

Life of St. Padarn.¹

HERE BEGINNETH THE LIFE OF ST. PADARN,² A BISHOP.

Christ, the son of the living God, the third person of the divine Trinity, co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, gave this precept to his church that he might the more effectually excite the minds of men to religion by promising them a double reward, that is a hundred fold here, and eternal life in the world to come. And Luke the evangelist, the disciple of Saint Paul the apostle, physician of the body and of the soul, wrote this precept for the common salvation of Christians; and this is the meaning of that precept, "Whoever will mortify all his affections, and trample on the riches and luxury of the world for obtaining the kingdom of God, will receive much

¹ From Cott. MSS. in the British Museum, A. XIV.

² Padarn was the son of Pedrwn, or Pedredin ap Emyr Llydaw, and visited Britain from Armorica, according to Usher, in the year 517; and it may be presumed at the same time as when Cadvan and his companions arrived in this country. According to the *Achau y Saint*, Padarn became a member of the college of Illyd. He afterwards established a religious society of one hundred and twenty members, at a place in Cardiganshire, since called Llanbadarn-fawr, where he founded an episcopal see, and became the first bishop. He was the founder of the churches of Llanbadarn Trefeglwys or Llanbadarn Fach, and Llanbadarn Odin, Cardiganshire, and of Llanbadarn Fawr, Radnorshire. The chapels of Llanbadarn Fynydd, under Llanbister, and Llanbadarn y Garreg, under Cregruna, both in Radnorshire, are named after him, and the situations of some of those places may serve to point out the extent of his diocese to the southward along the limits which have been assigned to the diocese of Saint David. To the north its extent is uncertain, but it probably included a considerable portion of Montgomeryshire. How long Llanbadarn continued to be a bishopric cannot be ascertained, as very little is known of its history, and the last notice of it under that character in the *Welsh Chronicles*, is in the year 720, when it is recorded that many of the churches of Llandaff, Mynyw, and Llanbadarn, meaning the three dioceses of South Wales, were ravaged by the Saxons. It is reported however to have lost its privileges through the turbulent conduct of its inhabitants, who killed their bishop, and the diocese was in consequence annexed to that of Menevia.—Professor Rees's *Essay on the Welsh Saints*, pp. 215, 216.

more at present than from his brothers and companions, who are united to him in spiritual friendship, and will obtain much more agreeable love even in this life; for it is clear that the love which is between parents and children, and relatives and wives and neighbours, whether caused by the bond of society, or the tie of relationship, is sufficiently short and perishable; whoever therefore on account of the kingdom of God will despise temporal things, will through faith taste, even in this life, the certain joys of heaven, and in expectation of the heavenly ones the most excellent of all, will also enjoy the most exquisite love of the elect."

Of whom was Saint Padarn,¹ a bishop, who abandoning his earthly inheritance, and seeking for aid of the highest importance, desired to become an heir and citizen of the heavenly kingdom; he was an Armorican by nation, and descended from noble parents, namely, his father Pedredin and his mother Gwgan, who availing themselves of an opportunity begot Saint Padarn. And afterwards they dedicated themselves to the constant service of God; for Pedredin immediately left Armorica, and went to Ireland. Therefore the nativity of Saint Padarn was gracious, through which his father was made a saint, and his mother a servant of Christ, and they led a religious life for ever; therefore it was foreseen by God in convenient order; as Christ was descended from the supreme Father, God of God, and Light

