

who seems to have received his crown under Dioclesian; his relics were brought from Vicenza, and deposited by St. Petronius in the church of St. Stephen. He is honoured as patron of the city.<sup>(1)</sup> The Roman Martyrology mentions him on this day.\* See Rufin, l. 2, de Vitis Patr. Gennad. de Vir. Ill. c. 41. Ceillier, t. 14, p. 299. Fontanini, Hist. Liter. Aquileiens. p. 361, l. 5, c. 12. Tillem. t. 15, p. 35. Bened. XIV. de Festis SS. Bonon. Bue the Bollandist, p. 422 ad 470.

### ST. AMMON, HERMIT,

#### FOUNDER OF THE HERMITAGES OF NITRIA.

THIS great saint was born in Egypt of a rich and noble family. At the age of twenty-two years his tutors and trustees obliged him to marry, in the year 308; but, on the day of his marriage, he read to his wife what St. Paul has written in commendation of the holy state of virginity, by which she was easily persuaded to consent to their making a mutual vow of perpetual continence. They lived together eighteen years under the same roof in perfect continency; and he was so severe in his mortifications as to have gradually inured and prepared his body to bear the austerity of long fasts. For having spent the day in hard labour in tilling a large garden in which he planted and cultivated balsamum, a shrub about two cubits high, which distils balsam and produces an apple, some time ago more famous in medicine than at present, (the tree is cultivated like a vine, and produces its fruit in the third year,) at evening he supped with his wife on herbs or fruits, and immediately retired to prayer, in which exercise he passed a great part of the night. When his uncle and other friends who opposed his retreat were dead, he retired to Mount Nitria with his wife's consent. She assembled and governed in her house a society of religious women, who in the exercises of a penitential and ascetic life, vied with the most fervent anchorets in the deserts, as is related by Rufin and others. St. Ammon first inhabited this desert; which

(1) Bened. XIV. de Sanctis Bonon. c. 26.

\* The great church of St. Petronius at Bologna, is famous, among other things, for the gnomon made in it by Dominico Cassini in 1645, with a meridian line one hundred and twenty feet in length, drawn on the pavement.

Cassian places five miles from the city Nitria. In the close of the fourth century, Cassian reckoned fifty monasteries on Mount Nitria, inhabited by five thousand hermits. St. Ammon's first disciples lived dispersed in separate cells, till the great St. Antony advised him to found a monastery, and to assemble the greatest part of them under the inspection of an attentive superior. That great patriarch of monks made choice himself of the place for erecting this monastery by setting up a cross.<sup>(1)</sup> If St. Antony sometimes visited St. Ammon, our saint often repaired to St. Antony on Mount Troicus, where he then kept his cell. St. Ammon lived in great austerity, when he first retired into the desert, taking only a refreshment of bread and water once a-day. This he afterwards extended to two, and sometimes to three or even four days. The desert of cells into which St. Ammon extended his hermitages, was ten or twelve miles distant from Mount Nitria, though one continued wilderness.\* St. Ammon wrought many miracles. That which follows seemed to St. Athanasius to contain so important an instruction, as to deserve to be inserted in his life of St. Antony, where he has recorded it. The authors of the histories of the Fathers of the desert, and of the life of St. Ammon also mention it. One day, as he was going to cross a river called Lycus, when the banks were overflowed, in company with Theodorus his disciple, he desired him to withdraw, that they might not be seen naked in swimming over. Ammon, though alone, stood pensive on the bank, being unwilling and ashamed, out of modesty, to strip himself, reflecting that he had never seen himself naked. God was pleased to recompense his virginal love of purity by a miracle, and whilst he stood thus, he found himself on a sudden transported to the other side of the river. Theodorus coming up, and seeing he was gone over without being wet, asked him how it came to pass, and pressed him so earnestly, that he confessed the miracle to him, making him first promise not to mention it to any one till after his death. St. Ammon, otherwise written Amun, died at the age of sixty-two

(1) Monum. Græc. in Apothegmat. Patrum. apud Cotel. t. 1, p. 351.

\* Mount Nitria was situated beyond the lake Maria or Marcotis, seventy miles from Alexandria, reaching towards Ethiopia.

years ; and St. Antony, though at the distance of thirteen days' journey from him, knew the exact time of his death, having seen his soul in a vision ascend to heaven. St. Ammon is honoured on the 4th of October in many Greek Menologies. See Palladius, Rufin, Socrates, Sozomen, &c., in Rosweide ; also Cotelier, *Mon. Græc.* t. 1, p. 352. Cassian *Collat.* 6, c. 1, &c.

### ST. AUREA, V. ABBESS.

WHEN St. Eligius, by the liberality of King Dagobert, settled at Paris a nunnery of three hundred virgins, he appointed Aurea abbess of that numerous family. She walked before them in the exercises of religious perfection, and, in the thirty-fourth year of her abbatial dignity, being invited to glory by St. Eligius in a vision after his death, she exhorted her sisters to rejoice at the near prospect of their bliss, and died on the 4th of October in 666. With her one hundred and sixty of her nuns were swept off by the pestilence. Her nunnery was called St. Eligius's and St. Aurea's. As it stood within the city she could not be buried at it, and St. Eligius had built the church of St. Paul, then without the city, for a cemetery for her community. She was therefore interred at St. Paul's, and some time after, her bones were taken up, and kept in a rich shrine in that church, till they were translated into her monastery. This nunnery being fallen to decay, it was united to the episcopal see of Paris in the twelfth century, and the bishop placed in it Benedictin monks. Four hundred years after, the first archbishop, John Francis de Gondi, settled in that church the Regular Clerks called Barnobites, in 1636. Her relics have been in some former ages in equal veneration at Paris with those of St. Genevieve. See the life of St. Eligius on the 1st of December, and the Roman and Paris Martyrologies. Also Felibien et Lobineau, *Hist. de Paris.*

### ST. EDWIN, KING, M.

THE school of adversity prepared this prince for the greatest achievements, as necessity often makes men industrious, whilst affluence and prosperity ruin others by sloth and carelessness. Edwin was son of Alla, king of Deira ; but at his father's death was deprived of his kingdom by Ethelfred, king of the Berni-