CHAPTER II.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGEND.

I.

Unconscious distortion of truth by the individual—By the people—Level of popular intelligence—Tendency to simplification—Ignorance—Substitution of the abstract form for the individual type—Poverty of invention—The borrowing and transmission of legendary themes—Examples—The antiquity of certain themes—Artificial grouping of incidents and persons—Cycles.

THE development of the legend is, according to our definition, the outcome of an unconscious or unreflecting agent acting upon historical material. It is the introduction of the subjective element into the realm of fact.

If, the day after a battle, we were to collect the narratives of eye-witnesses, we should find the action described in twenty different ways while identical details would be related from the most diverse points of view with the same accent of sincerity. The extent of his information, the sentiments and impressions of the narrator and the camp to which he belongs, all affect his account, which is neither wholly false nor yet wholly in accordance with truth. Every man will relate his own legend. The combined result of these divergent narratives will again be a legend, and should we insist on disentangling the pure historic truth, we shall have to content ourselves with the two or three salient facts that appear to be established with certainty.

If, in lieu of the remainder, we substitute a series of deductions, we are merely writing the history of the battle in our own way; in fact, we ourselves then become the creators of a new legend, and we must either resign ourselves to this necessity or elect to remain in ignorance.

Every one is agreed as to the special difficulty of giving a precise account of any complicated action that cannot be taken in at a glance. It must not, however, be assumed that putting aside these exceptional cases there is nothing more easy or more common than to give a faithful description. The truth is that in daily life we are perpetually taking part in that unconscious labour from which legends are evolved, and each one of us has had occasion to testify a hundred times over how difficult it is to convey, with absolute precision, our impression of any complex incident.

To begin with, it is very rare to grasp the event in all its details, and to trace the connection between the various parts. It is still more rare for us to be in a position to distinguish the causes in such a way as to leave no possible doubt concerning the motives that have prompted the actors. Consequently we allow our instinct to fill in the gaps in our information. By a series of intuitive connections we re-establish the continuity of action, and we read our own interpretation into the forces that have brought about such and such a result. If we happen to be under the empire of passion or of any sentiment that clouds our clear view of things, if we secretly desire that any established fact should not have occurred, or that any unnoted circumstance should really have taken place, if it coincides with our wishes that the actors should have followed any special impulse, it may occur that, heedlessly, we leave one

portion of the picture in the shade, or give undue prominence to another, according as our own prepossessions suggest. Unless, therefore, we submit our arguments to a rigid supervision and maintain complete control over our impressions, we are liable, to the detriment of truth, to introduce a strong subjective element into our narrative. To give an exact description of complex reality demands not only sound sense and a trained judgment but also conscious effort, and consequently requires a stimulus adequate to the object in view.

It must be admitted that apart from exceptional circumstances the average man is not endowed with the intellectual vigour necessary for such a task. The habit of analysing one's sensations and of controlling the slightest impulses of one's soul to such an extent as to be habitually on one's guard against the natural tendency to mingle what one imagines with what one knows, is the privilege of very few. Even those who, thanks to natural gifts and a superior training, rise above the average of their fellows, do not invariably make use of their special faculties.

Let me suppose that a man has been an eye-witness of some sanguinary drama. He will describe the various exciting circumstances to his friends with the most minute details, and nothing will appear to have escaped him that bears upon the criminal and his victim.

But suppose this same man subpœnaed to give evidence at the assizes, and that on his deposition, given on oath, depends the life of a fellow-creature. What a difference between the two versions of the same event! At once his narrative becomes less clear and less complete, and is far from possessing that palpitating interest that he gave to it in private. This is

simply because, under such solemn circumstances, we carry to a far higher point our scrupulous exactitude, and we are no longer tempted to indulge in the petty vanity of posing as important and well-informed. Hence it is that even the most veracious and upright of men unconsciously create little legends by introducing into their narratives their own impressions, deductions and passions, and thus present the truth either embellished or disfigured according to circumstances.

These sources of error, it need scarcely be said, become multiplied with the number of intermediaries. Every one in turn understands the story in a different fashion and repeats it in his own way. Through inattention or through defective memory some one forgets to mention an important circumstance, necessary to the continuity of the history. A narrator, more observant than the rest, notes the deficiency, and by means of his imagination does his best to repair it. He invents some new detail, and suppresses another until probability and logic appear to him sufficiently safe-guarded. This result is usually only obtained at the expense of truth, for the narrator does not observe that he has substituted a very different story for the primitive version. Sometimes again the narrative may pass through the hands of a witness who does not wholly approve of it, and who will not fail to contribute markedly to its disfigurement by some imperceptible turn of thought or expression.

These things happen every day, and whether we are eye-witnesses or mere intermediaries, our limited intelligence, our carelessness, our passions, and above all perhaps our prejudices, all conspire against historical accuracy when we take it upon ourselves to become narrators.

This commonplace experience becomes much more interesting and more fraught with consequences when it is indefinitely multiplied, and when, for the intelligence and impressions of the individual we substitute the intelligence and impressions of a people or a crowd. These collective, and, in a certain sense, abstract faculties, are of a quite special nature, and their activities are subjected to laws that have been deeply studied in our own day, and to which a special branch of psychology has been assigned.[1] Such laws as have been formulated have been verified by thousands of examples drawn from the popular literature of every country. Hagiographic literature offers a large mass of material amply confirming them.

To avoid complicating the question we shall not attempt to apportion the varying degrees of capacity of different social strata. No task, indeed, would be more difficult, and in regard to the matters that interest us the most varied elements have to be taken into account. In the Middle Ages the whole populace was interested in the saints. Every one invoked them, paid them honour and loved to sing their praises. Popular society in which the legends were elaborated was composed of many elements, and by no means excluded persons of literary pretensions. I hasten to add that the saints gained nothing thereby.

The intellectual capacity of the multitude reveals itself on all sides as exceedingly limited, and it would be a mistake to assume that it usually submits itself to the influence of superior minds. On the contrary, the

1 Lazarus und Steinthal, *Zeitschrift für Völkerspsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*, Berlin, Leipzig, i., 1860 - xix., 1889. A book by G. le Bon, *Psychologie des Foules*, Paris, 1895, treated from a very special point of view, contains, together with notable exaggerations, some useful remarks.

latter necessarily suffer loss from contact with the former, and it would be quite illogical to attribute a special value to a popular tradition because it had its origin amid surroundings in which persons of solid merit were to be met with. In a crowd superiority quickly vanishes, and the average intelligence tends to fall far below mediocrity. The best point of comparison by which we can ascertain its level is the intelligence of a child.

In truth, the number of ideas of which the popular brain is capable of receiving any impression is extremely small, and these ideas must be very simple. Equally simple are its deductions, which it arrives at by means of a small number of intuitive principles, and which are frequently little more than loosely connected conceptions or pictures.

The artless nature of popular genius betrays itself clearly in the legends it creates. Thus the number of personages and of events of which it preserves any remembrance is few indeed ; its heroes never exist side by side, but succeed each other, and the latest inherits all the greatness of his predecessors.

Antiquity has bequeathed to us many famous examples of this phenomenon of absorption. The struggles of many centuries concentrated themselves under the walls of Troy, while Solon and Lycurgus bear off the honours of a prolonged legislative evolution at Athens and in Sparta.[1] In less remote times it is Alexander,

1 Concerning this and similar examples consult Wachsmuth, *Ueber die Quellen der Geschichtsfälschung (Berichte über die Verhandlungen der K. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig)*, Phil.-Hist. Classe, vol. viii., 1856, pp. 121-53. It is worth remembering that legends of a similar nature are growing up in our own day. "Legend has transformed the Civil Code into the principles of the Revolution expressed in two thousand articles by order of the

Cæsar and Charlemagne[1] who, in their respective lands, fire the popular imagination, and on the heads of these chosen heroes all the honours accumulate. Brilliant feats of arms which rouse enthusiasm are attributed to the national hero, public benefits are all due to him, and everything of note throughout the country is in some way connected with his name.

Were we to believe what legend tells us there is scarcely in the whole town of Alexandria a single stone that was not laid by Alexander the Great himself.[2] Since the day when Tiberius turned the rock of Capri into the scene of his debaucheries he has become, so to speak, a tutelary genius whose beneficent hand has left traces of its activity in every corner of the isle.[3]

First Consul. In this summary of history the code is no longer the outcome of centuries of effort by king and parliament, and by the citizens in their communes and corporations; there survives only the thought of the Emperor; it is the Code Napoleon," H. Leroy, *Le centenaire du Code civil* in the *Revue de Paris,* 1st October, 1903.

1 Concerning the legend of Alexander consult P. Meyer, *Alexandre le grand dans la littérature française du moyen âge* in the *Bibliothèque française du moyen âge,* vol. iv., Paris, 1886; J. Darmesteter, *La légende d'Alexandre chez les Perses* in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études,* vol. 35, Paris, 1878, pp. 83-99; J. Lévi, *La légende d' Alexandre dans le Talmud* in the *Revue des Études Juives,* vol. ii., 1881, p. 203; vol. vii., p. 78; *Mélusine,* vol. v., pp. 116-18; S. S. Hoogstra, *Proza-bewerkingen van het Leven van Alexander den Groote in het Middelnederlandsch,* The Hague, 1898, pp. i.-xxiii.; Fr. Kampers, *Alexander der Grosse und die Idee des Weltimperiums in Prophetie und Sage,* Freiburg im Breisgau, 1901. Concerning the Caesar legend consult A. and G. Doutrepont, *La légende de César en Belgique* in the *IIIème Congrès des Savants Catholiques,* vol. v., Brussels, 1894, pp. 80-108. On Charlemagne, see G. Paris, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne,* Paris, 1865; E. Müntz, *La légende de Charlemagne dans l'art au moyen âge* in *Romania,* vol. xiv., 1883 p., 320.

