they were to serve any practical purpose they must be brought Westward. Even the Holy House of Loretto was caused to travel miraculously.

<sup>5</sup> The point is interesting, as shewing that the Holy Fields produced their own Relics on occasion, so that Legends concerning those of the Passion did not originate always far away and assign Palestine as their fountain source.

considerable place in the PERLESVAUS, where it covers the Altar in a Chapel of a mysterious and perilous Grave-yard. It is said concerning it that "the cloth is of the most holiest, for our Lord God was covered therewith in the Holy Sepulchre, on the third day when He came back from death to life."<sup>1</sup> The Sister of Perceval has to obtain part of it in order to save her Mother and herself from the King of Castle Mortal, who is laying siege to one of her Castles. It is necessary that she should enter the perilous place alone and withstand its evil hauntings. Even her brother must leave her on the threshold to dree the weird in virtue of her own spiritual strength and her prayers. Thereafter the story of the Shroud is left at a loose end and we know not what becomes of it.<sup>2</sup>

The Relics of the Cross of Christ were growing freely at the Grail period, and it must have been more and more obvious to the mind of Romance that it would be impossible for it to figure bodily in the Great House of Hallows. As a fact, however, it does not appear at all: we hear only of a fragment in the boss of a shield mentioned once in the PERLESVAUS. Now the Cross has not merely its Relics in "right great plenty" but also its Legends, and in this manner we are brought to a brief consideration of certain Apocryphal Gospels which are to be placed on the documentary side of that environment amidst which the literature of the Holy Grail was developed. Chief among these is the so-called GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS—otherwise and more especially the ACTS OF PILATE—of which there are various recensions in Greek and Latin, as well as Coptic, Syriac and Armenian versions.<sup>3</sup> It contains the root-matter of Early History Grail stories in verse and prose. Whether by direct acquaintance with one of the Latin codices, by some Northern French rendering or—and perhaps most likely of all—through the channel of popular preaching, Robert de Borron derived therefrom (1) the bare elements of his Myth concerning the imprisonment of Joseph of Arimathæa and of the visit paid him by Christ in the dark Tower; (2) the fact of his miraculous sustenance—not, however, by the ministry of the Holy Grail; (3) the story of the Descent of Christ into Hell for the liberation of the Fathers;<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 173-177; HIGH HISTORY, Branch XV, Titles 12-20.

<sup>2</sup> The Shroud of Christ was the subject of an elaborate study by Paul Vignon, and this was translated into English so far back as 1902. The Relic with which it is concerned is said to have been known historically in the East since 1353 and belonged to the Royal House of Savoy for a long period, dating from the middle of the fifteenth century. It was shewn at an Exhibition of Sacred Art in Turin on May 1st, 1898. The volume contains an exhaustive examination and defence of the Relic as authentic in all respects. It was photographed at the time mentioned and the negative revealed what is termed a "positive portrait," *ex hypothesi*. The examination of this photographic evidence lasted for more than a year and a half and was then made public. It is not the only Shroud in the Christian world of Relics: there was that also of Besançon, but it was pronounced fraudulent and the ecclesiastical authorities, we are told, gave orders that it should be converted into lint.

<sup>3</sup> The German reader may be referred to the texts printed by C. Tischendorf in *EVANGELIA APOCRYPHA*, and others to Dr. M. R. James' excellent *APOCRYPHAL NEW TESTAMENT* published by the Clarendon Press in 1924 and reprinted in 1926.

<sup>4</sup> It is said that a Latin version of the Descent into Hell has been the parent of others in every European language. James, p. 95.

(4) the healing of a Roman Emperor by the Face-Cloth of St. Veronica ; (5) the Emperor's conversion ;<sup>1</sup> (6) the vengeance wreaked upon the Jews, including the derisive story that they were sold at 30 for a penny. As regards the Cross, it is said in the second part of the Gospel (1) that the Cross of Christ was placed in the midst of Hell, to remain there for ever as a sign of victory.<sup>2</sup> But the cross of Dysmas, the penitent thief, was carried by him into Paradise.<sup>3</sup>

The Last Relic of the Passion of which we hear in the Books of the Grail is the *Sudarium*, which all men know and venerate in connection with the piteous Legend of Veronica. The memorials of this Tradition are on a moderate computation as old as the eighth century, but the course of time has separated it into four distinct branches. The first and the oldest of these is preserved in a Vatican manuscript, which says that Veronica was the woman whose issue of blood was healed by Christ and that she was also the artist who painted a likeness with which another account is concerned.<sup>4</sup> She was carried to Rome with the picture for the healing of the Emperor Tiberius.<sup>5</sup> The second branch is contained in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the eleventh century ; and this says that the Relic is a piece of Christ's garment which received in a miraculous manner the impression of His countenance.<sup>6</sup> The origin of the third Tradition seems to have been in Germany : it is preserved in some metrical and other Latin narrative versions. The likeness of Christ is said to be very large, apparently full length. It was in the possession of Veronica, but without particulars of the way in which it was acquired. According to a variant which is perhaps of the twelfth century, the Emperor who was healed is Vespasian, and Christ Himself impressed His picture on the face-cloth which He used when He washed before supper at the house of Veronica. She had asked St. Luke, whom tradition represents as an artist, for a copy of the Master's likeness. The fourth and last variant is the familiar Calvary Legend, wherein the holy woman offers in His service the cloth which she has on her arm when Christ is carrying the Cross, and she is rewarded by the impress of His countenance thereon. The noticeable point is that the story of Veronica, of the *Sudarium*, and of the healing of a Roman Emperor is the root-matter of the earliest historical account of the Holy Grail ; and this fact has led certain scholars to infer that the entire literature has been developed out of the Veronica Legend, as a

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that in the Gospel of Nicodemus the Emperor in question is Tiberius, but is Vespasian according to the Metrical Romance of Robert de Borron.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is obviously to the Hades of the Fathers and not to " the bottomless pit " into which Satan was cast by Christ.

<sup>3</sup> The Hengwrt Welsh MSS. include a fragment from the Gospel of Nicodemus concerning the Tree of Life in Paradise and the sowing of three seeds from an apple of the Tree. They produced three saplings which went through many vicissitudes and were planted ultimately in the Temple of Solomon, where they formed a single tree. This also had strange experiences in the course of the centuries, being cast at one epoch into the River Jordan. It was used in the end for the wood of the Cross of Calvary.

<sup>4</sup> That of the *Volto Santo*, traditionally the work of St. Luke.

<sup>5</sup> See *ante*, Book IV, sect. 1, for the version of Robert de Borron, which is concerned with another Roman Emperor.

<sup>6</sup> It is alternative therefore to the Shroud of Turin.

part of the Conversion Legend of Gaul, according to which the holy woman, in the company of the three Maries and of Lazarus, took ship to Marseilles and preached the Gospel therein. They carried the *Volto Santo* and other Hallows.<sup>1</sup>

I approach now the term of this inquiry, and there remains for consideration the Sword of the Grail Legends, which is accounted for variously in respect of its history and is described also variously; but it is not under any circumstances a Hallow of the Passion. A Romance which stands late in the general Cycle, so far as chronology is concerned, connects it with the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist. I have found no story in the world of Relics to help us in accounting for this invention, though there are traces of a Sword of St. Michael. In this respect, as indeed in other ways, the Hallow is complicated in the literature. It embodies (1) matter brought over from folk-lore; (2) deliberate invention, as when one story affirms it to be the Sword of David, but another that of Judas Maccabæus; and (3) the semi-devotional fable to which I have referred above, which can be taken in connection with the Legends of the Head of St. John, served to Herodias on a charger to satiate her desire for revenge on the precursor of Christ, he seeming to have reproached her concerning her manner of life. It will be plain from the enumeration subjoined that the Relics of St. John are comprehensive as to the person of his body. (1) A Martyrology tells us that some of his blood was collected by a holy woman at the time of his decapitation, was put into a vessel of silver, and was carried into her country of Guienne: there it was placed in a Temple which she erected to his honour. (2) The body was, according to one account, enshrined in a temple at Alexandria, which was dedicated to the Saint. Another says that the Head was interred at first in the sepulchre of Eliseus at Samaria. During the reign of Julian the Apostate it was redeemed from possible profanation and sent to St. Athanasius, who concealed it in a wall of his Church. At the end of the fourth century the entire remains were removed to a new Church, built on the site of a temple of Serapis. Subsequently they were divided and distributed. (3) The *Caput Johannis* was carried to Antioch by St. Luke, or alternatively to Cæsarea. From whichever place, it was removed afterwards to Constantinople and brought finally into France, where it was divided into three parts, one of which is at Amiens, another at Angély in the diocese of Nantes, and the third at Nemours in the diocese of Sens. A distinct account states that the Head was found in Syria in the year 453, and that the removal to Constantinople took place five centuries later. When that city was taken by the French in 1204, a Canon of Amiens, who was present, transported it into France, where it was divided, but

<sup>1</sup> The story is that after the first persecution, when St. James was slain by the sword, his followers were thrust into a boat without oars or sails on the coast of Palestine, not far from Mt. Carmel. It contained St. Mary, wife of Cleopas; St. Salome, often called St. Mary Salome; St. Mary Magdalene; St. Martha; the maid Marcella; Lazarus and Joseph, with many others. The boat drifted to Provence and up the Rhone to Arles. *THE COMING OF THE SAINTS* by J. W. Taylor, 1911, p. 126.

into two portions apparently, one being deposited at Amiens and the other sent to the Church of St. Sylvester in Rome. I have seen also a report of two heads, but without particulars of their whereabouts.

So much concerning the *Caput Johannis*, but I should not have had occasion to furnish these instances were it not for the apparition of an Angel carrying a Head upon a salver when the wonders of the Holy Grail were manifested originally at Sarras.<sup>1</sup> But this vision is not found in the story which connects the Hallowed Sword with the Head of St. John the Baptist. The Charger or Salver, with its contents, is supposed to be a complication occasioned by the intervention of folk-lore elements concerning the head of the Blessed Bran. In any case, a Dish or Platter apart from any Head, is almost always the fourth Hallow in the Legends of the Grail; and in those instances when the Grail itself is a Chalice it may have answered to the Eucharistic Paten, or alternatively to the Paschal Dish of the Last Supper.

