

Sæwulf, A Pilgrim

*Four Pilgrims*

BY

William Boulting

*Sæwulf, An English Pilgrim To Palestine.*

A.D. 1102

I.

*Early Pilgrimage To Palestine.*

Preface.

Pilgrimage has been popular in all countries and at all times. For what could be happier than an agreeable change which should contribute at once to welfare of soul, refreshment of spirit, and vigour of body ? Adventures on the way gave zest to the enterprise. It the more timid or feeble were content to visit neighbouring shrines, those of hardier mould, like the Wife of Bath, took more formidable journeys.

“ Thries hadde she been at Jerusálem ;  
She hadde passed many a straunge strem ;  
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,  
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne,  
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.”

Some of the boldest and bravest of ancient travellers were pilgrims, and we have their records of wide wandering. But their style is archaic, has at best little purely literary merit, and is usually forbidding. They are little known, except to the special student.

The footprints then are scanty, and all the worse for time, which testify to ardent spirits that once inhabited the warm vesture of flesh, but have long, long ago been laid to rest. I have tried to set forth certain of these dead and half-forgotten worthies as with “ organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions,” even as we....an Englishman of the earliest years of the Twelfth Century... gives us some notion of what the ordinary palmer was like who got to Jerusalem,

“ e qui devoto  
Il gran sepolchro adora e scioglie il vote”

(“and venerates the Holy Sepulchre and discharges his vow”).

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Jerusalem witnessed a remarkable scene (A.D. 629).

Heraclius, Emperor of New Rome, had over-thrown the hosts of Chosroes II, the Persian, and now he marched on foot through streets which that monarch had so lately ravaged and

shorn of half their population. A spirit of devout and humble thankfulness possessed Heraclius and his chastened people. The imperial feet were naked ; the imperial shoulders bore the weight of that True Cross which the aged Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, had so significantly discovered, and which Chosroes had carried away from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Long before the True Cross was miraculously found, pious Christians were wont to visit the sacred scenes of their Faith ; but, after that event, Pilgrimage became fashionable. Not the devout only thronged to the Holy Land, and crowded all its many sanctified spots. The inhabitants of Palestine were not slow to provide for the satisfaction of the pilgrim ; whether he were of the eager faithful, burning to behold the burial places of Patriarchs and the very spot associated with some scene of the Gospels ; or were one moved by a love of novelty and excitement. Tradition was revived, or legend invented ; a vast number of sacred relics was hit upon and produced ; hostelries became scenes of piety, and, alas ! often of dissipation.

Many, if not most, of the travellers were undoubtedly impelled by a genuine spirit of reverence ; but pilgrimages have always been popular because, under the sanction of Religion, they afforded the excitement of mild adventure and the physical and mental exhilaration which accompanies change of scene. As is always the case when men gather together from many lands and find themselves released from the restraints of home and the specified conventions of country, many were pliant to the allurements of pleasure. Indeed, Jerusalem was soon turned into a theatre of the passions, a centre of wild dissipation, and even of serious crime. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine, set themselves against the fashionable craze, and told would-be pilgrims that they might do far better by remaining at home and praising God in whatsoever station he had assigned to them.

When Jerusalem fell to the onrush of the Arabs (A.D. 637), the Moslem conquerors regarded it as a sacred city ; for they believed Mohammed to have been transported thence to visit Paradise. Christian subjects and Christian pilgrims added to Mohammedan wealth ; and they were allowed, under restrictions, to dwell in or to visit the Holy Land. Haroun-Al-Raschid, Caliph of Bagdad, and Charlemagne, Emperor of the West, were drawn together by the political antagonism of Constantinople alike to the Saracen and to an upstart Empire. They exchanged gifts ; and the traveller may still see some of those sent by Haroun-Al-Raschid, as well as much else that is curious or beautiful, in the Treasury of the great Church which Charlemagne built at Aix-la-Chapelle. Bernard, one of three Benedictine monks who visited the Holy Land A.D. 870, says that Christians there enjoyed such security that if, by some accident, a traveller should lose a beast of burden on the road, he might leave his belongings where they lay, proceed to the nearest city for assistance, and find them untouched on his return.

When the great Empire of the Abassides crumbled and fell, the Fatirait Caliphs of Cairo were usually tolerant of infidels, who increased their wealth and power. Commercial relations with the Christian West continued ; and pilgrims flocked to the Holy Land. In the tenth century, that darkest of the Dark Ages, John of Parma visited Palestine no fewer than seven times ; and even far-off Iceland sent its pilgrims.

But in the eleventh century (A.D. 1074) the Seljuk Turk swept down from the Oxus, and, aided by Emirs in revolt, took Jerusalem. The main body of the Turkish army retained the barbarous habits of a nomadic people ; they lusted for battle ; they were drunk with blood. Palestine became the scene of exaction, of debauchery, and of every kind of licence and excess. Churches were ransacked for spoil ; the rich pilgrim was subject to threat and compelled to disgorge much of his wealth before he was allowed to see Jerusalem ; the poor

pilgrim, already worn down by privation and suffering in some diminutive crazy craft, met, on landing, with insult and outrage. Neither Mohammedan Cairo nor Christian Constantinople were strong enough to deal with the Turk : he exhibited Moslem fanaticism at its worst. The Scimitar had indeed displaced the Cross.