2 G. Lumbroso, *L'Egitto dei Greci e dei Romani,* 2nd edition, Rome, 1895, p. 157.

3 Maxime Du Camp, *Orient et Italie,* Paris, 1968, pp. 13, 60, 74.

It is obvious that this custom of accumulating on a single head all the glories of preceding heroes affects very markedly the true proportions of the persons concerned. The splendour of the apotheosis is sometimes such that the hero entirely loses his true physiognomy and emerges in complete disguise. Thus Virgil, having become the idol of the Neapolitans, ceased to be the inspired poet in order to be converted into the governor of the city.[1] Local tradition at Sulmona has transformed Ovid into everything that he was not: a clever magician, a rich merchant, a prophet, a preacher, a sort of paladin, and—who would believe it?—a great saint.[2]

Historic truth is put wholly out of court on these occasions, for it is an understood thing that the really popular hero plays a part in all important events; that nothing generous, noble or useful can be accomplished without the intervention of the great man who monopolises the sympathies of the populace. In the religious sphere the idol of all hearts is the saint specially venerated in the district. Here, it is St. Martin whose name crops up at every turn; there, St. Patrick.[3] The enthusiasm of the people has not failed to enlarge the sphere of their activities, including among these a number of incidents detached from their historic setting, or despoiling, for their benefit, the eclipsed heroes of an earlier stage of development.

1 This subject has been exhaustively treated by D. Comparetti, *Virgilio nel medio evo,* 2nd edition, Florence, 1896, 2 vols. 8vo.

2 A. De Nino, *Ovidio nella tradizione popolare di Sulmona,* Casalbordino, 1886, p. 1.

3 Bulliot, *La mission et le culte de St. Martin d'après les légendes et les monuments populaires dans le pays Éduen,* Autun, 1892; Shearman, *Loca Patriciana,* Dublin, 1879; W. G. Wood-Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland,* London, 1902, vol. i., pp. 163, 245; vol. ii., pp. 20, 88.

Above all, do not expect the populace to distinguish between namesakes. Great men are so rare! What likelihood is there that there should have lived two of the same name? It is this sort of reasoning which has persuaded the inhabitants of Calabria that St. Louis, on his return from the first Crusade, sojourned in several of their towns, whereas, in truth, he never set foot in the district. The king Louis who passed through the Neapolitan provinces with the remains of his army of Crusaders was Louis VII. When the canonisation of Louis IX. had cast into the shade the memory of all his predecessors, it became quite natural to substitute him for the other Louis in the popular memory.[1] In the same way, by the simple force of attraction, as early as the fourth century, incidents borrowed from the life of Cyprian of Antioch became interpolated in that of Cyprian of Carthage.[2] It was almost inevitable that the illustrious martyr should inherit from the earlier and more obscure Cyprian. In the same way Alexander the Great and Charlemagne absorbed the achievements of all their namesakes.[3]

It may be seen from this that the populace is never disturbed, as we are, by chronological difficulties. No one, for instance, was startled by hearing it read out that St. Austremonius, in the reign of the Emperor Decius, was sent to Auvergne by St. Clement.[4] To

1 F. Lenormant, *À travers l'Apulie et la Lucanie*, Paris, 1883, vol. i., p. 323.

2 Witnesses to this confusion are St. Gregory Nazianzen, Prudentius and Macarius of Magnesia. See Th. Zahn, *Cyprian von Antiochien*, Erlangen, 1882, p. 84. [This sentence and the following, together with this footnote, are deleted in the 3d ed.]

3 It is well known that Alexander the Great has had the credit of the foundations of Alexander Severus, and that the name of Charlemagne has absorbed many incidents attributed by history to Charles Martel. P. Rajna, *Le origini dell' epopea francese*, Florence, 1884, p. 199.

4 *Acta SS.*, November, vol. i., p. 49.

the popular mind it was perfectly natural that, in the same early days, there should have been both dukes and counts; and why should any one have suspected that it was an anachronism to bestow the title of archdeacon on St. Stephen and St. Lawrence, who certainly were very far from being mere ordinary deacons?

Neither was the popular mind disturbed by geography, and questions of distance scarcely existed for it. Men listened without lifting an eyebrow to stories in which Cæsarea Philippi is confused with Cæsarea of Palestine,[1] and in which a war is referred to as breaking out between the latter town and Carthage.[2] The caravan of seventy camels sent by Isquirinus, Prefect of Périgueux, into the desert to seek for the seventy monks who were dying of hunger, did not appear to them any less interesting because the said desert is situated on the banks of the Dordogne.[3] I am prepared to believe that men would be more exacting concerning the topography of their native country, a knowledge of which is forced upon them by their own eyes. But why trouble about distant scenes?[4]

As for history, the popular intelligence conceives of it in the same spirit of naïve simplicity. Let us see, for instance, what impression has been preserved of persecutions under the Roman Empire. To begin with, no distinction is made between the emperors who

1 *Passio S. Procopii*, no. 27 in the *Acta SS.*, July, vol. ii., p. 564.

2 *St. Cassiodorus* in the *Mélanges Paul Fabre*, Paris, 1902, pp. 40-50.

3 *Vita S. Frontonis, auctore Gauzberto;* compare L. Duchesne, *Fastes Episcopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, vol. ii., p. 132.

4 We have referred to the value of topographical records in hagiographic legends in the *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvi., pp. 222-35, 243-44. Concerning the tenacity of the memory of the people in all that concerns the names of the places in the country they inhabit, see Père M. J. Lagrange, *La Méthode historique, surtout à propos de l'Ancien Testament*, Paris, 1903, pp. 188-92.

have ordered and those who have merely authorised proceedings against the Christians. There is but one epithet, *impiissimus*, by which all alike are described, whether reference is made to Nero, Decius and Diocletian or to Trajan, Marcus Aurelius and Alexander Severus. All are held to be animated by the same degree of insensate fury against Christianity, and to have no other thought but that of destroying it. Frequently it is the emperor in person who summons the Christians before his tribunal, even though he be compelled to undertake journeys of which history has preserved no record. It is, however, obvious that the head of the State cannot be everywhere. This is no obstacle to his fury. He has emissaries who scour the empire and represent him worthily. Everywhere Christians are outlawed, hunted down and dragged before monsters of judges, who contrive to invent appalling tortures that have never been inflicted even on the worst of criminals. Divine intervention, which prevents these refined torments from injuring the martyrs, serves to emphasise the cruelty of their persecutors, while at the same time providing an adequate and visible reason for the numbers of conversions which the rage of the executioners is unable to stem.

Such, in brief, is the picture of the age of persecutions as recorded in popular legend. The variations in legislative enactments, and the diversity in the application of the edicts, the very marked individuality of certain of the great enemies of the Faith, the purely local character of some of the outbreaks of which the Christians were victims, do not in any sense appeal to the intelligence of the people, who much prefer a simple picture in vivid colours and strongly marked outline, to combinations of numerous and complex facts.

Need we add that historical sequence has no existence for the populace? That, without exciting suspicion, one may assign the date of a martyrdom indifferently to the reign of any one of the impious Emperors Decius, Numerian or Diocletian?[1] That the name of the judge is of no consequence, and that it is a matter of indifference whether the cruel Dacianus could or could not persecute at one and the same time in Italy and in Spain? The long list of the Popes is unfamiliar to them, and the part played by a Pope Cyriacus was not sufficient to bring under suspicion the legend of the eleven thousand virgins,[2] any more than surprise was caused by the introduction of a Pope Alexander into the story of St. Ouen.[3]

Thus robbed of their individuality, isolated in a sense from their period and their surroundings, and dragged from their natural setting, historical personages acquire, in the eyes of the people, an unreal and inconsistent character. For a vivid and clearly accentuated portrait as bequeathed to us by history, we substitute an ideal figure who is the personification of an abstraction: in place of the individual, the people know

[1 The 3d ed. adds: There are numerous examples in *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, p. 136-315.]

1 I may recall, among others, the martyrdom of St. Cecilia of which the date is sometimes *temporibus Alexandri imperatoris* and sometimes *Marci Aurelii et Commodi temporibus*. See *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xxii., pp. 86-88.

2 *Acta SS.*, October, vol. ix., pp. 100-4, 214, 276-78.

3 *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xx., pp. 175-76. According to the legend of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria these saints suffered martyrdom in 283 under Numerian and their acts were written by order of Pope Stephen († 257), *Acta SS.*, October, vol. xi., p. 484. As a counterpart to this anachronism one may quote the legend of St. Florian and his companions at Bologna. The martyrdom of the saints is supposed to have happened in the twenty-seventh year of Heraclius (637), and the translation of their relics during the episcopate of St. Petronius in the fifth century. See *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xxiii., p. 298.

only the type. Alexander personifies the conqueror; Cæsar, the organising genius of the Roman people; Constantine, the Empire regenerated by Christianity.

In the really popular hagiographic legends it is not St. Lawrence, but the typical martyr that is brought upon the scene, just as later St. Martin becomes the type of the missionary-bishop and miracle-worker. There is also the typical persecutor. Diocletian is the most prominent here, then certain judges who personify, so to speak, the cruelty of pagan justice. One of the most celebrated of these is the redoubtable Anulinus, who was, in reality, pro-consul of Africa during the great persecution. His name has become a synonym for executioner, and in a number of legends recourse is had to him to bring about the death of Christians at Lucca, at Milan and at Ancona, under Nero, Valerian, Gallienus and Maximianus, without counting the narratives in which his authentic exploits are recorded.[1]

It is scarcely surprising that the reading of certain hagiographic records should be monotonous work, or that there should be such remarkable resemblances between the acts of so many martyrs. While really historical documents such as the Acts of St. Polycarp and of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas and of St. Cyprian offer the most remarkable variations of detail, the *legend* of the martyrs is nothing but a mass of repetitions. This is the result of eliminating as far as possible the individual element, in order to retain only the abstract form. Every martyr, as a rule, is animated by the same sentiments, expresses the same opinions and is subject to the same trials, while the holy confessor who has earned his reward by an edifying life must needs

1 Consult the quotations in Le Blant, *Les Actes des Martyrs*, Paris, 1882, p. 27.

have possessed all the virtues of his profession, which the hagiographer, the faithful mouthpiece of popular tradition, delights to enumerate.

