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The Life of St. Illtud

*Here begins the life of Saint Illtud.
Commemorated November 6/19*

§ 1.

Of the union of his parents and the birth of the boy.

Victorious Letavia (that is, Lesser Britannia, Brittany), a rich and successful province, powerful in arms, none greater in warlike fame, took its origin from its mother, Britannia. The daughter was taught by the mother; full success in war attends the daughter. British princes full of vigour, noble leaders, but formerly most noble heirs; afterwards being disinherited they lost their own, as aliens. Of these Bicanus was distinguished, a most famous soldier, illustrious by race and in military prowess. All his kindred were descended from conspicuous princes, but none was less of those who went before, for as the first were, so too was the last. Born so high and so famous from such, he must needs rejoice, because he came of most noble ancestors. He flourished and excelled in the service of his king, loved by king and queen, for they all magnified him, lavishing praises. So great a man of highest nobility desired to marry and to be succeeded by sons; he fulfilled his wish, marrying the daughter of Anblaud, king of Britannia, Rieingulid, called by this British name; when latinized it means regina pudica, modest queen. The most worthy name was bestowed in accordance with her desert, for before legal marriage she clung not to another attachment. Despising games, keeping to her chamber, she ever obeyed her mother's behest. For whatever she said was apt, and in everything she did she acted advisedly, an excellent maiden, without reproach, marriageable, of ripe age, worthy of a husband. The people knew not of any more worthy of betrothal. Therefore messengers crossed the Gallic sea, they bring back the maiden, as a pearl precious and excelling in beauty, and her whom they brought back most lovely and most docile they

entrust to the aforesaid prince in nuptial honour. These things being legally performed, as lawful wife she conceived, and after conception happily brought forth a son, as a fruit-bearing tree gives forth a most excellent blossom. In baptizing the boy and after the washing of regeneration the infant was named Illtutus, Illtud, to wit, ille, he, who is tutus, safe, from every fault. Blameless was he in the five stages of life, praised and beloved by all his fellow-citizens. His parents vowed to dedicate him to literature, and they dedicate him so vowed to be instructed in the seven arts. After instruction and after the knowledge taught was known to him, he laid aside the study of literature, applying himself to military training, not forgetting, however, through any negligence, anything which he had learnt. He was a man of such memory that once hearing an instruction of his master, he retained it in his heart ever after. To him were fully given the five keys, whereby he was wisely able to make known the unknown. None was more eloquent throughout Gaul than Illtud, the soldier, in discoursing philosophic eloquence.

§ 2.

Of his visit to the court of king Arthur and Poulentus.

In the meantime the magnificent soldier hearing of the magnificence of his cousin, king Arthur, desired to visit the court of so great a conqueror. He left what we call Further Britannia, Brittany, and arrived by sailing, and here he saw a very great company of soldiers, being also honourably received in that place, and being rewarded as regards his military desire. His desire to receive guerdons being also satisfied, he withdrew very pleased from the royal court. Journeying he came to Poulentus, king of the Glamorgan folk, accompanied by his very honourable wife, Trynihid. The king, perceiving that he was a court soldier and honourable retained him with much affection, loving him before all of his household and rewarding him bounteously. So he remained with very great honour until he merited to be chosen and to preside over the royal household. He ruled the household without any strife, a peaceful governor and second from his master. Gospel precepts were stored (or hidden) in the soldier's breast; incessantly he strove to recount them to those

keeping them. The things recounted directed the hearers to perfect works; the perfect works raised those who fulfilled them to a heavenly reward. A soldier he was outwardly in soldier's dress, but inwardly the wisest of British-born. Wherefore he was by king Poulentus made master of the soldiers for his very fine fluency and incomparable mind. No contemporary could be compared with him for his intelligence; this has been proved and confirmed by the testimony of learned men.

§ 3.

Of the household of king Poulentus, which the earth swallowed up, and of the promise made to adopt the clerical habit after military service at the advice of St. Cadog.

It happened on a certain day, when he was conducting the royal household for hunting through the territory of saint Cadog, while it rested, it sent to the renowned abbot in stiff terms that he should prepare for it a meal, otherwise it would take food forcibly. Saint Cadog, although the message seemed to him improper owing to the harshness of the words, as though demanding tribute from a free man, nevertheless sent to the household what sufficed for a meal. This having been sent, the household sat down with a will to take the meal, but the willing came short of the eating. For on account of the unlawful demand and sacrilegious offence the earth swallowed up the unrighteous throng, which vanished away completely for such great iniquity. But Illtud the soldier and master of the soldiers escaped, because he would not consent to the unjust demand, nor was he present in the place where the household had been in order to wait for the food, but was far off holding a she-hawk which he frequently let go and incited after birds. When Illtud saw this miracle he feared; being affected after the sight with compunction for past faults, he hastened his steps to saint Cadog, inquiring and asking counsel of him on his knees to make amends for what faults he had done. And he, becoming to him a salutary counsellor, advised him first to set aside the secular habit, then to seek again the clerical habit which he had discarded, and to serve the supreme Creator for the rest of his life for the sake of eternal repayment. He humbly obeyed the advice given, promising

firmly to perform it in the future. Then having returned to king Poulentus, he, having received permission, withdrew himself from secular service. Then the king grieving, the queen too, and all, owing to his withdrawal, he came at length to the margin of the river Naudauan, accompanied by his wife and his armour-bearers. It was summer time, wherefore from a reed-thicket he constructed a covering that it might not rain on his bed. The horses pasture in the meadows, and both lie down in the night sleeping through drowsiness, their eyes being heavy.

§ 4.

Of the first arrival of an angel to admonish Illtud.

