

person of whom these inquiries are to be made is ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἡγούμενος, by whom, the editor suggests, he probably means the Delphic Apollo.

The sixth letter is without superscription. If it were not rash to hazard a conjecture, we would suggest that it may have been addressed to Theodora or to the priestess Callixena of Letter XXI. It contains expressions of gratitude to the gods and to the person addressed (a lady) for gifts and assurances of good-will.

These six letters are followed by several fragments which almost coincide with passages in the received text, but have several variant readings. These variations are very numerous in the copy of the eighth Oration (to Sallust). There are several differences also in proper names. The Eumenius of Letter XXV., Julian's fellow-student, to whom, from barbaric Gaul, he wrote a somewhat envious letter of advice as to his studies, becomes in this version *Ammonius*. The unknown Amerius, to whom Julian wrote Letter LV., to console him on the death of his young and virtuous wife, becomes *Himerius, Præfect of Egypt*. Was this the same as the sophist Himerius? We should also like to know whether he was the successor of the præfect Ecdicius, the recipient of Julian's instructions as to the banishment of Athanasius, the safe disposal of the library of George, and the encouragement of the art of music. (Hertlein, Letters V. IX. L. LVL.)

Alice Gardner.

THE HOUSE OF ETHELWULF.

ONE of the most puzzling episodes in early English history is the conspiracy of Ethelbald against his father, at his return from Rome. 'He travelled back to his country,' says Asser, 'bringing with him Judith, the daughter of Charles, king of the Franks. Meanwhile, however, while king Ethelwulf stayed so long¹ time beyond sea, an infamy against the custom of all Christians arose on the western side of Selwood. For King Ethelbald, the son of King Ethelwulf, and Alstan, bishop of the church of Sherborne; Eanwulf, also, alderman of Somersetshire, are reported to have conspired that King Ethelwulf, on his return from Rome, might never be received back in the kingdom. This misfortune, unheard of in all former ages, very many impute to the bishop and alderman only, by whose counsel they say this was done. Many also ascribe it to the king's insolence; for that king was obstinate, both in this matter and in many other perversities, as we have heard by the report of some men, which also the event showed of that which followed.²

'For as he returned from Rome, the aforesaid son of King Ethelwulf, with all his counsellors, or rather conspirators, endeavoured to accomplish so great a crime as to drive back the king from his own kingdom: which neither God suffered to be so done, nor the nobles of all Saxony³ agreed to. For lest there should be incurable danger to Saxony, while father and son

¹ This must be the meaning, though the word is *tantillum*.

² Viz. his unlawful marriage.

³ I.e. the English kingdom as regarded by a Welshman—not Wessex, as distinct from the Jutish Kent.

made war—yea, lest with the whole nation rebelling against both the internal disaster should daily increase more cruelly and more bloodily—by the unutterable kindness of the father, and assent of all the nobles, the kingdom, united before, is divided between the father and the son, and the eastern parts are assigned to the father, the western, on the contrary, to the son. For where the father by a just judgment ought to have reigned, there reigned the unrighteous and obstinate son : for the western part of Saxony was always of higher rank than the eastern.

'When, therefore, King Ethelwulf arrived from Rome, the whole of that nation, as was meet, so rejoiced at the coming of their elder,⁴ that, if he allowed, they desired to drive out his obstinate son Ethelbald, with all his counsellors, from any share in the kingdom. But he, as we have said, with excessive kindness, and following prudent counsel, not to bring the kingdom into peril would not have it so done. And Judith, the daughter of King Charles, whom he had received from her father, he bade sit by him on the royal throne without any dispute and hatred of his nobles, even to the end of his life ; contrary to the perverse custom of that nation,' where the rank of queen had been abolished, in detestation of the crimes of Edburgh.

At one time Mr. Freeman went so far as to question the truth of the whole story, and its authenticity as part of the text of Asser, but for this there seems to be no justification. The story is told quite in Asser's manner, and there is no documentary evidence for its omission ; it is recognised by the twelfth-century chroniclers, who pass by the really interpolated story of the cowherd. The only evidence against the story is the silence of the official chronicle ; and this silence is not quite complete. The Chronicle's statement that the people 'were glad' at the king's return is naively superfluous, until we see how Asser explains their joy. And why, unless it was under discreditable circumstances, is the fact not mentioned of Ethelbald being made king in his father's lifetime ? It is implied in the statement of the length of his reign. The compiler, writing under Alfred's eye, might desire or might be bidden to spare his brother's memory ; he keeps absolute silence on the undoubted fact of his scandalous marriage. But Asser, writing for his own countrymen, could treat Ethelbald's crimes as freely as Edburgh's.

