WHO WAS ST. ROMALD?

BY THE HIV. A. CAMPBELL FRASER!

A paper read recently at a gathering in

Who was St. Romaid? Any inquiry as to this dedication is faced by certain initial difficulties :

That there are three Saints who have been claimed as the Saint in question.

With regard to these, or at least to two of them, there are no contemporwritings to guide us, such happily the case with St. Cuthbert. Consequently we can never be quite sure whether we are on firm ground. The only Lives were written centuries later, intended primarily to be "legenda," that is, to be read in churches. They are indeed mere legends, the floating traditions of the with reference to the Saint, dressed up to suit the religious taste of the age, with the narvellous plenti fully administered, aften in the crud-est and most impossible form.

A third difficulty is that Romaldkirk never had, what many villages have, an annual feast, which by the day and month on which it is observed every year, enables the inquirer to go to some calendar of Saints, and there under that date or within its octave. at once to identify the particular Saint of the name,

Let us however, examine the material we have at the three Saints in question, and, if possible disentangle the facts from the embellishments which later centuries have added.

First, there is St. Romnald of Ravenna. the sphere of whose labours was all round the upper end of the Adriatic Sea to Venice, and into Styria and Dalmatia. His labours took place roughly in the period 980-1027 A.D .- a period when Christianity and the Popedom were in a terrible condition of moral apostacy. This St. Ronmald went about among "the religious"-that is, the monastic establishments, and by the very goodness and attractiveness of his character did much to reform abuses. Yet what connection, we may well ask, could this far-away Italian have with Ronaldkirk? The only evidence that I know of is furnished by the wall paintings in the nave of the church, one of which, on the north, is said to represent the Lion of St. Mark at Venice. The other, on the south, is said to depict a pilgrim; and these are supposed to refer to St. Ronmald making his famous visit to Venice.

Even if this be correct, all that it amounts to is that the cleries of the Middle Ages (say of the time of the FitzHugh monument in the transept-i.e., the beginning of the 14th century) wished to discard any mere local saint and to connect their clurch with one more widely known. And let me way here that that was a fairly common practice. To give you an extreme instance One of the greatest of the Celtic Saints of what is now Scotland, the sphere of whose labours centred round the Island of Skye and Ross-shire (Maelrubha) was actually blemified with St. Ruphus of Capua in Italy. And in several of the Scottish Calendars of Samts his day is changed from his proper day in April to August 27th, St. Ruphus Day. For my part I cannot believe for a moment that the original dedication of Romaldkirk was in the name of St. Ronmald of Raveona

Let me go on to a second claimant to the church-this is Rombald or Rumbald, one of that great multitude of devoted missionavies who went forth in the seventh and eighth centuries from Ireland (hence that name for Ireland, for as it was then generally called Scotia, "the Island of the Saints"), who laboured in so many parts of Europe, the Low Countries, Germany, Switzerland, and North Italy, This Rumbald has given his name to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Belgium at Mechlin or Malines, famous in our day for Cardinal Moreter, who was such a noble figure during the War, which also we connect with those Malines conversations of which Lord Halifax has given some account. St. Rombald is said to have been martyred at Mechlin. Unfortunately the only "life" is long after his time; and tells us no fact beyond that Bumbald came from Scotia and that he had previously been Archhishop of Dullin; on anadironism, for the See of Dublin was founded at least three centuries after the age in which Rombald lived,

The Breviary of Aberdeen (end of 15th century), though it provides a collect for his day, July 1st, and nine lections to be rend, goes a good deal further. It says Rombald was born in Scotland (which now stands for what we mean by Scotland) at Rerwick; and that he was the son of a King David and Queen Cecille, and that he went to Rome and on his return stopped at Mechlin, when he was martyred. But

neither of these amounts, although they mention in connection with St. Rombald Ireland, Scotland, Rome, and the Low Countries, mentions England, and I cannot believe that this St. Rombald ever visited Rounddkirk or could be the Saint required, though I notice one of the Bollandist scholars of the 17th century maintains that St. Rumald was an English Saxon-on what grounds I am maware.

The third claimant to be the Saint of Romaldkirk is Rombald, Rumbald, Rumwald the name is variously snell. He is one of those purely English Saints, male and female, of high station, of which there were so many in Pre-Comparst Englandprinces and princesses, many of them. like Frideswide of Oxford, Worberga of Christer, Milderd of Thanei, and above all Etheldreda of Ely-all Women; and of princes, hesides Rombald, Kenelm, and the murdered boy king of England whose mane (wice appears in the Prayer Book Calendar -March 18: June 20, Translation of Edward King of the West Saxons. This Rumbald is said to have been a son of an unnamed king of Northumbria and of a daughter of that Penda who was the last champion of Anglo-Saxon beathenism; in which case his date is somewhere about 680 A.D.