While he slept an angel suddenly stood before him, admonishing him with these admonitions. 'Thou wast formerly a very celebrated soldier, rewarded by many kings. But now I bid thee to serve the King of kings and no more to love transitory things. Remember how thy parents dedicated thee to a clerical pursuit; thou didst study, devoted to a divine comradeship. Then thou didst despise what was not despicable, giving thyself to spear and sword. These (other) arms were not given thee from an armoury, but the five keys were conferred on thee under tutorship. Therefore seek again what thou hast left, lest thou be taken, caught by the plots of an unseen foe. For the plotter is nigh, who tries to beguile thee, desiring with all effort to damn thee. He sees thee, thou seest not him with the bodily eye; unless thou be on thy guard and ward him off, he will be able to destroy thee. Be not therefore unwary and deceived by the enemy of God and men, for he envies the inhabitants of earth and of heaven, because he lost his heavenly seat. He, fiercer than a lion, swifter than a bird, invisible poisoner, steals and takes away; and what he takes he refuses to restore; under punishment he punishes. Banish poison after medicine like a physician, that no scar appear after healing. Love of wife also possesses thee that thou turnest not to the Lord. What, pray, is carnal love but a horror and the source of sins? One who loves much burns as the burning of fire, a hurtful thing, an odious thing which leads to punishment. Let it not burn thee, neither let lust incite thee, a beast of poison. Thy wife is comely, but better is chastity. Who would choose for

such to forgo things eternal? For if thou shouldst see her naked, thou wouldst not love her as before. Look on this woman and after sight thou wilt then esteem her of less worth. What profit and how lucrative the felicity in such intercourse? He who shall abstain and forbear from sexual unions, shall be exalted and set on an everlasting seat. To-morrow when thou hast risen, quickly betake thyself to a certain woody valley towards the west, where thou shalt have a dwelling-place. For so is the will of God, since that place is convenient, very fertile, and habitable. For this cause have I come from the supreme Creator, being sent on this message, to announce such things with good will. I have announced the things to be announced for fulfilment and let there be no delay in fulfilling them.'

§ 5.

Of his arrival to lead the eremitical life in the Hodnant valley, and of his mode of life in conformity with the angelic exhortation. After these words the angel disappeared. After a little while saint Illtud, having waked, recalled to memory the angelic discourse, and also revolved in his mind that precept of the Lord, 'He who loves father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children, more than me, is not worthy of me' and so forth. Meditating on such things, he bade his wife rise; he commanded her on rising to see to the horses, the moon's light then shining, that he might know how they had been kept by their keepers that night. She went out naked with her hair loose that she might see, and that she might fulfil what the angel had ordered. She returned after the inspection, and on her return the blessed Illtud saw her naked body, the blowing wind dispersing her hair about her woman's side. He grieved when he looked at it; he deemed the female form as of little value; he deeply regretted having loved such a thing. He vows to leave her; he promises to fulfil his vow in words of this kind, 'The woman now of little worth, once beloved, agreeable, a daughter of luxury, fatal source of ruin, breeds punishment, because if anyone have loved it the now beautiful form of a woman becomes exceeding loathsome.

§ 6.

Of his first dwelling in the valley of Hodnant.

These things being done as related, the aforesaid woman wished to enter the bed; Illtud drove her off so wishing as the poison of a serpent, declaring he was leaving her, and saying 'Thou shalt not cling to me further.' He reached out to her her clothes; she putting on what was handed to her sat down, yet although clothed she feigned with trembling heart that she was cold, that by this plea she might lie again in the bed by his side. But he knew the reason to be feigned; he strengthens his purpose with the firmness of virtues; he gains the victory. A solitary wayfarer, whom God accompanied, having abandoned all secular things, he kept on his way until he arrived at the aforesaid valley, called Hodnant, which not without reason means in Latin uallis prospera, prosperous valley. About it stood no mountains or steep unevenness, but a most fertile open plain. There was a very thick wood, planted with diverse trees, which was the crowded abode of wild beasts. A very pleasing river laved its two banks, and wells intermixed with rills along their pleasing courses. After he had rested and examined everything, the delectable spot pleased him, as the angel had indicated before in dreams. Here is the woody grove, a sunny spot to those who tarry there; here too about the plains is rich fertility. Through the midst there runs a flowing stream of waters. This I know may be said, it is the most beautiful of places.

§ 7.

Of the penance imposed on him, and of the reception of the clerical habit, and of his manner of watching and fasting, and of the first building of a church, and of the sow seen with six porklings.

Such things having been seen and being pleasant to him, the servant of God, the most blessed Illtud, went to Dubricius, bishop of Llandaff, who imposed penance on him for past faults. He shaved his beard, he cut his hair, he blessed his crown. Then, having taken the clerical habit in accordance with the angelic command as revealed in the dream, he returned tonsured to the same place, building at once first a habitation, the bishop

Dubricius marking out the boundary of a cemetery, and in the midst, in honour of the supreme and undivided Trinity, the foundation of an oratory, where he had previously seen the lair of a sow and porklings. These having been duly marked out, he founded a church, a quadrangular rampart of stone being made above the surrounding ditch. After these things were done and before they had been undertaken, he watched and fasted assiduously, he prayed without ceasing, expending his goods bounteously on all who asked. He worked with his own hands, a most religious hermit, not trusting in the labours of others. In the middle of the night before mattins he used to wash himself in cold water, remaining so as long as the Lord's Prayer could be said three times. Then he would visit the church, kneeling and praying to the omnipotence of the supreme Creator. So great was his religion that he was never seen engaged in any business except in God's service. His whole concentration was on Holy Writ, which he fulfilled in daily works. Many to be taught resorted to him; they were trained to a thorough knowledge in the seven arts.

§ 8.

Of the stag tamed by saint Illtud, and of the king's wonderful meal on fish and water.