Still the story is, we repeat, a puzzling one. It is intelligible that a petulant and wilful youth should, with or without provocation, have rebelled against his father ; but how came he to gain the support of a powerful party, headed by statesmen of experience, including a prelate to whose high character Asser himself bears witness ? And if the nation at large was honest and loyal, how was it possible or justifiable for ever so weak a king, or ever so indulgent a father, to yield to his rebel son the better half of the kingdom ? One can hardly doubt that Ethelbald must have had some plausible case. On the other hand, it cannot, in Asser's impartial judgment, have been a good one. He knew and set aside what excuses were made for him ; other excuses, which he does not even name, may have existed, but cannot have been sufficient. Thus we cannot imagine that Ethelbald was vindicating his mother's rights against his

⁴ *Senioris*, no doubt in the sense of 'lord,' not the elder of the two kings.

father's wrong⁵—hardly that he was vindicating his own rights against a prospective wrong. Alfred was his father's favourite, and his father procured that he should be anointed king at Rome; but this surely was intended to secure his succession after his brothers, not to supersede them. Ethelwulf, who was of mature age in 823, and had a grown-up son in 839, must now have been fifty-five at least, which was old age as times went. Egbert seems to have lived to seventy—longer than any of his successors before George II; but his son can hardly have reckoned on seeing a child of six grow up. Still less can he have expected to be able to hand over the kingdom to his yet unborn children by Judith. Ethelbald, on the other hand, was old enough to be associated, at least nominally, with his father in the command at the battle of Ockley in 851; now he was five years older—able, surely, to take care of himself, so that his rights or reasonable expectations could not be ignored.

But perhaps we may infer what Ethelbald's case was, from the light thrown on Ethelwulf's family relations by the disposal he made of his inheritance. It is well known that he left four sons and a daughter, and that, after certain bequests to the church, he divided his private property among them. Still better known is it that his four sons successively occupied the West Saxon throne, and that this was done, in some sort, in accordance with Ethelwulf's will. But the document that gives us the clearest and most businesslike recital of these arrangements presupposes a quite different state of things from what seems implied in these familiar facts. In Alfred's will there is mention made not of four brothers as joint or successive heirs to their father, but of three—Æthelbold, Æthelred, and Ælfred himself. Æthelbyrht is indeed mentioned as king after Æthelbold's death, but he is described not as brother, but as kinsman (*maeg*) to Æthelred and Ælfred.

Can we account for the co-existence of these different ways of stating the same facts? It is generally admitted that Athelstan, who was made king of Kent immediately on his father's succession to Wessex, is not likely to have been the son of Osburgh.⁶ What if Ethelbert were his own brother?—then Alfred's language is accounted for. He had two brothers, full brothers, and Ethelbert was a less near kinsman. Now, if this was so, it will appear that Ethelbald was, during his father's absence, confronted by a natural rival, from a plausible dispute with whom arose what Asser considers an unnatural rebellion. If Athelstan and Ethelbert were sons of a first marriage, it will follow—if they were illegitimate, it would still be presumable—that Ethelbert was older than Ethelbald; Athelstan, at any rate, was the eldest of the whole family. He had held the post of king of Kent unchallenged for a number of years, and

⁵ The notion that Ethelwulf divorced Osburgh to marry Judith rests entirely on a misunderstanding of the well-known story of Alfred's education, which is supposed to prove that Osburgh lived till 860, or later. What Asser really tells us is (1) that Alfred, by the culpable neglect of his parents (Ethelwulf and perhaps Judith), never learnt to read till he was twelve or more; (2) that, nevertheless, he got some literary education by learning English poetry by heart; (3) that the beginning of his love for poetry dated from his mother's lifetime, or, indeed, before Alfred's last parting from her—i.e. before he was five years old. No doubt a child of four or five who can and will learn a volume of poetry by heart is—as rare a character as Alfred was.