## II. " Dieu Le Veult."

ONE of the eye-witnesses of the wretchedness of Christians in Palestine was a certain Peter, a man from Picardy ; high-strung ; one to whom a very varied experience brought no satisfaction. His restless disposition had driven him into the profession of arms ; he had sought for peace in study ; he had tried the companionship of a wife, who had borne him the boon of children ; his spirit found no tranquility among cloistered monks ; he fled to the greater seclusion of a hermitage. There visions left his soul still unsatisfied, and he went to the Holy Land. The sufferings of Christians at the hands of the Turk filled him with spiritual fury. He returned to Europe, and with inextinguishable zeal, traversed its western half to urge in impassioned eloquence, which made every heart throb and frenzied every mind, the union of all Christendom for the destruction of the Turk and the re-establishment of the True Faith in its first home.

He set Europe ablaze. Fourteen generations of Christians had grieved over the Moslem occupation of the Holy Land. John Zimiskes, the ablest and most popular of Byzantine generals, had carried his arms as far as Lebanon in the year 975, and had recovered what were said to be the shoes of the Saviour and the hair of John the Baptist. But, contrary to the vain-glorious assertions of Byzantine historians, he was unable to penetrate into Palestine. In 1073, Hildebrand, the great Pope-Statesman, was anxious to deliver the Holy Places ; but any project that he may have formed came to naught ; for the Head of the Holy Roman Empire was bent on subordinating the Church to his Imperial Will ; and the Head of the Church was even more resolute in his resolve to make the Papacy independent and supreme. About this time, German prelates headed 7,000 pilgrims, of whom only 2,000 survived to see their home once more. The conquest of Jerusalem remained a dream until Peter the Hermit awoke the sleeper.

But now Urban II responded to his call, and summoned and presided over the famous Council of Clermont in Auvergne. " God wills it," shouted the assembly ; " a truce of God" was declared ; private war and princely quarrels appeared to be forgotten ; and all Western Europe prepared for a Crusade.

The barons were undoubtedly captive to a great idea, and their zeal was sincere. But little of any human action is due to a single motive. Remission of sin was promised to those who should assume the Cross ; and love of battle, the charm of novelty, and the desire of acquiring large and lucrative fiefs in the Holy Land also played their part. The imagination of the common people, so lively and virile, often so spiritual and exalted in the Middle Ages, was no less fired than that of the barons. The spirit which directed men to the cloister now summoned them to the camp. A belief that God had decreed the expulsion of the Turk, and would protect and direct them to the capture of the Holy City, filled all men with fanatic fervour. The sound of clarion and trumpet and the clash of arms mingled with the voice of the preacher exhorting seigneur and serf. To men of the eleventh century, the curtains of the Unseen were often withdrawn, and the splendour of God shone forth, or devils appeared, comely to tempt, or distorted to terrify. Guibert tells us that, while at Beauvais, he noticed, at mid-day, a few clouds stretched a little obliquely athwart others, and " All at once, thousands of voices from every quarter cried out that a cross had appeared in the sky."

But, as with the barons, motives other than religious also moved the populace and favoured the Crusade. Private war had been unceasing ; famine and pestilence, the attendants on war, had desolated Europe ; the serf lay prostrate under the heel of his exacting seigneur. There would be release from these evils in that land which the Redeemer of Mankind had chosen to be the scene of his birth and Sacrifice.

The wave of enthusiasm struck our own shores, and passed beyond them. William of Malmesbury says in his “ Chronicles of the Kings of England” that, “ there was no nation so remote, no people so retired, as not to contribute its portion.” This ardent love not only inspired the continental provinces, but even all who had heard the name of Christ, whether in the most distant islands, or savage countries. The Welshman left his hunting ; the Scot his fellowship with lice ; the Dane his drinking party ; the Norwegian his raw fish. Lands were deserted of their husbandmen ; houses of their inhabitants ; even whole cities migrated. There was no regard to relationship ; affection to their country was held in little esteem ; God alone was placed before their eyes. Whatever was stored in granaries, or hoarded in chambers, to answer the hopes of the avaricious husbandman, or the covetousness of the miser, all, all was deserted ; they hungered and thirsted after Jerusalem alone. Joy attended such as proceeded ; while grief oppressed those who remained. But why do I say remained ? You might see the husband departing with his wife ; indeed, with all his family ; you would smile to see the whole household laden on a carriage, about to proceed on their journey. The road was too narrow for the passengers, the path too confined for the travellers, so thickly were they thronged with endless multitudes.” A French eye-witness tells us that “ thieves and evil-doers of all kinds cast themselves at the feet of priests to receive the cross. . . . The rustic shod his oxen like horses ; the children on approaching any large town or castle would ask : ‘ is that Jerusalem ?’ ”

These undisciplined hordes became turbulent ; their march was marked by famine, pillage and murder. The few who reached Asia Minor were exterminated.