When king Meirchion, surnamed the Wild, was one day hunting, he set his hounds on a stag. Roused, it ran on in flight until it entered the sleeping place of saint Illtud, as if seeking sanctuary with him after the manner of men. After entering, it lay down tamed at the feet of the astonished man, wearied on account of the dogs and full of fear. The barking dogs, however, were waiting outside for it to come forth, but then ceased from their barkings. The king on hearing the last bark followed up, wondering greatly at the sudden cessation of barking. On coming up he arrived at the hermitage, beholding there the hounds quiet and the stag, and, what was more wonderful, that from a wild animal it had become tame and domestic. He was very angry with the occupant, because without his permission he had occupied the waste, which in his judgement was more fit for hunting. He began to demand the stag, but what was

demande saint Illtud was unwilling to surrender, yet he conceded leave of entrance, if he would accept of it. He, filled with respect on seeing the very great piety of the most blessed man and such great wonders performed before him in person, although angry, entered not in, but rather bestowed on him the gift first presented from heaven, which he gratefully accepted. The same stag, tamed by saint Illtud, drew vehicles, and in the vehicles timber for building. After these things the aforesaid king, being hungry, desired to breakfast, whom saint Illtud invited to a breakfast. Being invited he descended humbly, and sat down, pacified from the madness which was wont to possess him. He sent a servant to a neighbouring pond to catch fish; he straightway drew in in his net a fish fat and fine of good weight. Taken and broiled they placed it before the king; when placed before him he would not taste it, because it seemed to him unbecoming that it should be placed before him without bread and salt. But Illtud not having that hour bread and salt, prayed (or said), saying, 'The author of all creatures, and the giver of gifts, is able to bring it to pass that, if thou shalt taste what is placed before thee, thou shalt have from me, in the fish so tasted, what thou desirest to have.' These requests being heard, the king dared not rebelliously refuse, but did eat, and had the tastes of divers kinds of foods in one sort. Having had enough and being thirsty he asked jeeringly for wine or mead to be set before him. But he, lacking both, ordered a draught of well water to be given him, and offered again the same prayers, which he had uttered before, that the desire of the asker should be fulfilled from a drink of water. He drank; the drink pleased him, and the tastes of divers liquors, especially wine and mead, he found in water alone.

§ 9.

Of the coming of an angel to admonish king Meirchion and for his reproof.

After the wonderful drinking the aforesaid king slept in sleep; to him sleeping came an angel from heaven, admonishing and rebuking. The angel reproved him, saying, 'Thou hast been hither to a mad and very wicked king, and remainest so now.

Amend, so I advise thee, and defer not thy amendment. Thou wouldst rather that useless beasts should dwell here than worshippers of God, who ought to occupy it. Forbid them not, but permit them to remain to cultivate this destined and conceded place. If thou refuse to concede what ought to be conceded, thou shalt be destroyed without length of days and without progeny. Grant them therefore leave to remain, because this valley shall be inhabited to the end of time. Who would dare to offend and to expel a most religious man and one engaged in the catholic life from his desired abode? God has chosen him and sent him hither, that he might serve him in the eremitical life. He will, moreover, be an abbot, venerable, distinguished, and exalted. Whosoever shall injure him, unless he amends, will perish for ever. Beware, therefore, lest thou perish; from now let thy obstinacy do him no injuries. Goliath of old was very stark, yet humble childhood overcame the most brave. He employed spear and sword, but David a tiny sling in battle. The small boy confiding in the supreme Conqueror, was victor by trusting to a cast of a sling in his hands. So this Illtud, the most humble servant of God, trusts that he may conquer by humility so as to remain here and to possess secure stability. He fights not with visible arms, he strives better with invincible virtues. A virtuous man, not fearful in a contest, he drives off his foes in the armour of righteousness. None throughout the whole of Britannia is holier than the most blessed one present, because he lives according to rule in accordance with monastic rule. Many will be brought together by his manner of life, he will be a refuge and a support, like a pillar supporting a standing house. His protection will be inviolable with kings and with princes in this kingdom. Kings and princes will heed his instruction, subject peoples will abide by his counsel. Pacific and more gentle than a gentle dove, he will give light as a most bright candlestick, and as a lamp.'

§ 10.

Of the awakening of the king and of his grant of habitation.

When these things had been said by the angel, the king, corrected from his maliciousness, was aroused from sleep, declaring to those who heard them such words as these, 'O servant of God, most blessed Illtud, I grant thee this solitude freely for a high and heavenly recompense. I have seen a vision useful to us both, an angel's voice commanding that it is by no means right that thou shouldst quit this valley. As long as I shall reign, I shall not offend thee; most freely mayest thou hold this district. Appoint husbandmen over thins territory, for this territory is meet to be cultivated, and there is none more fertile throughout the country. Tilled it abounds in harvests; it is seen to be flowing with honey and fragrant with flowers. Italy is fertile, abounding in fruits of the earth, this is more abundant and more temperate without its excessive heats. Too much cold does not destroy the crops, superfluous heat does not parch the fruits. It speedily ripens them at a suitable time; the reapers rejoice, more joyful than the reapers of Italy. Rejoice thou, therefore, to abide in such a territory; thou oughtest to rejoice, so I prophesy, for innumerable folk will rejoice in thy manner of life. So profitable a manner of life was not in these regions; thou wilt preach, directing wanderers by thy heavenly doctrines. Magistral care has been granted thee by the bishop, this also I concede and confirm by royal grant. Your school will be revered, vassals will serve thee and all born in the country. Many will flow together from divers parts, may they be instructed in liberal education. Although thou art now unknown thou wilt be known, I shall make thee known, and thou wilt be glad.' Then the placid saint Illtud, not more joyful but holding himself under control, gave thanks to almighty God, and cheerfully accepting what the king offered, beseeching the divine clemency that it would condescend to pity unto the forgiveness of the past crimes which he committed. After that that the angel had said such things, the king was mollified from wrath by the angelic reproof. He returned to his own court, magnifying and praising the omnipotence of the supreme Creator through the open miracles which he had seen.