The particular part of the country specially connected with this Rumbald is ilm district between Banbury and the town of Buckingham, King's Sutton. on the Cherwell; is the place of his birth, where is St. Rumbold's Well with medieinal qualities which in the 17th century altracted people to it as a sort of Harrogate. Unfortunately there is no account given us about the Saint except what is given in the 15th century Nova Legenda Angilæ of Friar John Capgrave, of King's Lynn (1393-1364). It is full of absurd and impossible miracles, but at least it bears witness to the very widespread popularity in medieval England which the cultus of the Saint had attained to. Let me show you something of the stuff which he gives. I quote Miss 'Arnold Forster's "Studies in Church Dedication," vol. i., page 172-

No sooner was he born than he found voice to declare three times "I am a Christian." He then desired to be baptised and with truly royal decision made choice of his sponsors and of his own name. He pointed with his infant finger to a great hollow stone, almost beyond the strength of man to lift, which should serve him as a font, and being duly baptised delivered himself of a sermon. Ex-hausted by all these efforts he died at the end of three days, but not before he had taken thought for the disposition of his body, bequeathing it for one year his birthplace, Sutton (thence distinguished as King's Sutton), then for two years to Brackley in Northamptonshire, and finally to the town of Buckingham for

Curiously enough, in none of these three places is the purish church dedicated to St. Rumbold. In each case the present dedicaion is St. Peter; but as I have said before, giving up a local dedication for one that is scriptural, or at least more widely known, was common in the Middle Ages; and further, the devastating flood of Pagan Danish invasion in the centuries following St. Romald's time, sweeping over all that countryside, would certainly wipe out much that was Christian.

Yet elsewhere in England his popularity was widespread. Thus we find churches dedicated to him, at Stoke Doyle, near Oundle; in Lincoln City, one of the demolished churches; in Colchester there is still St. Runwald's. In Kent, though, there and going to the boy's assistance when he is only one church still dedicated to him. Yet formerly in a church near Maidstone there was a small figure of St. Rumwald "which only those could lift who had hever sinued in thought or in deed," and at Folkestone St. Rumbald appears as patron of the fishermen. In Sussex, too, there is a dedigation at Rumbold's Wyke near Chichester. though it is doubtful whether it is the Saint who is here commemorated, or merely some ancient South Saxon proprietor of the place. There are also two dedications in Dorsetshire, Cann, or St. Rumbold's, just outside Shuftesbury; and Pentridge on the Hampshire border,

The question then is, Can Romaldkirk be properly claimed as a dedication to St. Rombald? The slight difference of name need prove no difficulty, because, as the late Canon Beal wrote, "In the old Registers the name is frequently spelt Rumbald or Rumbold." Thus, in a terrier of 1693, it is spelt Rombaldkirk. The fact that, in the legend, Rombald is called the son of a King of Northumbria makes it antecedently likely that there would be a dedication to him within the bounds of ancient Northumbria. We may then sum up our investigation in the words of Canon Beal; "I think it far more likely." he writes, "that a Northumbrian, as St. Rumwald is said to have been,

should have attracted attention in this part of the world, than that the devotion should have been bestowed either upon an Irishman, afterwards a foreign histor, as St. Rumuld, or an Italian, as St. Romuald."

What, then, can we make of the legend of this Saint? Can we disentangle the real facts from these absurd miracles? Was St. Romaid really a precoclous infant who did impossible things? Or was he, as Baring Gould suggests [" Lives of Saints," vol. 16. page 269), baptised as an adult, and died shortly after his baptism, when he was in scriptural phrase still a new-born babe in the faith? This seems the probable explanation-later ages reading in a literal, physical sense, words which originally had only a spiritual meaning. Taking this to be the train, I venture to embody it in the following collect for St. Remald's Day *:-

O Almighty God, who gavest grace unto Roundld the Prince, manfully to avow himself Christian, and in his short afe to fulfil a long life; Grant us, after his example, ever to remember that t where unto we were baptised, and to continue true soldiers of the Cross all our days through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen,

November 3, or the Day of his Transla tion, that is, the transfer of his body from King's Sutton in Northamptonshire Brackley in the same county, and after-wards to Buckingham—August 28th. Romans vi., 3.

SCHOOLBOY THRASHED.

SATURDAY SCENE AT BOLDRON.

At Greta Bridge Police Court on Wednesday, Dr. C. H. Welford presiding,

James Peverley (71), Boldron was sum moned for having assaulted Frederick Garry (13), of the same village, on January 16th, Mr T. B. Heslop defended.

Complainant, who seemed so upset in the witness-box while giving evidence that the magistrates decided to take his statement in their private room, said he was playing football near Mr Peverley's house and frightened his hens. Defendant caught him and without giving him time to speak thrashed him with a stick. He had not been forbidden to play football near the house. Two other boys were with him. He had played there before, and Mr Peverley had warned him about it. He had not done any damage.

