

ST. DAVID.

Reprinted from the "East Anglian Daily Times."

"St. David of Wales" formed the subject of a lecture delivered to the Suffolk Institute of Archæology and Natural History at the Museum Lecture Room, Ipswich, on Tuesday afternoon, by the Rev. Berthold A. Browning, Rector of Stratford St. Mary, Colchester. There was a large attendance, over which Canon Rowland Barker presided.

The Rev. Berthold Browning prefaced his lecture by referring to some holidays spent at St. David's, on the Pembrokeshire coast. Travellers arrive at the place by a 17-mile 'bus ride from Haverfordwest: once they get there it is well worth the journey. Indeed, one could not help feeling a sense of surprise and wonder at finding a town so full of memorials of the past on so remote and barren a headland. And then arose the question, Who was this St. David, who had given this name to the place, and in whose honour the beautiful old Cathedral had been placed in that far-away valley? In the first part of his lecture, he would tell his audience what he had been able to learn about the patron Saint of Wales, and in the second part he would show a few slides of the Cathedral and its surroundings. Had it not been for an invitation, he would have felt that he owed some apology for speaking about this Western saint to a distinctly Suffolk Society. St. David, they were told, was born just 30 years after St. Patrick went to Ireland in 432 as Bishop, i.e., he was born in 462, a date which might be considered as certain. His father was a kinglet of the region where St. David's now stands. He was born at a place known as Non's Well. Referring to the places where David was educated, the lecturer said that the different MSS. dealing with this point were very tantalising. The British Museum MS. said that David "went to Paulinus, the scribe, who, in a certain island, was leading a life pleasing to God," which meant that he had become a monk. David remained ten years with Paulinus, who instructed him in the art of reading until he was a scribe. And he remained there, "reading and fulfilling what he read," until at length, at about the age of 28, he was warned, either by a voice from within or from without, no longer to remain there but to go forth boldly and "amass sheaves of souls for the heavenly barns." He therefore returned to the little monastery at Whitesands Bay, and, gathering round him his three most faithful friends and several more, he walked across the rising ground which

separates Whitesands Bay from the valley where St. David's now stands, and down in that valley he kindled an enormous fire "in the Name of the Lord." The probable reason for this wholesale migration was that the monastery, being easily seen from the sea, was a tempting bait for the Irish sea-rovers, who are said to have rushed up and plundered it two or three times. His biographer here describes the life led by David for many years. His fame gradually spread, and men from far away came to ask admission to his monastery. From this centre "the Father," as he was called, sent forth to other places disciples whom he had trained. Irish monks — or saints, as they were called — used to visit St. David's and stay there on their way to England or the Continent. The date of St. David's death was not certain; the authorities varied from 505 to 605 A.D. Mr. Wade-Evans thinks he was only 44 when he died, but to the lecturer's mind that age hardly seemed to allow enough time for all that happened. He hoped he had said enough to show how singly and unfalteringly St. David upheld the lamp of faith in that dark age, and caused it to shine throughout the whole of Wales, and he trusted his lecture would help to explain to them why it was that his memory had always been treasured in the deeply religious heart of the Welsh people.

In the concluding part of his lecture, Mr. Browning described the evidence which drew his attention to the possibility of locating the remains of St. David. Ancient accounts stated that his bones together with those of another saint who was buried with him, had been removed from a niche in the wall behind the high altar of St. David's Cathedral, enclosed in a chest and buried in the floor of the church. Search beneath the pavement immediately below the niche in question revealed a chest which was found to contain the bones of two persons, one evidently a man of great stature, and corresponding with the accounts of St. David. There seems good evidence then, to conclude that the remains discovered were those of St. David and of his confessor, St. Justinian.