

laid siege to Ausburg. The good paster continued in prayer, like Moses on the mountain, for his people, whom he convened in frequent processions and devotions. His prayers were heard, and the barbarians, being seized with a sudden panic of fear, raised the siege and fled in great confusion. They were met and cut to pieces by Otho, who, in 962, was crowned emperor by the pope. St. Ulric rebuilt his cathedral in a stately manner, and dedicated it again to God in honour of St. Afra, the celebrated patroness of Ausburg, in which city she received the crown of martyrdom in the persecution of Dioclesian. She is commemorated on the 5th of August. The saint earnestly desired to resign his bishopric, and retire to the monastery of St. Gal, sometime before his death; but met with too great opposition. He made a second journey of devotion to Rome, and was received with extraordinary marks of esteem by the pope, and at Ravenna by the emperor and his pious empress. Otho I. died in May, 973, and from that time the saint's health began sensibly to decline. During his last sickness he redoubled his fervour. In his agony he caused himself to be laid on ashes blessed and strewed on the floor in the form of a cross, in which posture he died amidst the prayers of his clergy, on the 4th of July, 973, being about fourscore years old, and having been bishop fifty years. He was buried in the church of St. Afra, which at present bears his name. His sanctity was attested by miracles, and he was canonized by Pope John XV. in 993.

The saints living by faith had recourse to God in all their actions, and by that means drew down his blessing on their undertakings. It was the saying of a great man, that persons who expose themselves to many dangers and sins, often meet with temporal miscarriages,(1) like the Israelites when they were deceived by the Gabaonites, because they neglect to recommend their enterprises to God by fervent prayer and to consult his will.

ST. ODO, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, C.

HE was born in the province of the East-Angles of noble Danish parents, who about the year 870, had accompanied In-

(1) Jos. ix. 14.

guar and Hubba in their barbarous expedition, and had acquired a peaceable plentiful settlement in that part of England. Odo from a child loved the Christian religion, frequented the churches, and often spoke with honour of Christ to his parents; for which he was frequently severely chastised by them, and at length disinherited and turned out of doors. The young nobleman, rejoicing to see himself naked, and found worthy to suffer something for God, chose him for his inheritance; and, fearing lest by sloth he should lose the advantages he had already gained, resolved to give himself wholly to God, and embrace an ecclesiastical state. He was enabled to perform his studies by the liberality of the most noble and virtuous duke Athelm, who seems to have been son of the ealderman Athelm, who in the reign of king Ethelwulf, being assisted by the Dorsetshire men, had defeated the Danes near Portland, in 838. The duke or governor Athelm was one of the principal noblemen of England in the reign of king Alfred, and in the Saxon annals is styled ealderman of Wiltshire. Being a most religious man he was much taken with the piety of Odo. In 887 he made a devout pilgrimage to Rome, and carried thither the alms of king Alfred and of the West Saxons, as the Saxon Annals testify. He had before that time procured Odo to be ordained priest, and made use of him for his confessarius, as did many others who belonged to the court. He recited every day the church office with him, as it was then customary for pious persons among the laity to do. Our saint accompanied him to Rome in quality of chaplain. On the road this nobleman fell sick of a fever, which in seven days reduced him almost to extremity. But Odo, after praying for him, presented him a glass of wine on which he had made the sign of the cross, bidding him have an entire confidence in God. Athelm had no sooner drank the glass, than he found himself perfectly cured, and able to get on horseback. Athelm died in 898.