¹ There were at least two if not more saints of this name, and as usual in such cases their acts have been confounded. First we have a Saint Padarn, bishop of Vannes, another we are told was bishop of Avranche about the same time, and another is commemorated on the 10th of April as a simple monk. Our Saint Padarn is generally considered as identical with the first who was living, and attended the council of Paris in 557. Some however consider him to have been a different person altogether from either of the above mentioned bishops. He is however allowed to have been a native of Armorica and one of the companions of Cadvan, to whom, according to the Achau Saint, he was first cousin. Upon what authority Usher dates their arrival in this country in 517, is unknown. It was more probably either in 510 or 524, in the first of those years both of them must have been, if their genealogy be correct, much too young to have been the leaders of the numerous saintly personages who are said to have accompanied them. It appears more likely that it was in the latter year, when their Uncle, Howel, the reigning prince of Armorica, was murdered in one of those civil broils, which were unfortunately as common in that country as in Wales. And even then they must have been young men. According to this account Maelgwn Gwynedd was then, or a little after, sovereign of North Wales, who must have been himself a young man, if the statement that he died in 567 can be depended upon.—W.

of Light, so was Saint Padarn born of holy parents. [For immediately as soon as he was born, he chose to follow Christ. And as soon as he was able to understand anything rational in the world, he asked his mother, with whom he had been left, Who was his father, whether he was living in the world, and if he were living, where was he, and why did he reside abroad, and not rather remain in his own inheritance? Whom his mother answered with tears, "Thy father indeed is living, and more to God than to the world; and he is gone from hence to Ireland, where he fasts, prays, watches, meditates and commiserates, he sleeps on a mat, and he prays kneeling to the supreme Lord, both by day and by night." Then the youth being inspired by the Holy Spirit from above, was comforted and said, "How can a son live better than by imitating a good father, for if he be a king, a son desires to imitate his father in government; therefore I shall die if I do not follow my father in the paths which he has chosen."

At that time, Corus, a monk, left Armorica, and intended to land on the coasts of Britain; for as a winter beehive, when the pleasant spring excites the minds of the bees, and they prudently require their company to be increased, sends out the principal swarm that it might collect honey elsewhere; so Armorica, the serenity of religion increasing, sent out multitudes of saints to the country from which they originally came, under the leaders, Hitenlau, Cadvan,¹ and Tydecho.² The holy youth Padarn being excited by this account, girded himself to go abroad with the others, and not more slowly than his seniors, but as much younger as he was, so much the more fervently did he labour, and he greatly exceeded his age in performing religious services. Therefore all the companies came together, and were unanimously desirous to sail over to Britain; Padarn

¹ St. Cadvan, son of Eneas Ledewig of Armorica, whose mother was Gwen Teirbron, the daughter of Emyr Llydaw.—Achau y Saint.

² Tydecho, the son of Amwn Ddu, the son of Emyr Llydaw, and the cousin of Cadvan.—Ibid.

was soon made the fourth leader of a company; not at his own request, but his cousins seeing him prepare for the height of perfection, appointed him, saying, "Since God has caused thee to excel in manners, it is proper that thou shouldst be set over people, for an example of life." Therefore all the clergy, with a prosperous voyage landed in Britain. Eight hundred and forty-seven monks followed Padarn, and with his saints he took a place in the church called Mauriana,¹ where Saint Padarn afterwards distinguished himself by performing a remarkable miracle.

Therefore he soon built there a monastery; and afterwards he built a church, and monastery under a steward, and appointed a governor and dean; and he remembering his father, blessed the brethren, obtained leave, and sailed to Ireland, where they mutually saluted each other, gave thanks to the supreme God, Christ, and at length sat down together. [At that time the kings of two provinces in Ireland disagreed, and the country was laid waste on both sides, plunder was carried off, the houses burnt, wars arose, brethren were killed, and the land was depopulated, and rendered a desert.] At length the merciful Governor of the world, pitying with his accustomed providence the cause of hopeless peace, sent his angel to the bishop of each city of the church, who said, "Unless each army shall see the face of the Saint, who has lately come from Britain, the spiteful kings will never make peace with each other." Messengers were immediately sent who respectfully invited Padarn; the armies were called together, they placed Padarn in the middle between them; and by the grace of his countenance devils were driven away, perpetual peace was made between the two provinces, and eternal unity was effected by God; and as a sign of the unity of the men, the woods of one province fall when those of the other do.]

