

XVII.

DEDICATION OF ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH.

Dearest men, the honour and the blessedness of the festival of the high and holy archangel, admonisheth and remindeth us that we should say somewhat concerning the blessed memory of him who is to be honoured and glorified throughout the world in his church, consecrated both by his own work and by his own name. And thus it first appeared and was made known to men. She [the church] then shineth not in the beauty of gold and silver, but in especial privileges, through divine power, standeth glorified. She is also in outward appearance of a bad hue, but within she is honoured with everlasting virtue. It may easily be that the holy archangel should come from heaven and should be mindful of men's infirmity, so that he condescended himself to found and to make her (church) with his own hands, so that mortal men might there yearn for the citizenship on high and for the everlasting fellowship. The holy Church of St. Michael is situate upon the high summit of a mountain, and appeared in the form of a cave (*or* cell). The church (stands) upon the borders of the land of Campania. Then in the neighbourhood towards the sea named Adriatic, there is a very famous city (situate on the hill Garganus), called Sepontus. Then measured from the city's walls up to the high summit of the high archangel's church, of which I previously spoke, there are twelve miles; and she (the church) stands flourishing in bliss and in joy. The same holy book, that was found and discovered in the church, first showed and made known this church. It is recorded therein that there was in the city a certain noble man called Garganus, prosperous in wealth before the world, who bestowed upon the hill the same name by which he was called. The man possessed great wealth;

when that these endless hosts and innumerable multitude of neat and manifold cattle of the wealthy man increased and flourished to such an extent that he had with his flocks spread and extended as far as the mountain-plain; then it happened that a bull despised the company of the other cattle and abode solitary in the desert, and at last returned [not] to the herd and to the cattle and to their lair. The bull despised the drove of the herdsman and abode in the wilderness, at the door of a certain cavern. When the master was informed that the bull in such arrogance had gone as far as the desert, he was enraged because the bull, as it seemed to him, had insanelly gone over the spacious mountain. Then he gathered together a great host of his men, and turned his course through the woods and sought for the proud bull; then at last he found it on the summit of the hill, and saw that it stood at the door of a cave. Then was he greatly moved with anger, because it had gone about so madly and had behaved so arrogantly. Then he took his bow and bent it and then with poisoned arrow began to shoot towards where he saw the bull stand. Then as soon as he let fly the arrow there came a very great gust of wind in his face so that the arrow was immediately turned back and shot that same wealthy man by whom the arrow was previously sent, so that he died forthwith. When the citizens saw that, they became greatly terrified because of the marvel, for such a wonderful thing they had never seen before. And they durst not then approach the place where they saw the bull stand. There was at that same time, in that city of theirs called Sepontus, a holy bishop. Then they visited him and told him of the marvel and asked his instructions as to what they were to do about it. Then he instructed them, and counselled them that they should fast for three days, and desire of St. Michael that God would make known what was concealed and kept secret from men. When they had done [as was bidden them] in fasting, psalm-singing and in alms, then at night there appeared to that same bishop the high and the holy archangel Michael, and he meekly and kindly spoke to him, thus saying, 'Worldly and wisely ye acted when ye sought of God in heaven that

which was hidden from men on earth. Know thou also that the man who was shot with his own arrow, was so by my will. And my name is Michael. I am the archangel of heaven's King, and I ever stand in his presence. I tell thee now that I especially love this place here on earth, and I have chosen it above all others, and will also show by all those tokens that befall there that I am especially the creator and guardian of that place.' When that was told and made known to the citizens, they, very glad and rejoicing, with their bishop visited the place; and after their manner they prayed earnestly to the living God and to the holy archangel Michael. And to God they humbly offered gifts. And they saw there two doors in the church, of which the south door was somewhat greater in form. And as yet they were not able to pass over the cave, as the path where they should go was precipitous, before they had enlarged and completed the ascent. But each day they were occupied earnestly in their prayers. At the same time the Neapolitans their neighbours as yet were erring in heathen customs and served devils. Then they began to challenge the citizens of Benevento and Sepontus, as these two provinces were named, to single combat, and despised scornfully their land and made them no amends for it, but arrogant hostility and threatening. Then their holy bishop instructed and advised them that they should perform a three days' fast and manifold alms and holy psalms; and that they should entreat protection and help from the archangel Michael, as the most faithful guardian, that they might frustrate and overcome the machination of their enemies. Then, at that same time, the heathens shamefully and wickedly invited their false gods with various idols to aid them. Then at the same time the blessed angel Michael appeared in a vision to their bishop, and promised them future victory, and said to them that their prayers were heard of God; and he instructed them that they in the morning, at the third hour, should prepare to set forward against their enemies. And he also promised them that he himself would be a spectator of their proceedings and would be there