Odo continued to be caressed as much as ever, and was often employed by the kings Alfred and his son Edward the Elder, who began his reign in 901. King Alfred had by his wisdom and prowess raised the English monarchy to the highest pitch of grandeur, and the Danes who, from the time of the martyrdom of St. Edmund, were possessed of part of Northumberland, and

of the kingdom of the East-Angles, were confined within those territories, and restrained in the eastern provinces from making inroads by the famous ditch running from the northern fens to the river Ouse, and into Suffolk, separating Mercia and the kingdom of the East-Angles, called at this day, from a town of that name, Reech-dike, and by the common people Devil's-dike. This great ditch, mentioned by the Saxon Annals in the reign of Edward the Elder, seems made about this time. When the Danes broke the truce, king Edward entirely subdued them in the country of the East-Angles; he also defeated the Scots, Cumbrians, and Welch. He built towns and fortresses in many parts of the kingdom, as Ethelred, earl of Mercia, and after his death his courageous and virtuous widow Ethelfleda, daughter to king Alfred, did in the middle counties. But nothing reflects greater honour on the name of this king, and on his wise counsellors than the body or code of laws which he added to those of his father Alfred,⁽¹⁾ in enacting which the Danish king of the East-Angles, Guthrun, or rather Guthrun's successor, Eoric, concurred. In these laws only pecuniary fines are prescribed for theft, and most other crimes; for which capital punishments were not generally instituted before the thirteenth century. Edward the Elder reigned twenty-four years, and dying in 925 was buried in the monastery which his father Alfred had founded at Winchester.

Athelstan, his eldest son, reigned fourteen years with great prudence and valour. His father Edward having extinguished the kingdom of the Danes among the East-Angles, Athelstan expelled them out of Northumberland; obliged the Welch to pay him a considerable annual tribute; and in 938 vanquished also the Scots. For their king, Constantine, protecting the Danes in Northumberland under their last king Guthfrith and his son Anlaff, drew on himself the arms of king Athelstan, who marched with his victorious army to the very north of Scotland, in 934, as William of Malmesbury relates. In the same year Constantine invaded England with a great army of Scots, Danes, and Irish, another Anlaff, king of Dublin and some of the Western Islands, coming over to his assistance.

⁽¹⁾ See these laws in Spelman, Conc. t. 1, and Wilkins, Conc. Brit. t. 1.

Athelstan met them at Brunanburgh, a place at present unknown, near the Humber, and with his valiant West-Saxons attacking Anlaff, whilst his cousin Turketil, at the head of the Londoners, fell on the Scots, he gained a most complete victory, which he ascribed to the intercession of St. John of Beverley. Having on the other side driven the Welch out of Exeter, he founded there a noble monastery, which was afterwards made the cathedral, when the bishoprick was removed from Crediton to that city. Alfred of Beverley calls Athelstan the first monarch of all England, though out of modesty he never assumed that title, but left it to his brother Edred to take; for after the extinction of the Danish kingdom in Northumberland, and the death of Ethelfleda, countess of Mercia, there remained no petty sovereign in his dominions, which had always been the case from Egbert to his time. Athelstan also subdued the Welch and the Scots, and according to our historians made not only the former, but likewise the latter tributary, though this the Scottish writers deny with regard to their country. King Athelstan was a great lover of peace, piety, and religion: he was devout, affable to all, learned himself, and a patron of learned men; and he was as much admired and beloved by his subjects for his humility and humanity as he was feared by enemies and rebels for his military skill and invincible courage. He framed many good laws, in which he inflicted chiefly pecuniary penalties for crimes; for which purpose he fixed for every offence a value or price according to every one's rank and estate. This great king reposed an entire confidence in the prudence and sanctity of his chaplain, and not content to make use of his counsels in his most weighty concerns, he carried him with him in his war, that he might always animate himself to virtue by his example and holy advice. The kingdom of the West Saxons was for sometime all comprised under the diocese of Winchester, till in the reign of king Ina, about the year 705, the see of Shirburne was erected, and in 905 that of Wilton for Wiltshire, though these two sees were again united and fixed at Salisbury in 1046. King Athelstan about the beginning of his reign procured St. Odo to be chosen second bishop of Wilton, according to Le Neve's Fasti, though some say of Shirburne. Nevertheless, the saint was obliged often to attend the

king, and was present at the great battle of Brunanburgh, against the Danes, Scots, and Irish, in which Athelstan, being attacked by Anlaff and almost surrounded by enemies, having also broken or lost his sword, called aloud for help. St. Odo ran in upon this occasion, and first discovered to the king a sword hanging by his side, which was thought to have been sent from heaven, with which, animated by the saint, he gained one of the most glorious and advantageous victories that ever was won by the English nation.