§ 11.

Of the establishment of agriculture and the great number of his household.

Therefore the venerable abbot, Illtud, being at that time hindered by none, remained at peace. He tills and sows, he reaps and lives by his own labour. He appoints labourers, cultivators of husbandry throughout his fields. They increase seed, they duly perform labours with great profit. He feeds the poor, he covers the naked, he visits the sick and those cast into prison. He had a hundred in his household, as many workmen, clerics, and a hundred poor persons daily. He was hospitable, most ready, never refusing hospitality to those who required it. He gave bountifully whatever was put in his hands, not entrusting it to any guardians to be kept. In his bountiful heart there was no hurtful pride, but rather humility, kindness, and pure and undefiled religion. Very many scholars were attracted to him, of whose number these four, to wit, Samson, Paulinus, Gildas and Dewi (that is, David) studied with him, instructed in wisdom, and others, very many, like them.

§ 12.

Of ecclesiastical orders he received, and his rise to be an abbot.

His affairs increasing prosperously, and he having taken ecclesiastical orders and, moreover, having received the order of monk through his holiness and grace, and being appointed abbot the venerable man appointed fifty canons, who at suitable times and fixed hours visited the church, having each of them his prebend, to wit, each his own homestead with profits, which were given by the people to keep in memory their souls. Yearly rents were paid to the abbot; what was paid he divided by commot custom. Yearly entertainments were prepared for him; and to what was prepared he invited a multitude of poor people, whon regularly he bade to partake of it, until what was bestowed ran short.

§ 13.

Of the breach of the ditch, the sea rushing in, and of the recession of the sea, and of the springing of a well by mean of saint Illtud.

Such agreeableness of position as the aforesaid pleased him who dwelt there, level grounds on every side surrounding a plain, and a wood unfelled between. Yet he was troubled by the frequent inundation of the sea and a fluvial approach towards his cemetery. Therefore moved by grief and fear, lest it should invade and occupy further the whole valley, he built an immense dyke, a mixture of mud and stones, which should beat back the inrushing wave, that was wont to swell beyond measure, the river only having room to flow to the sea through the middle of it. After the work was done the force of the waves broke the dyke. A second time he renovated it, and the second operation the surge broke anew. A third time he repeated the task, nor did the repetition avail, but came to ruin. Saint Illtud grieved, sayin such words as these, 'Here I will dwell no longer; most willingly I might wish it, but troubled on account of this marine molestation I shall not be able. It will destroy my buildings, it will flow into the oratories which we constructed laboriously.' He invokes and beseeches the heavenly Protector for aid, to consider how he might avoid quitting the convenient place which he had chosen. In the meanwhile, arranging to withdraw on the morrow, the preceding night whilst he anxiously slept an angelic voice addresses the sleeper in this wise, 'I command thee and forbid thee to leave what thou wishest to leave, for God is not willing that thou shouldst withdraw from this valley, because your praye have been heard by the supreme Auditor, who delivers all who confide in him and pray. He will deliver thee from this injurious and troublesome anxiety. Tomorrow, after that thou comest from the oratory, take thy bachall and hasten thy steps towar the restless sea, which thou shalt drive back by divine power from thy threatening bachall. It will fly before thee continuously without return of flow, going again to its wonted quarters, as a fugitive will fear before a pursuing enemy.' So in the early morning, as the angel had commanded him in his sleep, he took his course to the wave-driven sea. He began to go forward, the sea began to retreat, as though it were become

capable of feeling and life. Its wavering became still, and its stopping-place was on the shore. And when the shore showed dry, he pierced it with his bachall, and thereupon as quickly a very clear fountain flowed out and one beneficial for expelling sicknesses, which continues to flow without deficiency, and, what is more wonderful, although it is near the sea, it emits fresh water. These things being performed, the most blessed Illtud kneeling prayed to the Lord of heaven, saying, 'I beg of thee, Creator supreme, and Giver of all gifts, who confirmest thy gifts with increase, that on this shore may be the boundary of the sea, and that it return not to that place, where I have chosen the fixed seat of my dwelling. Let not hurt, let it not disturb, here may it rest, here may there continue a landing-place for ships.' Thus it happened as he asked, because that marshy land having become dry was fertile for agriculture, and what was not arable, the clergy had in meadow and fodder abundance for cattle. Then the elect servant of God returned, giving thanks to almighty God, and living quietly and prosperously, free from the disturbance, which through the power of God and the prayer found blameless of the most holy Illtud no longer plagued or hurt him, he himself saying words of this sort concerning the marvellous performance, 'No am I able to dwell here, I was desirous to go away, I do not wish it now. The sea will not disturb me; after the neighbourhood had been overwhelmed, it has receded. Wherefore I was very fearful; from henceforth there is no room for fear. I wish to build, wherefore I am not fearful.'

§ 14.

Of the complaints of the corn-filching birds held in custody by their scarers.

In the autumn, when the crops were ripening, birds began to destroy the corn of saint Illtud and to leave the ears almost empty. When he discovered this, saint Illtud grieved for his loss, and ordered his scholars to guard the corn every day in their turn by constantly casting stones throughout the whole day with a sling. Now the disciple Samson, when he was taking his turn, wishing from good will (or obedience) to fulfil his master's command, kept guard as best he could; nevertheless

I prevailed not to keep the corn safe and intact. He seeks divine counsel and help that he might confine the multitude of birds, not knowing how otherwise to defend the corn on account the swarm of destroyers. He consulted with himself, inspired by divine counsel, and found by reflexion what ought to effect it. It was given to him from heaven to drive the birds from the corn without their flying. They try to fly and are unable by any exertions. The kindly Samson, seeing this, compelled them to withdraw before him of their own will, like tame animals. Driven they came to the open barn door and entered; like horses or sheep they precede those that follow, like sheep or horses they become gentle as they progress. The birds remain in complete confinement held without a net. Divine power, which keeps the stars in their order, tamed them. They caw mournfully, hungry, they fast, they pour forth mournful songs in a merited prison. There was lamentation in this company for the liberty they sought, they repented of having so greatly wasted the corn. Illtud frees the multitudes grieved with their imprisonment. They injured him no more after the performance of these wonders.