Then all magnify the Lord in his servant Padarn, and all blessed him, said, "Mayest thou always have the sign of

¹ At present LLANBADARN FAWR, near Aberystwyth, in the county of Cardigan, where St. Padarn is considered to have had his episcopal residence.

peace, whereby thy name may become famous upon earth whilst thou dost live, and after death mayest be filled with the reward of Cerrigwen. For such was the utility of that staff, that if two persons disagreed, they were through its means made to agree. And of Christ it is said, "That a good shepherd knows his sheep;" according to which precept, Saint Padarn brought to his remembrance his brethren, whom he left in Britain. He took leave of his father, who blessed him, and he went to Britain where he found his brethren safe in mind and body. Amongst whom he found Nimanauc who had lately arrived; for not being able to live in Armorica after the departure of Padarn, he came to the sea side, where he found a certain stone, on which he stood, and he said, "If those things are pleasing to God which I intend, and if Padarn whom I wish to follow, is truly a Saint, the stone will rise, and swim on the sea, the waves will become solid, the sea be rendered hard, so that the stone will not sink into it, and I shall be carried safe to my master, the leader Saint Padarn." Sooner than said, by a wonderful voyage he arrived at a maritime church on the coast of Britain, where he was saluted by the brethren, to whom he related his history, and all with one voice magnified the Lord God in his saints, who fulfilled the humble wish of Nimanauc, and manifested the virtue of his eminent Saint, namely Padarn. Then Padarn built monasteries and churches throughout the region of Ceredigion, in which he placed governors, namely Samson, Guinnius, Guipper, and Nimanauc. Therefore Saint Padarn became a lamp in doctrine and practice throughout Britain.

In the mean time Maelgwn, king of the Northern Britons, visited the Southern, for the purpose of making war on them, and rendering them subject to him, and he came with a powerful army as far as the river Clarach. [A]nd when he, the great tempter of the saints, was present, he ordered two heralds to go before him, that they might try Saint Padarn in some malicious manner, and they were called Graban and Terillan. They with a wicked intention

came to the hill of Clarach, and filled their bags with moss and gravel, which they feigned to be royal treasures; and they brought them to the Saint, and requested him to keep them until the king should return prosperously. The Saint consented, ordered them to be laid down, and affirmed that they would be found as they had left them. The king passed on, the heralds followed, and the king returned peaceably, the Britons having been reduced to obedience. And he sent the wicked heralds that they might try the Saint; who went quickly to his residence, and took up the bags, and emptying them laid down the moss and gravel, and saucily exclaimed that the royal treasures had been stolen, and gravel and moss had been put in their place; the Saint on the other hand declared that they were found in the same state as they had been delivered.] But they threatened ruin to the whole building, if the treasures were not restored; and some time before, the king had issued an edict throughout all Britain, that every liar should be found out by means of very hot water. Then in the warmth of the spirit, Padarn orders the water to be made hot in a brazen vessel until it boiled; this was soon done, and Padarn immediately put his hand into the water, when it was in its greatest heat, which when taken out appeared white and cold as snow. Soon after, the heralds were required to place their hands in the water, and their scalded hands showed the malice of their minds; and being forthwith all burnt, they and their lives, and their souls fled in the form of ravens over the channel, which unto this day is called by the name of one of them, that is Graban.

Then the king Maelgwn himself became blind at his station, and sick at heart, and staggered with weak knees, and confessed that he was about to die on account of the intended mischief against Saint Padarn. The king went immediately to Padarn, and on his knees asked for pardon, which was granted by Saint Padarn; and the king remunerated him with a quantity of land, that is, from the mouth of the river Rheidiol upwards, until at its head it touches the

boundary of the river Clarach, and its boundary goes the whole length of the river to the sea. In that hour the the king's eyes were cured, his heart was strengthened, and his knees rendered firm. Saint Padarn and the king departed from each other in peace, and there was also peace with God towards Padarn, and with Padarn towards God through this miracle.