It follows from the considerations of this section that whether or not there has been a passage of folk-lore materials through the channel of Grail literature—which passage has less or more involved their conversion—the real importation into Romance has been various elements of Christian Symbolism, Doctrine and Legend: it is these above all that establish the authentic subject-matter of the whole Mystery. It must be understood, this notwithstanding, that the literature is not to be regarded as an extension of the History of Relics into the World of Romance. Certain compilers of encyclopædic dictionaries and handbooks have treated the value of such Legends, and of the claims which lie behind them, in a spirit which has been so far serious that they have pointed out how the multiplicity of claims in respect of a single object must be held to militate against the genuineness of any. One early critic took the pains, centuries ago, to calculate how many Crosses might be formed full-size from the Relics of the one True Cross, and an opponent not less grave took the further trouble of recalculating to prove that he was wrong.<sup>2</sup> So also Luther, accepting a caution from Judas, lamented that so much gold had gone to enshrine the imputed Relics when it might have been given to the poor.<sup>3</sup>

It is desirable now to notice a few points, for the clearance of certain issues. (I) The German Cycle of the Holy Grail has the least possible connection, as we have seen otherwise, with Christian Relics; speaking of the most important branch, it is so much *sui generis* in its

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the *Grand Saint Graal*, not, however, to the Vulgate version printed by Sommer, *Op. cit.*, Vol. VI. Cf. Nutt's summary, based apparently on Furnivall's text: "Seven Angels issue from the Ark . . . , an eighth carrying the Holy Dish, a ninth a Head so rich and beautiful as never mortal eye saw." *STUDIES ON THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Similar concern has not been shewn about other Relics of the Passion; but, as in the case of the Shroud, the Church intervened occasionally to make away with things which interfered one with another.

<sup>3</sup> Robert de Borron and the *Grand Saint Graal* connect Judas more especially with the general indignation of the Disciples, according to St. Matt. xxvi, 8, over the waste of the precious ointment by the "woman having an alabaster box" and the money represented thereby. It was on this account that Judas "went unto the Chief Priests" and sold the Master.

symbolical elements that it enters scarcely into the same category as the Northern French Romances. (2) No existing Reliquary and no story concerning one did more than provide the great makers of Romance with raw materials and pretexts: the stories fell into the background, and the symbols were exalted by their genius. (3) The imaginary or vanished books to which they appealed were not of Fécamp or any competitive Monasteries, Abbeys or other Holy Houses, but the rumour of something unknown and withdrawn "far in the unapparent". The growing literature of the Grail drew from the life of devotion in its application to the Mystery of the Eucharist, owing little in reality to the secondary veneration of Relics; and on its own part it contributed a secret life to stimulate and extend the central Doctrine of the Mystery.

Investing this Mystery in chief of the faith in Christ which is thus the only real concern of the Holy Grail, there are other environments which will appeal to us, though their time is not yet in our methodical scheme of progress. There is (1) the state of the Official Church, so glorious in some respects, so clouded in others, like a Keeper of Sacred Things who has been wounded for his own sins, or like a House of Doctrine against which he who "sold God for money" has warred, and not in vain, for at times he has invaded the precincts and entered even the Sanctuary, though the holy deposit has not been affected thereby, because by its nature and essence it is at once removed from his grasp. There is (2) the Church in Britain and its connections of the Celtic world, having aspirations of its own, as there is no question—having a legitimacy of its own, as none can deny at this day—but with only a local horizon, a native mission, and used, for the rest, as a tool for ambitious kings, much as the all-embracing claim of the Church at large was the tool of the Popes at need. There is (3) the resounding rumour and there is the universal wonder of the high impossible quest of Holy Wars in Palestine, without which we might have never had the Grail literature, the Romances of Chivalry, or Secret Treasures of the disdainful East brought to the intellectual marts and houses of exchange in the restless, roving, ever-curious kingdoms of the West—kingdoms in travail towards their puberty. There is (4)—and of five things to be enumerated, I count this the head and crown—there is the higher life of sanctity and its annals at the Grail period, as the outcome of which the West went to the East, carrying what it believed to be the missing talent of gold, without which, as the standard of all values, all other talents were either debased or spurious. It was the age of a thousand reflections, at centuries sometimes of distance, from Dionysius (so-called), Augustine and the first great lights of Christendom; it was the age of Hugo de St. Victor, of Bernard, of Bonaventura; it was the age which Thomas of Aquinas would take up later as plastic matter in his hands, and he shaped the religious mind of the world after the image and likeness of his own mind in the high places of the Schools; it was the age of many doctors, some of whom might have known in their heart of hearts the real

message of the Grail and where its key was to be sought. (5) There is in fine a fifth branch, but this is the sects of the period, because more than one division of the Christian World was quaking and working towards emancipation from a yoke which was none too sweet and a burden none too light. As to all this, it seems needful to say at the moment that if the Books of the Holy Grail are among the most catholic of literature, they were not for such reason laid at the feet of Innocent III or those after and before in the Chair of Peter.

### III

## THE HOLY GRAIL IN THE LIGHT OF THE CELTIC CHURCH

### A.—A POSSIBLE ORIGINATING CENTRE OF THE WHOLE MYSTERY

**A**MONG all external organisations there is one Institution—and there is one only—which might be expected to offer some of those signs and warrants that we should look for in a Sodality, Association or Church which could and did connect with the idea of the Holy Grail, as something approximate to its source, if not indeed a centre from which the Mystery originated.

The Early History of the Holy Grail, as distinguished from the several Quests undertaken for the discovery of that Sacred Object, is one of Christianity colonising. We know that in the French Cycles, by the universal voice of the texts, it was a Mystery which was brought into Britain, and supposing that the Legend as a whole—apart or otherwise from anything involved by its implicits—could be regarded as of Celtic origin, its religious elements, in the absence of special and extrinsic claims, might be accounted for most readily by the fact and characteristics of the Celtic Church.

“That is best which lies the nearest,” according to an old maxim, and the Celtic Church is much closer to our hands than anything which has been suggested alternatively,<sup>1</sup> while it was unquestionably that environment in which some of the Legends developed. Those who have recognised previously, in their imperfect and dubious way, that some of the Grail Legends have a mystical aspect, and that hence they are probably referable to something in Instituted Mysticism, have put forward bare possibilities, and, independently of these, scholarship has itself gone much further afield. It has thought of the Far East as the home of the Holy Grail, and some who are mystics by more than a predisposition on the surface, know certainly—even if it is in a certain

<sup>1</sup> It is to be observed (1) that the Grail Castle is in a remote fastness of Northumbria according to the Borron Cycle, where Celtic Church influences lingered long after the victory of the Roman Rite; and (2) that in the Vulgate Cycle the Grail Castle of Corbenic is in South-West Wales, as if it were a Celtic Sanctuary.



sense only—that there is a country deep in Asia. Now, albeit the limits of our evidence concerning the Celtic Church are circumscribed somewhat narrowly, there seems no doubt that this Church bore traces of Eastern influence—by which I mean something stronger and plainer than resides in the common fact that Christianity itself came to us from the oriental world.<sup>1</sup> If, therefore, the Holy Grail has any marks and spirit of the East, it might be accounted for in this manner by way of the most colourable inference. If, however, we prefer to consider without any longer preface what is the palmary claim of all, and if therefore we appeal to the veiled suggestion of pre-eminence in the Grail Priesthood in respect of an extra-valid form of consecrating Eucharistic Elements and of a Super-Apostolical Succession, it may be advanced that here is simply an exaggerated reflection of that which was claimed actually by the Celtic Church and more especially by that Church in Wales.<sup>2</sup> The claim was that it had a title to existence independently of Rome, Christianity having been established in these islands for a long period prior to the arrival of St. Augustine, which arrival, from this point of view, was an incursion upon territory already conquered and held to a defined extent as well as a sacred endeavour to spread the Gospel of Christ: it brought therefore spiritual war besides the light of truth. I have classed these two points together—that is to say, the alleged oriental origin and the original independence of Rome—not because I regard the second as important in comparison with the first, but because as a fact we know that the Celtic Church had a certain autonomous existence long before any Legend of Joseph of Arimathæa was devised in the local interests of Glastonbury.<sup>3</sup> It was not therefore at the beginning a question of Angevin ambition. Further, we can understand, I think, very well how this claim may have been exaggerated in Legend, so as to cover—as I have said—the special implicits that are traceable in Grail literature and therefore to account for it within, as the general characteristics of the Celtic Church may account for it reasonably without. I propose now to set forth some other specific analogies from which we shall be enabled in fine to draw a general conclusion, namely, whether we can be satisfied with the evidence as it stands or whether we must go further. Let us remember, in the first place, that the earlier point, if it can be taken apart from the later, would mean probably an origin for the Holy Grail independent of Celtic environment, and would not of necessity exclude that of some Eastern heretical sects which passed into Southern France; otherwise a derivation through Spain; or, as an alternative

<sup>1</sup> C. F. E. Warren: *THE LITURGY AND RITUAL OF THE CELTIC CHURCH*, 1881, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> We have also to remember that (a) the Arthurian Romances were called *matière de Bretagne* on the Continent, a denomination which persisted when the French texts passed into Italy, Spain and Portugal; (b) that in the Northern French Cycles the heroes of Arthur's Chivalry moved continually and rapidly between Logres and Brittany; and (c) that Brittany was another region in which the Celtic Church survived.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. J. Armitage Robinson concludes that 1191 is the earliest possible date for the legendary connection of Joseph with Glastonbury, *Op. cit.*, p. 50. But there seems little question that *circa* 1250 is in his view nearer to the literal truth.

for both, the transit, for example, of Johannine Tradition Westward. But if we abandon the earlier and have recourse to the later point, then the Legend of the Holy Grail—because it contains elements which are foreign to the mind of Romance, though they find expression in Romance form—must belong to that class of fable which has been invented in an external interest, and its position is not much better than one of forged decretals: it might be indeed a decretal in literature, put forward in many guises and with many variants, and it would be useless to look therein for any secret intention beyond that of the particular pretence which it was designed to support. With the merits and defects of Celtic Christianity in Britain one is acquainted sufficiently to deal rather summarily respecting the value of any mystical suggestions which are discernible in the Cycles or in remanents of literature that must be regarded as belonging thereto. The hypothetical implicit with which I am dealing, if found to obtain, would signify therefore the closing of the whole inquiry.