⁶ Alfred was born in 849; Athelstan can hardly have been under fourteen in 839.

apparently had proved worthy of his race and rank. But after his victory at Sandwich he disappears from history ; in all probability he, like his step-mother, died during his father's absence on the continent. Who, then, was to be his successor in Kent ; and who was to be regent in Wessex till Ethelwulf's return ? If Ethelbert were the eldest surviving son, and Athelstan's own brother, he was the natural successor to the former office at least. On the other hand, it is likely that Ethelbald already held the second ;⁷ what else does Asser mean by calling him king before his rebellion ? and, if so, his designation to this might seem to give him a claim to succeed to what must still have been regarded as the higher post.

Between the brothers, then, a contest might be natural, and it is conceivable that, when Ethelwulf offended West Saxon feeling by giving royal rank to his young bride, this act was honestly or artfully put forward by Ethelbald's partisans as a plea in his behalf even against his father. Osburgh plainly had held no such rank, and her son may have resented the coronation, or even the marriage itself, as an insult to her memory as well as to himself. Thus, if Ethelwulf decided in Ethelbert's favour, Ethelbald might pass on into a refusal to acknowledge his father's authority, and might be able to carry his party along with him.

As to the merits of the prior dispute, we should from the modern point of view make it turn on the legitimacy of Ethelbert's birth. That of Athelstan's has been doubted ; all we can say is that Ethelwulf left the impression on posterity, not of a man who became devout after a more or less vicious youth, but of a good dull man, with a pious, perhaps a clerical, training, who was enabled to discharge an arduous task with honour by sheer conscientiousness and trust in good advisers. But we must remember that it was a gradual work, not complete before the eleventh century, for the laws of Christian matrimony to be practically enforced, at least upon kings ; and a prince who had a concubine need not have been a profligate. It is certain that the position held by Athelstan is compatible with his being born of a union less regular than that with Osburgh or Judith ; he was probably, at his father's accession, the only one of his sons old enough for office. On the other hand, if he and Ethelbert were born in wedlock, it is still possible that their mother was of lower rank than Osburgh, the heiress of the Jutish princes of the Meons in South Hampshire. Or there may have been the feeling that Ethelbald took precedence of his elder brother as the son born of a reigning king. We know that more than a century later, at the death of Edgar, there was a party in favour of the succession of his son by his living wife, though St. Edward's legitimacy was unquestioned. Alstan may have now urged the arguments, whatever they were, which it then needed St. Dunstan's influence to set aside.

If Ethelbald had not only a strong party but a plausible case, it is easier to understand how compromise was the wisest course—indeed, the only alternative to civil war. The compromise adopted agrees with the view that the controversy was, in the first instance, for the succession to Kent rather than to Wessex. That Ethelwulf should remain sovereign for

⁷ It would be carrying conjecture too far to ask if Ethelwulf had created a new appanage of the shires west of Selwood, so that this was Ethelbald's kingdom.

life was the least that he could ask; that Ethelbald should receive Wessex at once was the most that he could expect; while Ethelbert was not ill used if, though he did not obtain Kent at once, he remained the unquestioned heir thereto after his father.

But when the rivalry between the two elder brothers had been so embittered, how was peace to be restored between them? or how to be maintained between the two younger? Apparently, their rivalry was to be removed by dissociating their interests altogether: neither was to be the other's heir, but the throne of Wessex was to pass, after Ethelbald's death, to his younger brothers Ethelred and Alfred.

This arrangement was open to the objection that, if it in some sort restored harmony in the family, it sacrificed such unity in the kingdom as had been attained by Egbert. If Ethelbert had left children, Kent might have been separated from Wessex; if Alfred had been any less eminent than he was, the sons of Ethelbald or Ethelred might have disputed the succession with him, as one of them actually did with his son. But perhaps the result proves that Ethelwulf was right in risking everything for the sake of immediate peace; his younger sons learnt to follow his example, not Ethelbald's. On Ethelbald's death, they allowed Ethelbert to reunite the kingdom, though to the prejudice of their rights under their father's will. Ethelbert, on his side, 'kept his kingdom in goodly concord and great peace,' and his family too. We know not if he was married or had children; but his sons certainly never became rivals to his brothers, who lived with him as acknowledged princes. Ethelbert's reign, unlike Athelstan's, two generations later, is not marked by any great personal exploit; but, *notus in fratres animi paterni*, he may claim a share in the glory of theirs.