§ 15.

Of the election of Samson to be a bishop and of the springing up of a fountain from his tears and of the conveyance of his body by divine command.

After this miracle had become known everywhere, messengers came from Letavia (that is, Lesser Britain, Brittany) to elect Samson, a most noble youth and blameless in all his life, and to appoint him when elected bishop of Dol, also to ask leave of his master Illtud for him to go, because of the tranquil confidence which he enjoyed amongst his countrymen, for at that time the aforesaid church needed an episcopal representative. He being asked was unable to refuse. Grieving and weeping he prepared to migrate with the messengers, though preferring to live in subjection under the master's rod than to enjoy pontifical honour in the altitude of an ecclesiastical see. Whilst he rested a little time in the upper part of the valley, talking with his teacher about many past affairs, dwelling on his last words for solace before parting from the society of his instructor,

he began to shed tears, until his tears fell to the ground in an excessive tearful flow, whence a fountain burst forth on the spot, and flowed out, running down as the flow of a river, which was called by the name of the same wondrous Samson. Also, on account of the extraordinary love which he had for his dearest teacher, he ordered that his body after death should come should be brought to the monastery of saint Illtud and buried in his general and delightful cemetery. These things being so done, they proceeded to Dubricius, bishop of the church of Llandaff, that from him he might receive the first ecclesiastical orders and the diaconate. And while he was being ordained, there appeared to the pontiff Dubricius and to the abbot Illtud a pigeon, whiter than snow, sitting (or standing) on the head of the young man at his ordination. After these things he sailed, ordained, to Letavia, and was elevated to the episcopal chair according to catholic custom. And after the appointed end of his life, his body was placed in a sarcophagus, which a strong wind put in motion and lifted up and conducted seawards with very swift movement by divine power. Then it came upon the waves, darting along like a flying coot, and descending touched land safe and sound, like a ship crossing, in Illtud's harbour (or creek). The Lord performed what he wished to accomplish, because he had promised concerning his body, to wit, that it should be conveyed and buried in that same cemetery. In the meantime sailors seeing and smelling the odoriferous sarcophagus, informed saint Illtud what wonderful thing they had seen. And he, remembering the last charge of his most beloved Samson respecting his body, wept and prayed and went hurriedly in sorrow to the sea harbour. Then the body was taken and honourably carried by the clergy, and buried in the midst of quadrangular stones standing upright in the cemetery, a stone cross being placed above and the insignia of a bishop inscribed below, whose soul rests free from future burning.

§ 16.

Of the visit of the wife of saint Illtud, and the loss of her sight, and its recovery through the same saint.

The wife formerly of the blessed Illtud, named Trinihid, the chastest of women, passed her life subject to chastity on account of separation from her husband, desiring no conjugal intercourse, so her mind strove, so was the bent of her intention, constant in prayer, temperate in speech, keen on every good work. Christ was consolation to her, Christ was nourishment, daily at the ninth hour she broke her fast on barley bread and water. She rejected courses of food, she tasted no sweet fare. Love of the holy Trinity was her sweetness, which she enjoyed inwardly. She liked mountain solitude, and elected to dwell there, there she built a dwelling, she founded an oratory, where most faithfully she prayed to the Lord Redeemer. She prayed constantly, being found blameless and irreprehensible in all her manner of life, remaining a nun, comforting innumerable widows and nuns and poor people in her charge. In the meantime she desired to visit saint Illtud, and, undertaking the journey, she visited him, when she saw the industrious digger, of muddy countenance owing to his constant delving; leanness too had attenuated the contours of his countenance. She sought from him sweet discourse, her request displeased him who heard it, being sought he returned no response, he did not wish to see her or to be seen, nor to hear her discourse or be heard. She beheld his mean garb, clothed as he was with goat's hair and skins, not as she had seen him formerly, a handsome soldier. Owing to her improper visit she lost her sight, she grieved heavily to have lost it deservedly. Nevertheless saint Illtud, being asked, implored the Lord's compassion that she might recover her former vision. His prayers being heard by God, she saw clearly; afterwards she returned corrected by such a correction. Nevertheless her countenance was not afterwards so fair as before, affected with spots and pallor, and pallid as though ill with fever. Therefore she remained in the aforesaid place, never again visiting saint Illtud, because she was unwilling to displease God and the most beloved of God.

§ 17.

Of the steward, Cyflym, who melted like wax before fire, because he had offended Illtud.

The steward of Meirchion king of the Glamorgan folk was a malevolent person, Cyflym by name, which in Latin means totus acutus, very acute, really living up to this which he was called. For most sharply he accused the king's subjects to king Meirchion in order that they might lose their goods; he protected none who ought to be protected. His stewardship was hateful to all, his whole life was abominable. He frequently displeased the abbot Illtud, he also annoyed his clergy. Many things unjustly snatched away by him he feigned to have been demanded by his master, the latter being ignorant of the matter and not having given the order. He was angry with all, and all spoke ill of him; he a single individual, whom his own evil deeds condemned, was most harsh against all. He exalted himself by controlling the bishop's office; nay rather he kept himself back, because he loved villainy. Yet the man exalted by evil doing is restrained and thrust back, remaining in danger. Dangerous was his governance while seeking to rule; he governed not whilst he himself overthrew those whom he first ought to govern and direct. He deserved, therefore, to be overthrown whilst he caused the saint to be afflicted, who, when afflicted by the malevolent man was pacifically courteous. But God, the supreme avenger, caused him to melt like wax softened and melted by heat of fire, and so to cease from his malice, he not appearing any more, for he had wished the holy and most free Illtud to become tributary and to send his tributes to the king's fortress. He a man who enjoyed greatest liberty was unwilling to suffer these things of his own accord, or to allow so great an injury or to be angry, but poured forth diligent prayers that God might grant pardon to the malevolent man. For he strove to fulfill the gospel precept which thus enjoins, 'Pray for those who persecute and speak evil of you', and again, 'Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake.'