Cross-examined by Mr Heslop, complainant said the other boys were named Brunskill and Aislaby. The ball had been several times over the wall in Mr Peverley's hen run and also in the garden. The first time it went over Mr Peverley gave the ball back to them, but the second time he took it into his house and refused to give it up. Mr Peverley struck him four times. The other boys ran away. He did not tell his mother that he had had a hiding; she discovered that on seeing the bruises when she put him to bed on Saturday night. She asked him who had been hitting him, and he told her all about it.

By the Chairman: The first time the ball went over the wall Mr Peverley gave it back, but he did not remember Mr Peverley telling him not to kick it over again-

James Watson, quarryman, Boldron, said that at 4.30 p.m. on the day named he was going to the village pump with a pail for water and saw defendant come out of his gate, chase the boy, catch him by the throat, and thrash him most mercilessly. Witness was on the point of putting down his pail broke away from the defendant. Defendant ran after the boy, who escaped by running into his own home.

Mr Hestop: You did not go to the boy's assistance ?

Witness: I was going to when the boy gat away. I had only a second to think about it. When the boy got away I did not want to interfere. I was 22 yards away when I saw the boy struck. He struck the boy several times-five or six, Peverley followed Aislaby to his home, but I did not see him after he went through the gate.

Witness added that he did not report the case. He did not know the boy was any worse until he heard some conversation about it on the Sunday night, and he then told the boy's father what he had seen. He did not know that the boy had taken any harm except that he was screaming.

Dr. C. B. Robinson, Barnard Castle, said he examined the boy at his surgery on the Monday morning and found a bruise four inches long on his right arm with a great deal of effusion and discolouration. The bruise ran past the elbow joint and on to the forearm. The limb was still discoloured. There was also a bruise on the right thigh with effusion and discolouration. A third mark, similar in character, was on the boy's back.

Cross-examined: The marks were comtent with the suggestion that they was inflicted on the Saturday afternoon, To were not the marks one might expect ; ordinary schoolboy to have. They appear to have been inflicted with a stick an is thick. A thin cane would have made smaller mark

Mr Heslop, addressing the beach on half of the defendant, who pleaded guilty, submitted that this was purely technical assault and not criminal. It is been held in one of two hoted cases to assaults were justified in defence of to perty. There was, indeed, a corious in which an unofficial fire brigade appear at a fire as well as an official brigade, and assault took place when one of the offibrigade pushed one of the unumerial brigaout of the way. It was held at law that was justified in the push. Defendant 1 been annoyed by the booliganism of a complainant and other boys who plays tootball outside his house and not an frightened his heas but willfully dirtied (step and the path leading to his front do-Defendant would tell the bench that he exasperated by this display of booligania This was the first time he had been ina police court. For thirty years he clerk to the gas engineer of the Ma chester Corporation, and later he wa engaged in the stationery department at Barnard Castle School, holding rank of Quarter-master-Sergeant Im 1915 to 1919. Eighteen years ago be we to live at Boldron for health reasons. may have administered a little harder poishment than was necessary, but thought that the only practical way stopping the nuisance was getting hold one of the lads and inflicting a little re poral punishment.

Defendant said he had had a lot trouble with the boys who played footbu near his house. He had been annoyed to a long time. He had a now which w very restive and became nervous when it boys kicked their ball over the wall into b premises. When he picked the ball up h spoke to the boy Garry and told him a to kick the ball over his wall any more, if he did he would take it into his home He gave the boy the ball, and he stan kicking it again. It came over the w again, and witness carried it into the hou The boys then besmeared his door step w path with mud and threatened to pull garden wall down if he refused to give the ball. Witness afterwards found the ball belonged to a four-years-old chil named Mitchell, whose sister came to for it at dusk. Witness added that he w so exasperated by the boys' conduct that caught hold of Garry and administered hiding with a stick, but the stick was roll and broke at the first blow. He hit the three times before he ran away. He : after two boys, but did not catch either. afterwards had a visit from Garry's fath who was very abusive and struck the isl with a stick to emphasize his point challenged him to a fight on the gre He threatened to waylay him and then he would bring the case before the

and wait for him afterwards. Complainant's father: Was it British hit a hoy like that when there were po-

men in the district ? Defendant: I was so exasperated at 0 had been done that on the spur of moment I went for the boy and caught !-I told the parents what had transpired invited them to come and see what the had done, but they would not come, O plainant was the first I could lay my ha on. The others ran away.

Mrs Minnle Maria Plews, widow, in keeper for defendant, said the step dirtied on two Saturdays running. corroborated the rest of defendant's the ment

The Chairman said the magistrates " agreed that a certain amount of punishm had been inflicted on the boy, but thought the merits of the case would mel by the payment of costs. They them however, it would have been better !! Peverley had controlled himself and not so exasperated.

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