#### B.—THE FORMULÆ OF THE HYPOTHESIS SCHEDULED

There are traces in the Anglo-Norman Romances of a certain fluidic sense in which Britain and its immediate connections, according to the subsurface mind of their writers, stood typically for the world. They were familiar enough with the names of other regions—with Syria, Egypt, Rome—above all, with the Holy Places in the Jerusalem which is below; but their world was the Celtic World, comprised, let us say, between Scotia and Ireland on the one side and central France on the other. This region came, I think, to signify symbolically, and so we hear that the failure to ask "one little question" involved the destruction of kingdoms, while the belated interrogation seems to have lifted a veil of Enchantment from the world itself. The cloud upon the Sanctuary was a cloud over that world; its lifting was a glory restored everywhere. But as the Enchantment, except within very narrow limits, and then *ex hypothesi*, was only of the imputed order, so the combined restoration of Nature in common with Grace was but imputed also: the woe and inhibition were removed as secretly as they were imposed. So again, when the Chivalry of the Round Table—according to the Vulgate Cycle—covenanted to go forth on the Quest of the Holy Grail, the universal and proclaimed object was to terminate those hard Times of Adventure, which had become intolerable: *pour deliveir nôtre pais des grans mervelles et des estrainges auentures qui tant y sont auenuës, lonc tans a.*<sup>1</sup> The whole position reminds one of that chapter in the Apocalypse which presents a sheaf of instructions to the Seven Churches of Asia. No one knew better than the Jews not only concerning Rome, Greece and Alexandria, but of the world extended further: this notwithstanding, when the Great Book of the Christian

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the *Queste* in Sommer's text, *Op. cit.*, VI, pp. 7, 8, 10. It affirms that the Adventures of the Quest are significances and demonstrations of the Holy Grail.

Secret Mystery was first written, the World of Christendom was confined chiefly within narrow limits in Asia, and this was the World of the Apocalypse. Recurring to the fact out of which this analogy arises, it should be added, as a matter of justice to the hypothesis under consideration, that within this Celtic World the first and most natural sympathy in the religious order would be indubitably with its own aspirations: I set aside therefore for the time being all speculation as to anything rich and strange in Rite and Doctrine which may have been brought from the Eastern world by those—whoever they were—who first planted Christianity on the known confines of the West. The chief points of the hypothesis may be collected into a schedule thus:—

(1) It has been affirmed that the Grail Legend is of Celtic origin and making, because of the Celtic attributions of the Romances and their Celtic *mise-en-scène* and characters; because of the Celtic names, disguised and otherwise, even in those which belong to the Teutonic Cycle; and because of imagined derivations into Grail Legend from Welsh folk-lore.

(2) The Romance of the Holy Grail, regarding the Cycle synthetically, is a great Ecclesiastical Legend of Celtic origin;<sup>1</sup> while there are other Ecclesiastical Legends, referable to the same source, which suggest the Grail atmosphere. The "Grail Church" was in its earlier stages the Celtic Church contrasted with the Saxo-Roman.

(3) The nucleus is to be found in a story concerning St. David and his Miraculous Altar. The Apostle of South Wales, with some other Saints, made a pilgrimage in the Legend to Jerusalem, where the Patriarch of the Holy City invested him as Archbishop and gave him "a consecrated Altar in which the body of our Lord once lay." It was transported to Wales and performed innumerable miracles; but after the death of St. David it was covered with skins and was never seen by any one. According to a variant of the Legend, this Altar—and possibly some other Hallows—was carried through the air to Britain, and hence was often described as *e cælo veniens*. Though apparently it was the rock-hewn sepulchre mentioned in the New Testament, no man could specify its shape, its colour, or of what material it was fashioned: in addition to its other wonders, it gave oracles—that is to say, a Voice spoke therein, as it did, according to the Romances, in the Grail itself. St. David died about 601 A.D.; he gave the Mass to Britain; he was of the lineage of Our Lady; and his birth having been foretold by the finding of a great fish, he was termed the Waterman—*vir aquaticus*—which recalls the Rich Fisherman of later Legends. It might be said that this title was applicable especially to him, as one who was rich in the conversion of souls to Christ and in the greater gifts of sanctity. His ancestors bore the name of *Avallach*, whence that of the King of

<sup>1</sup> My old friend Arthur Machen believes that the Grail Myth is a glorified version of early Celtic Sacramental Legends, married to certain elements of pre-Christian folk-lore. See *The Secret of the Sangraal* in a collection entitled *THE SHINING PYRAMID*, p. 90.

Sarras seems to be derived certainly ;<sup>1</sup> and he is said to have provided Sacred Vessels for the Celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup>

(4) The Secret Words of the Robert de Borron Cycle refer to the *Epiclesis* of the Greek Rite.<sup>3</sup> The form of Eucharistic Consecration in the Latin Rite is actually the Words of Institution—that is to say, the New Testament's account of the Last Supper. In the East, however, Consecration is effected by addition of the *Epiclesis* clause—that is, by the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. In its more usual form, it is a petition for the descent of the Comforter, firstly, upon the worshippers, and, secondly, upon the Altar Gifts, that the Elements may be converted into the Divine Body and Blood. The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom may be consulted on this point: indeed from one passage it would seem to follow that what was communicated was the Holy Ghost, an idea in which all that attaches normally to the Eucharistic Office seems dissolving in a higher light.<sup>4</sup> The evidence, however, is confessedly somewhat indirect, as no Gallican or other connected Liturgy gives the Words of Institution; but they are found in a North Italian, perhaps a Milanese Liturgy, and elsewhere, outside the Greek Rite. It has been said that between 750 and 820 A.D. certain words in the Celtic Rite vanished from the Consecration of the Eucharist, corresponding presumably to the intervention of the Roman Rite.<sup>5</sup> The Celtic was abolished formally about 850, but is said to have survived even to the period of the Grail literature.<sup>6</sup> The Welsh in this case might have learned from the Crusades that the LITURGY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT was still used in the East.

(5) The notion of Hereditary Grail Keepers, so strongly emphasised in the Romances, is derived from the Hereditary Relic Keepers of the Celtic Church. Mr. J. Romilly Allen has said: "The vicissitudes through which the Relics passed in the course of centuries were often of a most romantic description. The story was generally the same. The book, bell or crozier belonging to the founder of the Church was supposed to have acquired peculiar sanctity and even supernatural properties by association with him; and after his death it was often enclosed in a costly metal shrine of exquisite workmanship. Each

<sup>1</sup> Avallac=Evalach in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, according to this hypothesis. He was the son of a poor cobbler, who served Tholomer-Ptolemy, King of Egypt and whose valour brought him the crown of Sarras. Sommer, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 47, 48. He became Mordrains in Baptism. *Ib.*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the PERLESVAUS: Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 272, and HIGH HISTORY, Branch XXVI, Title 4.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix I, Note 17.

<sup>4</sup> See L. Duchesne: ORIGINES DU CULTE CHRÉTIEN, and in particular the fifth, revised and enlarged edition of 1920, which approximates the Liturgy of the Gallican Rite to the Syriac of the fourth century and reconstructs the latter on the basis of *Catechesis* 23 of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, the CONSTITUTIONES APOSTOLORUM and the HOMILIES of St. John Chrysostom. The *Epiclesis* follows the Words of Institution, and the transformation—spiritual or otherwise—of the Bread and Wine is operated by the descent of the Holy Spirit thereon, and Christ is among His believers under mystical veils in a veritable communion, as One in many and the All in one. *Op. cit.*, pp. 57-63.

<sup>5</sup> The inference is obviously that the *Epiclesis* Clause was removed.

<sup>6</sup> According to Arthur Machen, a remnant of Culdees in the twelfth century are reported as celebrating "some kind of barbarous Rite" in a corner of a Scottish Church. *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

Relic had its hereditary custodian, who was responsible for its safe keeping and who in return received privileges, such as . . . the title to inherit certain land, of which the Relic constituted the tenure."<sup>1</sup> The preservation of Relics under hereditary guardianship seems to have been common among Celtic families: it was the case with the Banner of St. Columba.<sup>2</sup> So also the Relics of certain Saints belonging to the Scoto-Irish Church were in the care of families of Hereditary Keepers: these were consecrated objects, not human remains, and they were regarded as of great virtue when borne in battle by a person who was free from deadly sin. Sometimes a Venerable Cup was deposited in a special Shrine; sometimes the Book of the Gospels was enclosed in triple cases—as of wood, copper and silver. The custody of such an object became an office of dignity from generation to generation in a single family. The general characteristics of the Celtic Relic may be enumerated as follows, but it is not intended to say that every Sacred Object possessed all the qualities: (1) It came from Heaven, like the Grail; (2) it was of mysterious and incomprehensible matter; (3) it was oracular; (4) like the Grail, it had the power of speech; (5) it healed the sick, as the Grail did also occasionally, though this was not its specific office; (6) like the Grail, it must not be seen by unqualified persons; (7) it had the power of miraculous self-transportation, and the Holy Cup, in certain Romances, was also a Wandering Vessel; (8) it acted as a guide; (9) it was a Palladium; (10) it executed judgment on the wicked and profane, which is the characteristic in chief of the Grail in the Metrical Romance of Robert.

(6) In the PANEGYRIC OF ST. COLUMBA, a document ascribed to the last years of the eleventh century, it is recorded among his other good works that—like his peer, St. David of Wales—he provided a Mass Chalice for every Church—presumably within his special sphere of influence or perhaps even in the islands generally. Readers of the prose PERCEVAL LE GALLOIS will remember that Chalices were so uncommon in Arthurian days that the King, during a certain Quest, seems to have met with one, and that miraculously, for the first time in his life. One explanation is that wooden bowls may have been used previously for purposes of consecration. I allude to the Mass of the Grail, which Arthur was permitted to see at the Grail Castle—that is to say, after the accession of Perceval to the Office of Keeper.<sup>3</sup> We should remember at this point that it is only at the close of the Cycle in Northern French—that is to say, in the Romance which I have just mentioned, in that of Galahad and in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL—

<sup>1</sup> The possessive sense in these matters seems a little like that of the Bardic Secret itself. See J. Williams ab Ithel: *BARDDAS*, Vol. I, 1862, pp. 65, 66. It was not lawful to utter "the Secret Word of the primitive Bards . . . to any man in the world, except to a Bard who is under the vow of an oath." So it was reserved and so also transmitted, like the Blessed Relics.

<sup>2</sup> In like manner, the Grail Castle is ever a House of Relics, and they multiplied more and more as the literature extended towards its term. The *PERLESVAUS* embodies a long list and may compare almost with the wealth of the Provençal *FIERABRAS*.

<sup>3</sup> Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 250: *HIGH HISTORY*, Branch XXII, Title 3.

that the Sacred Vessel, its other uses notwithstanding, is connected expressly with the Administration of the Eucharist, though it is not always the Vessel of Communion.

