

Sigeberti ad an. 1127. Jac. Maierus, *Annal. Flandriæ*, l. 4, p. 45, 46. Likewise Ericus Pantoppidanus in his *Gesta Danorum extra Daniam*. Hafniæ, 1740, t. 2. sec. 1. c. 5. sec. 32. p. 398.

ST. JOAVAN, OR JOEVIN B. C.

THIS saint was a fervent disciple of St. Paul of Leon, in Great Britain, his own country, accompanied him into Armorica, led an anchoretical life near him in the country of Ack, and afterwards in the isle of Baz. That great saint chose him coadjutor in his bishopric, when he retired a little before his death. St. Joavan survived him only one year. He is titular saint of two parish churches in the diocess of St. Paul of Leon, &c. See Lobineau, *Vies des Saints de la Bretagne*, p. 71. from the breviary and tradition of that church, though the life of St. Jovian, copied by Albert the Great, &c. deserves no regard.

MARCH III.

ST. CUNEGUNDES, EMPRESS.

From her life, written by a canon of Bamberg, about the year 1152: also the Dissertation of Henschenius, p. 267.

A.D. 1040.

ST. CUNEGUNDES was the daughter of Sigefride, the first count of Luxemburgh, and Hadeswige his pious wife. They instilled into her from her cradle the most tender sentiments of piety, and married her to St. Henry, duke of Bavaria, who, upon the death of the emperor Otho III. was chosen king of the Romans and crowned at Mentz on the 6th of June, 1002. She was crowned at Paderborn on St. Laurence's day, on which occasion she made great presents to the churches of that city. In the year 1014 she went with her husband to Rome, and received the imperial crown with him from the hands of Pope Benedict VIII. She had, by St. Henry's consent before her marriage, made a vow of virginity. Calumniators afterwards accused her to him of freedoms with other men. The holy empress, to remove the scandal of such a slander, trusting in God the protector of innocence, in proof of hers, walked over red hot plough-shares without being hurt. The emperor condemned his too scrupulous fears

and credulity, and made her ample amends. They lived from that time in the strictest union of hearts, conspiring to promote in everything God's honour, and the advancement of piety.

Going once to make a retreat in Hesse, she fell dangerously ill, and made a vow to found a monastery, if she recovered, in a place then called Capungen, now Kaffungen, near Cassel, in the diocese of Paderborn, which she executed in a stately manner, and gave it to nuns of the Order of St. Benedict. Before it was finished St. Henry died, in 1024. She earnestly recommended his soul to the prayers of others, especially to her dear nuns, and expressed her longing desire of joining them. She had already exhausted her treasures and her patrimony in founding bishoprics and monasteries, and in relieving the poor. Whatever was rich or magnificent she thought better suited churches than her palace. She had therefore little now left to give. But still thirsting to embrace perfect evangelical poverty, and to renounce all to serve God without obstacle, on the anniversary day of her husband's death, 1025, she assembled a great number of prelates to the dedication of her church of Kaffungen; and after the gospel was sung at mass, offered on the altar a piece of the true cross, and then put off her imperial robes, and clothed herself with a poor habit: her hair was cut off, and the bishop put on her a veil, and a ring as the pledge of her fidelity to her heavenly spouse. After she was consecrated to God in religion, she seemed entirely to forget that she had been empress, and behaved as the last in the house, being persuaded that she was so before God. She feared nothing more than whatever could bring to her mind the remembrance of her former dignity. She prayed and read much, worked with her hands, abhorred the least appearance of worldly nicety, and took a singular pleasure in visiting and comforting the sick. Thus she passed the fifteen last years of her life, never suffering the least preference to be given her above any one in the community. Her mortifications at length reduced her to a very weak condition, and brought on her last sickness. Her monastery and the whole city of Cassel were grievously afflicted at the thought of their approaching loss; she alone appeared without concern, lying on a coarse hair-cloth, ready to give up the ghost, whilst the prayers of the agonizing were read by her side. Perceiving they were preparing a cloth fringed with gold to cover her corpse after her death, she changed colour and ordered it to be taken away; nor could she be at rest

till she was promised she should be buried as a poor religious in her habit. She died on the 3rd of March, 1040. Her body was carried to Bamberg, and buried near that of her husband. The greater part of her relics still remain in the same church. She was solemnly canonized by Innocent III. in 1200. The author of her life relates many miracles wrought at her tomb, or by the intercession of this holy virgin and widow.