Here, for example, is the portrait of St. Fursey, Abbot: "Erat enim forma præcipuus, corpore castus, mente devotus, affabilis colloquio, amabilis adspectu, prudentia præditus, temperantia clarus, interna fortitudine firmus, censura iustitiæ stabilis, longanimitate assiduus, patientia robustus, humilitate mansuetus, caritate sollicitus et ita in eo omnium virtutum decorem sapientia adornabat, ut secundum apostolum sermo illius semper in gratia sale esset conditus".[1] Unquestionably this is a noble eulogy. But might not the same be written of every saint?

The biographer of St. Aldegonde describes her in the following terms: "Erat namque moribus honesta, eloquio suavis, in pauperibus misericors, in lectione velox, in responsis citissima, mitis omnibus, inter nobiles humilis, iunioribus quasi æqualis, in parcitate cibi et potus ita dedita abstinentiæ ut nulla sodalium sibi æquipararetur".[2] A few characteristic incidents revealing her admirable virtues would impress one far more than this conventional picture. But the popular mind can

1 "For he was comely to look upon, chaste of body, earnest in mind, affable of speech, gracious of presence, abounding in wisdom, a model of abstemiousness, steadfast in resolution, firm in right judgments, unwearied in longanimity, of sturdiest patience, gentle in humility, solicitous in charity, while wisdom in him so enhanced the radiance of all the virtues that his conversation, according to the Apostle, was always seasoned with wit in the grace of God" (*Acta SS.*, Jan., vol. ii, p. 37).

2 "For she was irreproachable in conduct, persuasive of speech, merciful to the poor, quick at reading, most ready in answering, gentle to all, humble among great folk, to her juniors like one of their own age, and so devoted to abnegation in abstinence of food and drink that none of her companions could be compared with her" (*Acta SS.*, Jan., vol. ii., p. 1036).

only retain a simple and general notion of sanctity. You ask for a portrait and you receive a programme.

Moreover the programme can boast of very little variety. Poverty of invention is another of the characteristics of popular intelligence. Its developments all resemble each other, and its combinations offer but little interest. As for its creative faculties, they appear condemned to sterility the moment the public has come into possession of a sufficient number of fairly interesting themes and topics to fit the situations of more ordinary occurrence.

The comparative study of folk-lore has revealed the fact that the same stories recur among all races and in all countries, that they can all be traced back to a limited number of identical themes, and that they have spread themselves over the world from a common stock.

Every one is aware that even in our own day celebrated sayings are constantly re-issued under fresh headings, that amusing anecdotes are perpetually transferred from one person to another,[1] and that, to quote but a single classical example, there is not a town without its legendary absent-minded citizen, everywhere the victim of identical misadventures.

The study of ancient authors supplies us with innumerable examples of the transmission of legendary themes. We have only to glance through the descriptions of celebrated sieges as told by the old chroniclers to discover that the effects of famine, the patriotism of the besieged, and the cunning artifices designed to deceive the enemy as to the resources of the town, are almost invariably described in identical terms.

1 Some examples of this have been collected by H. Gaidoz, *Légendes Contemporaines* in *Mélusine*, vol. ix., 1898-99, pp. 77, 118, 140, 187.

Thus when the Gauls besieged Rome the soldiers were reduced to soaking the leather of their shields and sandals in order to eat it. The same fact occurred, if we are to accept the evidence of Livy, at the siege of Casilinum during the second Punic war, and again, according to Josephus, at the siege of Jerusalem. During the same siege of Rome the women sacrificed their hair to weave into ropes; while the women of Carthage, Salonæ, Byzantium, Aquileia, Thasos and many other cities were equally capable of a devotion that may well be called heroic.[1] In the same way the chronicles of the Middle Ages are full of ingenious manœuvres invented to deceive the enemy who forthwith falls into the trap and raises the siege.[2] In order to appreciate the historic value of these curious narratives, it is sufficient to place them side by side with others of the same description.

One might vary indefinitely the examples given, and quote curious cases of quaint legends becoming acclimatised in the most incongruous localities. Strange as it may seem, the Irish have thought fit to borrow from King Midas his ass's ears,[3] with which to adorn at least two of their kings.[4]

1 The examples have been collected by A. Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. iii., Tubingen, 1858, p. 260.

2 For example, a herd of fat cattle would be driven into the enemy's camp, or the besiegers would be pelted with loaves of bread, or still better with cheeses, frequently made from the milk of nursing mothers, in order to create a conviction that the town was well supplied with provisions. See G. Pitrè, *Stratagemmi leggendarii da città assediate*, new edition, Palermo, 1904, 21 pp.; also the *Archivio per lo studio delle Tradizioni popolari*, vol. xxii., 1903-04, pp. 193-211. See also *Romania*, vol. xxxiii., 1904, p. 459.

3 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xi., 180 and following; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 191, 3.

4 H. D'Arbois de Jubainville in the *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxiv., 1903, p. 215.

A systematic classification of legendary themes furnished by hagiographic documents would lead to similar conclusions. Many striking episodes which an inexperienced reader would be tempted to take for original inventions are mere reminiscences or floating traditions which cling sometimes to one saint, sometimes to another.

The miraculous crucifix which appeared to St. Hubert[1] between the antlers of a stag, is in no sense the exclusive property of this saint. It may be found equally in the legend of St. Meinulf[2] and that of St. Eustace,[3] as well as in those of many others in which variations of detail render the theme less easily recognisable. Lists of saints have been compiled who all vanquished dragons,[4] but all these enumerations would have to be greatly enlarged before one could in any way hope to exhaust the subject. For myself, I see no object in doing so. It is almost always a waste of time to seek to identify the historical fact which has been responsible for the introduction of such epic incidents in the life of a saint. We might as well institute inquiries as to why a seed borne by the wind has fallen on any particular spot.

It is with reason that a critic has taken exception to a detail in the acts of SS. Sergius and Bacchus.[5] The body of the latter martyr having been flung out on the highway, was protected from dogs by birds of prey.[6] A

1 *Acta SS.*, Nov., vol. i., p. 839.
2 *Ibid.*, Oct., vol. iii., pp. 188, 212.
3 *Ibid.*, Sept., vol. vi., p. 124; [H. Delehaye, *La légende de S. Eustache*, in *Bulletin de la classe des lettres de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, 1919, p. 1-36.]
4 See Ch. Cahier, *Caractéristiques des Saints*, vol. i., pp. 315-22. See also M. Meyer, *Ueber die Verwandschaft heidnischer und Christlicher Drachentödter* in the *Verhandlungen der XL, Versammlung deutscher Philologen*, Leipzig, 1890, p. 336 and following.
5 P. Byaeus in *Acta SS.*, Oct., vol. iii., p. 838.
6 *Ibid.*, p. 867.

similar miraculous protection was accorded to the remains of St. Vincent,[1] St. Vitus,[2] St. Florian,[3] and St. Stanislaus of Cracow,[4] while we must not omit the eagle summoned by Solomon to watch over the body of David, or other similar narratives drawn from Talmudic literature.[5] Nor, since we are on the subject of eagles, should we forget that the miraculous bird who spread his wings to protect St. Servatius,[6] St. Bertulph,[7] St. Medard [8] and others from sun and rain is to be met with elsewhere than in hagiographic documents.

We read in the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary that, before starting on the Crusades, her husband presented her with a ring of which the precious stone possessed the property of breaking when a calamity happened to its donor. This legend, introduced into her life, no doubt on the strength of some historic incident, may be found with slight variations in the life of St. Honoratus of Buzançais. It is a popular theme which has not only been turned to account in the romance of *Flores and Blanchefleur*, but in the *Arabian Nights*, in a Kalmuk folk-tale, and in more than one Indian story.[9]

Again, the dramatic adventure that befel the page of St. Elizabeth of Portugal is a Christian adapta-

1 Prudentius, *Peristeph.*, v., 102 and following.
2 *Acta SS.*, Jan., vol. ii., pp. 1025-26.
3 *Ibid.*, May, vol. iv., p. 465.
4 *Ibid.*, May, vol. vii., pp. 202, 231.
5 S. Singer, *Salomon sagen in Deutschland* in *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum*, vol. xxxv., 1891, p. 186; *Id.*, *Sagengeschichtliche Parallelen aus dem Babylonischen Talmud* in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vol. ii., 1892, p. 301.
6 *Acta SS.*, May, vol. iii., p. 215. 7 *Ibid.*, Feb., vol. i., p. 679.
8 *Ibid.*, Jan., vol. ii., p. 87. Compare Singer, *Salomon sagen*, as above, p. 185.
9 E. Cosquin, *Contes populaires de Lorraine*, vol. i., p. 71.

tion of a narrative that had its origin in India,[1] while the story of the crucifix dropped into the sea by St. Francis Xavier and brought to land by a crab is simply borrowed from Japanese mythology.[2]

At Valencia, in the Church of San Salvador, there is preserved a figure of Christ which drifted there miraculously by sea and up-stream; at Santa-Maria del Grao, the port of Valencia, there is another figure of Christ together with a ladder, the one used at His crucifixion, which was also carried by sea in a boat without crew or cargo. As the vessel came to a halt in mid-stream, an altercation arose between the inhabitants of the opposite banks for the possession of the sacred relics. To settle the matter, the boat was towed out to sea, where it was once more left to take what direction it pleased. Straightway it sailed up the river and became stationary close to Santa-Maria del Grao.[3]

In a similar strain Pausanias describes the coming of the statue of Hercules to Erythræ. It arrived by sea on a raft and came to a halt at the promontory of Juno called Cape Mesata because it was half-way between Erythræ and Chios. From the moment they espied the god, the inhabitants of each of the two towns did their utmost to attract it in their own direc-

1 E. Cosquin, *La Légende du page de Sainte Elizabeth de Portugal et le conte indien des "Bons Conseils"* in the *Revue des Questions historiques*, vol. lxxiii., 1903, pp. 3-42; *Id., La légende de Sainte Elizabeth de Portugal et les contes orientaux, ibid.*, vol. lxxiv., pp. 207-17. *Id., Etudes folkloriques*, p. 73-162; C. Formichi, *La leggenda del paggio di santa Elizabetta* in *Archivio delle tradizioni popolari*, vol. xxii., 1903, pp. 9-30.

