

THE MARTYRS OF UTICA,
CALLED THE WHITE MASS.

IN the persecution of Valerian, in the year 258, the proconsul of Africa went from Carthage to Utica, and commanded all the Christians who were detained in the prisons of that city to be brought before him. St. Austin says their number amounted to one hundred and fifty-three. The proconsul had ordered a great pit of burning lime to be prepared in a field, and by it an altar of idols with salt and hog's liver placed on it ready for sacrifice. He caused his tribunal to be erected near this place in the open air, and he gave the prisoners their choice either to be thrown into this pit of burning lime, or to offer sacrifice to the idols which were set by it. They unanimously chose the first, and were all consumed together in the furnace. Their ashes were afterwards taken out, and as they made up but one common mass cemented with the lime, these martyrs were called The White Mass. See St. Austin, Serm. 306, p. 1239, t. 5, and in Ps. 49, n. 9, and in Ps. 144, t. 4, p. 1621. Also Prudentius, De Cor. Hymn. 13, alias 5, ver. 80.

SAINT OUEN OR AUDOEN, ARCHBISHOP OF
ROUEN, C.

HE was otherwise called Dadon, and was son of Autaire, a virtuous French nobleman, who was settled in Brie. St. Columban being courteously entertained by him, gave his blessing to his two sons, Ouen and Adon, then in their infancy. Autaire placed them both, during their youth, in the court of King Clotaire II., where they contracted a friendship with St. Eloi, and by his example conceived a great contempt for the world, and both resolved to devote themselves to the service of God. Adon executed his design some time after, and founded upon an estate which he had near the river Marne, the double monastery of Jouarre, then called Jotrum, which he endowed with his own estate. It is at present a Benedictin nunnery. St. Ouen was in great credit with king Clotaire II., and with his son and successor Dagobert I. who made him keeper of his seal, in quality of his referendary or chancellor; and original ates signed by him by virtue of this office are still extant. He ob-

tained of the king a grant of a piece of land situated in the forest of Brie, between the greater and lesser Morin; where, in 634, he erected a monastery called, from the brook near which it stands, Resbac, at present Rebais. By the advice of St. Faro, bishop of Meaux, he sent for St. Agil, a disciple of St. Columban, and got him appointed the first abbot by a council held at Clichy in 636; but in this he was forced to make use of the king's authority; for the cities of Metz, Langres, and Besançon had at the same time requested St. Agil to be their bishop, and the monks of Luxeu desired to have him for their abbot. St. Ouen would have retired himself to Rebais, there to embrace a monastic life; but king Dagobert and his nobles could by no means be induced to give their consent. St. Ouen and St. Eloi, though yet laymen, were for their zeal, piety, and learning considered as oracles even of the bishops, and they exceedingly promoted the cause of religion and virtue through the whole kingdom. Dagobert dying in 638, Clovis II. his son and successor, testified the same esteem for St. Ouen, and continued him for some time in the office of referendary, by virtue of which all the letters and edicts of the king were brought to him, and he put the king's seal upon them, says Aymoinus. At length this prince was prevailed upon to give St. Ouen leave to receive the clerical tonsure, and he was shortly after elected archbishop of Rouen, in the room of St. Romanus; and at the same time his friend St. Eloi was chosen bishop of Noyon and Tournay. They took a considerable time to prepare themselves for this dignity by retirement, rigorous fasting, and prayer, and received the episcopal consecration together at Rheims in 640.

St. Ouen in this new dignity increased, not his pomp, but his humility, austerities, and charities. His zeal was indefatigable, and, by his affability and patience, he was truly all to all. He exerted his zeal in extirpating simony and other abuses, and promoted every where the reformation of discipline, especially in the third council of Châlons in 644. King Theodoric III. employed him in many charitable important commissions, especially in pacifying those who were at variance, and in calming seditions. The saint having procured a peace between the French in Austrasia and Neustria, went to carry the news thereof to king Theodoric at Clichy near Paris, where an ac-

ssembly of prelates and lords was held; and falling there sick of a fever, he besought the king that St. Ansbert, abbot of Fontenelle, who was the king's confessor, and whom the clergy and people of Rouen desired to have for their pastor, should succeed him. He died at Clichy, in great sentiments of holy compunction and joy on the 24th of August, in 683, having possessed the episcopal dignity forty-three years. See his life in Surius, and another more ancient in the Bollandists, p. 805, also *PHistoire de Rouen*, t. 1, part. 3, p. 136, and Du-Plessis, *Hist. de Meaux*, p. 34, 45, and 47. See a long history of miracles performed by the intercession and relics of St. Ouen, written by the monk Fulbert in 1066; also the poem of Thierri, the learned monk of St. Ouen in 1050, upon the life of this saint in F. du Moustier's *Neustria Pia*, p. 23, 72—846. Henschenius confounded St. Ouen with St. Owin, a monk of Lichfield, when he ascribed his life to an English writer of the tenth age, named Fridegorius, as Dom. Rivet observes, t. 8, p. 366. On his translations and miracles, see Martenne, *Anecd.* t. 3, Col. 1669.

ST. IRCHARD OR ERTHAD, BISHOP, C.

IN SCOTLAND.

ST. PALLADIUS sent Servanus to preach to the northern islands of Orkney, and St. Ternan bishop to the Picts, who is titular saint of the cathedral of Abernethy, and many other churches. St. Irchard was bishop of the Picts about the same time, according to some Scottish historians; but more probably, according to others, about the reign of Malcolm I. See the Breviary of Aberdeen, and Cuper the Bollandist, p. 778.