Few arrive at any degree of perfection amongst those who aspire after virtue, because many behave as if they placed it barely in multiplying exercises of piety and good works. This costs little to self-love, which it rather feeds by entertaining a secret vanity, or self-complacency, in those who are not very careful in watching over their hearts. It is a common thing to see persons who have passed forty or fifty years in the constant practice of penance and all religious exercises, and the use of the most holy sacraments, still subject to habitual imperfections, and venial disorders, incompatible with a state of sanctity or perfection. They give marks of sudden resentment, if they happen to be rebuked or despised: are greedy of the esteem of others, take a secret satisfaction in applause, love too much their own ease and conveniences, and seek those things which flatter self-love. How much are these souls their own enemies by not giving themselves to God without reserve, and taking a firm resolution to labour diligently in watching over themselves, and cutting off all irregular attachments, and purifying their hearts! The neglect of this fosters many habitual little disorders and venial sins, which incredibly obstruct the work of our sanctification, and the advancement of the kingdom of divine grace in our souls. These little enemies wilfully carressed, weaken our good desires, defile even our spiritual actions with a thousand imperfections, and stop the abundant effusion with which the Holy Ghost is infinitely desirous to communicate himself to our souls, and to fill them with his light, grace, peace, and holy joy. The saints, by the victory over themselves, and by making it their principal study to live in the most perfect disengagement and purity of heart, offered to God, even in their smallest actions, pure and full sacrifices of love, praise, and obedience. If we desire to cultivate this purity of heart, we must carefully endeavour to discover the imperfections and disorders of our souls, especially such as are habitual, and strenuously labour to root them out. Secondly, we must keep our senses under a strict guard, and

accustom them to restraint by frequent denials. Thirdly, we must live as much as may be in a habit of recollection, and the practice of the divine presence, and, after any dissipating affairs, return eagerly to close retirement for some short time. Fourthly, we must, with perfect simplicity, lay open our whole interior to our spiritual director, and be most solicitous to do this, with particular candour and courage, in things in which we are tempted to use any kind of duplicity or dissimulation. Lastly, we must propose to ourselves, in all our thoughts and actions, the most perfect accomplishment of the will of God, and study to square our whole lives by this great rule, watching in all we do with particular care against motives of vanity, pride, sensuality, interest, and aversions, the great enemies to purity of intention.

SS. MARINUS AND ASTERIUS,

OR ASTYRIUS, MM.

ST. MARINUS was a person remarkable both for his wealth and family at Cæsarea in Palestine, about the year 272, and was in course to succeed to the place of a centurion, which was vacant, and about to obtain it; when another came up and said, that according to the laws Marinus could not have that post, on account of his being a Christian. Achæus, the governor of Palestine, asked Marinus if he were a Christian; who answered in the affirmative: whereupon the judge gave him three hours space to consider whether he would abide by his answer, or recall it. Theotecnus, the bishop of that city, being informed of the affair, came to him, when withdrawn from the tribunal, and taking him by the hand led him to the church. Here, pointing to the sword which he wore, and then to a book of the gospels, asked him which of the two he made his option. Marinus, in answer to the query, without the least hesitation, stretched out his right hand, and laid hold of the sacred book. "Adhere stedfastly then to God," says the bishop, "and he will strengthen you, and you shall obtain what you have chosen. Depart in peace." Being summoned again before the judge, he professed his faith with greater resolution and alacrity than before, and was immediately led away just as he was, and beheaded. St. Asterius, or Astyrius, a Roman senator, in great favour with the emperors, and well known to all on account of his birth