Athelstan dying in 941, left the crown to his brother Edmund, at that time only eighteen years of age. This prince reduced a second time the Northumbers and Anlaff the Dane, who had again revolted; and governed by the wise counsels of St. Odo, he enacted many wholesome laws, especially to prevent family feuds and murders. By one of these it is ordained that if several thieves combine together, the eldest shall be hanged, the rest whipped thrice. This seems the first law by which robbery was punished in England by death. This king was religious and valiant, and being a judge of men, reposed an entire confidence in St. Odo, who, in 942, was translated to the metropolitan see of Canterbury. The saint had consented to his first promotion with great reluctance. But he opposed the second a long time with a dread which saints are usually filled with on such occasions. He alleged first, his unworthiness, secondly, the canons against translations, and thirdly, that he was no monk. His two first difficulties were overruled; and as to the third, he at length consented to receive the Benedictin habit from the hands of the abbot of Fleuri, now St. Bennet's on the Loire, a house then famous for its regularity. The abbot was therefore invited into England for this purpose, or according to others, St. Odo travelled to Fleuri, and received the habit from his hands; after which he was installed archbishop. King Edmund was assassinated by Leof, an outlawed thief, who had insolently seated himself at the king's table, in a great banquet which the king gave on the feast of St. Austin, archbishop of Canterbury, in 948.

Edmund left two sons very young, Edwy and Edgar, but was succeeded by his brother Edred, in whose days happened the following miracle, related by Eadmer in his exact life of our

saint; also by William of Malmesbury, and the Chronicles of the Church of Canterbury, quoted in Parker's *British Antiquities*, and Du Pin.(1) Some of the clergy at Canterbury being tempted to doubt of the real presence of Christ's body in the holy eucharist, St. Odo begged by his prayers that God would be pleased mercifully to demonstrate to them the truth of this sacred mystery; and at this petition, whilst he was saying mass in his cathedral, at the breaking of the host, blood was seen by all the people distilling from it into the chalice; the saint called up to the altar all those who laboured under the temptation before-mentioned, and others then present to bear witness to the miracle. Full of gratitude, they afterwards celebrated with their archbishop a solemn thanksgiving for this wonderful miracle, in which Christ had manifested himself visible in the flesh to their corporal eyes. King Edred died in 955, after a lingering illness, which he sanctified by the most edifying patience and acts of devotion, having reigned nine years and a half. He took the title of king of Great Britain, as he styles himself in a charter which he gave to the abbey of Croyland, recited by Ingulphus. In another, given to the abbey of Reculver,(2) he calls himself *Monarch of all England*.

Edwy, the eldest son of king Edmund, succeeded next to the throne, and was crowned at Kingston by St. Odo. But being a youth abandoned to excessive lust, after the coronation dinner he left his bishops and nobles to go to his mistress Ethelgiva, who was his own near relation. St. Dunstan, then abbot of Glastenbury, reproved him by order of St. Odo, but was banished by the tyrant, and the monks turned out of Glastenbury and many other monasteries. St. Odo exerted his zeal against the adulteress, but the king repaired to Gloucester when she fled to that city. The enormities of his reign stirred up the Mercians and Northumbrians to take up arms against him, and to crown his younger brother Edgar. Edwy retained the kingdom of the West-Saxons till his death, which happened in 969, according to Florence of Worcester and Laud's copy of the Saxon annals.

Edgar exceedingly honoured St. Odo, recalled St. Dunstan, and advanced him to the bishopric of Worcester. He reigned

(1) Cent. 10.