Macaulay’s “ schoolboy” knows the story of the disciplined army of the First Crusade ; how, after the Caliph of Cairo had wrested Jerusalem from the weakened Turk and offered peace and security to Christians in vain, the slow advance of the invaders, marked by incredible cruelty on both sides, was so far successful that the crusading barons and their followers hurled themselves against the Holy City and took it (A.D. 1099). “ Even civilization always bears a brute within its bosom,” remarks Sainte-Beuve ; and assuredly Mediæval Religion made small attempt to caste out the devils that made the Cross their screen. The loftiest passions are often unstable ; the enthusiasm of the crowd readily passes from mood to mood. The fervour of faith became the frenzy of carnage. Raymond of Agiles, an eye-witness, declares that the Mosque of Omar and its portals ran blood up to the knees and even so far as to the reins of the horses. For seven days, Jerusalem was given up to slaughter and pillage.

Yet, in spite of a campaign tarnished with shame and dyed with guilt, the Christian ideal had not wholly disappeared. The growing spirit of Chivalry was not wanting, nor was the Norman genius for statesmanship absent. At the famous “ Assizes of Jerusalem,” a code of laws was drawn up better than the Middle Ages had yet known. But after Baldwin was crowned at Bethlehem (A.D. 1100), the new Kingdom remained unsettled. Neither Christian nor Saracen was likely to forget the atrocities of war ; the whole of Palestine was far from being subdued ; a few parts were still held by the Infidel ; the paths to Jerusalem were still perilous for the pilgrim ; but once again the Holy City and other sacred places were under Christian rule. The enthusiasm and joy of Western Europe ran high. The tide of pilgrimage at once set in, and an obscure Englishman was one of the first pilgrims to reach Jerusalem.

### III. Sæwulf's Record.

THERE is preserved in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, a valuable collection of ancient manuscripts presented by an old pupil of the College, who was no other than Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Among these manuscripts is a mere fragment, written in Mediæval Latin, which tells of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem of one Sæwulf, an Englishman, who must have started from his native shores thirty-six years after the landing of William the Conqueror, and less than two years after the coronation of Baldwin. [1] The record of Sæwulf is the broken voice of an obscure, unlettered palmer, which chance has preserved from common sepulture with things more important in the Ancient Silences. It gives us little more than a glimpse of a single year of adventurous pilgrimage in the life of a plain Englishman who, like the Chinaman who undertook a sacred journey nearly five centuries before him, having beheld "a gleam upon the mountain, needs must arise and go thither."

The narrative begins with the statement : " I Sæwulf, an unworthy person and an evil doer, made for Jerusalem that I might pray at the tomb of our Lord." Who Sæwulf was, is open to conjecture. It seems probable that he was the man of that name of whom William, Librarian of Malmesbury Abbey, speaks in his " Book of Bishops" ; a merchant who had recurring spasms of penitence, during which he was wont to repair to Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, a prelate of " pious, simple truth," who commanded the affection of the people and the confidence of the King. This Sæwulf was probably a native of Worcester. Wulstan, we know, was the last of the Saxon Bishops ; for the hand of the Norman was heavy on the prostrate land, and it was the policy of the Conqueror, as William of Malmesbury tells us, in another of his works, to replace the native bishops on their death " by diligent men of any nation except English"—a policy which the Church supported ; for religion had been in a decaying state in England for some years before the arrival of the Normans. Indeed, " the clergy, contented with a very slight degree of learning, could scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments ; and a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment. The monks mocked the rule of their order by fine vestments and the use of every kind of food." Wulstan implored Sæwulf to give up a livelihood which was beset with all manner of temptation, and to take the habit ; for his conviction of sin was soon over, and he invariably resumed his former vices. Wulstan told him that the time would come when he would become a monk, " which" says the Chronicler, " I afterwards saw fulfilled ; for he was converted in our monastery in his old age, being driven to it by disease." There is nothing in Sæwulf's narrative to indicate that he was in holy orders ; more than once he speaks of himself as one oppressed by a sense of sin ; and the record of his pilgrimage may very well have been translated into the dry, terse Latin of the monks by another hand, or, conceivably, may have been written by himself in his last years at Malmesbury.