2 Bouhours, *Vie de saint Francois Xavier*, vol. iii. The Japanese legend is related by A. B. Mitford, *Tales of Old Japan*, London, 1871, pp. 40-43. Attention is drawn to the loan in the *Revue des traditions populaires*, 15th August, 1890. I am indebted to M. E. Cosquin for these details.

3 See Fages, *Histoire de saint Vincent Ferrier*, vol. ii., pp. 46, 47.

tion. But the heavens decided in favour of the first. A fisherman of that town named Phormio was warned in a dream that if the women of Erythræ would sacrifice their hair in order to make a cable, they would have no difficulty in drawing in the raft. The Thracian women who inhabited the town made the sacrifice of their locks, and thus secured the miraculous statue for Erythræ. Except for the final details the two legends are identical.[1]

Nothing is more common in popular hagiography than this theme of the miraculous advent of a picture or of the body of a saint in a derelict vessel; equally common is the miracle of the ship that comes to a halt or of the oxen who refuse to go any farther, in order to indicate the spot mysteriously predestined for the guardianship of a celestial treasure, or to confirm some church in the legitimate possession of the relics of a saint.[2] We need only recall the arrival of St. James in Spain, of St. Lubentius at Dietkirchen, of St. Maternus at Rodenkirchen, of St. Emmerammus at Ratisbonne, of the girdle of the Blessed Virgin at Prato, of the Volto Santo at Lucca.[3]

These miraculous voyages of crucifixes, Madonnas and statues of saints are particularly abundant in Sicily, as has been proved by recent researches.[4] A similar

1 Pausanias, vii., 5, 5-8.

2 In our own country (Belgium) it is not usual to employ oxen for the transport of sacred objects. Hence, in the legend of "Le Christ des Dames Blanches" of Tirlemont, it is the Canons of Saint Germain who find themselves incapacitated from carrying their precious burden any farther. P. V. Bets, *Histoire de Tirlemont*, Louvain, 1861, vol. ii., p. 88. The same story is related of the relics of St. George by Gregory of Tours, *In gloria martyrum*, c. 101.

3 The documents have been collected by H. Usener, *Die Sintflutsagen*, Bonn, 1899, pp. 136-37.

4 G. Pitrè, *Feste patronali in Sicilia* in *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari Siciliane*, vol. xxi., Turin and Palermo, 1900, pp. xx.-xxii.

inquiry in other countries would probably be rewarded with equally numerous discoveries.[1] In Istria an occurrence of a similar nature is connected with the foundation of the Bishopric of Pedena by Constantine.[2]

The Greeks have not neglected to introduce into their lives of saints a theme which had proved so popular among their ancestors. The panegyrist of St. Theodore Siceotes not only made use of it, but endowed the animal with a voice in order that it might declare in explicit terms the desire of the saint to rest on the spot he had selected for himself.[3] The oxen which drew St. Cyril of Gortina to the scaffold also stopped at the chosen spot in obedience to a divine command,[4] and the reader will recall the *rôle* attributed to the camels in the history of St. Menas of Egypt.[5]

It would be an endless task to draw up a complete list of the stock incidents of hagiography. We have already been able to show from examples that some of them go back to a very remote antiquity. That is

1 Concerning the miraculous crucifix of Hoboken, near Antwerp, see P. D. Kuyl, *Hoboken en zijn wonderdadig Kruisbeeld*, Antwerp, 1866, pp. 147-56; concerning the local legend of St. Desiré (Allier) see J. Stramoy, *La légende de sainte Agathe* in *Revue des traditions populaires*, vol. xiii., p. 694; on the advent of the relics of St. Thomas at Ortona, A. de Nino, *Usi e costumi Abruzzesi*, vol. iv., Florence, 1887, p. 151. The legend of St. Rainier of Bagno, *ibid.*, pp. 162-63, may also be mentioned here. A recent work on this subject is that of M. F. de Mely, *L'image du Christ du Sancta Sanctorum et les reliques chrétiennes apportées par les flots* in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de France, series* vii., vol. iii., Paris, 1904, pp. 113-44.

2 Manzuoli, *Vite e fatti de' santi et beati dell' Istria*, Venice, 1611, pp. 107-12. [The sentence which follows was omitted in the 3d ed. *Ed.*]

3 *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xx., p. 269.

4 *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, pp. 17, 750.

5 *Bibl. hag. lat.*, n. 5921.—The site of the Church of S. Auxentius in Cyprus was also indicated by the oxen which carried his relics. C. Sathas, *Vies des saints allemands de Chypre* in *Archives de l'Orient latin*, vol. ii., p. 419.

a point that cannot be too strongly insisted upon. A number of the legendary themes to be found scattered through the lives of saints, in the histories of the foundation of celebrated shrines, and in the accounts of the origin of certain miraculous pictures, are to be met with in the classics. The people of ancient times would themselves have experienced great difficulty in indicating their origin. For them, as for us, they were as leaves carried hither and thither by the wind.

The picture or letter dropped from heaven, the "acheiropœetos" or picture not made by human hand, are by no means the invention of Christian narrators. The legend of the Palladium of Troy, the statue of Pallas Athene fallen from the sky, and many other similar legends, show how common such conceptions were among the ancients.[1] Like ourselves they were familiar with holy pictures which shed tears,[2] with statues bathed in sweat in times of calamity,[3] with voices issuing from marble lips.[4]

The story of some object flung into the sea and recovered from the belly of a fish, to be met with in the lives of St. Ambrose of Cahors, St. Maurilius,[5] St. Magloire,[6] St. Kentigern [7] and many others, is nothing more than a reminiscence of the ring of Polycrates, related

1 See demonstration of this in E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder* in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, N.F., vol. iii., Leipzig, 1899.

2 "Apollo triduum et tres noctes lacrimavit," Livy, xliii., 13.

3 "Signa ad Junonis Sospitæ sudore manavere," Livy, xxiii., 31.

4 "Fortunæ item muliebris simulacrum, quod est in via Latina non semel sed bis locutum constitit, his paene verbis: Bene me matronæ vidistis riteque dedicastis," Valerius Maximus, i., 8.

5 See A. Houtin, *Les origines de l'Eglise d'Angers*, Laval, 1901, pp. 54, 55.

6 *Acta SS., Oct.*, vol. x., p. 787.

7 *Ibid.*, Jan., vol. i., p. 820.

by Herodotus.[1] The swarm of bees that alighted on the cradle of St. Ambrose,[2] and which also visited St. Isidore,[3] had long before deposited its honey in the mouth of Pindar[4] and in that of Plato.[5] The miracle of the rock opening to receive St. Thecla[6] and St. Ariadne[7] in order to snatch them from the pursuit of their persecutors is but an echo of the fable of Daphne, just as the story of St. Barbara recalls that of Danaë confined by her father in a brazen tower.[8]

Suetonius relates how Augustus, one day, when still a child, imposed silence on the frogs that were croaking near his grandfather's villa, and, it is said, he adds, that since then frogs have never croaked on that spot.[9] The same marvellous incident is recounted of more than one saint: of St. Rieul, St. Antony of Padua, St. Benno of Meissen, St. George, Bishop of Suelli, St. Ouen, St. Hervatus, St. James of the Marches, St. Segnorina, St. Ulphus.[10]

1 Herodotus, *Hist.*, iii., 43. Further parallels are quoted by R. Köhler, *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. ii., Berlin, 1900, p. 209, note 1.

2 *Vita a Paulino*, No. 3. 3 *Acta SS.*, April, vol. i., p. 331.

4 Pausanias, ix., 23, 2.

5 Cicero, *De divinatione*, i., 36; Olympiodorus, *Vita Platonis*, Westermann, p. 1.

6 Lipsius, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, vol. i., p. 272.

7 P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, *I martiri di santo Teodoto e di santa Ariadne* in *Studi e Testi*, No. 6, Roma, 1901, p. 132. The *Acta sanctæ Mariæ ancillæ* in *Acta SS.*, Nov., vol. i., pp. 201-6, cannot be quoted in evidence, as they are not distinct from those of St. Ariadne.

8 Papebroch had already noted the borrowing; *Acta SS. Bollandiana apologeticis libris in unum volumen nunc primum contractis vindicata*, Antwerp, 1755, p. 370.

9 Suetonius, *Octavius*, xciv. [Antigonos, tells the same thing of Hercules. Keller, p.l.]

10 The hagiographic documents have been collected by Cahier, *Caractéristiques des Saints*, vol. i., pp. 274-76, who did not trouble himself about the early origin of the incident. A large number of legends might be quoted in which other animals play an analogous part. Thus St. Tygris caused some sparrows to keep silence who had disturbed her at her prayers, and they never troubled her again, *Acta SS.*, June, vol. v., p. 74, note 9. At the request of St. Cæsarius of Arles, the wild boars which attracted a crowd of hunters forsook the neighbourhood of his monastery (*Acta SS.*, August, vol. vi., p. 72, note 36). [3d ed. adds references to St. Ursin and St. Martin from *Acta SS.*, Nov., vol. iv, p. 103.]

The reader will recall the vigorous language in which St. Jerome, in the early part of his life of St. Paul, summed up the horrors of the persecutions under Decius and Valerian: the martyr smeared with honey and exposed to the stings of insects, and yet another who protected himself against the snares of sensual desire by spitting out his tongue in the face of the temptress.[1] The magic of St. Jerome's style and the vivid relief of his pictures endow them with a semblance of originality to which they cannot lay claim.[2] Martyrdom from insects, which, if we may believe Sozomen, was renewed under Julian, was but another reminiscence of the classics.[3] Apuleius, among others, makes mention of it. As for the episode of the tongue, ancient writers have related the story on more than one occasion, attributing it now to the Pythagorean Timycha, now to Leæna the courtesan, and again to the philosopher Zeno of Elea.[4] St. Jerome, the recorder of this Christian adaptation of an ancient legend, did not succeed in giving it a permanent attribution. At a later date it was told of the martyr Nicetas, and Nicephorus Callistus[5] repeats it once again in connection with an ascetic who lived in the reign of Diocletian.[6]

1 These anonymous martyrs are inscribed in the Roman martyrology for 28th July. [This note in the 3d ed. reads simply *Metamorph.*, VIII, 22.]