(7) There are historical memorials of Holy Cups, possessing great virtues and preserved in old Welsh families. Among these is the Holy Cup of Tregaron, which was made *ex hypothesi* from the Wood of the True Cross, and its healing virtues were manifested so recently as the year 1901.<sup>1</sup> The curious thing in the Romances is that the Holy Grail has healing power, but not for the Keeper himself, who in most texts of the Perceval Cycle can be cured only by a Question,<sup>2</sup> and in the Galahad Legend—but here it is a former Keeper—by the magnetic touch of his last lineal descendant.

(8) In England during the Middle Ages,<sup>3</sup> the Eucharist was reserved, as we have seen otherwise, in a *Columbarium*, or Dove-House, being a Vessel shaped like a Dove. This was the Tabernacle of its period, and it recalls (a) some archaic pictures of a Cup over which a Dove broods; (b) the descent of a Dove on a Grail Stone in Wolfram's poem; (c) the passage of Symbolical Doves in connection with the Grail Procession as told by several Romancers, but especially in the Quest of Galahad; and (d) the Office of the Holy Spirit in the Grail Legend.<sup>4</sup> But it is suggested also—and this, I believe, by Huysman—that the Tabernacle was frequently in a form of an Ivory Tower, to symbolise Christ in the womb of the Virgin, who is herself called *Turris eburnea*.

(9) The vanishing of the Grail refers (a) to the actual disappearance of St. David's Altar after the death of its custodian;<sup>5</sup> (b) to the disappearance of the Celtic Church before the Roman; and (c) to the subjugation of the British by the Saxons. The Welsh Church was pre-eminently a Monastic Church; and, in spite of the existence of Bishops, its government was in the hands of Monks. The claim of the ancient British Church generally, including its Legend that the first Church of Glastonbury was consecrated by our Lord Himself,<sup>6</sup> may

<sup>1</sup> It must be confessed that the last point cannot be verified. I find no reference in my papers: it may well have been a newspaper report.

<sup>2</sup> Except, *e.g.*, in the PERLESVAUS, and in this anomalous text the Keeper is stricken because the Question is not asked. Cf., however, DIU CRÔNE, in which all the men of the Household as well as its Head are suffering not from disease or maiming but from a state of death in life. In Manessier the head of his Brother's destroyer heals the Grail King.

<sup>3</sup> In the Celtic Rite the Reserved Sacrament was carried to the sick in a "chrysmal," or in a satchel suspended from the neck. Warren, *Op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> Not only does the Voice of the Holy Spirit speak from the Grail in the Metrical Romance of Robert de Borron, but it is heard *in articulo mortis* by Alain according to the DIDOT PERCEVAL and by Perceval himself in the Modena text. It must be remembered also that the Dove is the Symbol of the Spirit, and it precedes the manifestation of the Grail at Corbenic in the LANCELOT and at the Royal Court in the QUESTE.

<sup>5</sup> It might refer also and perhaps as easily to the migration of some proscribed Sect Eastward, and the Grail Refuge of the PERLESVAUS might be the impregnable and almost inaccessible Citadel of Montségur, the last stronghold of the Cathari and their Holy Church of the Paraclete.

<sup>6</sup> This is the Church built of wattles, erected by Joseph of Arimathæa and his disciples, "thirty-one years after the Passion of our Lord and fifteen after the Assumption of the Virgin" and "dedicated to His Mother by the Lord Himself." Dr. Armitage Robinson, *Op. cit.*, p. 28. The authority is an introductory chapter prefixed to William of Malmesbury's DE ANTIQUITATE, circa 1250.

help us to explain the undertone of dissent from Rome which can be noted here and there in the subsurface of the Grail literature, but especially in the LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL. To appreciate the position fully, we have to remember that the Latin Rite gained ground and influence with the Norman Conquest, though independently of that Rite there were monasteries in remote valleys where the old Liturgy and its supposititious ancient form of Consecration may have been used still, and where also the ancient wisdom of the Druids was preserved, though—in spite of certain testimonies—it could have been scarcely considered consistent for a man to be a mystical Druid and also a Christian. The Druidic Secret was symbolised by the term *Afalon*, which means the Apple Orchard. The last Welsh Archbishop of St. David's died in 1115, and was succeeded by a Norman, that is to say, by a Roman prelate.

(10) Cadwaladr is Galahad. Galahad took away the Holy Grail, because, according to the WELSH QUEST, the world was not worthy.<sup>1</sup> His prototype, in despair of his country, removed certain Relics, and, by the testimony of one Tradition, he died in the Holy Land, as if he also had departed to Sarras, with the intention of proceeding further. Another story says that he projected the reconquest of Britain in a fleet furnished by his kinsman Alain of Brittany, where he was then in exile; but an Angel warned him to desist. He was to seek the Pope and confess, and he would be canonised after his death—which, according to his Legend, occurred at Rome. This chieftain, who loomed so largely in Welsh imagination, who, like Bran of another mythos, is termed the Blessed, was regarded as of the Royal Line of David: he is thought to have been the custodian of Holy Relics belonging to his family before him, and when he died—in reality, as it seems, of the Yellow Sickness—in 664 his second advent was expected confidently. So many Legends grew up around him that he appears to have drawn into himself all the aspirations of Celtdom. His return is associated with a second manifestation of his Relics and with the final felicity of the Celts. Awaiting that event, the entire British Church, for reasons not fully explicable, began to droop and decay, till a Welsh revival was inaugurated in the year 1077 by the return of Rhys-ap-Teuudwr from Brittany.<sup>2</sup> Bards and Druids were at white heat, for

<sup>1</sup> The Welsh translator varies the QUESTE that he may bring the state of things home to his own countrymen. "For at that time so bad was the country of the Welsh, that if the father was ill in his bed, the son would come to him, and would pull him from bed, and drag him out, and kill him. And so also would the father do with the son . . . And when the father was seen killing the son, and the son the father, in that manner, all went armed to tournaments and combats, and so they were killed, and because they were killed in arms, they were said to be gentlemen." HENGWRT MSS., I, p. 476.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. M. Harper in THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL, 1896. He says (1) that no poetical influence was half as widespread as that which started from Wales at the end of the eleventh century; (2) that it was occupied by free Celts at the beginning of Norman rule in Britain, but they lost their independence when little more than a century had passed away; (3) that at the beginning of the twelfth century they remembered their original possession of the land and that their Christianity was older than that of Saxon or Norman; (4) that their old Mythology revived in noble song; and (5) that they may have remembered their independence of Rome in earlier times, as the Irish remembered long generations previously. *Op. cit.*, pp. 7-9.

Rhys himself was a descendant traditionally of Cadwaladr the Blessed, who was to restore all things. He even claimed identity with that departed hero.

(11) When the particular set of claims connected with Glastonbury began to be manufactured about 1150, to centralise a wide field of interest at a defined point, Joseph of Arimathæa was substituted for St. David.<sup>1</sup> There was the supposed body of Joseph; there were the Vials which he brought, containing the imputed Precious Blood; there also was the body of King Arthur and the so-called *Sapphirus*, the Lost Altar of the Welsh Apostle, the last of these recalling rather plausibly the *Lapsit exillis* or *exilix* of Wolfram. From this point of view it is worthy of close attention (a) for its sacramental connection; (b) for its association with the Body of the Lord; and (c) for the mystery attaching to its form, with which we may compare the vagueness which characterises nearly all descriptions of the Grail Vessel.<sup>2</sup>

(12) The hypothetical descent of the Grail *prima materia* from folk-lore no more explains the Christian Legend of the Grail than the words *vir* and *virtus* explain the particular significance attaching to the term *virtuoso*. The Mythological Salmon of Wisdom as a prototype of the Fish in Robert de Borron's poem is a case in point. The true approximate progenitor is the primitive Christian Fish-Symbol which was familiar to Celtic Christianity; and seeing that the latter was much like the Church at large of several centuries earlier, so it may have preserved things which had passed elsewhere out of memory—the *Ichthus* Symbol among them. This signified Christ, and especially the Eucharistic Species. It symbolised also the *Disciplina Arcani* and was the most general of Christian Emblems: it passed into a defined form of expression for concealment of more interior Mysteries, and to partake of the Fish was an evasion for the Reception of the Sacrament.

(13) His connection with the Quest of the Grail not only enabled King Arthur to furnish Chalices for Churches but Bells, also, which seem to have been unknown previously in Logres. In the Celtic veneration for Relics they bear, however, a conspicuous part, the examples being far too numerous for recitation in this place. I can say only that their cultus, their care, the keeperships instituted in connection with and the wonders ascribed to them are common to ancient Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

(14) Reverting once more to St. David, it is reported traditionally that the first Church which he built was situated at Glastonbury, and in connection with this ascription we shall do well to remember that primitive structure which is said to have been consecrated by Christ Himself. This in more senses than in one sense merely was a source and fountain of all religion in the Kingdom of Britain, as affirmed by

<sup>1</sup> It would seem that the statement obtains only in respect of Glastonbury, where William of Malmesbury tells us that he came only as a visitor and built another Church.

<sup>2</sup> I have said that it might be even a Lamp in Chrétien, and the word Grail bore this connotation in Northern France. It is said to be the Paschal Dish in the Galahad Quest; yet it served as a Pyx in the last Masses at Corbenic and Sarras.



William of Malmesbury. It was therefore among ecclesiastical structures what the Second Joseph was among the Bishops of Christendom. If ever there was an Arch-Natural Mass celebrated and a Noumenal Eucharist administered at a specific place in Logres, assuredly with these warrants it would have been only at Glastonbury, the connection of which with St. David raises one further point. The Celtic Church is said to have held that the Roman Pontiff was the Successor of St. Peter, but the Patriarch of Jerusalem—who ordained the Apostle of Wales—was the Successor of Christ. The subsurface intention which created this Legend seems to have been nearly identical with that which put forward the Super-Apostolical Succession of Joseph II, and it follows that Celtic Imagination at work in the field of Hagiology furnished the makers of Romance—and the author in particular of the GRAND SAINT GRAAL—with an ample groundwork. The substitution of the Man of Arimathæa for the original Patron of Wales was the appropriation of an independent Legend, and it served the ecclesiastical side of Angevin ambition without affording a handle to the troublesome Principality on the Western side of the vast dominions of Anjou.