Whoever he was, Sæwulf's early manhood was spent in a disordered land among a dejected people. During the reign of William Rufus, England was visited by tempest and famine and even by severe earthquake ; rebellion was rife ; the Welsh over-ran the county of Chester and part of Shropshire, leaving them waste ; Magnus, King of Norway, swooped down the Irish Sea, occupied Anglesea, and threatened the mainland ; the common people were oppressed by their foreign masters and illegally taxed ; " the courtiers preyed upon the property of the country people and consumed their substance," says William of Malmesbury, and Eadmer of Canterbury, our best authority on the period, confirms his statement : " As to their cruelty towards their hosts," he writes, " or their unseemly conduct towards their wives and daughters, it is shameful even to remember" ; the royal progresses through England were a travelling Sodom and Gomorrah. And we may judge of the tender mercies of the time when

we read that traitors to the King, or innocent men deemed to be such, “ were deprived of their sight and manhood.” These inhumanities also disgraced the far more civilized Byzantine Empire. No wonder that men’s hearts yearned for a “ City of God,” or that their hearts were set on the peace of the convent, or that they disdained the mere perils of pilgrimage !

The existing fragment of Sæwulf’s narrative begins with his departure from Southern Italy ; but we know, from other sources, what were the conditions and prescribed forms of pilgrimage, and how an English pilgrim would reach Apulia.

First, he had to get the consent of near relatives, in order that the interests of his family or dependents might be protected. To make sure that the would-be pilgrim was moved by devotion or penitence, and not by vain desire to see the world, he was also required to secure the sanction of his bishop, who made investigation into his life and character before granting it. The enquiry was a very searching one in the case of a monk ; for his real motive might be to escape from conventual discipline. If satisfied, the Bishop or his delegate solemnly presented him with a pilgrim’s staff and wallet, and bestowed his benediction at Mass in the church of the parish in which the pilgrim resided. He was furnished with a document which exhorted all monasteries, priests, and faithful Christians to give him aid and relief on his journey. He was now bound to set off without delay, under penalty of being dealt with as a backslider and perjurer. When the day of departure arrived, a procession of relatives, friends, and pious people accompanied him some little distance, and then, having been blessed by the clergy present, clad in white linen with the cross marked on it, and duly sprinkled with holy water, he went on his way alone.

The long and hazardous sea-voyage to the Mediterranean was shunned. Despite the perturbed state of the Continent, it was safer to make for the heel of Italy by the over-land route. All men who bore arms were under the obligation to defend him ; no robber-baron might demand a toll from him—nay the castle welcomed him, and he was seated at table beside the house-priest. The bishop of every town and the abbot or prior of every monastery gave him shelter and hospitality ; alms were specially devoted to the relief of the poor pilgrim and the support of monasteries along the pilgrim’s path. If he were ill, the doors of whatever hospital might be near were open to him, or he was cordially received into the Infirmary of every convent. A pilgrim’s hospice, founded in the first half of the ninth century by Louis the Pious, stood amid the snowy wastes of Mont Cénis to shelter him from its bitter blasts. He would pass through Italy, little affected by the unceasing and bloody conflict of noble with bishop, bishop with city, city with noble, and every one of a thousand petty communes and fiefs with its neighbours ; for the charitable monastery would prove a ready asylum. Arrived at a convenient port, a greatly reduced passage-money was required of a pilgrim to the Holy Land ; and there were some ports where ships belonging to them were compelled to carry pilgrims free of all charge.

Mediterranean shipping was not notably different in build and badness from that of Northern waters ; but was often of larger size. Nearly all that we know about it is derived from the uncouth paintings, coins, and arms of maritime towns of a somewhat later period, which are rather symbols than representations. The sailing-ship was shorter than the galley, which was rowed as well as sailed ; it was shaped somewhat like a half-moon and was very broad in the beam. It could sail only before the wind. There was rarely more than a single mast ; the sails were square ; and the yards could be lowered to the deck like those of a modern barge. These ships were not unlike the clumsy coasters still to be met with off Norway. Passengers were very uncomfortably crowded together, and must have had a terrible time. The outside planks overlapped, and were held together by iron nails ; and the seams were stopped up with oakum. Mediæval vessels were crazy craft, and frequently went to pieces when wind and

wave ran high : he was a bold traveller who tempted Neptune in those days, and especially bold if, after a first experience, he braved the sea god a second time.

Brindisi was the usual place of embarkation ; but for some reason, which Sæwulf does not state, he started from Monopoli, a little port midway between Bari and Brindisi. Now there was a general belief in certain days being unlucky ; a belief which persisted in spite of the condemnation of the Church. A Christian Calendar of the early part of the 4th century indicates what days are of ill omen, according to the Astrology of Egypt. Popular belief credited the feast-day of St. Mildred the Virgin (a saint of Kent) with this disqualification ; and it was on St. Mildred's day, July 13th, 1102, that Sæwulf set sail in a craft rather crazier than most. A storm came on the very same day the port was left behind, and the ship was wrecked a short distance from the harbour ; but, " by Divine Mercy," all aboard got safely to shore. The passengers went on to Brindisi ; their ship, having been patched up in some fashion, sailed thither, and the pilgrims got on board again ; but alas ! it was another of those unlucky Egyptian days ! Corfu was reached in two days (July 24th) ; but a great storm arose after leaving port and drove the rickety craft before it. However, shelter was gained at another of the Ionian islands—Cephalonia—on August 1st. Here, the company was still further depressed by the death of one of their number. Cephalonia is opposite the Gulf of Lepanto, and, sailing up the gulf, they landed at Patras, which Sæwulf speaks of as a " notable *island*" ; not improperly, the word island being often applied to a port in those days. The ship stopped at Patras for a special purpose—that its passengers and mariners should go on shore and pray to St. Andrew the Apostle at the site of his martyrdom. Corinth was reached on Aug. 9th, and Sæwulf and fellow pilgrims left their wretched craft to avoid the long, stormy passage by Cape Matapan. He finds a resemblance between his experiences and those of St. Paul : both had suffered shipwreck, and Paul met with misadventure at Corinth, where " we suffered many hardships." When a pilgrim to the Holy Land speaks of hardship, it was probably of an unusually severe kind. Roman Catholics neither loved nor were loved by members of the Greek Communion ; and the behaviour of Crusading hosts in Eastern Europe was too recent to be forgotten.

