



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

S. GERMANUS IN BRITAIN

By JOHN EVANS, F.S.A.

S. GERMANUS or German, bishop of Auxerre¹ in Gaul became a famous if enigmatic figure in the dim records of the fifth century in Britain because he made two visits to this country in the first half of that century. The first of these took place in 429, which was within twenty years or so of the earliest date by which central Roman imperial authority is believed to have been withdrawn from the province, and the second, less certainly dated to 446, was made on the very eve of the traditional date of the landing of Hengist and Horsa in Kent. Consequently whatever we can learn from these visits bearing on the current state of affairs in Britain becomes of first interest to the student of our Dark Age. Unfortunately, as usual for this century, the record is confusing and conflicting for it is difficult to separate the few historical facts from a mass of legendary matter which has accrued around the actions of this Gaulish saint.

The original, earliest and highest authority for the life and work of the saint is *The Life of S. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre* by Constantius of Lyons, for it was certainly written within thirty years of the death of its subject. Constantius, who had been a disciple of Germanus, undertook the writing of the *Life* at the instance of his bishop, Patiens, who held the see of Lyons from 449, and later, at the request of Censurius, who was bishop of Auxerre from 470, it was revised and given a wider publicity. A précis of the *Life* follows, the quotations being translations of the words of Constantius.²

¹ Auxerre, then known as Autessiodurum, lies some 85 miles south-east of Paris. A straight line from Auxerre passing through Paris and projected another 92 miles from the latter city would end at Dieppe. Boulogne, then known as Gessoriacum or Bononia, is 157 miles north-north-west of Paris.

² It has been taken from the translation of F. R. Hoare in *The Western Fathers*, 1954, which was made from the text of Wilhelm Levison, in which certain interpolations from the *Lives* of other saints have been rightly eliminated. Constantius's *Life* has not escaped the critics, especially Schoell, whose 'corrosive criticism' in the words of S. Baring Gould in *Y. Cymmrodor*, XVII, 65, would reduce the work to a forgery of the sixth century. Certainly, as noted, there have been certain interpolations taken from the *Lives* of other saints, principally S. Genoveva (Ste. Genevieve) and S. Amator, which were written in the sixth century, but there has since been discovered a MS of Constantius based upon a text so early that it pre-dates the adulterations of the sixth century and gives us the text of Constantius himself.

Germanus was born about 378 in Auxerre of Christian parents of some rank and importance. He received a liberal education in Gaul and later in Rome, and attained distinction as a jurist and barrister. Marriage followed, and then, when he was 'at the height of his reputation in the legal profession the State promoted him to official rank by conferring on him the supreme office of *dux* and the rule over more than one province.' Next, 'all the clergy, the whole nobility, the townsfolk and the countryfolk with one accord demanded Germanus as their bishop.' Accepting this demand³ he was consecrated bishop (in 418) and 'deserted the earthly militia to be enrolled in the heavenly; the pomps of this world were trodden underfoot; a lowly way of life was adopted, his wife was turned into a sister, his riches were distributed among the poor and poverty became his ambition.' Chapters III to XI are largely concerned with accounts of miracles performed by the new bishop, and then in Chapter XII we are told of a deputation arriving from Britain to acquaint the Gaulish bishops with the extent and influence of the Pelagian heresy in the island, and at a synod Germanus and Lupus, bishop of Troyes (Trecassina) were requested to go to Britain to combat the heresy. They sailed from an unnamed port, but probably Boulogne, were caught in a Channel gale and saved by the usual miracle. On the British shore great crowds received the two bishops for, strangely enough, the 'enemies of souls' and the 'spirits of evil' had foretold their advent in Britain. It was not long before the visitors had 'filled all Britain . . . with their fame, their preaching and their miracles' and at a meeting with the Pelagians the Catholic party won the day with a sight-restoring miracle by Germanus. With Pelagianism suppressed the bishops visited the shrine of S. Alban, which closed with another miracle.