(15) And now as regards the summary of the whole matter, the argument may be expressed as follows: (*a*) The Grail Legend is demonstrably of Celtic stuff—in part of Celtic folk-lore which has turned good Christian, but more largely of Ecclesiastical Legend; (*b*) it derives from the story of St. David and his Altar; (*c*) the original Grail Book was probably a Legend following a special and peculiar Liturgy; (*d*) the Legend told of the Conversion of Britain by St. David, the celebration of the Christian Mysteries on the Saint's Miraculous Altar, which was claimed to be the Sepulchre of Christ, of the wonders wrought by this Altar, of the coming of the heathens, the ruin of Britain, the flight of its King—who was St. David's last descendant—bearing with him the Altar Relic to the East. There he died, thence he shall yet return, again bearing the Relic. The Britons shall triumph, the Saxons shall suffer expulsion and the Mystical Words shall be uttered once more over the Thaumaturgic Altar.

It is obvious that, according to this hypothesis, the Book, which was far older than any Grail literature, remained in concealment in Wales and perhaps was unearthed at the Norman Conquest of Glamorganshire, when it was modified, varied, exalted, transformed and allegorised by successive makers of Romance, being adapted specifically as an aid to the House of Anjou, in its struggle with the Pope, by the author of the GRAND SAINT GRAAL—whether Walter Map or another. But Rome proved more than one part too strong and by more than one interest too many for the ambition of Henry II, while as regards Wales, it had long and long already succumbed to the Latin Rite.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, between 750 and 809, according to Machen (p. 120); but according to Warren (p. 4) North Wales conformed in 768 and South Wales in 777.

## C.—IN WHAT SENSE THE PLEA MUST BE HELD TO FAIL

Let us suppose it indubitable for a moment, even in a plenary sense, that folk-lore provided its elements as the crude matter of the scheme of the Holy Grail. Let us admit it to be true also that many accidentals of the Celtic Church became accidentals of the literature; and that they were worked into the Grail Cycle as well as the pre-Christian elements, the process arising in the most natural of possible manners. It would not be exactly that the most early Romancers took the matter which was nearest into their hands, but rather that there was no other: the external aspect of religion was by necessity therefore a reflection of the Celtic Church. But as mere folk-lore does not explain the Christian Grail and the high experiments of sanctity connected therewith, so the contributory memorials on the Celtic Ecclesiastical Side do not explain it either. To justify and expound this statement, be it noted (1) that Christianity existed in Britain during the Roman occupation and that three British Bishops were present at the Council of Arles, about 350 A.D.; (2) that the extent of its diffusion is doubtful, but it was probably the religion of Romans and Romanised Britons in and about the garrison towns; (3) that it became diffused more widely in the early fifth century, which was the beginning of an age of Saints; (4) that it is doubtful whether the Celtic Church<sup>1</sup> at this period was a descendant of the Roman-British Church or a colonisation *de novo* from Gaul, but it may have combined both sources; (5) that an episcopal mission from Gaul into Britain is certain, and its object is supposed to have been the extinction of Pelagian heresy, or Pagan, as it has been suggested alternatively; (6) that the derivation *ab origine symboli* was possibly from Ephesus through the Johannine Rite into Southern Gaul, and thence into Britain; (7) that, also possibly, there were other Oriental influences, and particularly from Egypt, in the fifth century, the evidence being: (1) The derivation of Celtic ornament from Egyptian ornament; (2) the commemoration in ancient Irish books of "Holy Egyptian Hermits" buried in Ireland; (3) the correspondences between the Celtic monastic system and that of Egypt; (4) the practice, attributed to St. Columba, of removing his sandals before entering the Sanctuary, an observance known otherwise only in Egypt.

As regards the hypothesis put forward in the previous sub-section, it is observable that we have not been invited to consider in the Celtic

<sup>1</sup> According to Warren "there are no substantial grounds for impugning the orthodoxy of the Celtic Church. On the contrary, there is unimpeachable evidence the other way." The fact that Pope Gregory commissioned Augustine to impose his personal jurisdiction not only over all Bishops ordained by him but over all Priests in Britain—presumably there already—"that they might learn the rule of believing rightly and living well from his life and teaching" (Bede's ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, I, 29) is explained by the Pontiff's slender acquaintance with the faith of the British Church. *Op. cit.*, p. 26. It happens that Pelagius was of British birth and that his teachings obtained a certain credence in his native country rather early in the fifth century.

Church any traces of a particular theological or doctrinal Tradition—such as might, for example, be inferred from the supposed Johannine Rite—or of an evasive or concealed claim: it is not suggested that in Wales, Scotia or Ireland there is any trace of an Ecclesiastical Legend concerning a Relic which at any distance might be held to offer correspondence with that of the Holy Grail or even one of its companion Hallows, because the essential condition of the analogy must be indubitably the existence of memorials of the Passion of our Lord. Of these it is certain that there were none, because otherwise it is certain that they would be adduced. We are asked, on the contrary, to assume that a variant liturgical reading, the Legend of an Historical Apostle, after passing under a specific transmutation, and the mythical restitution of a Welsh King are the first matter in combination of the complex cycles of literature which are comprised in the Grail Legend. If this hypothesis can be taken with such high seriousness that we may suppose it put forward—shall I say?—as an equivalent by analogy for that which has offered St. Dominic and the enchanting fable of a question which should have been put to the Pope as a real explanation of the Perceval-Grail Myth,<sup>1</sup> it will be sufficient, I think, to deal with it on general lines rather than by an exhaustive process of criticism in detail. Let us put aside, in the first place, all that part which is purely in the region of supposition, and take the actual facts as things for valuation in the schedule. Question of *Epiclesis* or question—as we shall see presently—of a particular tense, it is obvious that the oriental terms of Consecration, when those prevailed in the West, were the secret of no particular Sanctuary as distinguished from all other Holy Places in Brittany, Britain and Wales.<sup>2</sup> They were catholic to these countries and also to a great part of that which we understand by Scotia, Ireland and Gaul. They connect in themselves with no Keepership and with no Hallows. We know that the Roman Rite colonised all these countries, and that in the course of time it prevailed. But the period between the public use of the Words now in question and their final abrogation was one of centuries, and although during a portion thereof—*ex hypothesi*—they may have been perpetuated in concealment, there is no doubt that they had fallen into complete desuetude long before the third quarter of the twelfth century. It is impossible to suppose that there was at that time any one concerned in their perpetuation sufficiently to put them forward as a Great Mystery of Sanctity inherent in the heart of Christianity, while it is impossible, mystically speaking, that they should carry this significance. The Secret Words do not emerge in the Metrical Romance of Joseph as in any sense the material of Romance: they appear with all the marks of

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Sebastian Evans: *IN QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL*, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> They were secret to all Sanctuaries in the sense that the words are said in a low voice. All Low Masses of the Roman Rite may be called secret, being said in an undertone, not to speak of a language which is largely unknown to the laity. The same affirmation can be made of the Greek Rite. As regards the *Secreta* of the Ordinary, the undertone is reverential.

a particular claim advanced for a special reason and maintained through more than one generation by the successive production, firstly, of a prose version of the Early Metrical MERLIN and, secondly, by the similar derivation or independent invention of the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL, which carried on the same Tradition, though it seems left unfinished, perhaps from the standpoint of narrative and assuredly of the term of its intention. In the second place two concurrent claims appear, and the second—which is stronger than the first—abandons the claim in respect of Secret Words. It does this so explicitly that it makes public the Words of Consecration, by which we are enabled to see at once how little they could ever have signified, if indeed it were possible to suppose that these are the Lost Words of Grail literature.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, by a particular fatality, they do not happen to contain the *Epiclesis* Clause. In its place, as we know so well already, we have the claim of the GRAND SAINT GRAAL on a Super-Apostolical Succession—as I have said, a much stronger claim and one for which there is little precedent in the dubious history of the Celtic Church. It is out of this pretension that the Galahad Quest arises, though at a period when the notion itself seems to have passed out of sight. We are agreed that, so far as there is a true story at all, it is the Quest of Galahad, with the LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL as its competitor on the same level, and the question of Secret Words never entered into the heart of either. It is useless to put forward the assumed fact of their existence in the Celtic Rite of Institution as something which is explanatory of the literature.<sup>2</sup> In this connection it is of importance to remember (1) that the only prose PERCEVAL which is of any consequence mystically is that which depends from the GRAND SAINT GRAAL rather than from Robert de Borron, and is of course the PERLESVAUS;<sup>3</sup> while (2) the only Metrical Romance of Perceval which ethically may be also important is that of Wolfram. The first has abandoned the Words and the second all earthly Eucharistic connection. The first puts the Roman Dogma of Transubstantiation in its most materialised possible form. It will be seen therefore that the Celtic hypothesis fails along what must be regarded as the most vital line. I submit that the pretension to a Super-Apostolical Warrant is either part of a fraudulent scheme for pre-eminence as an argument for autonomy in the case of the British Church, with the advisers of a King for its spokesmen, or it belongs to another order of concealed sentiment and event, the details and motives of which are wanting on the manifest side of things. In the first instance it is not of our concern and is explanatory only of

<sup>1</sup> *Laiens fist iosephe le premier sacrement qui onques fust fais a cel pueple mais il lot moult tost acompli. Car il ni dist fors que le parole seulement que ihesus dist a ses disciples, quant il sist a la chaine, tenes et mangies cest li vrais cors qui pour vous & por maintes gens sera liures a tourment; & autre tel dist il del uin; tenes & si beues tout car cest li sans de ma nouele loy li miens meismes qui por uos fu esbandus en remission de uos pecies. Sommer, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 40.*

<sup>2</sup> It might as well be suggested that the whole Northern French Grail Cycle came into existence to promote the practice of Communion in one kind, for so the Knights communicate in the Great Quest and inferentially or otherwise through all the texts.

<sup>3</sup> By its recurring appeal to Joseph II as he who first sacrificed the Body of the Lord.

one branch of a large literature ; in the latter we must go much further, and if we can supply the missing events or motives<sup>1</sup> from certain hidden sources, we shall be in possession of at least a provisional explanation of things most important in the literature and—*donec de medio fiet*—it must be allowed to hold.

The distinctive note of the Latin Eucharistic Rite is that, like the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, it gives the first Words of Institution thus : *Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes. Hoc est enim corpus meum*—"Take and eat ye all of this. For this is My body". Hereto certain Oriental Rites added other words, which should read in Latin : *Quod pro multis confrangetur*—"Which shall be broken for many". The GRAND SAINT GRAAL in the Hucher text gives : *Venes, si mangies et chou est li miens cors qui pour vous et pour maintes autres gens sera livres a martire et a torment*—the substantial equivalent of *pro multis confrangetur*. Compare the Gospel of St. Luke in the Latin Vulgate, which uses the present tense : *quod pro vobis datur*.