The pilgrims crossed the isthmus to Livadrostro, and, some riding asses, the rest on foot, reached Thebes. They would find Thebes inhabited chiefly by Jews, who were " the most skilled artificers in silk and purple cloth of all Greece." Sixty-four years later, a Spanish Jew, Benjamin of Tudela on the Ebro, who visited the settlements of his race in many lands and reported on their condition, found 300 Jews at Corinth and no fewer than about 2,000 at Thebes, " many of them being learned scholars, not to be equalled in the land of Greece, save in the city of Constantinople." Leaving Thebes the travellers arrived next day at Negropont (Aug. 23rd). This land- journey had proved untoward ; the Greeks were so inhospitable and so suspicious of them that often they had to pass the night in deserted huts and sheds. No wonder that they do not go a little out of their way to visit Athens, in spite of the fact that " in the Church of the Blessed Virgin there is a lamp which is ever burning with miraculously replenished oil," and that Scripture records how St. Paul preached there and " certain men clave unto him and believed." Among these converts was Dionysius, the Areopagite. It may be true that Dionysius " was born and got his learning there" : we are indebted to Sæwulf for the information.

At Negropont, the band of pilgrims took passage in a tramp-trader, which first touched at one of the islands of Petali, hard by Marathon ; but what Englishman of the year of grace 1102, even if he were an educated monk, knew aught of the " glory which was Greece ?" The voyagers now made for Naxos, touching at various islands on their way ; their mediæval minds sightless to the classic lustre of the Cyclades. Sæwulf does indeed speak of Naxos as being " near to Crete, that memorable island" ; memorable because his own lively experience

of what it means to “ go down to the sea in ships” recalls the “ tempestuous wind” which caught St. Paul off Crete ; for certain, he had never heard of that Epimenides of whom the Apostle makes such vigorous use. Patmos is reached, where the Beloved Apostle, banished by Domitian, “ entered his tomb alive.” Other islands are touched at, among them Cos, and here our author exhibits his learning : it is the birthplace of Galen, “ the most famous physician among the Greeks.” However, Hippocrates and Galen were both physicians, and that is near enough. On the trader goes, changing its course, now north, now south ; and the pilgrim associates every place visited with some pious legend. Rhodes is reached, and history is again rescued from oblivion : the Colossus was “ an idol, 125 feet high ; the Persians destroyed it together with almost the whole Roman province on their way to Spain.” Sæwulf, or tradition, has confused the first conquering onrush of the Arabs with the Persian advance ; but the Colossus was destroyed, not by Persians but by earthquake, nine centuries before Sæwulf’s time. Yet there is a basis for his story ; its fragments were removed for building purposes about the time of the first Arab conquests. Sæwulf falls into a widespread blunder of his unlettered age when he assumes that the inhabitants of Rhodes drew their name from the Colossus, and that the Epistles to the Colossians were directed to them.

Leaving Rhodes, a great storm drove the ship straight before it ; but the sailors got her into the harbour of Patara, “ and, by next day, the storm had abated, and we came to Long Island.” Here was a ruined city which had been the refuge of exiles, escaped from the Turk. Myra, on the mainland, was now reached ; and Sæwulf states that it is “ the port of the Adriatic Sea ; as Constantinople is of the Ægean” : either his geography is not quite accurate, or he would imply that, in his time, Myra received the main Eastern traffic from the Adriatic, and Constantinople from the Ægean. At Myra, he worshipped at the empty tomb of St. Nicholas. Favourable winds bore the ship thence to an island called “ Sixty oars,” on account of the force of the sea and the effort required to overcome it. A discursion, out of sight of land, brought the pilgrims to Paphos in Cyprus. We do not expect any reference to the Cyprian Venus ; but we are a trifle surprised to find that our author now confuses two separate chapters of “ Acts” in one jumbled statement.