Then in Chapters XVII and XVIII we are given an account of the famous Alleluia victory. 'The Saxons and Picts had joined forces to make war upon the Britons' the natives had been forced to retreat and appealed to Germanus for aid. The bishops hastened to the British camp where, oddly enough, they spent some time building a rustic church and baptising the soldiers of the British army. Germanus then announced that he would be their general (i.e. *dux proelii*) 'in the direction from which the enemy were expected he saw a valley enclosed by steep mountains. Here he stationed an army on a new model, under his own command' The British forces were apparently spread out and hidden along the mountain sides and when the bishops three times repeated the cry of Alleluia the soldiers took up the shout and so

³ The sudden translation of civil officials of standing and wealth to the episcopacy was not unusual in the fourth and fifth centuries. That of S. Ambrose forty-five years before Germanus was a very parallel case as also was that of S. Appollinaris Sidonius some half century after the elevation of Germanus.

astounded the barbarians that they fell into a panic and fled, many being drowned in a river which they had just crossed. The British did not strike a blow and 'the bishops were elated at the rout of the enemy without bloodshed and a victory gained by faith and not by force.' 'Thus this most wealthy island, with the defeat both of its spiritual and of its human foes, was rendered secure in every sense.' The two bishops then returned home, and we pass to Chapter XXV where we are given a very short account of the second visit when the companion of Germanus was Severus, bishop of Treves (Trier). It is a doublet of the first visit; Pelagianism had revived, the Gaulish bishops again ask Germanus to repeat his earlier success, again the demons spread the news of his coming, there were the same crowds, the same miracles and the Catholic victory was assured by another crowning miracle, the curing of the crippled son of Elafius, 'one of the leading men of the country.' The preachers of the heresy were banished and the visitors returned to Gaul. It was at the then imperial capital of Ravenna that Germanus died in 448, closing a life of service to the communities of western Gaul and Britain.

The first visit to Britain is confirmed by an entry under the year 429 in the chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine which states that Pope Celestine I sent Germanus to combat the heresy at the suggestion of a deacon named Palladius.⁴

Overloaded as Constantius's *Life* is with marvel and miracle it is a sober narrative compared with the fantastic thaumaturgy of some later stories of, it is alleged, the same saint's doings in Britain. These occur in some fragments of a lost *Book of S. Germanus* which have been preserved in the *Historia Brittonum*, a work which goes under the name of its chief compiler Nennius. There are various manuscripts extant of differing dates and the work is obviously the end product of a long process of compilation. The Chartres MS. 98 of about 900 has an introduction which reads, 'Beginnings of excerpts. Discoveries of the son of Urbagen with regard to the Book of S. Germanus, and the origins and genealogies of the Britons.' The excerpts from this *Lost Book* are contained in chapters 32, 33, 34, 35, 39 and 47 of the *Historia*. and brief comments on them follow.⁵

Chapters 32 to 35. In the time of Vortigern (Guorthigirn) originally a king of Powys but later a kind of high-king in Britain, 'came S. Germanus to preach in Britain and he was renowned among them for many virtues . . . of some miracles . . . I am resolved to write. The first of his miracles.' This miracle was the destruction in his fortress of a wicked king Benlli and his followers by fire from heaven.

⁴ *Mon. Hist. Brit.*, lxxxii. The Gaulish bishops probably recommended that Germanus and Lupus be sent and this was confirmed by the Pope.

⁵ Taken from A. W. Wade-Evans, *Nennius's History of the Britons*, (1938).

Chapter 39. 'Now adding to all his evils Vortigern took his own daughter to be his wife and she bore him a son.' There follows an incomprehensible story of Vortigern, his daughter-wife, his son-grandson and Germanus which seems to be a confused version of a pagan foster-age rite.⁶

Chapter 47. Germanus still preaches against Vortigern because of his unlawful marriage, and finally the king flees to his castle in which he is destroyed by fire from heaven; an obvious doublet of the destruction of Benlli. Chapters 40, 41 and 42 tell a wild and pagan story involving magicians, a mysterious boy named Ambrosius, son of a Roman consul, a fight between two dragons and *ex post facto* prophecies about future events in Britain; S. Germanus does not figure in this fantastic episode. All these stories are of interest to the student of folk-lore, myth and ritual but they are valueless to the historian.