§ 18.

Of the flight of the man of God to a cave owing to king Meirchion's persecution.

The sacrilegious steward having melted away, king Meirchion was moved with excessive wrath, wishing to kill the innocent man Illtud, and to destroy the place and its clergy, as he greatly repented having permitted the occupying of the waste, for he preferred rather the beasts to dwell there than that the elect servants of God should do service in honour of the holy and undivided Trinity. He speedily takes arms, he bids his soldiers arm themselves, and armed they proceed together to the holy place and endeavour to take revenge both on the abbot and the occupants of the place. These things being heard, the most blessed Illtud shunned the malevolent troop, shunning both it and the excited people, who caused hindrance to his prayers. He wished to shun them, going afar off on the earth, and feared to be sought and found, and being found to be brought back again unwillingly to his abbacy. He seeks everywhere for secret security, where he might hide his face. After inquiring he arrives at length at the bank of the river Ewenny, where he saw a very secret cave. Seeing it, he entered, and occupied it for the space of one year and for the space of three days and nights in addition. The whole night he lay on a cold stone, as he desired, so fulfilling such a penance as he had imposed on himself, as if he were saying, 'This stone for a bed is placed beneath my breast, this is my delight, I will lie down in accordance with the divine will; pleasant will be the blessed reward which will come to one who is blessed, a reward laid up in heaven for me, when I shall reach it.'

§ 19.

Of the heavenly food in the cave, and the general lamentation after Illtud, and of the bell sent to him by saint David which sounded at God's direction, and of his return from cave to monastery.

The blessed Illtud prayed then incessantly, fasting daily. Every ninth hour there was sent to him from heaven one loaf of barley bread, and one portion of fish, wherewith he was refreshed. After a temperate meal he visited a neighbouring

well, drawing water for himself in the hollow of his hands, as Paul and Antony, the first hermits, performed their drinking. Then he returned to the cave, guarding against being seen by anyone at his entering. He was diligently looked for in woods and in forests, and in the retreats of deep valleys, and was not found after assiduous searchings. As long as he lay hid so, the powerful were distressful, not knowing whither he had gone, the poor and the widows mourned miserably, exclaiming, 'Who will be our protection? Who with overflowing heart will dispel our poverty? He gave bountifully, to no one did he refuse his substance. Affectionately he administered assistance to all who asked aught of him, for indeed he was the general stay of all the needy. He grieved with those who grieve, he rejoiced with those who rejoice. Incessantly he sowed apostolic precepts, multiplying the seed a hundredfold. To those who were to be punished and to those who had suffered punishment he was a frequent source of relief, redeeming them by prayer and fasting and bounteous gifts. If he still lives in this world, he is held fast in a subterranean prison. If he has quitted this life, may he live, as we do wish, in eternal repose. While such things and many others were being said, a certain wayfarer passed by, who was a messenger of Gildas the historian, carrying a brazen bell made by the same Gildas, that he might bear it for presentation to saint Dewi (that is, David), the bishop, in memory of past fellowship and love. As he passed by the cave which was near the public road, the bell sounded, being moved without human agency. Saint Illtud, hearing the sweet sound, came up to the person who was carrying it, and swung it thrice being pleased with its very sweet melodiousness, asking the man where he was going, or where he was carrying that beautiful thing, superior to gold. He answering says, 'I go and am carrying this bell to saint Dewi (or David) at the bidding of the renowned Gildas.' Having thus spoken, he went on his way, and arriving at the Valley of Mynyw, presented the bishop with the gift as mentioned. Being presented with the bell, he shook it; it rendered no sound with the motion. The bishop, wondering at that marvel, asked the messenger whether it had been moved or tested by anyone along the way during his messengership. He being asked told

him what had happened as above, and the bishop believed it to be truly told, saying, 'I know that our master, Illtud, wished to possess it for the sweetness of its sound, but he was unwilling to ask for it, hearing that it was to be sent to me by the donor, Gildas. God is unwilling that I should have this. Return without delay to the cave, and restore to saint Illtud the thing meant for him which he desired.' The messenger returned to Illtud, and executed the bishop's order, leaving there the occupant lonely, were it not for the frequent visitation of angels. Afterwards the messenger mentioned in the monastery what he had seen and what had happened to him. When these things were heard, the monks joyfully went to the aforesaid place, and there they found their most beloved abbot. The brethren rejoice in the discovery of their most pious abbot, and he too rejoices, knowing that he could not be found nor have returned except by the divine will. All their compatriots assembled, giving thanks for the return of their master, saying such things as these, 'Heretofore were we sad, now are we joyful and secure from every adversity and peril. We fear none besides God who is to be feared in this refuge. No one will dare to oppose us under so great a rule. Kings and princes will obey the virtuous abbot; this monastery will be first among the monasteries of this pagus, cantref. Our joys lay hid in a secret cave, they do not spread throughout our borders without past sorrow. That cave was not dark but full of light, for while Illtud occupied it, it ceased not to shine with angelic splendour.'

§ 20.

Of the most vile Cyfygydd, the steward of king Meirchion, whom marshy ground swallowed up.