So far as regards the really trivial question of tense. The mode of Consecration by *Epiclesis*, or the Invocation of the Holy Spirit, will be unknown to some of my readers, and I extract one example therefore from the LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

THE PRIEST (saith).—Blessed art Thou, Christ our God, who didst fill the fishermen with all manner of wisdom, sending down upon them the Holy Ghost, and by them hast brought the whole world into Thy net, O Lover of men : Glory be to Thee.

R. Both now and ever, &c.

THE PRIEST (saith).—When the Highest came down and confounded the tongues, He divided the nations ; when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity ; and with one voice we praise the Holy Ghost.

*The Deacon, pointing to the Holy Bread, saith in a low voice :*

DEACON.—Sir, bless the Holy Bread.

*The Priest standeth up, and thrice maketh the sign of the Cross on the Holy Gifts, saying :*

PRIEST.—And make this bread the Precious Body of Thy Christ.

DEACON.—Amen. Sir, bless the Holy Cup.

PRIEST.—And that which is in this Cup the Precious Blood of Thy Christ.

DEACON.—Amen. (*And pointing with his stole to both the Holy Things*) Sir, Bless.

PRIEST.—Changing them by Thy Holy Ghost.

DEACON.—Amen, Amen, Amen.

PRIEST.—(*After a pause*) So that they may be for purification of soul, forgiveness of sins, communion of the Holy Ghost, &c.

<sup>1</sup> The events, if they signify validly, will be those of inward experience.

I believe that in the Mosarabic Rite, which is thought to be in near consanguinity with the Celtic, the *Epiclesis* formula is used on occasions only. It is missing altogether from the so-called LITURGY OF ST. DIONYSIUS, which only survives in the Latin. I should add that the existence of the clause in the Celtic Rite—whatever the strength of the inferences—is a matter of speculation, for the simple reason that no such Liturgy is extant.<sup>1</sup>

The other analogies and possibilities are a little attractive on the surface, and are of the kind which are caught at rather readily; but they seize upon a single point where they can be made to apply, and the other issues in a long sequence are ignored. The name Cadwaladr naturally suggests that of Galahad, and on the appeal to certain laws of permutation, it seems for a moment justified, but it is not justified in the Legends. The last King of the Britons had indeed the Hallows of his family by the right of inheritance; but there was no antecedent Keeper whom he was required to heal, and there was no Quest to undertake in order that he might secure his own. But this healing and this Quest inhere in the Grail Legend, and are manifestly at the root of the design, so that there is no connection possible between the two cases. Moreover, Cadwaladr is destined by his Legend to return, while it is of the essence of that of Galahad that he comes back no more. The same remarks will apply to all traceable instances of Hereditary Keepership in Celtic families, whatever the object reserved. It is even more certain that any comparison of St. David the Waterman with the Rich Fisherman who is wounded is highest fantasy: neither physically nor symbolically did the Saint suffer any hurt, but, again, one of the foremost Grail intentions resides in the King's wounding. The symbolical term Fisherman signifies the Guardian of the Holy Mysteries; it can have nothing to do with DEVERUR=Waterman. We do not know why a great fish is said to have heralded the birth of the Welsh Apostle. To help out the argument, we may affirm that he was a Guardian of the Christian Mysteries in the land to which he was commissioned; but we do not in this manner account, either in the historical or symbolical sense, for the fishing of Brons or Alain in the lake, or for the title of Rich Fisherman applied to the Wardens of the Grail. It is true that they also were Guardians of Mysteries, but this is an instance of concurrence and not of derivation. The LESSER HOLY GRAIL may create a comparison between the Sacred Vessel and the Sepulchre in which Christ was laid; but it does not for this reason institute any analogy between that Vessel and St. David's Altar, nor is the appeal to Wolfram useful except in the opposite sense, for the Grail Stone of the PARZIVAL, whether or not it was once in the crown of Lucifer, can tolerate still less the institution of its likeness to "a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid."

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that the GRAND SAINT GRAAL gives the Formula for the Consecration of Wine. But *ex hypothesi* the Chalice was the Grail itself, the Reliquary of the Precious Blood, which no human being, including the first Priest who sacrificed the Body of the Lord, would dare to Consecrate. Another Vessel was therefore used.

The Altar of St. David is an interesting fable of its type, as preposterous as that of Fécamp, and between the Tomb of Christ, *ex hypothesi* transported to Wales, and the Sacramental *Ciborium* likened to the Holy Sepulchre there is no analogy in any world of correspondences.

It remains therefore that in this literature we have seen how evil fell upon the House of Doctrine; how it overtook also the Keeper of Secret Knowledge; after what manner he was healed at length; how the Hidden Treasures passed under the care of his saviour; and how at the term of all they were removed, because of a fell and faithless time. That might be a very pleasant scheme of interpretation which could say that the House of Doctrine was the Celtic Church and that the wounded Keeper signified the Church in desolation; but it remains that we must go further in our search for a Key to these Mysteries.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I went further on a day long since, when dream moved up towards vision, but did not reach that state: it broke therefore and dissolved. But a few of my fellow-watchers in the precincts may find some glints of suggestion among the shards, so they are drawn here together, carrying no title. It is true that I went further, and not without remembering that dreams lead sometimes unto great awakenings, in others and even us, when it may happen that we exceed their measures. It seemed to me then at a venture that, as the sum total of many mystical aspects, the desire of the eyes in the Seeking and Finding of the Holy Grail may be re-expressed as follows: Temple or Castle or Palace—Mont Salvatch or Corbenic—wherever located and whether described as "a wilderness of building," crowded burg or simple hermit's hold, there is one characteristic concerning the Sanctuary which is essentially the same, amidst all variations of the accidents: the Keeper of the Great Hallows has fallen upon evil days; the means of restoration and of healing must come from without. They are those of his predestined successor whose office is to remove the Palladium, so that henceforth it is never seen so openly. Taking the Quest of Galahad as that which has the highest significance spiritually, I think that we may speak of it thus: In the last analysis it is the Inward Man who is really the Wounded Keeper. The Mysteries are his; on him the woe has fallen: it is he who expects healing and redemption. His body is the Grail Castle, which is also the Castle of Souls, and behind it is the Earthly Paradise as a vague and latent memory. He who enters into the consideration of this Sacred and Immemorial House by contemplation, under fitting guidance, shall know why it is that the Grail is served by a pure Maiden and why that Maiden is ultimately dispossessed. Elaine is the Soul, and the Soul is in exile because all the high unions have been declared voided: the Crown has been separated from the Kingdom and experience from the higher knowledge. So long as she remained a Pure Virgin, she was more than a Thyrsus-Bearer in the Mysteries; but the morganatic marriage of mortal life is part of her doom. This is still a high destiny, for the Soul out of earthly experience brings forth spiritual desire, which is the Quest of the return journey; and this is Galahad. It is therefore within the law and the order that she has to conceive and bring him forth. Galahad represents the highest spiritual aspirations and desires passing into full consciousness, and so into attainment. But he is not reared by his Mother, because Eros, which is the higher knowledge, has dedicated the true desire to the proper ends thereof. It will be seen also what must be understood by Lancelot in secret communication with Elaine, though he has taken her throughout for another. The reason is that it is impossible to marry even in hell without marrying that seed which is of Heaven. As she is the Psychic Woman, so is he the Natural Man, or rather the natural intelligence which is not without its consecrations, not without its term in the highest. Elaine believes that her desire is only for Lancelot; but this is because she takes him for Eros; and it is by such a misconception that the lesser Heaven stoops to the earth: herein also there is a sacred dispensation, because so is the earth assumed. I have said that Lancelot is the Natural Man; but he is such merely at the highest: he is born in great sorrow, and she who has conceived him saves her Soul alive amidst the offices of External Religion. He is carried into the lesser Land of Faërie, as into a garden of childhood. When he draws towards manhood, he comes forth from the first places of enchantment and is clothed upon by the active duties of life, as by the Vestures of Chivalry. He enters also into the unsanctified life of sense, into an union against the consecrated life and order. But his redeeming quality is that he is faithful and true, because of which, and because of his genealogy, he is chosen to beget Galahad, of whom he is otherwise unworthy, even as we all, in our daily life, fall short of the higher aspirations of the Soul. As regards the Keeper, it is certain that he must die and be

If the Legend of the Holy Grail were the last light of the Celtic Church before it expired in proscription, one would confess that it was glorious in its death. But the most that we can say actually is rather that it left elements which in fine served a better purpose. The PERLESVAUS, the poem of Wolfram, and the sacred and beautiful Quest of Galahad, these are three records which bear witness on earth of the secret things which are declared only in the Heavens. There are Three Tabernacles wherein Transfiguration takes place.

In the extrinsic Celtic remains the only substitute which offers for the great Legend of the Holy and Sacramental Cup is an obscure and nameless Vessel which is subject in its latest history to the irreverence of a pedlar, and this it was deemed worth while to avenge. From such inefficiencies and trifles it is certain that we must have recourse, even if for a moment only, to the Glastonbury Legend, which did invent high fables to glorify the British Church. This recourse must fail us however in its turn, because Glastonbury is (1) of very small moment throughout the Grail literature, except in the PERLESVAUS; (2) is never the place of the Sacred Vessel, for even its most mythical allocations—as, for example, Corbenic—cannot be identified therewith; and (3) it knows nothing of the Second Joseph. The GRAND SAINT GRAAL does in one of its codices speak of Glastonbury as the burial-place of the elder Joseph, though it only says “*Glas in England*,” for which other texts substitute Scotland. I doubt very much whether the Glastonbury Legend was intended for more than the praise of a particular Monastery: it represents Joseph of Arimathæa as the chief among Twelve Apostles sent by St. Philip to Britain, and they carried a Vial or Vials containing the Precious Blood. The Grail notion might have gratified Henry II, who concerned himself with things Arthurian, but beyond this we have only Romance of History. It is certain in any case that St. David was not transformed into Joseph of Arimathæa, so far as Glastonbury is concerned. He and his *apostoli coadjutores*, his Staff and his Relics, belong to another story, brought over from the Continent when St. David had passed into desuetude. Even so, of the Joseph claim, as we have it in the Grail Romances, there is little enough trace in historical writers of the time. The Abbey of Moienmoutier<sup>1</sup> in the Vosges laid claim to the original possession of Joseph's body; but it disappeared or was stolen, as some said, by the

replaced by another Keeper before the true man can be raised, with the holy things to him belonging, which Hallows are withdrawn indeed, but it is with and in respect of him only; for the Keepers are a great multitude, though it is certain that the Grail is one. The path of Quest is the path of upward progress, and it is only at the great height that Galahad knows himself as really the Wounded Keeper and that thus, in the last resource, the physician heals himself. Now this is the mystery from everlasting, which is called in the high doctrine *Schema misericordiæ*. It is said: *Latet, æternumque latebit*, until it is revealed in us; and as to this: *Te rogamus, audi nos*.