(2) Extant in *Monast. Anglic. App.* vol. 1.

about sixteen years in uninterrupted peace and prosperity, till his death in 975, beloved by all his subjects, and revered by foreigners. William of Malmesbury and Florence of Worcester mention his two great fleets, said to have consisted of three thousand six hundred ships, with which he yearly scoured the British seas; and he had six or eight petty kings often to wait on him, namely Kenneth of the Scots, Malcolm of Cumberland, Maccuse, lord of Man and the Isles, and five princes of Wales, who all rowed his galley from Chester down the river Dee. These princes of Wales were the successors of Howel Dha, the wise legislator and powerful prince of all Wales.* King Edgar's salutary laws are chiefly to be ascribed to St. Odo and St. Dunstan. This great king, by the direction of these holy men, set himself earnestly to repair the damages which the Church and State had received under the tyranny of his brother.

St. Odo never intermitted the daily instruction of his clergy and flock, notwithstanding his great age, and strenuously laboured to advance daily in the divine love. He died in 961. His relics, when his shrine was plundered at the change of religion, seem to have been deposited under a small tomb which is seen at this day in the same place where the shrine formerly stood. His name was famous in our English Martyrologies. For his virtue he was usually styled whilst living, *Odo se gode*, that is, in the Saxon language, *Odo the Good*. The Constitutions of St. Odo seem charges delivered by him to the clergy.(1) The laws of the kings Athelstan, Edmund, and Edgar, are part laws of the State, part of the Church. They were enacted in general assemblies or synods, and are for the most part to be ascribed to St. Odo. See Matthew of Westminster, Florence of Worcester, and the life of St. Odo, written, not by Osbern the famous monk of Canterbury, in 1070, as Mabillon conjectured, Sæc. Ben. V. p. 203, but by Kadmer, the disciple of Anselm, in 1121, as Henry Wharton demonstrates in his Preface, vol. 2, p. 10, *Anglia Sacra*. The

(1) See Inett, History of the Church of England, t. 1.

* The Welch laws of Howel Dha, that is, Howel the Good, are published by Dr. Wotton, in folio, 1733.

Life of St. Odo, written by Osbern, and quoted by William of Malmesbury, seems no where to be extant. The History of St. Odo is compiled by Ericus Pantopidanus in his *Gesta Danorum extra Daniæ. Hafniæ, 1740, t. 2, § 2, § 8, p. 157.*

ST. SISOES OR SISOY, ANCHORET IN EGYPT.

AFTER the death of St. Antony, St. Sisoës was one of the most shining lights of the Egyptian deserts. He was an Egyptian by birth. Having quitted the world from his youth, he retired to the desert of Scete, and lived some time under the direction of abbot Hor. The desire of finding a retreat yet more unfrequented induced him to cross the Nile and hide himself in the mountain where St. Antony died some time before. The memory of that great man's virtues being still fresh, wonderfully supported his fervour. He imagined he saw him, and heard the instructions he was wont to deliver to his disciples; and he strained every nerve to imitate his most heroic exercises; the austerity of his penance, the rigour of his silence, the almost unremitting ardour of his prayer, insomuch that the reputation of his sanctity became so illustrious as to merit the full confidence of all the neighbouring solitaries. Some even came a great distance to be guided in the interior ways of perfection; and, in spite of the pains he took he was forced to submit his love of silence and retreat to the greater duty of charity. He often passed two days without eating, and was so rapt in God that he forgot his food, so that it was necessary for his disciple Abraham to remind him that it was time to break his fast. He would sometimes be even surprised at the notice, and contend that he had already made his meal; so small was the attention he paid to the wants of his body.(1) His prayer was so fervent that it often passed into ecstasy. At other times his heart was so inflamed with divine love, that, scarce able to support its violence, he only obtained relief from his sighs, which frequently escaped without his knowledge, and even against his will.(2) It was a maxim with him, that a solitary ought not to choose the manual labour which is most pleasing to him.(3)

(1) Rosweide, Vit. Patr. l. 5, lib. 4, n. 38.

(2) Ibid. l. 6, lib. 2, n. 14.

(3) Cotelier, Monum. Gr. p. 675.