Whilst these things were doing, a heavenly messenger came to Saint David serving Christ God in Glyn Rosyn, and said to him, "Arise and go to Jerusalem, and there thou shalt be ordained, and add to thyself two worthy companions, who likewise will be ordained, that is, Padarn and Teilo." David sent presently to them, and they came without delay; they passed together over barbarous nations, and received the grace of languages; for although they were men of one language, yet they spoke to every man in his own language, that of the country wherein he was born. They came at length to Jerusalem, and there preached in the noblest manner after the Apostles; and afterwards were ordained by the imposition of the hands of the chief archbishop. The three Saints were enriched by presents, and Padarn had a two-fold present, namely a staff and a coat wove throughout. They returned happily, and divided Britain into their three dioceses, unless the malice of tyrants should afterwards disturb them.

And when Padarn was in the church, resting himself after so much labour on sea, a certain tyrant whose name was Arthur, traversed the countries on each side, and came on a certain day to the cell of Saint Padarn the bishop; and while he spoke to Padarn, he looked at his coat, and being seized with the affection of avarice, asked if he should have it; and the Saint answering, said, "This coat is not suitable for the wearing of any malicious person, but for a clerical habit." He went out of the Monastery in a rage, and again returned in a state of anger that he might take away the coat against the wishes of the attendant saints. One of the disciples of Padarn seeing him returning in a rage,

ran to Saint Padarn, and said, "The tyrant who was here before is returning in an insulting manner, and treading the ground levels it with his feet." Padarn answered, "Yes, may the earth swallow him." With the word, the earth opened its bosom to some depth, and swallowed Arthur as far as his chin, who immediately acknowledged himself guilty, and he began to praise both God and Padarn; until by asking pardon, the earth delivered him up. And in that place with bended knees, he begged the favour of the saint, and obtained it; and he accepted Padarn for his perpetual patron, and so departed.¹

In those days, Caradoc, surnamed Vraichvras, enlarged his kingdom beyond the bounds of Britain, and came to Armorica, and took it to his government. And the Armoricans came to him, saying, "Unless thou wilt call our countryman Padarn to us from Britain, thou wilt not be able to find us peaceable." And Caradoc traversing the circuit of his kingdom, at length came as far as the city, where at that time Saint Padarn resided. And that land, before Padarn came there, was called the Plain of Heli, but now it is called the metropolis of Saint Padarn; for during twenty one years he kept those three churches in strict penance, that is, seven in what was maritime, seven in the middle kind called Agam's Cross, where he overcame Graban and Terillan, and seven, being the last of his episcopacy, living in theory to God alone. Caradoc remained in that great church, and with earnest entreaty requested that he would at length go for an example to Armorica. And Padarn not being desirous, according to the apostolical precept, to resist his power, consented to go, and informed the king that he would make laws respecting those churches which should remain for ever; and this saying of the king immediately

¹ The adventure with Arthur is consistent with the era generally assigned to that hero, who however does not appear in a very creditable light in the affair. His real character may however be much more truly shadowed forth in this fable than in those of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and his followers.—W.

There are remains of an ancient entrenchment in the parish of Llanbadarnfawr, in the county of Cardigan, called Llys Arthur.

followed, "During my time the churches shall be thine, as an island of the great sea, and I who sit in the chief seat of the kingdom of the Britons, do say, that if any king, or the son of a king, or any military leader shall make this law void, either his days will be shortened, or his pedigree will not be mentioned on earth, or hell will be his eternal possession." And all the people and the army of the king, and all the disciples of Saint Padarn answered, AMEN.¹

Saint Padarn therefore took leave of his brethren, whom he left to govern his churches, and he comforted them that they might not be discouraged in their tribulations, saying that in all things they should always pray to God through him; and he came to Armorica, where he suffered much from false brethren; for as soon as he arrived, his fame spread throughout the country. And Samson, whom at that time all the Armoricans magnified as the most excellent in sanctity, surveyed his parishes, that all the churches of the Armorican saints might be made subject to episcopal tribute, to be then, and subsequently paid for ever. And it happened that he came to places in the neighbourhood of the city of Guenet,² near which Saint Padarn, a bishop, had built a monastery. And one of the monks