2 [See P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, *Hagiographica*, p. 124. We do not forget the torment of Mark of Arethusa: Gregory of Nazianzus, *In Iulian.*, I, 89; Sozomène, *Hist. eccl.*, V, 10. (See p. 104 n. 1 below, *ed.*).]

3 *Metamorph.*, viii., 22.

4 The chief classical texts are quoted by Wachsmuth, *Berichte der k. Sächs. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, Phil. Hist. Cl., vol. viii., 1856, p. 132.

5 *Acta SS.*, Sept., vol. iv., p. vii.

6 *Hist. Eccles.*, vol. vii., chap. 13.

It seems scarcely necessary to remind the reader of the legend of the Seven Sleepers. The conception of a long sleep, which occurs in the history of Epimenides, has never ceased to have currency in folk tales, and it has been repeated with endless variations.[1]

The apparent complexity of certain legends and the startling effect of certain combinations which appear highly ingenious must not deceive us, and we must not hastily draw conclusions in favour of the creative faculty of popular genius. The historic elements which do not lend themselves to simplification are merely placed in juxtaposition, and bound together by a very slender thread. The result is usually an incoherent narrative, which in most cases is distinguished by its extraordinary improbability, though on occasions the effect is not devoid of impressiveness.

The following, for example, is one version of the legend of the wood of the cross. Adam, driven from Paradise, took with him a branch of the tree of knowledge, which served him as a staff to the end of his days. This stick passed down from hand to hand to the patriarchs, and during the wars an angel hid it in a cave where it was discovered by Jethro while herding his flocks. In his old age Jethro sent a message to Moses to come and take the staff, which on the arrival of the prophet sprang miraculously towards him. Moses made use of it to hang from it the brazen serpent. Later Phineas became possessed of it and buried it in the desert. At the time of the birth of Christ the precise spot was revealed to St. Joseph, who

[1] H. Demoulin, *Epiménide de Crète* in the *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liége*, fasc. xii., Brussels, 1901, pp. 95-100, in which other versions of the sleep legend are indicated.

found the staff on the occasion of the flight into Egypt. He handed it on to his son Jacob, who gave it to the traitor Judas, and through him it came into the hands of the executioners of Jesus Christ, and from it the cross was made.[1]

It will be admitted that, reduced to these terms, the legend of the wood of the cross does not give evidence of much wealth of invention, although the root idea of the mysterious continuity of the Old and the New Testament upon which the story has been clumsily built lends it a certain dignity.

The legend of Judas's thirty pieces of silver runs on similar lines. The money was coined by the father of Abraham, and with it Abraham bought a field as a burial-place for himself and his family. Later the coins passed into the possession of the sons of Jacob, to whom they were paid over by the slave merchants who purchased Joseph. With the identical coins they paid for the corn which Joseph procured for them in Egypt. At the death of Jacob they were given in payment for the spices for his tomb, and thus passed into the land of Sheba, and there remained until they were sent with other gifts by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon's Temple. From Jerusalem the coins were transferred to Arabia, to return with the Magi. The Blessed Virgin took the money with her to Egypt, and there lost it. It was found by a shepherd, who hoarded it until, struck with leprosy, he went to Jerusalem to implore Jesus to cure him. As a thank-offering he presented the thirty pieces of silver to the Temple, and

[1] Fr. Kampers, *Mittelalterliche Sagen vom Paradiese und vom Holze des Kreuzes Christi*, Cologne, 1897, pp. 89, 90. *Cf.* W. Meyer, *Die Geschichte des Kreuzholzes vor Christus in Abhandlungen der k. Bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, i. Cl., vol. xvi., 1881.

they thus became, in the hands of the chief priests, the price of Judas's betrayal. But Judas repented, and restored the price of his sin to the priests, who gave half of it to the soldiers on guard at the sepulchre and the other half to the potter for the field to be a burying-place for strangers.[1]

By a succession of similar combinations men have succeeded in identifying the stone which served as a pillow for the patriarch Jacob with that which supports the throne of the Kings of England at their coronation in Westminster Abbey.[2] One might quote many examples of such childish concatenations of historical reminiscences resulting in narratives which appear to be carefully elaborated, but which are, in reality, of puerile simplicity.

Popular imagination in its workings has not been restricted to the famous names and great events of sacred history. It has frequently given itself free scope in relation to the history of certain well-known saints, who, owing to the existence of their tombs and the veneration paid to their memories, could neither be passed over in silence nor fused into one. The recognised procedure was to group them together, to imagine links of kindred or of some common action between them, to forge a history in which each should play a

1 See, for example, A. Graf, *Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del medio evo*, Turin, 1883, vol. ii., pp. 462-63; L. De Feis, *Le Monete del prezzo di Giuda* in *Studi Religiosi*, vol. ii., 1902, pp. 412-30, 506-21. Note also, by the way, the version of the legend of the thirty pieces of silver in Solomon of Basrah, *The Book of the Bee*, edited by E. A. W. Budge, Oxford, 1886, p. 94 and following.

2 J. H. Rivett-Carnac, *La piedra de la coronación en la abadia de Westminster y su conexion legendaria con Santiago de Compostela* in the *Boletin de la real academia de la Historia*, vol. xl., 1902, pp. 430-38.

well-defined *rôle*, without ever stopping to inquire whether a particular saint might not be acting quite incompatible parts in two different stories. In this way, with the assistance of historical names and a topographical setting, whole cycles of purely imaginary legends have been composed.

The best-known example of this is that of the Roman martyrs of whom the legends form a series of cycles each one embracing a certain number of saints who frequently had nothing in common save the place of their sepulture.[1] Some of these legends are interesting and in places poetic; others—and they are in the majority—are trivial and meaningless. Nevertheless, if we study them as a whole, we can derive from them a picture which is not the result of design yet is none the less impressive; and if a poet had arisen to put into shape the raw material of these rude narratives, he might have drawn from them an epic poem of Christian Rome, from the foundation of the Mother and Mistress of Churches by St. Peter, through the bloody conflicts of the days of persecution, down to the final triumph under Sylvester and Constantine. Unhappily the man of genius who might have endowed us with this work of art has never arisen, and our sense of the grandeur of the subject only gives us a more vivid perception of the poverty of the legends that remain to us, and the lack of inspiration and originality in the creations of the people at large.

1 *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvi., pp. 2-7 and following.

II.

Predominance of sense impressions over the intelligence—Localisation and foot-prints—Literary origin of certain of these—Iconographic legends—Popular etymology—Miracles—The soul of the people—Energy of expression—Exaggerated feeling—Ambitions of individual churches—Morality of the mob—Local claims.

The brain of the multitude has been shown to be narrow, incapable of coping with any large number of ideas at once, or indeed with even a single idea of any complexity, equally incapable of applying itself to prolonged or subtle reasoning, but, on the other hand, fully prepared to receive impressions through the senses. The idea may fade quickly away, but the picture remains; it is the material side of things which attracts the populace, and it is to sensible objects that all the people's thoughts and affections cling. In this respect popular intelligence scarcely exceeds the intellectual level of a child, who, equally indifferent to abstract concepts, turns instinctively towards that which appeals to the senses. All the child's ideas and reminiscences are indissolubly linked to material and palpable objects.

Thus it is that great men live far less in the memory of their countrymen than in the stones, rocks or buildings with which it pleases people to connect their names. For, in the first place, the popular mind craves for what is definite and concrete. It is not satisfied with knowing that some celebrated personage passed through the country. It wishes to identify the precise spot on which he stood, the tree that gave him shelter, the house in which he lodged. Thus we have Alexander's oak, shown in the days of Plutarch near the Cephisus to mark the spot where he pitched his

tent at the battle of Chæronea;[1] Horace's house at Venusium, an ancient ruin shown under his name even in our own day, although no historical tradition connects it with the poet; and finally Virgil's house at Brindisi, the remains of a structure only built in the sixteenth century.[2]

In the same way the populace always feels constrained to explain the origin or the purpose of whatever impresses it and to bestow a name upon every object that excites its attention. Like a child it contents itself with the first explanation that soothes its imagination and satisfies its craving for knowledge, while reflection and the critical faculty never enlighten it concerning the insufficiency or improbability of what it invents. Thus it becomes a matter of course that people should transfer to the curious features of natural scenery or to the constructions of bygone ages, both the pictures that haunt their imagination and the celebrated names that live in their memory. It is one and the same psychological cause, which, all the world over, has bestowed well-known names on rocks of unwonted shape or natural grottoes which attract attention.

In the religious sphere the popular instinct asserts itself very emphatically in both these directions.

From this point of view nothing is more instructive than accounts of pilgrimages to celebrated shrines and more especially to the Holy Land. The earliest narratives by pious pilgrims[3] betray no trace of the

1 Plutarch, *Alexander*, ix., 2.

2 F. Lenormant, *À travers l'Apulie et la Lucanie*, vol. i., Paris, 1883, pp. 202-3. In the same way the site of Ovid's house is still shown at Sulmona. A. de Nino, *Ovidio nella tradizione popolare di Sulmona*, Casalbordino, 1886, p. 21.

