

Gerald of Wales, Journey Through Wales, Book 1, Chapter 7.

On the following morning, the business of the cross was preached at Llandaff. The English standing on one side, and the Welsh on the other, many persons of each nation took the cross, and we remained there that night with William bishop of that place, a discreet and good man.

The word Llandaff signifies the church situated upon the river Taff, and is now called the church of St. Teilo, after a former bishop of that see. The archbishop having celebrated mass early in the morning, before the high altar of the cathedral, we immediately pursued our journey via the little cell of Ewenny to the noble Cistercian monastery of Margam. This monastery, under the direction of Cynan, a learned and prudent abbot, was at this time more celebrated for its charitable deeds than any other of that order in Wales. On this account, it is an undoubted fact, that, as a reward for that abundant charity which the monastery had always, in times of need, exercised towards strangers and poor persons, in a season of approaching famine, their corn and provisions were perceptibly, by divine assistance, increased, like the widow's cruse of oil by the means of the prophet Elijah.

About the time of its foundation, a young man of those parts, by birth a Welshman, having claimed and endeavoured to apply to his own use certain lands which had been given to the monastery, by the instigation of the devil set on fire the best barn belonging to the monks, which was filled with corn; but, immediately becoming mad, he ran about the country in a distracted state, nor ceased raving until he was seized by his parents and bound. Having burst his bonds, and tired out his keepers, he came the next morning to the gate of the monastery, incessantly howling out that he was inwardly burnt by the influence of the monks, and thus in a few days expired, uttering the most miserable complaints. It happened also, that a young man was struck by another in the guests' hall; but on the following day, by divine vengeance, the aggressor was, in the presence of the fraternity, killed by an enemy, and his lifeless body was laid out in the same spot in the hall where the sacred house had been violated.

In our time too, in a period of scarcity, while great multitudes of poor were daily crowding before the gates for relief, by the unanimous consent of the brethren, a ship was sent to Bristol to purchase corn for charitable purposes. The vessel, delayed by contrary winds, and not returning (but rather affording an opportunity for the miracle), on the very day when there would have been a total deficiency of corn, both for the poor and the convent, a field near the monastery was found suddenly to ripen, more than a month before the usual time of harvest: thus, divine Providence supplied the brotherhood and the numerous poor with sufficient nourishment until autumn. By these and other signs of virtues, the place accepted by God began to be generally esteemed and venerated.

It came to pass also in our days, during the period when the four sons of Caradoc ap Iestin, and nephews of prince Rhys by his sister, namely, Morgan, Maredudd, Owain, and Cadwallon, bore rule for their father in those parts, that Cadwallon, through inveterate

malice, slew his brother Owain. But divine vengeance soon overtook him; for on his making a hostile attack on a certain castle, he was crushed to pieces by the sudden fall of its walls: and thus, in the presence of a numerous body of his own and his brother's forces, suffered the punishment which his barbarous and unnatural conduct had so justly merited.

Another circumstance which happened here deserves notice. A greyhound belonging to the aforesaid Owain, large, beautiful, and curiously spotted with a variety of colours, received seven wounds from arrows and lances, in the defence of his master, and on his part did much injury to the enemy and assassins. When his wounds were healed, he was sent to king Henry II. by William earl of Gloucester, in testimony of so great and extraordinary a deed. A dog, of all animals, is most attached to man, and most easily distinguishes him; sometimes, when deprived of his master, he refuses to live, and in his master's defence is bold enough to brave death; ready, therefore, to die, either with or for his master. I do not think it superfluous to insert here an example which Suetonius gives in his book on the nature of animals, and which Ambrosius also relates in his Exameron.

A man, accompanied by a dog, was killed in a remote part of the city of Antioch, by a soldier, for the sake of plunder. The murderer, concealed by the darkness of the morning, escaped into another part of the city; the corpse lay unburied; a large concourse of people assembled; and the dog, with bitter howlings, lamented his master's fate. The murderer, by chance, passed that way, and, in order to prove his innocence, mingled with the crowd of spectators, and, as if moved by compassion, approached the body of the deceased. The dog, suspending for a while his moans, assumed the arms of revenge; rushed upon the man, and seized him, howling at the same time in so dolorous a manner, that all present shed tears. It was considered as a proof against the murderer, that the dog seized him from amongst so many, and would not let him go; and especially, as neither the crime of hatred, envy, or injury, could possibly, in this case, be urged against the dog. On account, therefore, of such a strong suspicion of murder (which the soldier constantly denied), it was determined that the truth of the matter should be tried by combat. The parties being assembled in a field, with a crowd of people around, the dog on one side, and the soldier, armed with a stick of a cubit's length, on the other, the murderer was at length overcome by the victorious dog, and suffered an ignominious death on the common gallows.