<sup>1</sup> See THE MYSTIC VISION by Miss Fisher, p. 49. The theft is referred to Glastonbury by Paulin Paris. Miss Fisher is a little vague respecting the Relics: possibly the reference is to the two Vials. It does not seem that other Relics than these were claimed by Glastonbury, except that it was the burial-place of Joseph. Miss Fisher says that it appropriated Joseph “bones and all” (p. 50). Its claim rests, however, on his supposititious evangelisation of Britain, beginning A.D. 63.



Monks of Glastonbury. If it be affirmed that the Second Joseph, who is a creation of the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, signifies some move in the curious ecclesiastical game which was played by Henry II, the evidence is in the opposite direction, so far as it can be said to exist : it is obvious that any game must have worked better with the original Apostolical Joseph than with his imaginary Son.<sup>1</sup>

It is time to close these reflections, and there are only two points which remain, as I have not covenanted to deal with the *minima* as a whole. If King Arthur was enabled to make Chalices for ordinary Sacramental Uses in Official Churches from the prototype which he saw in his vision, being an Arch-Natural Chalice, this occurred after the same manner that the Pilgrim Masons who discovered the body of the Master Builder were enabled to bring away certain things in substitution for the Secrets that were lost at his death ; and there are thus other analogies than the natural and reasonable gifts of the Welsh Apostle ; but there is no need to dwell upon them in this place.

The quotation which I have given from the LESSER HOLY GRAAL raises an interesting point, and, without being versed in the ecclesiastical side of things, we can all of us believe that a Church so strange as that which once ministered in Wales had also some curious things belonging to the Liturgical World ; but the extract in question must be read in connection with the original Metrical Romance, where the symbolism is expressed differently.

“ Aussi sera représentée  
 Cele taule en meinte contrée.  
 Ce que tu de la crouiz m’ostas  
 Et ou sepulchre me couchas,  
 C’est l’auteus seur quoi me metrunt  
 Cil qui me sacrifierunt.  
 Li dras où fui envolepez,  
 Sera corporaus apelez.  
 Cist veissiaus où men sanc méis  
 Quant de men cors le requueillis,  
 Calices apelez sera.  
 La platine ki sus girra  
 Iert la pierre senefiée  
 Qui fu deseur moi seelée,  
 Quant ou sepuchre m’éus mis.”

The Blood is mentioned therefore and the analogy is complete ; it is also gracious and piteous, as the poem might say itself ; and, in fine—apart from forced analogies of a material kind—it is a true, catholic and efficacious comparison, which exhibits for those who can read in the heart one other side of secret Eucharistic symbolism—even the deep mystery of that mystical death which is suffered by the Lord of Glory in the assumption of the Veils of Bread and Wine, that He may arise into a new life in the soul of the reborn communicant.

<sup>1</sup> We have seen that Glastonbury would have nothing to do with Joseph II and substituted its own Vials for the Holy Grail.

I do not propose to speak of any original Grail Book, because this is for another consideration; but supposing for a moment that a Secret Liturgy or Missal were at the root of the Legend my conviction would be that it was not especially Celtic and still less Welsh especially. Behind the hypothesis of the *Epiclesis* Clause there lies for me a deeper speculation, because there are traces of a rare and wonderful Office of the Holy Spirit here and there in Grail literature; it may be—not impossibly—that this is one of the keys as to its source and Doctrine, could only we find the lock for which it was wrought in Romance. Would it open some gate, I wonder, leading back to that Johannine Rite,<sup>1</sup> the rumours of which have reached us from strange and doubtful quarters?

It has been noted already that if we accept the hypothesis of a Pan-Britannic Church, its evidence lies substantially within the measures of the GRAND SAINT GRAAL. Of Chrétien's intention we can discern little, nor does it indeed signify: it seems fairly clear that he had no religious, much less ecclesiastical implicits. Wauchier and his anonymous precursor are in the same position; Manessier is concerned only with a Vengeance Quest; Gerbert offers a few significant allusions, but his end is a thing frustrated. There is nothing so remote from all ecclesiastical programme in the official order as the Lesser Chronicles, notwithstanding their Secret Words. Finally, the PARZIVAL of Wolfram renders to God all that can be offered by ethics—like another Cain, though not of necessity rejected, offering the fruits of earth—and to the spiritual Cæsar appears to deny nothing. If the PARZIVAL has an ulterior motive it is not of the Celtic Church, nor yet of the House of Anjou, about which methinks that it protests too much, either for the alleged Provençal Kyot or the Lord of Eschenbach. There remain therefore only the VULGATE CHRONICLES and outside the primary text in place, which happens to be last in time, may those come forth and testify who can find a Pan-Britannic Church in any MERLIN codex, the LANCELOT or the QUEST.

The debate must end here: there is another point of view from which one cares but little on what materials the makers of Grail

<sup>1</sup> There is something to be said on this subject at a later stage; but the pitfalls of occult reverie are about it on every side. It has been suggested, for example, that there is a chain of "evidence" passing through Spain and the Knights Templar to St. John the Divine, so onward to the Essenes, after whom there is the further East. This is the fable of a few who look to India as asylum-in-chief of all veridic Mysteries; but it has been found more convenient to state the fact of the evidence than to produce it. At an earlier stage Abbé Grégoire affirmed that our Saviour placed His Disciples under the authority of St. John, who never quitted the East and from whom certain secret teachings were handed on to his successors, the Johannine Christians, leading after many centuries to the Institution of the Templars. Again, the evidence is wanting on all the counts. The broad speculation has found, however, some favour with a few critics of the Grail literature; and Simrock in particular put forward, as will be seen in another section, the idea of the Sacred Vessel as belonging to the root-matter of alleged Templar Secrets. He suggested also a connection between that Chivalry and the Essenes, postulated as repositories of a concealed science confided by Jesus to His Disciples and, in fine, by them communicated to Templar Priests. Those who are acquainted with the claims of German Masonic Knights Templar in the late eighteenth century are likely to be looking for the problematical personality of Johann August Starck in the shadows behind Simrock.

Romances may be held to have worked, since it is clear that they imported therein a new spirit. If anyone persists in affirming that Cadwaladr, who went to Rome or Jerusalem, is to be identified with Galahad, who went to Heaven, he can have it that way at his pleasure, understanding that on my part the judgment is reserved. I know that the one has suffered a high change before he has passed into the other. I know also, in any case, that of God moveth the PERLESVAUS and the GALAHAD of the King of All. I know that every literature has its antecedents in some other literature, and that every religion owes something to a religion that preceded it. Sometimes the consanguinity is close and sometimes it is very far away. Only those who affirm that the one accounts for the other, and this simply and only, seem to be a little unwise. Christianity arose within Jewry and doctrinally out of Jewry, but this fact only brings their generic difference into greater relief. So also the Grail literature rose up in the Celtic Church; its analogies may be found therein; they may be many also in folk-lore; but there are also as many ways in which the one, as we know it, does not account for the other, as we have it actually.

The Celtic Church has assisted us, however, to see one thing more plainly, though we know it on other considerations, namely, that in fine there is but a single Quest, which is that of Galahad. We must make every allowance for the honest findings of those past scholars, for whom the Holy Grail, as it was and it is, has never spoken, for whom it is only a Feeding-Dish under a light cloud of imagery, and by whom it is thought perhaps in their hearts that the paraded intervention of Christianity among wild old pagan myths is on the whole rather regrettable. They turned naturally to those quarters whence issue the voices of purely natural life, and therefore they chose Gawain and Perceval in his cruder forms, because these spoke to them in their own language. Unmanifested now but still discerned darkly, if a lost proto-Perceval should be found at length, even that which went before the PEREDUR and the English Metrical Romance; and if, as there is no doubt, it should be devoid of all elements belonging to Grail or Quester, our case would be proved the better, being (1) the natural succession of the Galahad Quest after the GRAND SAINT GRAAL; (2) the succession of Perceval in the sequence of Robert de Borron, but rather as the scion of a less exalted legitimacy; (3) the introduction of the late prose PERLESVAUS or PERCEVAL LE GALLOIS as a final act of transmutation in the Anglo-Norman Cycle, which so far assists our case that it manifests the unfitness, realised at that period, of Perceval as he was known by the earlier texts; (4) the derivation of the Wolfram PARZIVAL in part from Celtic elements, in part from some which are, or may have been, Teutonic, but also with speculative derivations through Provence from Spain.

## D.—THE VICTORY OF THE LATIN RITE

The hypothesis of the Celtic Church has been put forward in the last section as it has never been expressed previously : I have diminished nothing and any contrary inferences have been proposed so far temperately ; but the issues are not entirely those of the Grail Legend, and in view of all that comes after a few words in conclusion of this part may be stated in plainer terms. It should be on record, by example, for those who have ears, that the Welsh Church with its phantom and figure-head Bishops, its Hereditary Priesthood, its fighting and sanguinary Prelates, and its profession of sanctity as others profess trades, seems a very good case for those who insist that the original Christianity of Britain was independent of St. Augustine, which it was, and very much indeed ; but on the whole, as a counsel of despair or otherwise, there may be some of us who will prefer Rome.<sup>1</sup>

There may be insufficiencies and imperfect warrants in the great Orthodox Assemblies ; there may be and there are indeed a thousand scandalous and appalling histories encompassing the Roman Orthodoxy ; but the Celtic Church—innocuous in these respects—recalls nothing that we can regret. Gildas and St. Bernard at their values are eloquent witnesses concerning it. The Latin Rite prevailed because it was bound to prevail, because the greater absorbs the lesser. For the rest, we know that the True Church has never been built on earth, except in the hearts of the Elect ; that after Rome and Greece and Canterbury, we are looking like the Joachists for the Reign of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, and now only in respect of the Legends, let us say lastly, using a tongue of symbolism, that the Ascension of Galahad is without prejudice to the second coming of Cadwaladr. It does not signify for our purpose whether Arthur ever lived, and if so whether he was merely a petty British Prince. The Grail is still the Grail, and the Mystery of the Round Table is still the sweet and secret spirit of Universal Knighthood.