3 See more especially the narratives of Antoninus, of Theodosius, and Adamnan; Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana saec.*, iv.-viii., in the *Corpus script. Eccl. lat.*, vol. xxxix.

ignorance and hesitation of our most learned exegetes in topographical matters, and with glorious assurance they will point out to you the precise spot where David composed his psalms, the rock smitten by Moses, the cave that sheltered Elijah, without counting the places mentioned in the Gospels of which not one is forgotten, not even the house of the wicked Dives, or the tree into which Zaccheus climbed. To show the extent to which material things dominate the intelligence and stifle the powers of reflection, people have pretended to have seen the "corner-stone which the builders rejected," and have begged for relics "de lignis trium tabernaculorum," those three tabernacles which St. Peter, in his ecstasy, proposed to erect on the mountain of the Transfiguration.[1]

In a similar way the names of saints are frequently linked with monuments or remarkable places which appeal to the popular imagination. Thus it is quite natural that in Rome the Mamertine prison should be selected as the scene of St. Peter's imprisonment, and that men should be enabled to point out the precise spot where Simon Magus fell: *Silex ubi cecidit Simon Magus.*[2] Neither is it surprising that in Ireland so many places are connected with the memory of St. Patrick, or at Naples with that of St. Januarius, or in Touraine and the neighbourhood of Autun with St. Martin.

It is furthermore only a particular example of a universal phenomenon that people should recognise in the hollows of rocks the imprint of the feet, hands or knees of St. Peter, St. George and St. Martin, just as in other

1 *Angilberti abbatis de ecclesia Centulensi libellus,* M. G., Scr., vol. xv., p. 176.

2 L. Duchesne, *Le forum chrêtien,* Rome, 1899, p. 17.

localities one is shown the footprints of Adam and Abraham, of Moses and Buddha.[1] That a large number of such attributions, more especially in the case of megalithic monuments, should have been christianised, and that the Blessed Virgin and the saints should have been substituted for the heroes of heathen legends, need excite no surprise. Whether St. Cornelius, in preference to all others, by turning the soldiers of King Adar to stone, should have created the long lines of menhirs at Carnac and Erdeven in Brittany,[2] or whether it was a fairy rather than St. Frodoberta, who dropped a lapful of stones, useless for building purposes,[3] near the lake of Maillard in the department of Seine-et-Marne, the popular tradition remains unaffected, testifying in each case that there is as yet no advance beyond the intellectual level of childhood.

It must not be forgotten that very precise identifications of locality may frequently be traced to a purely literary origin. Thus at Verona, where Romeo and Juliet only lived in the imagination of poets,[4] travellers are shown both their palace and their tomb, while the two ruined castles perched on the neighbouring hills

1 S. Reinach, *Les monuments de pierre brute dans le langage et les croyances populaires* in the *Revue archéologique,* 3rd series, vol. xxi., p. 224.

2 S. Reinach, *loc. cit.,* p. 355.

3 *Ibid.,* p. 354.—A great number of miraculous imprints have been pointed out in Italy by various scholars who have published their notes in the *Archivio per lo studio delle Tradizioni popolari,* vol. xxii., 1903, p. 128, and the preceding years. A considerable number of these imprints are attributed to various popular saints. [Other examples are to be found in F. Lanzoni, *Le fonti della leggenda di Sant' Apollinare di Ravenna,* Bologna, 1915, p. 57.]

4 L. Frankel, *Untersuchungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Stoffes von Romeo und Julia,* in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteraturgeschichte,* N.F., vol. iii., 1890, p. 171-210; vol. iv, 1891, 48-91; G. Brognoligo, *La leggenda di Giulietta e Romeo* in *Giornale Linguistico,* vol. xix, 1892, p. 423-39. [There is a useful bibliography, with discussion, of the Romeo and Juliet sources in E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare,* Oxford, 1930, vol. i, 340 ff. *Ed.*]

have become those of the Capulets and Montagues.[1] In Alsace are we not shown the forge which Schiller has "immortalised" by his ballad of Fridolin, and the castle of the Counts of Saverne, who none the less never existed?[2] This last example proves that in these cases tradition does not take long to germinate and blossom. Until the old legend was turned into verse by Schiller in 1797, Alsace had never been regarded as the home of the incident. Yet it was sufficient for the ballad to become popular for the event to be materialised and localised in the most precise fashion.

Of such topographical transference to suit the requirements of a legend there is no lack of examples in hagiography. At Sofia (Sardica), near the Church of St. Petka (Parasceve), may be seen an ancient tree-trunk partially built into the wall and scored with many notches. The people call it the tree of St. Therapon, and believe that the saint suffered his martyrdom near by. On his feast-day, 27th May, they go in pilgrimage to the spot, and make a point of carrying away with them some small piece of the sacred tree to which they attribute miraculous virtues. Now, in point of fact, St. Therapon did not die at Sardica; he was a native of Sardis, but according to the legend a great oak-tree sprang up from the ground that had been soaked with his blood. This evergreen oak was said still to exist

1 The Cappelletti and the Montecchi according to Dante are types, and in no sense historical characters. R. Davidsohn, *Die Feindschaft der Montecchi und Cappelletti ein Irrtum* in *Deutsche Rundschau*, Dec., 1903, pp. 419-28. On 8th July, 1905, the "historic" house of Juliet was purchased by the municipality of Verona. See *The Times* of 10th July, 1905.

2 W. Hertz, *Deutsche Sage im Elsass*, Stuttgart, 1872, pp. 278 and following.

and to cure every disease.[1] The confusion between Sardis and Sardica having once established itself, it became easy to transplant the miraculous tree.[2]

In the face of facts such as these, need we insist on the illusory nature of the process which consists in tracing the itinerary of a saint by means of the landmarks established by legends? If this has sometimes been attempted, it has not been precisely in the higher interests of history.[3]

Popular imagination in the past has not exercised itself solely on rough-hewn stones and buildings. Carved figures wrongly interpreted have proved the starting-point of a number of quaint legends.[4] A poet is represented with his foot on a large book: he must be the most learned of men, for he can read with his feet.[5] The two fine equestrian statues on Monte Cavallo (now Piazza del Quirinale) in Rome gave currency during the Middle Ages to a most curious tale. It was said that they represented two celebrated philosophers named Phidias and Praxiteles, who came to Rome during the reign of Tiberius, and had the singular habit of walking

1 *Synaxarium ecclesiæ Constantinopolitanæ*, p. 711.

2 C. Jirecek, *Das christliche Element in der topographischen Nomenclatur der Balkanländer* in the *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlich. Akademie*, vol. cxxxvi., 1897, pp. 54-55. Other examples of similar instances are to be found in this essay.

3 J. G. Bulliot et F. Thiollier, *La mission et le culte de St. Martin d'après les légendes et les monuments populaires dans le pays éduen*, Autun-Paris, 1892, vi., p. 483. The life of St. Radegonde has been the object of a similar attempt. See *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. x., pp. 59-60.

4 C. Kinkel, *Mosaik zur Kunstgeschichte*, Berlin, 1876, devotes a whole chapter to this question: *Sagen aus Kunstwerken entstanden*, pp. 161-243.

5 A. de Nino, *Ovidio nella tradizione popolare di Sulmona*, p. 17.

about the city in a state of nudity, in order to inculcate the vanity of the things of this world.[1]

Every sort of invention has been forthcoming to explain the representations of saints. It was obviously the common people who created the naïve legend of the saints who carry their own heads, suggested by a prevalent iconographic type,[2] and the legend of St. Nicholas and the three children is usually traced to a similar source.[3] A symbol interpreted in a materialistic sense has built up a regular romance around an incident in the life of St. Julian,[4] and we shall see later on that the extraordinary history of St. Liberata or Uncumber merely translates into popular language the explanation of certain peculiar features in a picture.

The following is another example, drawn from hagiography. An inscription, now to be seen in the Marseilles Museum, makes mention of a certain Eusebia, Abbess of St. Quiricus, *Hic requiescit in pace Eusebia religiosa magna ancella Dei*, etc., without any indication that would lead one to assume the existence of any cultus of this admirable woman. But her body had been laid in a sarcophagus of older date adorned with the figure of the dead person for whom it had been originally intended. It was the bust of a beardless man, which, in the course of time, had become damaged and mutilated. This fact was sufficient to give rise to a legend, and it was told how St. Eusebia, abbess of a convent at Marseilles, and her forty com-

1 C. L. Urlichs, *Codex urbis Romæ topographicus*, Wirceburgi, 1871, pp. 122-23.

2 Ch. de Smedt, *Principes de la critique historique*, pp. 188-92. [This paragraph has been revised in the 3d ed. and St. Lucy adduced as an example, while the saints carrying their own heads have been omitted. The rev. fn. cites *Anal. Boll.*, vol. xxxix, p. 162.]

3 Cahier, *Caractēristiques des Saints*, vol. i., p. 304.

4 A. Ledru, *Le premier miracle attribué à Saint Julien* in *La province du Maine*, vol. x., 1892, pp. 177-85. *Cf. Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xxii., p. 351.

panions cut off their noses to escape from the violence of the Saracens. "Quam traditionem confirmat generosæ illius heroinæ effigies, dimidia facie et naso præciso supra tumulum posita cum epigraphe," writes a Benedictine, quoted by M. Le Blant.[1]

Again, more than one legend owes its existence to names incorrectly understood or to resemblances of sound. To the curious examples of popular etymology collected by various learned authors,[2] we might add a large number of cases bearing specially on hagiography. We must, however, restrict ourselves to a few cursory indications.

The Church of St. Nereus and Achilleus on the Appian Way close to the Thermæ of Caracalla formerly bore the name of *Titulus de Fasciola*.[3] Opinions differ as to the meaning of the title. Some consider Fasciola to be the name of the foundress. Others regard it merely as a topographical expression of obscure origin. The erudite may hesitate: popular legend sees no cause for hesitation. The name Fasciola is a reminiscence of St. Peter. As he was passing by the spot on leaving prison he dropped the bandage that bound up his injured leg. "Tunc beatissimus Petrus," says an old writer, "dum tibiam demolitam haberet de compede ferri, cecidit ei fasciola ante Septisolium in via nova."[4] Here, indeed, we may see the naïveté of a people who

1 Le Blant, *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule*, n. 545.

2 A. F. Pott, *Etymologische Legenden bei den Alten* in *Philologus*, Supplementband, vol. ii., Heft 3; O. Keller, *Lateinische Volksetymologie*, Leipzig, 1891; O. Weise, *Zur Charakteristik der Volksetymologie* in *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, vol. xii., 1880, pp. 203-23.