In the meantime he ruled his abbacy peaceably, admonishing the brethren and all in general to true religion, praying and fasting in the proper time of fasting. Nevertheless a certain steward, Cyfygydd by name, began to oppose and to offend the saint and clergy very frequently by enclosing pastures and very often by impounding cattle and herds. He used to hold cattle for three days, unwilling through perversity to take bail from their owners. When they were let loose, leanness appeared in

their flanks, nor is it a wonder, however thin they were, after a three days fast. Therefore Illtud, although very frequently hurt by the most injurious steward, was yet unwilling to curse him, but rather he was wont to bless him in return for his frequent persecutions and injuries, praying that he might be reformed and converted from iniquity, lest he might end his life, being most vile, in the way of malice. But the supreme Avenger in heaven, seeing that he was unwilling to amend what wrong he had done, caused that a marshy land should swallow him up, and that his vile spirit should enter torments worthy of his acts. That same marsh is till now apparent to human sight as a sign of the villainy of an ill doer for his ill deed.

§ 21.

Of the stirring of the wrath of king Meirchion the mad, whom the earth swallowed up.

King Meirchion, full of madness, hearing that such misfortune had happened in his loss of his trusty steward, grieved, and being infuriated desired to rush against saint Illtud either to kill him or to expel him outright from his dominion. He puts on his arms like a warlike soldier in battle array. From his fortress he rides quickly to the gate of the monastery. Whilst he remained so prepared to perpetrate homicide, as he had often done previously, the earth absorbed the malevolent man, so that he no more appeared in the sight of his household. And for such huge ill deeds that he had done, his spirit went to be punished in that place where the souls of the unrighteous are punished without any remedy. After some interval of time saint Illtud was burdened by the multitude of people who came to him, and hindered in his prayers, for which reason he went to the cave of Llwynarth, remaining there the space of three years in vigils and fastings, receiving every ninth hour food for himself from heaven brought to him by an angel and placed on a rock within, where he saw a marvel worthy of veneration.

§ 22.

Of the miracle seen in the cave at Llwynarth.

One day as he was sitting at the mouth of the cave, he saw a skiff coming and approaching the shore. When it had reached the shore, he saw two very honourable men in the skiff rowing, and one altar supported by the divine will above the form of the skiff. Saint Illtud went to meet it, uttering words of welcome with gladness. And they after a little conversation gave the sweet smelling body of a certain most holy man to saint Illtud, revealing his name, and after revealing they forbade him ever to divulge it. And so, the body having been consigned to the blessed Illtud, they returned. These things done, he took the body and the altar which had been above the form of the most holy man, and buried it honourably in the cave, the altar being placed over the buried body held up by the divine will as it had been before, by means of which numerous miracles were performed on account of its sanctity.

§ 23.

Of two robbers transformed into two stones.

One night two robbers from the district of Brycheiniog stole a herd of swine belonging to saint Illtud. Driving them from their sty, they proceeded to woody places. Judging they were keeping to the right path they deviated from it, wandering all night long, until they returned with the herd, when dawn was breaking, to the same place which they had left. The herd, however, being fatigued rested until the third hour, whilst the swine-herd wondered at the prolonged sleep of the swine. After having taken rest the herd proceeded, as had been its wont, to its food. When night approached, the herd returned to their sty, when the same most wicked ones, of whom we have before said, came again, and driving the swine from the same place departed, straying as previously to a distant mountain, and were out of their course, as inexperienced persons and as if they had never been informed in the knowledge of their journey. At length wandering about they returned unwittingly to the aforesaid place, for it then happened to them in the same manner as before. But the heavenly King and supreme Corrector, seeing that those evil doers would

not return from their ill-will, changed their bodies into two stones, and let their spirits, as they had deserved, go to infernal torments. This memorable miracle is credited by posterity, for even till now there is seen the place of the sty, which is called by Illtud's name. Till now too are seen the immovable stones called by the name 'Two Robbers'. Believe thou the robbers were changed into hard stones, deservedly remaining so, a witness to their iniquity. On account of the herd of swine the bodies of the two were changed; lifeless they continue beneath snow, beneath rain, beneath hail.

§ 24.

Of the three granaries, whose abundance of corn was conveyed from Britannia to Llydaw, which formerly was called Armorica. The most blessed Illtud, wishing to visit the Church of saint Michael in Mons Tumba, having in his possession three barns full of corn, ordered his stewards before his departure that they should cause all the corn to be thrashed, and when thrashed to be placed in granaries, and reserved against his return from his inheritance Llydaw, that is, Minor Britannia, Brittany. The master's order was obeyed; moreover, his desire to visit was fulfilled. Now after his visitation he began to return; in returning he saw men afflicted almost to death with hunger, and, unless he relieved them, soon to die. He was afflicted at the sight of such need as this; he felt for them, he besought the heavenly Helper to render help. His prayers being heard in the heavenly hall, the aforementioned corn was conveyed from on high, as he had wished it in his prayers to be carried, and was afterwards found in a harbour of Llydaw on the shore, whence the whole of Llydaw (that is, Britannia Minor, Brittany) fed itself, and moreover, sowed its cultivated lands. They magnify and render thanks to their helper, by whose prayers they had been defended from dangerous famine. Then he returned by sail over the Gallic sea, all the people standing on the shore and unanimously commending a prosperous passage. A more fortunate arrival there never was in Llydaw. The citizens could have wished that he departed not, but that he remained in his fatherland. Nevertheless he himself willed not to remain in answer to such

great desires, but chose to dwell in Britanma although an exile from his paternal stock. Now when the time had approached, wherein the Lord had decreed to remunerate the labours of his favourite, the blessed Illtud, with the hundredfold recompense, the promise to his elect, he returned again, as we think by divine impulse to his native soil, to wit, Llydaw, which we call Minor Britannia, Brittany, and there at the monastery of Dol, his days being determined for him beforehand by his own Creditor, who has fixed for mortals the limits, which they will not be able to pass, his virtues and sanctity being accomplished, renowned for his miracles and celebrated for his signs and wonders, commending his body to the ground and his spirit of a truth to the Lord, departing from this mournful life on the eighth day before the Ides of November, and being born to a lasting and celestial existence, and rejoicing to be about to live for ever, he passed over to the Lord, to whom is honour, power, and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

§ 25.