For Ethelbald's marriage it is less possible to make excuse than for his rebellion. With Eadwald, doubtless, it had been a following of national custom, not of lawless passion, to succeed to his father's wife as well as his father's throne; but the tradition cannot have failed to be broken by two centuries of Christianity. Nor can we admit the suggestion of Kemble, accepted by Mr. Green, that here too the English Absalom was no worse than Adonijah. Not only is it plain that Asser knows nothing of such a plea, but Hincmar, when he married Judith, took for granted that she was really undertaking the duties of a wife, and that she was old enough to understand them. Doubtless it was cruel to lay such duties on a child under thirteen; it was less her fault than that of the custom of the age, that the widow of fifteen did what she did. On the other hand, it was the custom of the age,* and her father and bridegroom are not to be held personally responsible for it. Yet, if Ethelwulf was not an old man befooled by a pretty girl, but a Christian king desirous to bind Christendom together by every sort of tie, why did he not ask for Judith for his son, or, like Charles, promise to let her have his son if she were willing to accept himself?

* Alfred married his eldest girl to Ethelred of Mercia when she was nine, which Asser considered quite marriageable age. In her case, as in Judith's, nature avenged itself, though less scandalously. The story can hardly be an invention, that the poor little thing suffered so much at the birth of her first child that she vowed that she would never have another.

It seems to be a mistake to argue, as has been done from Cod. Dipl. 1058, that Ethelbald's marriage was condoned by St. Swithun. That document, dated in the year of Ethelwulf's death, was doubtless executed almost immediately after it. One may guess that the grant to the king for life of the bishop's estate at Farnham was in lieu of a customary payment at the coronation. Anyhow, nothing is more natural than for the late king's heir and his widow to sign as king and queen; we do not expect her to define her position as queen dowager. Very likely this was the first occasion when the two met; unless indeed a formal interview had followed on the settlement of peace between the father and the son. Now the two would 'begin with a little aversion,' remembering how each had tried to exclude the other from their present rank; but the antagonism would of itself rouse curiosity. When the young king saw the beautiful girl—grown out of childhood since he last saw her, if he ever had, and very likely honestly sorry for the loss of her kind old husband—it was his instinct to comfort her in the way pleasantest to himself. It was very wicked, but it was very human wickedness.

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A MEDIEVAL LATIN POEM.

THE following short poem was transcribed by me at Wolfenbüttel from the MS. which contains Ovid's 'Tristia' (Gudianus, 192). The MS. is sec. xiii., and this poem occurs at the end (fol. 50r), written by the same scribe as the rest. The last few lines are difficult to read, owing to the last leaf of the MS. having been damaged. The poem is interesting partly from the intrinsic cleverness of some of the lines, which form a very good example of leonine verse, and partly because it affords a specimen of monkish opposition to the poems of the *Goliardi*, whose exhortations to sensual enjoyment are answered in their own strain by an assertion of the principles of monastic asceticism. See E. du Ménil, 'Poésies populaires latines du moyen âge,' p. 179, where there is a fragment of a poem in a similar strain by Bernard of Morlaix.

- Arbore sub quadam dictavit clericus adam
 quomodo primus adam peccavit in arbore quadam.
 femina uicit, adam uictus fuit arbore quadam;
 femina serpenti mox credidit alta loquenti.
 5 femina deceptos sapientes reddit ineptos;
 femina te, david, et te, salamon, superavit;
 femina uictorem uicit uictum per amorem,
 femina decepit te sanson (*sic*), et hoc tua fecit
 femina iob; uicit genesis quoque quomodo dicit;
 10 femina dannari (*sic*) fecit nabaot lapidari;
 femina, tu christi battiste colla petisti;
 femina cuncta regit, iuuenum sibi colla subegit;
 femina corda senum necat inspirando uenenum;
 femina prelati adimit nomen bonitatis;
 15 femina ditatur cum presbiteris dominatur;