Leaving Cyprus “ we were tossed about by violent storms seven days’ space before we could reach our haven ; and one night a fierce contrary wind drove us back towards Cyprus ; but Divine Mercy, Who is close at hand to those who truly call on Him. vouchsafed no small pity for us afflicted souls, and we resumed our proper course. Yet, during seven nights, we were overwhelmed by such a tempest and were in such peril that almost all hope left us. Nevertheless, at the rising of the sun, behold ! the coast of Joppa lay before our eyes ; and even as the turbulence of our peril had made our hearts to sink within us, so joy, unexpected and un hoped for, lifted them up an hundredfold more. And so it came to pass that, thirteen weeks after our departure from Monopoli, the sea having been our home, or deserted hovels in the islands (the Greeks not being hospitable), we made the harbour of Joppa, filled with joy and thanksgiving.” Sæwulf gives no dates ; but many have been fixed by the industry of a French scholar, who compared feast days mentioned in the narrative with the calendar, and its events with ascertained dates. Sæwulf reached the Holy Land, Oct. 12th, 1102.

God had interposed on behalf of “ the meanest of His servants and the company of pilgrims” ; and Sæwulf renders praise, with the manner of the Psalms of David in his mind. But yet another danger from wind and wave awaits him. He got warning from some weather-wise friends who knew the badness of the harbour. But he shall tell his own tale : “ The same day that we anchored, someone, directed by God, as I believe, said to me, ‘ Master, go ashore this very day, for it may hap that to-night, at dawn, a storm shall come on and stop you from landing.’ When I heard this, the desire to land seized me. I got a boat and went ashore with all my party. Even whilst I was landing the sea was vexed ; the waves became more troubled,



and a tempest came on ; yet by Divine Mercy, I landed unharmed. What happened then ? We entered the city to find a lodging. Weary and overdone by our long labours, we fed ourselves and went to rest. And then ? In the morning, when we came out of church, we heard the roaring of the sea and the populace shouting, and everybody was running in a crowd to the shore, marvelling at such sounds as they had never heard aforetime. And, when we got there, we beheld the waves higher than hills, a countless number of bodies of men and women lying in wretched-wise on the beach ; and ships were crashed against each other and broken into small bits. Could anyone hear a sound save that of roaring breakers and splintering ships ? For this drowned the outcry of the crowd and the shouting in the ships. Our ship, however, being a big one and strongly built, and some others, laden with corn and other goods and with pilgrims going or returning, held to their anchors still. Yet how were they tossed about ? Into what terror were they plunged ! How their ladings were cast into the sea ! What onlooker so hard and strong as to keep a dry eye ! Not long did we gaze when, through the violence of the waves and currents, the anchors parted, the ropes were broken asunder, and the ships abandoned to the fierceness of the billows. All hope of safety was gone. Now they were cast high ; now flung down, and hurled by degrees upon beach or rock. There were they dashed against one another in wretched plight, and, little by little, torn to bits by the tempest. Neither would the savage blasts allow of their getting back to the sea whole, nor the steepness of the shore admit of their gaining safety there. But what gain in telling how dismally sailors and pilgrims hung on ; every hope gone, some to ships, some to masts, some to spars, some to cross-tenders ? What more shall I tell ? Some, overwhelmed with fright, are drowned. It may seem unbelievable to many, yet I beheld with my own eyes the heads of some separated from their bodies by the timbers of their own ship. Some, washed from the decks, are borne away again into the deep. Some, who can swim, leap into the sea. So, very many find their end. But just a very few, relying on their strength, gain the land. Thus, of 30 ships of largest size, of which some were Dromonds” (that is to say, having two tiers of double oars), “ Gulafri” (a sort of galley) “ and Catts” (vessels narrowing to the stern, with overhanging quarters and a deep waist)—“ all full of pilgrims and goods—of all these barely seven were still unwrecked when I left the shore. That day more than a thousand folk, of both sexes, perished. Never did eye behold greater horrors in a single day. But the Lord, to whom be honour and glory, world without end, delivered me from all this of His grace. Amen.”

The little company had escaped a great peril, but another lay ahead. Two days later they set forth to Jerusalem, and found the way “ hilly, very rough, and very perilous. For the Saracens are constantly devising traps for Christians ; they lie hidden in the hollows of the hills and in rocky holes, and by day and night remain ever sharply on the look-out for those whom they may pounce upon, by reason of their being few in numbers, or so jaded as to lag behind their band. Suddenly, the Saracens are all round about ; the next moment they are gone. Anyone who does that journey, may make trial of this. How many human bodies, torn by wild beasts, lie along the way and beside it ! Perchance, some one may marvel how the bodies of Christians should lie unburied. But there is nothing to wonder at ; for there is very little earth, and the rocks are not easy to dig, and, even if there were soil, who would be so unwise as to leave his band and dig his companion a grave all by himself ? He who should do so would dig his own grave rather than one for his companion. On that wayside, not only the poor and weak, but the rich and strong also, are in peril. If men are cut off by the Saracens, yet more in number die from heat and thirst ; many through want of drink ; more by drinking inordinately. Nonetheless we and all our company came scatheless to the place we longed for.” Sæwolf’s account of the dangers which beset the pilgrim is confirmed by that of Daniel, Abbot of Kief, who made his pilgrimage four years later ((1106, A.D.) North of the pilgrim’s way lay Acre ; south of it Ascalon, strong fortresses, still held by the Saracen.