with them for their succour. They then, very glad and joyful in the morning, proceeded against the heathen. And they knew by the angel's promises both of their victory, and of the flight and destruction of the heathens. Then immediately at the beginning of the fight the mountain on which they should fight was overtaken with horror and dread; and a fierce storm arose from the mountain, and the summit of the mountain was all overhung with a dark mist. Then flew the lightning like fiery arrows against the heathens so thickly that they in no wise were able to look towards it because of the lightning's blaze. Then was fulfilled what the prophet had foretold. And he praised the Lord and thus said, '*Qui facit angelos suos spiritus et ministros suos ignem urentem.*' 'Sometimes the same God sendeth his angels' spirits as messengers, at other times he sendeth [them] by a flame of fire.' Then the heathen people fled, and in part the lightning killed them, and in part the Christians harassed them with their weapons, and overwhelmed them, until they had severely vanquished the Neapolitans, and the heathen folk who left their city half dead, and had destroyed those whom the dangers and distresses had spared. Then was it manifested to us Christian people that the angel of God had come for succour and for protection; and forthwith all meekly did obeisance to the King of kings, to Christ himself. Then all the heathen folk yielded to them, and lived according to the lore of Christians and received baptism; and they truly perceived that God's angel had come there for a help and protection to the Christian people. And while the Christian folk were well considering this, then saw they and reckoned that there were also six hundred men killed by the lightning and the fiery arrows alone, besides those whom they had killed and slain with their weapons. They then, thus triumphant and crowned with great bliss, went home and forthwith to Almighty God and to the archangel Michael, at the holy church, they meekly and joyfully gave thanks for the victory which they had obtained. Then found they also before the north-door of the church, in the marble-stone, as it were, a man's footsteps, just as if a man had stood there; and the footsteps were plain and visible in the stone as if they were impressed on wax.

Then they perceived plainly that the blessed Michael was present there for a help to them, whilst they were at the battle; and that he himself had ordered the acknowledgment (sign) of the victory and made it known to them in the deep sleep. Upon the stone they at once built a church, and therein sumptuously made and set up an altar; and with great joy afterwards they honoured the place, and those who had great love and belief worshipped at the church. And a great fear also came upon the people; and they were in great anguish of mind and in much doubt as to what they durst do concerning it, whether they should consecrate the church, or what might be the will of God and of the holy artificer who made it (the church) with his own hands. They then at first found it advisable to raise a church to the east of the place and to consecrate it to St. Peter the holy disciple of Christ. And therein they put two altars and consecrated one of them to St. Mary, Christ's mother, and the other to St. John the Baptist, Christ's baptismal father (baptizer). Then their venerable bishop proposed a happy and successful plan to them and advised them to send to Rome forthwith to the pope, and that they should inquire and ask of the pope and the episcopal court what seemed advisable to them with regard to this matter, whether they durst consecrate the church in any other wise. The blessed pope then sent back this message and said these words: 'If it be man's duty that he should consecrate the church, then is it most fitting that it should take place on the day in which victory was given them; (but) if the sacred guardian were pleased with or preferred ought else concerning the holy place, then is it altogether best to find out what his will may be with respect to that day. And when the time approaches, then let both of us two with our citizens make a four day's fast, and earnestly entreat the holy Trinity that It (the Trinity) would produce and bring forward the favour—that It would indicate, for men to follow, that wondrous token which It first displayed to men through the holy archangel.' Then they all meekly performed their four days' fast, as the eminent bishop advised them. Then on the night in which they had completed their fast, St. Michael appeared in a vision to the bishop and said unto him, 'Ye need be under no anxiety to