About a century after the death of Germanus the monk Gildas was writing his mournful book *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* or the Loss of Britain, of which one section purports to recount the history of Britain from the Roman conquest until his own times. It is an extremely disappointing work for it is largely dateless and anonymous rhetoric, giving very few personal and place-names and unreliable for the period before Gildas's own lifetime. It seems incredible that he knew nothing of Pelagianism or of Germanus's activities in its suppression, but he certainly wrote nothing about the subject; but this need cause no surprise for the 'silences of Gildas' are notorious and mean nothing. Yet certainly during his lifetime legend must have been busy with the name of Germanus, as with those of other early saints, and they follow much the same pattern of piety and miracle. A feature of many of the hagiographies is the grouping around the central figure of as many saints as possible, often without much regard for strict contemporaneity. Thus Germanus is credited in late legend with many distinguished disciples who were supposed to have been taught by him at Auxerre. Muirchu wrote that the early saints of Ireland, Patrick, Iserninus and Auxilius were at Auxerre around 430, and the early Welsh saints Dubricius and Illtud were likewise said to have been his disciples.⁷ A much later *Life* of S. Germanus bears witness to the growth of his legend; this is the metrical version composed by Heiric of Auxerre between the years 860 and 875, but it adds nothing to the *history* of its subject.

Thus far in the collection of reliable information about Germanus, although much of Constantius is miracle and marvel he does also tell a

⁶ The rite involved the cutting of the hair of the applicant and for a parallel instance see the Welsh tale of *Kulhwch and Olwen* in *The Mabinogion*.

⁷ For the Irish saints see Muirchu, *Life of St. Patrick*, late seventh century, for Illtud the *Vita Samsonis*, early seventh century. They are late legends.

plain story of the main events in the life of his patron. His early eminence as a lawyer, his appointment as a Roman governor requiring legal and administrative ability, his call to the Church involving his retirement from secular office and his whole-hearted change of life. We learn of his devotion to the interests of his people which at one time involved him in the confrontation of a barbarian chief and also acting as intermediary between his restless flock and the imperial authorities. The two visits to Britain are described as being entirely religious in motive and, for what they are worth, the incredible episodes from the *Lost Book* at least indicate the growth of a legend which was entirely spiritual in character. Yet in spite of these facts from the *Life* and the inferences of the *Legend* there has developed a modern view that Germanus was a distinguished Roman general and that his missions to Britain had military aspects if not entirely military objectives.

This view can only be based on Constantius's use of the word *dux* to describe the high office to which Germanus was appointed, and to the episode of the Alleluia victory. As regards *dux* the title generally described a high and strictly military rank; now it is difficult to imagine that the Roman government would invest a lawyer who was quite untrained in military matters with the rank of a general, but easy to believe that what actually occurred was that Germanus was raised to the civil magistracy, as is still our practice today. Consequently it has been assumed that Constantius used the wrong term for the office, and indeed other of his comments may suggest as much. For he writes that Germanus attained the peak of civil promotion (*culmen cursus honorum*) and that he was finally equipped by Divine grace to play his role as 'apostolic pontiff-to-be,' with 'eloquence to equip the preacher,' and 'legal learning as an aid to justice,' but no word, be it noted, of any endowment of military skill or knowledge. The truth of the matter may lie in a sentence written by Professor J. S. Reid.⁸ Describing the division between the civil power and military authority in the later Roman empire and the reasons for it, he goes on, 'a few frontier districts were treated in an exceptional manner. Their chiefs were allowed to exercise civil as well as military functions and were naturally described by the ordinary name for an army commander (*dux*).' As it is believed that the provinces placed under the control of Germanus were Armorica and Nervica (roughly Brittany, Normandy and Hainault) and at this time they were liable to be raided by sea by western barbarians, it is likely that they were treated as frontier districts. Thus Germanus may have been a *dux* in the sense that he was governor with a military staff responsible to him. But he certainly resigned all his secular offices by 418 when, as a man of forty or so, he became bishop.

⁸ In the *Cam. Med. Hist.*, 1, 30.

When we consider Constantius's account of the Alleluia victory we shall find that it will hardly support a *military* reputation. The stratagem of trapping a mentally backward enemy into a narrow valley or gorge and then sweeping down on him from the enclosing hillsides above is not unknown in military annals, and in the case under discussion one would have thought that the whole subject of the exercise was to exterminate a savage band of marauders. But this is just what Germanus did not do. Writes Constantius, 'thus the British army looked on at its revenge without striking a blow, idle spectators of the victory achieved . . . the bishops were elated at the rout of the enemy without bloodshed and a victory gained by faith and not by force.' What kind of victory was this which dispersed a large band of savages over a peaceful countryside to burn, loot and murder as they pleased? Bede faithfully copies Constantius but many modern historians ignore the bloodless victory,' they were pursued and cut down by the oncoming Britons,' writes Sir Charles Oman;⁹ on the other hand Lord Raglan, puzzled by this account of a strange battle, suggests that in its original form it was a story of a spiritual victory over the demons of heresy.¹⁰

