



Stories of the Saints

Grace Hall

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With the spread of Christ's teaching carried by the far-travelled Apostles, the minds of men and women were touched with a great faith, their thoughts were absorbed with visions of heaven and holy life on earth. Many gave up earthly desires and ways and devoted themselves to meditation on sacred things and to zealous missions and pilgrimages. In thought and feeling they lived in a region of their own, difficult now to conceive in its perfect unworldliness.

Their clear belief in a heaven to which they would surely pass stripped fear from their hearts, gave them a more than human endurance in hardship and persecution, and an unquenchable zeal in carrying their saving faith to distant lands and barbarous peoples.

They suffered torture, accidents of field and flood, with cheerful resolution. They had hard adventures, narrow escapes; they overcame by their undaunted spirit the opposition of men. They saw about themselves guardian angels, and at times seemed to be saved by the outstretched hand of Christ Himself. As a reward for successful sacrifice they saw His gracious Mother smile upon them in hours of meditation.

A great body of history and legend grew up around them. Stories and incidents grouped about the devout men who gave their lives and service to the cause of Christ. Who can say that many of the miraculous happenings related of these devout folk did not happen, as told and often recorded in their own time?

They surely testify to the childlike state of mind of the faithful believers of their day, and to the continuing spirit of faith of the days of the Apostles.

How much we have lost of that simple faith! But whatever our own state, we may rejoice in the lovely legends and see in these stories of the Saints a significance and a lesson, useful and stimulating in our own less believing lives and days. We can appreciate and approve of the noble trust in God's power, shown by the narrators of these stories. They stretch in unbroken line from the time of Christ Himself down almost to our own day. Their records have been preserved in the hearts and writings of generation after generation; a fact that is a wonderful testimony to the everlasting goodness of the simple human soul. It is and has been ever ready to see and believe the loveliest and best in the words and deeds of the great examples of the spiritual life.

To understand their histories we must become as little children and look upon that wonderful phase of the world with unquestioning eyes; even with the prayer or wish that we may know its spirit and share something of its devotion and faith...

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