consecrate the church, for I have made it and I have consecrated it. Now enter ye therein and wait for me, and believe me indeed to be the guardian of the place, and visit it often in prayers. To-morrow you must sing masses therein, and this people according to custom must go to the Sacrament. I, on my part, will appear by a solemn token, and manifest it, that I myself have hallowed and consecrated it (the church). Then soon on the morrow, rejoicing greatly because of the answer, with much unity of prayers and with offerings of holy psalms, they came thither and all went into the church. On the threshold coming out of the porch-door it was evident that the tracks (which I previously said were first found in the marble-stone,) had first commenced in an outward direction. This church with the portico might contain and hold some five hundred men. And then there was seen somewhat towards the middle of the south wall the venerable altar. It was covered and spread over with a crimson woven pall. That house was made corner-wise or oblong, not quite after the custom of men's work, so that the walls should be straight, but it appeared rather like a cavern; and frequently the stones as from a cliff steeply projected. The roof also was of various heights—in one place a man might hardly reach it with his hand, and in another easily touch it with his head. I therefore believe that the Archangel of our Lord much more required and loved purity of heart than the adornment of the stones. The knoll was then known as it now is—the hill is large on the outside; and here and there it is overgrown with rimy wood; other parts are covered with green pasture. And after that the holy psalms and masses were finished, they then with great joy and bliss, and with the angel's blessing, returned to their houses. The bishop then appointed them good singers and mass-priests, and manifold church ministers, who ever afterwards should daily in proper order carry on the worship. There was no man, however, who durst ever come into the church at night time. But at daybreak, after it had dawned, they assembled therein for psalmody. There was also from the same stone of the church-roof at

the north-side of the altar a very pleasant and clear stream issuing, used by those who still dwelt in that place. By this piece of water was a glass vessel, hung on a silver chain, which received this pleasant fluid. And it was the custom of this people, when they had gone to the Sacrament, that they by steps should ascend to the glass vessel and there take and taste the heavenly fluid. It was very pleasant in taste and wholesome to the inside. This was also marvellous, that many men with fever-sickness and with various other infirmities through taste of this fluid should at once be made whole. Also in other ways innumerable ailments of men were often and frequently healed; and manifold miracles similar to these there were, and still are seen and manifested, but most frequently on that day which is his (St. Michael's) festival and commemoration. Then from the surrounding provinces come the people, and we must believe and know assuredly that manifold and various diseases are healed there, and the (arch-)angel's power and miracles are there revered, and most often shown on that day (i.e. St. Michael's); according as St. Paul said, '*Qui ad ministrum summis.*' Angels are as ministering spirits, sent hither into the world by God, to those who with might and main merit from God the eternal kingdom; so that they (the angels) should be a help to those who shall constantly contend against the accursed spirits. But let us now intreat the archangel St. Michael, and the nine orders of the holy angels, that they be our aid against hell-fiends. They (the angels) were the holy ones ready to receive men's souls. As St. Paul was looking towards the northern region of the earth, from whence all waters pass down, he saw above the water a hoary stone; and north of the stone had grown woods very rimy. And there were dark mists; and under the stone was the dwelling place of monsters and execrable creatures. And he saw hanging on the cliff on the icy woods, many black souls with their hands bound; and the devils in likeness of monsters were seizing them

like greedy wolves; and the water under the cliff beneath was black. And between the cliff and the water there were about twelve miles, and when the twigs brake, then down went the souls who hung on the twigs and the monsters seized them. These were the souls of those who in this world wickedly sinned and would not cease from it before their life's end. But let us now bid St. Michael earnestly to bring our souls into bliss, where they may rejoice without end in eternity. Amen.

XVIII.

FESTIVAL OF ST. MARTIN.

Dearest men, we may in some few words speak to you of the honorable birth and the holy life and death of the blessed man St. Martin, which we now at this present time are celebrating. He was very dear to God on account of his works. He first came into the world in the land of Pannonia, in the town of Sabaria. He was, nevertheless, brought up in the city of Ticino in Italy. In the sight of the world he was of very noble and good birth, but yet his parents, father and mother, were both heathens. His father was first a king's servant (thane), and at last rose to be chief of the king's servants (thanes). Then of necessity was St. Martin in his youth associated with the king's thanes, first in the days of Constantine, and afterwards in those of the emperor Julius. He was not willingly engaged in a worldly occupation; but he soon in his youth much more loved the service of God than the idle vanities of this world. When he was ten years old, and his parents put him to, and taught him, a temporal occupation, then he fled to the church of God, and entreated to be christened, that the first part of his endeavours and of his life might be turned towards belief and baptism. And he was during his whole life wonderfully busy about