3 Concerning the title of Fasciola, see De Rossi, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, 1875, pp. 49-56. [Added in 3d ed.: J. P. Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen im Altertum*, Paderborn, 1918, p. 909-94.]

4 *Acta SS., Processi et Martiniani*, BHL, n. 6947.

imagine that a great man cannot even drop a handkerchief without the spot being immediately marked and remembered in order that the incident may be recorded by a monument.

The influence of sound on the popular impressions formed of certain saints is well known, and we are all aware that at times something little better than a pun decides the choice of a patron. Thus, in France, St. Clare is invoked by those who suffer from their eyes because she enables people to see *clearly;* St. Ouen cures deafness because he enables them to hear (*ouïr*); St. Cloud cures boils (*clous*). Again, in certain parts of Germany St. Augustine is believed to rid people of diseases of the eye (*Auge*), and in others of a cough (*Husten*). Writers have drawn up lists of these conceits,[1] which are not solely due to popular imagination, and which learned men have amused themselves by multiplying. There is one of comparatively recent date which enjoys a surprising and regrettable popularity: St. Expeditus, thanks to his name, has been acclaimed as the advocate of urgent causes.[2]

It also happens that, under the influence of phonetic laws, the names of certain saints have become quite unrecognisable. On the Via Porto near Rome there may be seen a little country church belonging to the basilica of Santa Maria in Via Lata, known under the title of Santa Passera. Who is this saint who may be searched for in vain in the Calendar? Will it be believed that the name and the chapel are intended to recall the translation of the relics of SS. Cyrus and John, martyrs, formerly honoured at Menouthis near Alexandria?

1 *Mélusine*, vol. iv., pp. 505-24; vol. v., p. 152.

2 See later, chap. iii., par. 2. Compare *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xviii., p. 425; vol. xxv., pp. 90-98.

St. Cyrus, *ἀββὰ Κῦρος*, Abbacirus, has finally become transformed into Passera.[1] Has the metamorphosis ended there, or has the new saint acquired a legend of her own? I do not know, but even were it so I should feel no astonishment. The least that could be done was to confuse St. Passera with St. Praxedes, and sure enough the opportunity has not been missed.[2]

We have surely said enough to show how, among the people, the senses predominate over the intelligence, and how owing to the lethargy of their brains they are unable to rise to an ideal conception, but stop short at the matter, the image, the sound. It is furthermore by this spiritual feebleness that one must account for the blind attraction of the populace for the miraculous and the sensibly supernatural. The thought of the invisible guidance of Providence does not suffice; the interior working of grace offers nothing that can be grasped, and the mysterious colloquies of the soul with God must be translated into palpable results in order to produce any impression on the

1 *Abbacyrus, Abbaciro, Abbáciro, Pácero, Pácera, Passera,* such is the series of changes traced by M. Tomassetti in the *Archivio Storico Romano,* vol. xxii., p. 465. *Passera* and *Aboukir* are thus exact counterparts.—One may also quote *Sancta Fumia* on the Appian Way. This saint is no other than St. Euphemia. De Rossi, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, 1869, p. 80. There is also St. Twosole, in whom it is not easy to recognise St. Oswald. J. Aubrey, *Remains of Gentilism and Judaism*, ed. J. Britten, London, 1881, p. 29.

2 Tomassetti as above, vol. xxii., p. 466. The Venetian dialect is specially rich in transformations of saints' names, very bewildering to strangers. Thus in Venice the church of *San Marcuola* is, in reality dedicated to SS. *Ermagora e Fortunato; San Trovaso* is an adaptation of S. Gervasio e Protasio; *San Zanipolo* of *S. Giovanni e Paolo; San Stae* of *S. Eustachio; San Zandegola* of *S. Giovanni decollato; San Stin* of *S. Stefanin; San Boldo* of *S. Ubaldo; San Lio* of *S. Leone*, etc. See G. Tassini, *Curiosita Veneziane*, 4th edition, Venice, 1887, p. 428 and following. [One may find other interesting examples of the phonetic transformation of saints' names in A. Longnon, *Les noms de lieu de la France*, Paris, 1920-1923, p. 400-446. 3d ed.]

popular mind. The supernatural is only impressive when it is combined with the marvellous. Hence it is that popular legends overflow with marvels. Visions, prophecies and miracles play a necessary part in the lives of saints.

We shall not refer here to the wonders accomplished through the intercession of the miracle-working saints on behalf of those who visit their tombs or touch their relics; these constitute a special category which deserves separate treatment. But the narrative of the acts of the saint himself is, as it were, impregnated with the miraculous. Even before his birth his greatness is foreshadowed, and his cradle is enveloped in visible signs of divine protection. Angels guard his footsteps, Nature obeys him, wild beasts recognise his authority. In urgent peril he can always count on the intervention of the celestial powers. One might almost say that God Himself seems to favour the very caprices of His friends and seems to multiply miracles without any apparent motive. The staff of St. Gangericus (Géry) remained upright throughout the prayers of the saint,[1] and the same thing occurred while St. Junianus conversed with King Clothair.[2] Various saints hung their cloaks on a sunbeam or brought birds to life when they were already turning on the spit. Blessed Marianus Scotus had no need of a candle when writing at night as his fingers gave out the necessary light.[3] In answer to the prayer of St. Sebald, a peasant obtained a similar privilege until he had found his strayed oxen.[4] An eagle sheltered St. Ludwin from the sun's rays with his wings,[5] and the servant of St. Landoald brought his

1 *Acta SS.*, Aug., vol. ii., p. 674. 2 *Ibid.*, Aug., vol. iii., p. 41.
3 *Ibid.*, Feb., vol. ii., p. 367. 4 *Ibid.*, Aug., vol. iii., p. 772.
5 *Ibid.*, March, vol. i., p. 319; see *ante*, p. 29.

master fire in the folds of his robe.[1] The miracle of Joshua was renewed, we learn, in the person of St. Ludwin in order to allow him to confer ordination on one and the same day at Reims and at Laon.[2] In this direction popular imagination knows no bounds, nor can it be denied that, more especially in certain surroundings, among nations of a poetic temperament, these bold and naïve fictions frequently attain to real beauty.

One must not, however, exaggerate the fertility of these hagiographic *trovatori*.* A methodical classification of the themes employed by them compels one to realise that repetitions are numerous, and that it is chiefly by means of new combinations of familiar topics that an appearance of variety is conferred on different groups of legends of the saints. Above all, we must be on our guard against the belief that from the æsthetic point of view the level of the miraculous creations of popular hagiography is, as a rule, a high one. Putting aside an occasional happy thought or a few interesting ideas worked out with some ingenuity, the material of these biographies is as a rule deplorably commonplace even where it is not beyond measure whimsical and extravagant. The imagination, overexcited by the craving for the marvellous, and possessed by a burning desire to outstrip one extraordinary narrative by another more extraordinary still, has only too frequently overstepped all bounds in a region in which an unlimited field appears to open out before the creative faculties.

The familiar miracle of the arrival of relics on a derelict vessel[3] ended by appearing tame and vulgar.

[* *trovatori:* the original in Delehaye is *trouveurs*, i.e., *trouvères*, the mediaeval poets of Northern France. *Ed.*]

1 *Acta SS.*, March, vol. iii., p .36.
2 *Ibid.*, Sept., vol. viii., p. 171.
3 See above, p. 30.

Some one, therefore, invented the idea of a heavy sarcophagus floating on the water. It was in a stone coffin that St. Mamas landed in Cyprus,[1] as also did St. Julian at Rimini[2] and St. Liberius at Ancona.[3] For a babe to leap in its mother's womb like St. John the Baptist was not enough to foreshadow the greatness of a saint. St. Fursey spoke before his birth,[4] so also did St. Isaac, who made his voice heard three times in one day.[5] This miracle scarcely surpasses that of St. Rumwold, an infant who lived but three days after birth, but who not only repeated his profession of faith in such a way as to be understood by all present, but also preached a long sermon to his parents before breathing his last.[6]

In the *Acta Petri* we read not only of a child seven months old addressing violent reproaches "in manly tones" to Simon Magus,[7] but also of a big dog who conversed with St. Peter by whom it was entrusted with a message for Simon.[8] Commodianus has also commemorated a lion who miraculously made a speech in support of the preaching of St. Paul.[9] Such narratives may perhaps be mere reminiscences of Balaam's ass, unless indeed the incidents were inspired by a study of the fabulists.

1 Stefano Lusignano, *Raccolta di cinque discorsi intitolati corone*, Padua, 1577, cor. iv., p. 52.
2 *Acta SS.*, June, vol. iv., p. 139. 3 *Ibid.*, May, vol. vi., p. 729.
4 *Ibid.*, Jan., vol. ii., p. 45
5 *Ibid.*, June, vol. i., p. 325. The incident of the child speaking before its birth has not been utilised by hagiographers alone. See *Mélusine*, vol. iv., pp. 228, 272-77, 297, 323, 405, 447; vol. v., pp. 36, 257; vol. vi., p. 91; vol. vii., pp. 70, 141.
6 *Acta SS.*, Nov., vol. i., p. 605.
7 R. A. Lipsius, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, vol. i., Leipzig, 1891, pp. 61, 62. In Commodianus, *Carmen apolog.*, v., 630, the child is only five months old. *Cf.* C. Schmidt, *Die alten Petrusakten* in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vol. xxiv., 1903, pp. 106-7.
8 Lipsius, *ib.*, vol. i., pp. 56-60.
9 *Carmen apolog.*, v., pp. 57, 58. Cf. Schmidt, vol. xxiv., pp. 108-9.

These excesses lead us to speak of the passions to which the popular mind is liable, passions intense and unrestrained, and impressing everything they touch with that element of exaggeration and even of violence of which so many legends have preserved the trace. The populace can only be moved by strong emotions, and it has no idea of keeping its feelings under control. It takes no account of delicate shades, and just as it is incapable of perceiving them so it is incompetent to express them. But it makes use of energetic language to affirm its impressions and enunciate its ideas.