¹ The account of Caradoc Vraichvras and his expedition to Armorica, is very curious if there be any truth in it. Mr. Turner in his *Hist. Angl. Sax.* quotes this passage; if founded on fact, it must be received with some allowance. Assuming the date of Padarn's arrival in this country, to have been in 524, and as stated he had been here 21 years, this would give the date of this transaction about 545. If as Usher states, he came over in 517, the date would be 538. At both these periods Armorica was governed by Howel Vychan, or as he is sometimes called Ruval 2nd, as tributary to Childebert king of the Franks, who was not likely to permit the British adventurer to take possession of the government without interfering. Nothing of the kind is however mentioned in the *Chronicles of the Franks or Armoricans*, and on the other hand we might suppose Caradoc had quite enough to do to protect himself from the Saxons at home, without attempting foreign conquests. Howel Vychan was murdered by his brother Canao in 546, and the country for several years was torn to pieces by the contending factions, and it is certainly not beyond the limits of possibility that the restlessness of Caradoc may have prompted him to cross the sea, in the hope of profiting by the confusion. And it would seem that it was about the time of these civil wars between the Armorican princes, that Padarn was made bishop of Vannes, as we find in the next paragraph that Samson was the bishop of Dole, which he does not appear to have been before 546, and it may have been two or three years after, that the interview between the saints took place, so that whether Caradoc had anything to do with the matter or not, we can approximate to the date with tolerable accuracy within a few years. Both Samson and Padarn were present at the council of Paris, in 557.—W.

² Vannes, capital of the department of Morbihan, France.

maliciously beholding Samson, said to him, "Send to the Saint who is lately come from Britain, and prove his humility, and command him by means of a messenger that in whatever state he shall be when the messenger arrives, he shall therein hasten to come to you." Samson innocently received the advice, and not suspecting any trick to be therein, sent a messenger, who, without delay, came to Saint Padarn, and found him with a boot and stocking on one leg, and the other naked. The servant delivered the message as directed. And Padarn foreseeing what would take place, made no delay, but went to the council, and the malicious monk, the author of the mischief, derided Padarn with his legs half clothed, but was immediately seized by a demon, and fell to the earth. And soon after Samson understood the cause, and that he was the author of the wicked temptation against Saint Padarn; and then he peaceably saluted him, asked pardon, which Padarn gave; and he cured his afflicted servant, and cast out the devil, and the Lord was honoured in Saint Padarn.

Then Saint Samson ordained that although all the dioceses throughout Armorica were to pay tribute to him, yet the diocese of Saint Padarn should be free from every claim. And whoever should make this law void in the churches of Saint Padarn, and in their possessions in Armorica and Britain, he should perish by those cursings wherewith king Caradoc had condemned him, and all the company of the clergy answered, AMEN. AMEN.

And the city of Guenet was the episcopal see of Saint Padarn, in which the apostle Peter had one church; for Caradoc ordered by a command, that with the exception of one hall, the honour and name and reputation of that city should be always dedicated to Saint Padarn. After these things, the saints appointed seven dioceses throughout Armorica, and that they should meet on one mountain, and confirm their unity to remain for ever. In which synod, Padarn suffered much from envious and false brethren, and he confirmed his union with the six principal saints, he

being the seventh, according to the number extant of the sevenfold grace; and fearing lest from their intolerance they might be angry with him from some slight cause, he left Armorica, and went to the Franks; where he slept in the Lord on the eighteenth of the calends of the month of May.¹ And the Armoricans celebrate those three solemnities, that is, that day of the calends of November when he formed perpetual union with the principal saints of Armorica, and the day of his decease, and the day on which he received the episcopal order, namely, the twelfth of the calends of the month of June.

