St. Hilary of Poitiers and St. Martin of Tours

Cazenove John Gibson
The Fathers for English Readers.

ST. HILARY OF POITIERS

AND

ST. MARTIN OF TOURS.

BY

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ERRATA.

Page 143, line 2, for "Macharius" read "Macarius."
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,, 168, ,, 21, for "Milan" read "Poitiers."
PREFACE.

The biographies contained in this small volume are based, like the rest of the series, upon a study of the original authorities. These are, in the case of St. Hilary, most especially the very considerable writings which he has left us. In the case of St. Martin, we have to depend almost exclusively upon the comparatively small treatises of Sulpicius Severus; for St. Gregory of Tours, though greatly extolling him, tells us hardly anything concerning Martin's earthly career, and the poems of Paulinus of Perigueux and of Venantius Fortunatus are little more than reproductions in verse of the prose narrative of the earlier biographer.

It is right to confess my obligations to the authors cited in the notes, not only for the particular information therein mentioned, but also for much general light upon the topics discussed. Let me add a word of gratitude, for what are sometimes called side-lights, to Dean Merivale's "History of the Romans under the Empire"; to "Les Césars" of Count Franz de Champigny; to the "Heathenism and Judaism" and to "The First Age of the Church" of Dr. Von Döllinger; and to the Commentary of Bishop
Lightfoot on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians. I have also made free use, sometimes for elucidation, sometimes for confirmation of conclusions reached independently, of the "Dictionary of Christian Biography" which is in progress under the editorship of Dr. William Smith and Professor Wace; more particularly of the articles on Damasus and Liberius, and of my own contributions on Hilarius Pictaviensis and Martinus Turonensis.

The very mixed character of the Emperor Maximus is coloured with a more romantic tint than is discernible in the pages of Sulpicius and of the pagan historian Pacatus in the poem entitled "The Dream of Maxen Wledig," which forms one of "The Visions of England" depicted for us by Mr. Francis Palgrave. The fact that the poem is inspired by "The Mabinogion," the collection of the legends of that highly poetic country, Wales, may suffice to account for the apparent discrepancy. If any of my readers are induced to compare the two portraits, they may perhaps be inclined to think that of the Latin historians the more probable. But in any case they will, if I mistake not, feel grateful for the reference to a book which, over and above its poetic merits, is so full of instruction and suggestiveness to all students of history.

J. G. C.

Edinburgh,
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ST. HILARY OF POITIERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTRY AND THE AGE OF HILARY.

It was permitted by God's providence that at the time when His Son, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, heathen Rome should be the mistress of the world. But to reach this pinnacle of earthly greatness had been a long and arduous task—a task achieved by hard-won triumphs against able and often formidable enemies.

Among the opponents of the pre-eminence of Rome, the Gauls were for many centuries the most uncompromising. Their opposition, it is true, was of a wayward and fitful character. The different tribes of the race did not often act in concert; and, even when they did so, their harmony was soon broken. No Gallic general can be said to have attained the high position won by Pyrrhus of Epirus, far less that achieved by Hannibal, in a career of anti-Roman warfare. Even Brennus, the chieftain of the Gauls, who in B.C. 390 captured and burnt Rome, did not remain in central Italy long enough to consolidate his conquest.
But while the rivalry of other enemies, as of the Epirote and the Carthaginian, was comprised within a comparatively limited period of time, that of the Gauls was enduring and persistent. The Celtic tribes in that part of northern Italy which the Romans called Cisalpine Gaul, as well as those who occupied so large a portion of the country now known to us as France, continued for more than three centuries to be the watchful and unsleeping foes of Rome. They looked out for opportunities, and when they saw them were not very scrupulous about breach of treaties. The sudden and irregular character of the Celtic attacks was of that kind which the Romans specified by the name of *a tumult*; and, as a Gallic tumult was an event which might happen at any moment, a special fund of money was kept in the Temple of Saturn in order to meet such an emergency.

A day, however, was to come when the long duel between these powers was doomed to cease. Cisalpine Gaul was humbled and reduced to a Roman province about B.C. 200, soon after the defeat of Hannibal. About 150 years later that remarkable man, who has been justly called the greatest and most versatile of all Romans, Caius Julius Cæsar, in a series of campaigns, which lasted for nine years, completely subdued the whole of the Further Gaul. We must not pause to consider the character and the motives of the conqueror. But it seems only fair to remark, that when it is asserted, and perhaps truly, that a million of Gauls may have perished in fighting against Cæsar, it is a mere assumption to imply, as is often done, that these warriors would have died a natural