The following fact concerning St. Cataldus is a small example from among many. His sanctity having betrayed itself by extraordinary manifestations which appeared to be miraculous, an ecclesiastical commission was appointed to pronounce on their nature. This was too simple for literary effect. Consequently the legend relates how the Pope, followed by all the cardinals, went in procession to the house of Cataldus and visited it from cellar to garret.[1] The device reminds one of the methods of those painters whose whole talent lies in the suggestion of life and movement.

Need we add that popular admiration, not seldom ill bestowed, is always quite unmeasured? The multitude endows its favourites with every great quality, and cannot tolerate the idea that others should appear superior to them. We may quote here, although it has no connection with the history of the saints, a legend

1 A. de Nino, *Usi e costumi abruzzesi*, vol. iv., Florence, 1887, p. 195.

that is particularly instructive from this very point of view, the legend of Saladin. The admiration and sympathy which his personal qualities and especially his moderation and humanity inspired in his prisoners gave rise to a most improbable story, but one which emphasises in a remarkable way the enthusiasm with which he was regarded. Nothing would satisfy his admirers but to connect this Mussulman prince with a French family, and to make of him a knight and next door to a Christian.[1] Again, when popular imagination was fired by the great expeditions to the Holy Land, it seemed impossible that a warrior such as Charlemagne should not have taken part in them: accordingly from that time forth the Crusades became one of the episodes in the history of that popular hero.

Under such circumstances is it surprising that all the saints should be endowed with all the virtues, and that in a period when illustrious birth added markedly to a person's merit, a patent of nobility should invariably have been made out in their favour? But what was valued even more than noble birth was the honour of having belonged to our Saviour's immediate following. People had no hesitation in identifying the ancient patrons of churches with certain personages who are mentioned in the Gospel, or who were supposed to have taken part in some scene in the life of Christ. Thus St. Ignatius of Antioch became the child whom our Lord showed to the people when He enjoined upon them the humility and simplicity of childhood;[2] St. Syrus of Pavia became the boy with the five loaves;[3] St.

1 G. Paris, *La Légende de Saladin* in the *Journal des Savants*, 1893, pp. 284-99, 354-65, 428-38, 486-98.

2 *Acta SS.*, Feb., vol. i., p. 18.

3 Prelini, *San Siro primo vescovo di Pavia*, vol. i., Pavia, 1880, p. 312.

Martial held the towel at the washing of the feet;[1] and St. Ursinus read aloud during the Last Supper.[2]

It may readily be conceived that the legends tracing back to Christ or to St. Peter the mission of the first bishops of important dioceses were not solely inspired by a disinterested love of the saint. The passion for a noble ancestry which caused first the Romans and then the Franks to connect themselves with the heroes of the *Iliad*, discovered this fresh form of self-flattery, and the impulse once given, one church vied with another in claiming the honour of apostolic foundation.[3]

In the East these claims appear to have had their origin in a literary fraud. The forger who disguised himself as Dorotheus of Tyre drew up a list of the names of all the persons mentioned in the New Testament, and bestowed upon each one an Episcopal See. He proceeded with so much haste that he included various names that obviously had never been borne by a bishop; such as Cæsar, which he borrowed from the words of St. Paul, "All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household" (Phil. ii. 22), without realising that the Cæsar in question was no other than Nero.[4]

Among the churches of the West, and more especially among those of France, pretensions to apostolicity

1 *Vita S. Martialis a. Pseudo-Aureliano*, no. 2; Bourret, *Documents sur les origines chretiennes du Rouergue*, Rodez, 1887-92, p. 13.

[2 *Vita S. Ursini, in Act. SS.*, Nov., vol. iv, p. 109. 3d ed.]

3 L. Duchesne, *Les anciens recueils de légendes apostoliques* in *Compte-rendu du troisième Congrès scientifique international des Catholiques*, Brussels, vol. v., 1894, pp. 67 and following.

4 Houtin, *La controverse de l'apostolicité de l'Eglise de France*, 3rd edition, Paris, 1903. In other countries also people have taken pleasure in concocting similar legends, so flattering to national vanity. See *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xii., pp. 458, 462; vol. xviii., p. 402.

did not spring up with quite the same uniform impulse, and this is not the place to investigate the respective parts played by popular imagination and by literary fiction in the elaboration of these celebrated legends. What is important to note is that the inventors of these ambitious narratives could always count upon the complicity of the multitude in every enterprise that tended to flatter local sentiment.[1]

For we must not expect of people in the aggregate either keen intelligence or an enlightened morality. Taken collectively they are wholly devoid of that sense of responsibility which causes an individual to hesitate before a dishonest or irregular action. They have no scruples, and as everybody relies on his neighbour to examine the validity of the evidence brought forward, nothing is more easy in dealing with a crowd than to strike the chord of patriotism, vanity or self-interest. It matters, therefore, very little whether the interested imaginings of "apostolic" or other claims are of literary origin, or whether created by the people they have been simply disseminated by hagiographers who have become parties to the fraud by arranging and embellishing them. In either case they belong to the category of products of legendary growth, and constitute only the normal development of popular ideas and aspirations in the matter of ecclesiastical origins.

Thus freed from all trammels the ambitious designs of the people know no limit, and their audacity does not recoil before any obstacle. Neither time nor dis-

[1] A title of honour which the Greeks have been unequal to refusing to any of the holy bishops who were more or less contemporary with the Council of Nicæa was that of having sat among the "three hundred and eighteen fathers". One must therefore not be over-anxious to give credit to those biographers who confer this distinction on their heroes, *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xviii., p. 54.

tance will prevent them from claiming as their own special property any saint whom they may elect to honour and whose glory they may desire to see reflected upon themselves.

Every one is familiar with the legend of the great St. Catherine. Both by her birth and by her martyrdom her biographers have connected her with the town of Alexandria. This has in no way deterred the Cypriots, thanks to a series of ingenious and discreditable artifices, from annexing a saint of whom the cultus no less than the legend has always been as popular in the Greek as in the Latin Church.

Now Stephen of Lusignan declares that at Famagusta he read the Greek text of a life of St. Catherine in which one learnt, first of all, that the famous Costos, father of the saint, was not King of Egypt at all, but King of Cyprus, and in proof of this that he bestowed his name on the town of Salamis, afterwards known as Constantia. At some political crisis Diocletian transferred Costos to Alexandria and confided to him the government of Egypt. It was at this period that Catherine was born. It is well known with what care she was brought up, and how proficient she became in all the liberal arts. After the death of her father she returned to the island of Cyprus, where her uncle, learning that she had become a Christian, had her thrown into prison at Salamis—where the actual prison was shown in the time of Lusignan—and then sent her back to Egypt, where the Emperor Maxentius, despairing of her recantation, had her put to death. She suffered her martyrdom at Alexandria, which, adds the chronicler, caused it to be said that she was a native of that town.[1]

[1] The text of Lusignan is quoted by J. Hackett, *A history of the orthodox Church of Cyprus*, London, 1901, p. 395.]

It might have been supposed that the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus would have been sufficiently protected against similar attempts both by their celebrity and by the marvellous details of the legend. Nevertheless the grotto where they slept their sleep of three hundred years has been shown in the neighbourhood of Paphos.[1] Stephen of Lusignan expresses some surprise, but tries to persuade himself that the legend might refer to a different group from that of Ephesus.[2]

St. Savinus is a martyr to whom honours are known to have been paid in the sixth century[3] at Spoleto, where a basilica[4] was erected to his memory. The inhabitants of Spoleto naturally regard him as their compatriot, but he is also claimed by those of Fermo, who possess his relics, and by those of Monselice. At Monte San Savino he has been made into a bishop of the neighbouring town of Chiusi. As for the people of Faenza, they invented a sojourn of the saint within their territory, and, after his martyrdom at Spoleto, a translation of his relics. Later on they attempted to pass him off as their first bishop.[5]

1 "Nella città di Paffò è una spelonca: la qual dicono esser delli sette dormienti. Pero, noi ritroviamo nelli leggendarii che li sette dormienti erano in Epheso, niente di meno essi cittadini di Paffo dicono ab antiquo esser chiamata quella spelonca di santi sette dormienti: et possono esser altri di quelli di Effeso." Quoted by Hackett, as above, p. 456.

2 Concerning the localisation of the legend in the East see J. de Goeje, *De legende der Zevenslapers van Efeze*, Amsterdam, 1900, 25 pages. The various groups on which the title of Seven Sleepers has been conferred are discussed in the *Acta SS.*, July, vol. vi., pp. 375-76.

3 Gregorii I., *Reg.*, ix., 59. *M. G.; Epist.*, vol. ii., 3, p. 82.

4 Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Langobard.*, l. iv., *M. G.; Scr. rer. Langob.*, p. 121.

5 F. Lanzoni, *La passio S. Sabini o Savini* in the *Römische Quartalschrift*, vol. xvii., 1903, pp. 1-26.

The bonds which the people seek to establish between themselves and a favourite saint are not always as close as this. Often they are satisfied with the honour of having received him, alive or dead, within their city walls, and then all that is necessary is to imagine a journey which need in no way affect the main lines of his history. It is by means of this simple artifice that St. Nicephorus, the celebrated martyr,[1] has become a local saint in Istria,[2] and that St. Maurus has been claimed by so many towns—Rome, Fondi, Fleury, Lavello and Gallipoli, without counting Parenzo.[3]

We have now seen something of the processes of the anonymous author who creates legends. As he himself does not hold the pen, we have usually been compelled to have recourse to the hagiographer who registers his tales and discoveries. But so far we have only consulted this latter agent in those things in which he is the echo of the popular voice. In the following chapter we shall attempt to trace out what is specially his own, and to lay bare the secrets proper to his craft.

1 *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina*, n. 6085.

2 *Ibid.*, n. 6086.

3 *Analecta Bollandianna*, vol. xviii., pp. 370-80.

THE LEGENDS OF THE SAINT

AN INTRODUCTION TO HAGIOGRAPHY

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