The track from Jaffa led to the gate of David, and, entering the city, Sæwulf visited its holiest place first—the Martyrium or Holy Sepulchre. The tomb was under cover, because the Church above was so built as to be open to the skies. He tells us that Titus and Vespasian destroyed the whole of Jerusalem to fulfil the prophesy of Christ, and that the city has undergone the same fate seven times since Titus. He has for guides native Syrians, a people whom he confuses with the Assyrians and calls by that name. The guides told him that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built in the time of Constantine the Great. Now, the existing Church was only about 80 years old, and there had been two previous buildings, of which the earlier was destroyed by Chosroes II, early in the Seventh Century, and the second by Mohammedans, early in the Eleventh Century.

He was then taken to see the place where Christ was imprisoned, the spot where His Cross and the crosses of the two thieves were found, the column to which Christ was bound (the thong with which He is said to have been bound is still to be seen at Aix-la-Chapelle) ; all these sacred objects of pilgrimage being near the Holy Sepulchre. He was shown the “ navel of the earth,” a spot which a contemporary of Sæwulf tells us was in the outside wall of the Martyrium, beyond the altar. Sæwulf assures us that Christ marked it out with His own hand, and declared it to be the centre of the world. This tradition dates from the Sixth Century. Readers of Dante will recall that the poet makes Jerusalem and the Earthly Paradise the Antipodes of our globe ; and, indeed, the Holy City was at the middle of the circumscribed world known to the Middle Ages. And had not David sung “ God is my King of old, working Salvation *in the midst of the earth* ?”

Thence to Calvary ; “ Which is the very same place where Abraham built an altar to sacrifice Isaac.” Traces of the Earthquake which rent the rock, “ for that it could not endure the death of its Maker without breaking asunder,” were pointed out to him. The guides also took him to Golgotha, the very place where a stream of the Saviour’s blood reached the bones of Adam, “ and he and the bodies of many saints arose.” Again readers of Dante will think of the passage where the shade of Virgil tells him how, a little before the Roman poet’s own death, Christ took from Hades the souls of Adam and Moses and other Scriptural personages of distinction, with many others “ *e fecegli beati*,” “ and made them blessed.” Sæwulf has perfect trust in any information conveyed to him by his “ Assyrian” guides. Indeed, who so likely to know the truth about this wonderful land as its natives ?

Close by the Holy Sepulchre was a little monastery which merchants of Amalfi had founded 54 years before Sæwulf saw it. It was the abode of the Knights Hospitalers, who became so famous ; but they had not yet become that military order of which, after so singular a history, England possesses traces in St. John’s Gate, Clerkenwell, and a memorial in the beneficent work of which that building is the official centre.

He saw the “ Gate Beautiful,” through which Heraclius, triumphant bearer of the Cross, entered after his defeat of the Persians ; and heard how “ the stones fell down and closed the way, until an angel reproved him ; and he descended from his horse, and a passage was opened up to him.” The guides took the pilgrim to see that stone which was the pillow of Jacob when angels ascended and descended a celestial ladder “ and the Lord stood above it” at Bethel. It was now at Jerusalem, and, traditionally, is the very stone which was transported to Scone, whereon the Kings of Scotland sat to be crowned, and is to be seen at the present day, placed below the Coronation Chair at Westminster Abbey.

He was taken to Bethlehem ; and complains that there, as at every holy place, the Saracen had destroyed everything. Yet the Convent of the Virgin still stood, and within it he saw the very manger where the infant Jesus lay ; the very stone on which His head reposed in the

tomb, and which St. Jerome had brought hither from Jerusalem ; the marble table at which the Mother of our Lord sat at meat with the Magi ; a well which received their guiding star into its waters ; and the burial-place of the Innocents. The story of the Star falling into a well is also told by that fraudulent Fleming who adopted the name of Sir John Mandeville, in his “ Voiage and travaile.”

As much of Palestine as had been conquered was still the scene of unceasing disorder, brigandage, revolt and warfare ; so pilgrims were conducted to the holy places under military escort. Sæwulf went to Hebron, and tells us of the tombs of the Patriarchs, ornamented by the men of old and emitting sweet odours. The tombs were inside a strong protecting fortress. Here, at Hebron, he found, still standing, an ancient Ilex tree, under the shadow of which the Lord had appeared to Abraham and promised that Sara should bear him a son. Apparently, his friends, the “ Assyrians,” during many centuries of experience, had found what profit accrued to them in tacking on some Biblical association to every available object.

Travelling Northward, he visited Nazareth and Cana of Galilee, whence he beheld Mount Tabor, clad in refreshing green and sprinkled with flowers. Still advancing to the North, he saw the glory of Lebanon above him, and the springs which give birth to the milky waters of Jordan.