Although the late H. M. Chadwick believed that there was an element of truth underlying the wild tales of the *Lost Book* he did not say what that element was;¹¹ it is now known that it is not even evidence of the presence of our Gaulish saint in Wales, for the church dedications in the west to S. Garmon refer to a native saint, nor can the name Garmon be derived from Germanus.¹² Butler lists two other saints named Germanus, both apparently native British.¹³

But certain historians have pursued extreme speculations in this matter of the status of Germanus and the nature of his missions to Britain. Thus Miss N. K. Chadwick has written, 'the office which Germanus is stated by his biographer Constantius to have held in early life, described as *ducatu culmen*, seems to have involved the supervision of at least the Gaulish side of the Saxon shore, in Armorica and Belgium, and may well have been identical with that of Exuperantius, whom indeed he may have succeeded.' Since this Exuperantius is believed to have been assassinated in 424 the suggestion here would seem to be that Germanus returned to an alleged military life six years after his elevation to the episcopacy. Miss Chadwick goes on to ask, 'did his authority extend across the Channel? We know that the Saxon shore defences were under a joint command earlier, and such a responsibility

⁹ Sir Charles Oman, *England before the Norman Conquest*, 196.

¹⁰ Lord Raglan, *The Hero*, 83.

¹¹ H. M. Chadwick, *Studies in Early British History*, 33.

¹² E. G. Bowen, *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in Wales*, 32.

¹³ Butler, *Lives of the Fathers*, etc.

would best account for St. Germanus' visit to Britain in 429.' Later she writes, 'We know that he undertook a mission to Britain in 429, perhaps again in 447, in which his military activities are of paramount importance, and in which he is clearly represented as having been in command as a military expert.'¹⁴ M. P. Charlesworth goes further by suggesting that Cunedda's Votadini were moved to North Wales as *foederati* to protect British territory against Irish raiders on the orders of S. Germanus during his second visit in 447.¹⁵

It will be clear to the reader that these views either receive no support from the *Life* or flatly contradict the author of it, and are generally contrary to the whole tenor of his work, wherein Germanus is represented as altogether abandoning the worldly life and devoting himself to his religious duties, which involved the defence of the Catholic faith and the protection of his people. Nor was the unexpected incident of the Alleluia encounter any exception to this rule, for the celebrated stratagem was not followed by military action and no Roman general could have acted in the manner described.

According to the historian Zosimus¹⁶ it was in the year 410 that the Emperor Honorius wrote letters to the cities of Britain bidding them provide for their own safety. At this time Britain was cut off from Rome by the presence in Gaul of the usurper Constantine, who had led a revolt in Britain three years before, and Honorius was also hard pressed by the Visigoths in Italy. The imperial directive did not recognize the loss of Britain as a province of the empire but because of a situation believed to be temporary it gave permission to the civil authorities to raise troops for defence without incurring the charge of treason by so doing. Whether in happier times later there was a resumption of central imperial control is a matter for debate. To understand why Honorius addressed his letters to the 'cities of Britain' we must glance at the Roman system of administration of the civil districts of Britain. These districts covered roughly the lowland zone of England, for the North and West formed the military districts of the highland zone where different conditions applied. The administration of these civil districts, subject to the higher civil service headed by the governor of Britain, was through local urban councils based on towns (i.e. cities, *civitates*); such cities were of two types. There were first the cities of Roman foundation, *municipia* and *coloniae*, which had extensive privileges of self government, and secondly the old pre-

¹⁴ N. K. Chadwick, *Studies in Early British History*, Chap. VIII, 223, Note 1, 229.

¹⁵ M. P. Charlesworth, *The Lost Province*, 27-29. The Votadini were a northern Celtic tribe who under their chief Cunedda migrated to north Wales some time in the early fifth century.

¹⁶ Zosimus, *Hist. Novae in Mon. Hist. Brit.*, lxxix.

Roman tribal cantons or regions, each having its capital city (or county town) where the tribal council sat and the magistrates met. In Britain there was one *municipium*, that of Verulamium (S. Albans) and four *coloniae* founded as settlements of time-expired soldiers, these being Camulodunum (Colchester) Lindum (Lincoln) Glevum (Gloucester) and Eburacum (York). There were ten to fifteen native towns and we know that at least ten of them were tribal cantons. It is believed that many if not all of them had certain powers of self-government both in the towns and over the surrounding countryside of the canton. When central and provincial government broke down these cantonal governments alone remained, and it was to these local authorities that Honorius addressed his letters.