And after the decease of Saint Padarn, a famine seized Armorica; for during the space of three years after his death, neither dew nor rain fell throughout the country; And all enquired the cause of so great poverty and heat; and they discovered at length that Saint Padarn, having been afflicted by false and injurious brethren, had forsaken Armorica, and entering into counsel, they all went to the place of his burial among the Franks. It was determined that they should honourably carry back his remains with them, which however they were not able to do; for the whole army was not able to carry one of his bones. They were therefore disturbed, and did not know what they should do; at length a certain nobleman of the city of Guenet came forwards and said, "Whilst Saint Padarn was living, he always asked me for my field, that he might therein lay the foundation of his church; therefore, although I did not comply with his request whilst he was living, yet I will give it after his death; therefore he may arise, enjoy the honour, and accept what he requested." With the word, they raise the chest with the remains from the earth, and one or two carry it with ease; they came to Armorica, and with hymns and spiritual songs honourably buried the remains in the field of the aforesaid nobleman.

¹ The year of Padarn's death is not here mentioned, but he must have been considerably advanced in life at the time of the council of Paris, and probably only survived it a few years.—W.

It was so done, that as the temple of Solomon was honourably built in the barn floor of the Jebusite, so the Armorians determined to build a temple of Christ in the floor of that nobleman about the remains of Saint Padarn. And another city was built among the Franks, where he was first buried; therefore in the city of Guenet his remains will happily await the day of judgment, and his soul will rejoice in heaven, in the unity of the nine degrees of the heavenly host, in the unity of Saints, Bishops, Confessors, and Apostles, and in the unity which excels every union, in the unity of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Let us therefore beseech Saint Padarn, that as he lives happily in heaven, we may also through his intercession dwell in the heavenly kingdoms for ever and ever. AMEN.

HERE BEGINS THE POSSESSION OF LANDS OF SAINT PADARN,
THE BISHOP.

Whilst the patriarch was present at Jerusalem, the three southern kingdoms of the Britons succeeded under three episcopacies of three Saints; the kingdom of Seisill with the consecration of churches, received the granting of episcopal degrees, and the confirmation of episcopal baptism, and the chrismal oil, and all episcopal appointments from the episcopacy of Saint Padarn. And the kingdom of Rhun received the aforesaid rights from the episcopacy of Saint David. And Morgan received his kingdom and episcopal appointments from Saint Eliud. Therefore the third episcopal place among the southern Britons is the city of Saint Padarn, bishop. How the territory of Saint Padarn became his own, is already mentioned in the miracle, which Saint Padarn performed against Maelgwn.

On a certain time, whilst Saint Padarn, bishop, resided in his cell, it happened that one of his servants, who necessarily visited the woods of the monastery, fell among thieves, and was slain; and as he did not return, the ecclesiastical men doubted why he caused delay to the saints; but the cause of the delay was at length made known even to

the ears of the prelate Padarn. Which hearing, he went to the wood, and called his servant by his proper name, saying, "Rees, answer thy master." Then the head cut off from the body, answered, "Here I am, Sir." On which being said, the bishop came to the place of the answer, where he saw the head of his servant separated from the body; and raising his eyes towards heaven, he blessed the whole body, and at the blessing of the holy man, the head and body were joined, and the servant arose alive. Both gave thanks to Christ for the miracle, and the report of the resurrection came to the ears of the governor, named Eithir, who being moved by the virtue of the miracle, addressed the bishop saying, "The murderers of thy servant were my malicious men, and lest divine vengeance, through the irritation of thy mind, should anticipate me, I ask pardon; and that I may cause thy mind to be pacified towards me, I will grant to thee a portion of very beautiful country without the payment of tribute to any man; that is, from the ditch of Linum between two rivers, that is Rheidiol and Paith,¹ to the sea-coast. To whom Saint Padarn gave pardon, and foretold, "Before thou wilt end thy life, thou wilt please the Lord, and thou, who art commonly called Eithir the son of Arthet, shalt be honourably buried in the cemetery of this place, where thy solemnity will be for ever celebrated by this company.

¹ Rivers in the northern portion of Cardiganshire, in the neighbourhood of Aberystwyth.