Of the booty that was returned and the similarity of horses.

Edgar, king of the English, moved by raging fury, moved his army on account of the disobedience of the Glamorgan folk and led it to that same region, violating the territories of the saints and their very churches, and leaving not a homestead inviolate throughout the whole of that country. And so it was that in this invasion the bell of saint Illtud was taken away from his church, and carried off by a certain looter to English soil. Also, whilst the army was returning, it was placed and tied about the neck of one particular horse, which on the Golden Mount took the lead in the royal and equestrian herd. Golden Mount that place was called, namely, on account of an assembly there of people standing in the army who glittered in golden raiment and gilded arms. At the hour of noon, whilst the king rested in a field-tent put up on a plain, and the immense booty was being divided, it seemed to the king that some terrible soldier had pierced his breast with a spear, and after the piercing he was seen of none. Grieving sorely he revealed what he had seen, whilst all denied that they had seen what he assured them was seen by himself.

Wherefore he knew that he was culpable and a violent plunderer. Full of dread he bade his sacrilegious army to restore to God and to the most holy Illtud all the plunder, promising thereafter amendment, and in honour of the same saint he built a church, and to those serving in the church he granted the territory in which it stood. This amendment, however, profited his spirit, for he departed from this life on the ninth day as punishment for his wickedness. In the meantime the aforesaid horse, carrying the bell, went forward towards the west in the presence of all who there remained and none compelling him, whilst the whole equestrian herd followed the sweet melodiousness of the bell, which was wonderful and admirable to one who heard and saw so great a miracle. More wonderful than this is that he was able to cross the Severn; he came to this bank which he sought without loss. The courageous troop of horses follows the sound; it loves to hear its call full of sweetness. Then speedily along beaches, mountains, and woods it reaches where was the way to Glamorgan, all the horses hearing and following the sweet sound. And so when the horses had reached the bank of the river Taff, the sound of the bell was heard by the clergy. Whereupon the clergy are merry, and come to meet the horse, which went before and bore forward that same little bell as far as the door of the Church of saint Illtud. When he had brought it, he placed it down on the spot, being loosened roughly from his neck, and it fell on a stone, and by the fall it received a fracture of one part, which is shown to this day in remembrance of this extraordinary miracle. Then is glorious psalmody sung in the choir; how great were the joys and laudations on account of this miracle! Of the innumerable canons each had one horse, but for the horse which excelled the rest with difficulty was the quarrelling among the canons brought to an end. Wherefore each single one was saying, 'That one will be mine', whilst another was answering, 'I will not allow such a choice to be made.' A third was urging, saying, 'Not so of your own will shall you have your wish.' This contention persisted without agreement till the morrow, almost giving rise to the murder of many. On the second day, however, of the coming of the equestrian herd, the clergy came to the herd of horses, wishing to distribute them equally and peaceably.

And when they were dividing them, they perceived that all the horses were equal, and that not one excelled the rest, as they had observed previously. Then the division was concluded agreeably, and the clergy were pacified by the peaceful distribution. By such means, for the love of Illtud, God sent back the stolen bell, and the whole of the plunder to the most sacred church of the same.

§ 26.

Of the victory of the clergy of saint Illtud over lawless men and in the fortress of Meirchion.

When William, king of the English, was reigning throughout Britain, and prince Robert fitz Hamon was ruling Glamorgan, the Northern Britons began zealously to resist the king, and afterwards in common and firm confederacy with them the Southern Britons. They wasted and burnt villages and towns. The foe came from the woods to injure their English-born and Norman-born fellow-countrymen. They laid waste and returned to distant mountains and to woods with immense plunder. In the meantime an army was put in motion by the Welsh of about three thousand armed horsemen and footsoldiers to waste and burn Glamorgan. When this was heard, the clergy of saint Illtud with the inhabitants of their district, on account of the hostile attack, fortified themselves by means of a ditch and by means of a hedge firmly made above the sea shore, and so fortified they entered, endeavouring to protect their wealth by defence. This being done, the incautious foe came by night before the gate, for if they had come by day, they would have had success. Therefore a nocturnal fight began between the two battle-fronts, until many fell dead from the hurling of stones and the vibration of spears, and others, very many, wounded, suffered greatly, groaning in the contest. Whilst such things were being done, thick sparks frequently appeared in the air between the church of saint Illtud and the fortress of king Meirchion, near which was the battle. They shone intensely like lightning, to protect the catholic people; angelic signs they appeared to be. The more the two battle-fronts attacked, the more ardently did the fiery figures blaze in the upper air. The refuge of God and of the

most holy Illtud was violated, wherefore three thousand were overcome before the fortress by a smaller number. Unarmed women administered arms to the combatants; weak boys were not inactive within. Hostile shields were broken by stones cast at them; terrific outcries were poured forth by the enemy; few were wanting bloody countenances. Divine power was present there, when the paucity of the fighters within put to flight and overcame three thousand. Smooth might the ascent to triumph have become, but brave Illtud granted no ascent. If they had attacked by daylight, they would have ascended most smoothly, but the supreme Light and the true Light was unwilling to allow this. There is no virtue or vigour where wickedness abides; this was clearly proved, when fled the army of Gwynedd (Snowdonia).

Here it ends.