One would not expect that such a regional system of government could long endure without some attempt at amalgamation or centralization but it was clearly functioning two decades later when Germanus came to the island; perhaps that it had so survived is an added argument for a temporary restoration of central imperial authority, but if so that control had again been withdrawn by 429. For there is no mention of Roman officials or troops in Constantius's story of the visit, nor is there any hint of the presence of local kinglets (*reguli*) or of a 'British' emperor or high king. The British army of the Alleluia episode must have been a mixed force composed of levies from several cantons, and since the encounter clearly took place somewhere in the North it is possible that soldiers provided by the two *coloniae* of York and Lincoln formed the backbone of the force, for the military tradition would endure longer in the *coloniae* than in the native cities. And they may have exerted the influence which called Germanus to the field of action, for he had been a Roman governor and carried in his person the aura of the Empire. Furthermore it would explain the puzzling business of the mass baptism, for with the Roman military tradition went the military cult of Mithras and Germanus may have demanded a Christian army to oppose the heathen. The story of the first visit thus strikingly confirms the opinions which had been formed as to the posture of affairs in Britain during the first decades of the fifth century, but when we come to consider the second visit we find ourselves in difficulties. The precise dating of the first mission is in contrast with the uncertainties regarding the date of the second, and it is inferred that it occurred in 446 or 447. Constantius's account of it is disappointing, for it is short and reads very suspiciously like a doublet of his story of the first visit (see p. 176). It gives very little information and conveys the impression that conditions in Britain were much the same as they were at the time of the first mission seventeen years before. But we know that this could not be so, for it would seem that civil war and barbarian pressure had enfeebled if not destroyed cantonal government, and it

would appear that there was a struggle going on between British chiefs from the West and local Roman leaders from the South and East. At this time Vortigern, king of Powys (North Wales) had apparently emerged as a sort of high-king (440) but, wrote Nennius, he 'was beset with fear of the Picts and Scots, and by Roman aggression and also by dread of Ambrosius,' so it would appear that his supremacy was not complete. According to Gildas the country about this time was suffering from a barbarian incursion so severe that the Britons sent a desperate appeal for aid to Aetius, chief minister of the Western Empire, but without result. The letter of this appeal is generally dated to 446. Vortigern looked in another direction for aid by employing a band of overseas warriors under their chief Hengist to repel the northern marauders. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Hengist and his band landed in Kent in 449.¹⁷

If these events and their dates are anywhere near approximations of the truth then we are at once faced with the difficulty of accounting for the complete silence of Germanus on these catastrophic events and of the actors in them; for Constantius would certainly have recorded any information given by his patron. We must therefore review the evidence for the dates quoted. That for the date of the second mission is bound up with the record of Germanus's life immediately after his return, and as he died in Ravenna in July, 448, clearly the last possible time for the visit must have been in the year preceding. The following is the sequence of events in the *Life* after the return of Germanus to Auxerre. He had hardly got home when a deputation from Armorica came to him begging for his aid. The restless people of this province had again been in revolt and Aetius had invited Goar, king of the Alans, to punish the province with his army. Germanus was intreated to intervene, and ready as ever to intercede for his people he set out alone and unarmed to meet the king and his marching army. With great courage and intrepid faith he confronted the 'savage king' and by seizing his bridle forced him to stay his march. Moved, as the 'barbarians' sometimes were, by such courage and firmness the king entered into peaceful negotiations with the bishop and agreed to abandon his cruel project if Germanus would obtain pardon for the Armoricans from the Emperor or Aetius. To obtain this Germanus set out for Italy, pursuing his journey 'gently' and with 'much appreciated pauses' until he reached the then imperial capital of Ravenna, where he appears to have resided for some time until he sickened and died in the July of 448, at the age of seventy. Now it was in 442 that Aetius gave Goar, the aforesaid 'savage king,' permission for him and his tribe to settle around Orleans, and it must have been some time later, perhaps several years,

¹⁷ *A-S Chronicle*, Rolls Edn., I, 19, 20, II, 11.

before Aetius asked Goar to act against the Armoricans. Everything points, therefore, to 446 or 447 as the years of the second mission to Britain.