It has been proposed that the Grail Symbols are to be found in the Greek Mass : the Cup, the Lance, the Platter or Sacred Dish, the Lights and so forth. In reality it is a fantastic reverie which reduces the Hallows and replaces the mighty Spear—a blood-dripping Talisman—by a small instrument used for dividing bread and called, also fantastically, the Lance of Longinus, which is obviously the sole ground on which the comparison has been made. We must remember in these connections that the Pageants or Processions in the Grail Castle have no relation to a Mass of any kind whatsoever. If they are comparable with any Church Observance, it is with the Catholic Ceremony of Corpus Christi and the modern Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, which forms on special occasions a part of the Rite of

<sup>1</sup> Apart from its official history, apart from the poisoning Borgia and his Host efficacious unto death ; apart from the Legate of Innocent III and his holocaust of men, women and children of Provence, leaving God to find out His own.

Benediction. We may remember also the Procession of the Precious Blood at Bruges, which is at least some centuries old.

It is obvious that there is a Mass of the Grail in certain texts, though not in any branch of the CONTE DEL GRAAL, not in the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL, and not of course in Wolfram. It is found in the Galahad QUESTE and in the PERLESVAUS. In these it is a Wonder-Mass, and no other Hallows ever occur therein, an accessory Chalice excepted, or that which corresponds thereto. Miss Fisher, among others, has been misled by plausible but quite empty analogies between the Church Mass and the Grail. Such correspondences are obvious enough, but they account for nothing which distinguishes the Grail Service from an Ordinary of the Latin Mass or from any of the Orthodox Liturgies. The Ordinary was heard daily in every Minster and was said in Hermit's Chapels. It is met with continually in Grail texts; but it was not the Grail Mass which Arthur heard and saw in the PERLESVAUS and which Galahad heard with his peers at Corbenic or at the end of all in Sarras.

It is to be noted further that an attempt at identification of the Secret Words communicated by Christ to Joseph with any part of the VERE DIGNUM or the official SECRETA is like explaining the Rosicrucian *absque nube pro nobis* as a simple confession of faith: it covers no part of the ground. The MYSTERIUM INEFFABILE does not lie within the compass of a Roman penny Catechism.

BOOK X

FURTHER CRITICAL APPARATUS:  
THE SCHOOLS, THE CHURCHES, AND THE SECTS



## THE ARGUMENT

I. CHRONOLOGICAL SKETCH OF THE CRITICAL LITERATURE.—Early Studies of Arthurian Romance in England—Arthurian Antiquities in Wales—Views of Thomas Warton derived from the German Grail—Gorres on the Lohengrin Legend—Speculations of Dunlop—Fauriel on Provençal Literature and the Grail therein—On Kyot de Provence—On Earthly and Heavenly Knighthood—On the Grail and Apocryphal Christian Legends—Various editions of the PARZIVAL—Modernised versions of Schulz and Simrock—Their variant points of view—The historicity of Kyot—Legend of the Baptist's Head—Alleged identity of Kyot de Provence and Guiot de Provins—Opinions of Rosenkranz and Rochat—The Younger Titurel—Templar Speculations—Criticism of San Marte—Clash of opinion on Celtic origins—Furnivall and Campbell—Vogue of Baring-Gould in England—Paulin Paris and his rendering of the Prose Lancelot—Opinions of Potvin—Bergmann on the SAN GREAL—Rejections of Zarncke—The praise of Birch-Hirschfeld—His views on the Borron Cycle and Celtic Fables—On the Question in Perceval Romances—Counter views of Martin—Conclusions of Herz—The Studies of Alfred Nutt—Miss Weston's Contributions to the Criticism of Grail Literature—Bruce on the Pageant at the Grail Castle in the CONTE of Chrétien. II. THE CLAIM IN RESPECT OF TEMPLAR INFLUENCE.—An Illustration of the Romance of History—The Templars and the Latin Church—After what manner the Temple has been brought within the Chain of a Secret Tradition—The Grail and Templarism—A note on one Hypothesis—Templar Symbolism in Grail Literature—The Temple and the PARZIVAL—Estimate of the alleged connection—The Templars and Catholicism—The Grail and the Church—A Matter of Personal Confession—Summary of Templar Hypotheses in respect of the Grail Literature—Grail Knights and an Order of San Salvador—The Baphometric Mystery—Von Hammer's Grail Reveries—Abbé Grégoire on a Secret Doctrine of St. John the Divine—The Speculations of San Marte—Judgment thereupon—Simrock on alleged Templar and Grail Traditions—Purpose of Grail Romances according to Eugène Aroux—Papal Interdiction of Grail Romances according to Moland—Religious Opinions ascribed to the Templars by Næf—Miss Weston's affirmations on the Templar Debate—Papal Charges against the Knights Templar—Questions of Heresy—Inferences and Conclusions based hereon—True position of the Order—Saint Bernard's Ideal regarding it—The Hypothesis Abandoned. III. THE SECTS OF SOUTHERN FRANCE.—Albigensian Sects and the Grave Misconceptions Concerning them—Old Protestant Apologists—Occult and other Speculations—Attempted connection of the Sects with the Grail Subject—Its critical examination—Albigenses as Manichæans—Waldenses as Donatists—Paulicians and Cathar—The Albigensian Crusade—Simon de Montfort—His war of extermination—His death—The Crusade and the Holy Inquisition—The Last Stronghold



of the Catharists—Judgment on this business—The Story of Enforced Confessions—The Sects and their Sacramental Teaching—A French Understanding of Chivalrous Romance—The Theses of Aroux—The Grail as signifying a Secret Association—Canon of Criticism in respect of Chivalrous Literature—Supposed Intervention of Secret Orders in the development of the Grail Subject—An Authentic Record of Albigensian Belief—The Cathar Ritual of Lyons—Incarnation of the Mystical Christ in perfect believers—Eckbert on the Cathar Sacrament—Testimonies collected by Schmidt—Views in contradiction—Joinville's Story of Montfort and of Albigensian Bread and Wine—The Albigensian Book of John the Evangelist.

## BOOK X

### FURTHER CRITICAL APPARATUS: THE SCHOOLS, THE CHURCHES, AND THE SECTS

#### I

#### CHRONOLOGICAL SKETCH OF THE CRITICAL LITERATURE

IT will pass, I suppose, unquestioned that a notable impetus was given to the study of Arthurian Romance in England by the publication in 1817 of the first reissue of Caxton's *MORTE D'ARTHUR* by Sir Thomas Malory, printed originally in 1485 and made available thus early in the nineteenth century, with an admirable introduction and notes by Robert Southey.<sup>1</sup> It will be understood that at this day the introduction is rather of memorial than of critical value: it spoke of the sources of Malory, as they could be ascertained at that date, and offered to those who were concerned a first acquaintance with the wealth of Arthurian literature in Northern French; as represented by the printed editions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Scott had preceded the English Poet-Laureate with his edition of Thomas of Ercildoune, including an investigation of the so-called Luce de Gast Cyclic Romance of Tristram, "with his usual ability and erudition, leaving nothing undone", as Southey testifies. Edward Davies was also in evidence, unfolding his Arkite Mythos and other reveries of the period in dissertations on Celtic Druids and Celtic Mythology, embodying amazing translations of Welsh triads, Taliesin Poems and so forth, drawn from Cambrian Archives and accepted of course at the value of their own claim on an almost prehistoric past.<sup>2</sup> They served, however, to make known something of Arthurian antiquities in the Principality of Wales, as did also Sharon Turner from the attempted historical standpoint. As the days drew on Thomas Warton appealed to Continental sources in his *HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY*, which is not without value even at this day and delightful in any case as a storehouse of reference. He was acquainted with a mangled version of the *GRAND SAINT GRAAL* under the name of Robert de Borron and with the *SAINT GRAAL* as a Reliquary containing the Precious Blood. He regards it, however, as a Breton or British

<sup>1</sup> Appendix II, Part I.

<sup>2</sup> *THE MYTHOLOGY AND RITES OF THE DRUIDS*, 1809.

account and passes to German Romance for a different version of its history. In this way we are furnished with a moderately accurate and graphic account of the PARZIVAL scheme, having special reference to the Kyot de Provence fable, by which Warton was greatly attracted, more particularly with the discovery of the Grail depicted mysteriously in the skies. He regards the claim made on an Arabian source as supported by the internal evidence exhibited in the poem of Wolfram. "The scene for the most part is not only laid in the East but a large proportion of the names are of decidedly oriental origin." Like so many who succeeded him, Warton was impressed also by the almost fraternal communication between Christian and Saracen, the absence of religious animosities, and by the fact that Christian Knights were enrolled frequently under the Banners of Eastern Caliphs.

According to Wolfram the Grail came down from Heaven, but Warton points out that according to his assumed Armorican, British and even Provençal Legends, it was brought Westward from the Eastern World, in connection with which he is reminded of that other Traditional Cup which occupies, as he says, a conspicuous place in Jewish Law. He traces its descent from the Patriarch Joseph to Solomon the King as to "the great object of Hebrew veneration and glory". From this point there begins to open before him a wide field of mythos. The Jew who discovered and contrived to read the Toledo Arabic manuscript is said to have descended from Solomon on the maternal side, a fitting genealogy, in Warton's view, for him who was destined to write the first story of the Grail in any language of the West. Historical difficulties notwithstanding, the Blessed Vessel is connected at once with that other miraculous Talisman which Persian fable bestows on Jemshid, a "pattern of perfect Kings during whose reign the Golden Age was realised in Iran". Favoured by Ormuzd and his legitimate representative on earth, Jemshid discovered a Goblet of the Sun when digging the foundations of Persepolis, "and it brought him unbounded knowledge of both terrestrial and celestial affairs". The Goblet passed on from the founder of the Persian Monarchy to "the hero of all later oriental fiction", namely, Alexander the Great, for whom it was "the auspicious emblem of his victorious career". It became for Eastern poets a symbol of the world and of "the fecundating powers of Nature", as also a source of divination and even of the Philosopher's Stone. Warton remembers further that a Goblet of the Sun is found in Grecian Fables and that a Golden Chalice, also of the Solar God, is connected with the name of the Theban Hercules. The analogy between these things and the Holy Grail is instituted by affirming that "the Sacred Vessel of modern fiction is no less distinguished for its attributes", at which point it may be wise to leave the question.

Warton's account of the PARZIVAL is derived probably from J. Gorres, to whom he refers and who produced in 1813 the POEMA PARCIFALI ET LOHENGRINI from a text compiled by Glöckle of two