More than seven months had passed since our simple-minded, whole-hearted pilgrim landed at Joppa, and now he turns his steps towards home. “ Having seen every one of the Holy Places of Jerusalem and its territory, so far as we were able ; and our devotions done, we took ship at Joppa on the day of Pentecost” (May 17th, 1103). Each pilgrim would take on board with him a palm-branch as ensign of his success, and a few portable *souvenirs*.

Just as war with the Caliph of Cairo prevented our pilgrim from reaching the Holy Land by way of Egypt (which was the ordinary route from Western Lands), so its continuance compelled him to return by an unusual journey. The ship turned from Joppa to the North. Saracen ships were scouring the sea ; and the returning pilgrims found themselves hugging the shore, although they must pass by that one fortified seaport which the Crusaders had not yet overcome. Four days out from Joppa, and when a little to the south of Acre, “ behold twenty-six Saracen ships hove into sight. They were the squadron of the Admiral of Tyre and Sidon, sailing for Babylonia with an army to aid the Chaldeans in waging war with the King of Jerusalem” (! *sic*). This statement is an example of how hearsay may germinate in the uninstructed mind. It may not, however, be quite so wild as it seems. Cairo is called Babylon in all Mediæval writings, but, as a matter of fact, Arabs were, about this time, trying to turn Tancred out of his fief at Edessa ; and Edessa may, perhaps, be regarded as lying towards the Babylon of Scripture. And a Saracen army was at sea, sent by the Caliph of Cairo, the new “ Babylon,” to raise the siege of Ascalon, which Baldwin I. was conducting. Probably it was this expedition from Cairo which Sæwulf came across. “ Two vessels from Joppa, which were with us, laden with pilgrims, left our ship to itself ; for they were lighter craft ; and, by hard rowing, fled to Cæsarea. The Saracens sailed all round our ship, and kept an arrow’s flight off, rejoicing over so much plunder. However our men were ready to die for Christ ; they laid hold of their arms, and used up each moment in fortifying the castle (at the stern) of our ship ; for we had in our dromond 200 fighting men. After the space of about an hour, the chief of the expedition, having held a council-of-war, ordered one of his sailors to climb up to the mast-head, so as to find out what it was exactly that we were at. And, when he learned from this man how strong was our defence, he hoisted his high yards and made for the main. Thus did Our Lord, of His Grace, rescue us from the foe that day. Afterwards our folk from Joppa took three of these same ships and made themselves rich men with the spoil thereof.”

Sæwulf's dromond hugged the coast for eight days, and then crossed the open sea to St. Andrews', at the eastern extremity of Cyprus ; thence it made for Antiochetta on the mainland. " During this voyage pirates often attacked us ; but, under the protection of Divine Grace, we suffered naught, whether from hostile attack or from tempestuous tossing." Rhodes was reached on June 23rd ; and Sæwulf and some others, who were weary of tacking east and west and of the slow progress made by the heavy vessel, agreed to go a certain distance together, and hired a smaller but swifter craft. Embarked in this, they returned towards the Asian Coast. A contrary wind detained them a few days at a place which Sæwulf calls Stromlo (Astypalæa), " once a fair city, wholly made waste by the Turks." At Scio, " we took leave of our (last) ship and fellow-travellers, and began our journey to Constantinople, in order that we might pray there." While passing Tenedos, he heard of the ruins of Troy, and " how many miles of ground they covered." He tells us of two fortresses facing one another from opposite sides of the " Arm of St. George" (the Dardanelles), " which are so near as to be only two or three bowshots apart, and which thus make the taking of Constantinople an impossibility." We have another reference to the Trojan war : " The Greeks say that Helen was carried off (from Eregli) by Paris Alexander." And now the fragment ends, leaving our pilgrim landed at Rodosto on the Sea of Marmora, Sept. 10th, 1103. It has taken him more than four months' voyage from Joppa to reach within fifty miles of New Rome. Doubtless he found at St. Sophia, as Benjamin of Tudela did towards the end of the same century, " a quantity of wealth beyond all telling and the like of these riches is not to be seen in any other Church in the world."

A long, weary journey, full of the excitement of peril still lay before him, whatever route he might take. All we know is that, arrived at his native town (Worcester ?), a procession would receive and accompany him to his parish church. There he would render thanks to God for his safe return, and deliver his palm branch into the hands of the priest, who would lay it on the altar.

Some chance has rescued this broken record of an obscure, unlettered palmer from oblivion. He is as the hollow voice of a shade which has burst its sepulture in the silences of oblivion. We catch but a glimpse of some tenuous wraith ; once warm and breathing flesh. It tells us of a few months in the brief adventure of Life. Yet we recognize, as in Hiuen-Tsiang, one who, having beheld " a gleam on the mountain," must " arise and go seek it." Sæwulf the Englishman may be but " a poor thing," yet he is our own. There lies the excuse for " a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that that no man else will."

[1] The Latin text is printed with a translation by Brownlow, by the Palestine Pilgrims Text Society. 1892.

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