The second significant date is that of the famous 'Groans of the Britons' letter to Aetius, which is only recorded by Gildas, who quotes a sentence from it.¹⁸ Who wrote it, whether a reply was ever received, and how Gildas came to have a copy of it a century later are unanswerable questions. One can only conjecture that it was written on behalf of the 'Roman party' in Britain, for Vortigern, however hard pressed by the barbarians, would scarcely welcome imperial troops into his 'kingdom.' Indeed, he looked in another direction for aid, as noted, and did not hesitate to donate Kent to the Teutons, thus cutting off the 'road to Rome.' Within limits the dating of the appeal to Aetius lies in the address to him, for he is hailed as 'thrice consul.' Now he was appointed consul for the third time in 446 and for the fourth time in 454, so that the letter could have been written at any time between these two dates. The date generally accepted is that of 446, but this is surely the least probable, for news of the third appointment would have had to reach Britain.¹⁹

The Chronicle year for the landing of Hengist is 449 and is entirely traditional, yet it cannot be far from the true date.

The limits of the dates of the three events thus seem to be:

446, 447	Short second visit of Germanus.
447 to 454	The letter to Aetius.
449 (?)	The landing of Hengist.

It is therefore possible that Germanus paid a short and circumscribed visit to south-east Britain before Hengist landed in Kent, in which case he would have found this region (and indeed the south and south-west) undisturbed and peaceful. Conditions were far different in the north, the midlands and the west where barbarian devastation was extensive.

¹⁸ Gildas, *De Excidio, Mon. Hist. Brit.*, 11 (xvii).

¹⁹ The letter is introduced thus, 'epistolas ad Agitium Romanae potestates virum, hoc modo loquentes, inquit, "Agitio ter consuli gemitus Britanniorum"' or, 'a letter to Agitius, a man of Roman authority (or a powerful Roman) speaking in this manner, "To Agitius, thrice consul, the groans of the Britons".' On the strength of the 'thrice consul' reference this Agitius has been universally identified with Aetius but it should be noted that a few years after the death of Aetius there was a certain Roman general named Aegidius operating in northern Gaul. He was appointed *magister militum per Gallias* by the Emperor Majorian but on the death of that Emperor in 461 he refused to acknowledge the puppet Emperor Severus. Aegidius defeated the Visigoths at Orleans in 463 but died in the following year. Although the identification of Agitius with Aetius seems as certain as anything can be in the fifth century yet it is possible that there was some confusion by Gildas (or his sources) between the two men; their description of Aetius the Magnificent as a man of Roman authority is a little curious, for the writer of the letter at least salutes him as consul.

If Germanus came in 447 not only could he have brought news of the third consulship of Aetius but he could have carried back with him the letter of appeal; but this is mere conjecture.

Some commentators explain away the difficulties of this second mission by assuming that it was made to the west, in which case the saint would have travelled by road to Brittany and from there made a longer sea voyage to Cornwall and South Wales. But Constantius writes, 'He had hardly got home from his overseas expedition when a deputation from Armorica came to the weary prelate with a petition.' If Germanus had come from the west of Britain via Brittany, why was it necessary for a deputation to follow him from Brittany to Auxerre? The answer is that he had not been near Brittany. But there was really no reason why the visit could not have been made to the south-east, for this region was certainly undisturbed until the landing of Hengist in Thanet.

We close this essay with a brief comment on the central character in it, S. Germanus of Auxerre. Maugre all the near endless miracles and pious embroideries of Constantius there does emerge from his short work the figure of a remarkable man. Living in a time when the 'wind of change' in the Roman world had risen to hurricane force Germanus met the challenge of it with a steadfast faith, calm dignity and high courage. He was always truly the servant of his people and ready at all times to work for them, ungrateful as they sometimes were. Compare his reported acts with those of the fabulous thaumaturgist of the *Lost Book*. This 'S. German' denounced kings, accusing them of heinous crimes in the true, vindictive spirit of Gildas, pursuing them from place to place, praying against them for forty days and forty nights and then destroying two kings with their followers by fire from heaven. Of course these stories are copied from the Bible but they do give a certain character to the chief actor which is at variance with what we know of the real saint. For he did none of these things and his miracles were all of healing. He never denounces, persuades but does not curse King Goar and even spares the savage hoards of Saxons and Picts. He was a real man and the *Lost Book* shadow is none of his.