

JULY XXVI.

SAINT ANNE, MOTHER OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

See Cuper the Bollandist, t. 6, Julij, p. 233.

THE Hebrew word Anne signifies gracious. St. Joachim and St. Anne, the parents of the blessed Virgin Mary, are justly honoured in the church, and their virtue is highly extolled by St. John Damascen. The emperor Justinian I. built a church at Constantinople in honour of St. Anne, about the year 550.(1) Codinus mentions another built by Justinian II. in 705. Her body was brought from Palestine to Constantinople in 710. whence some portions of her relics have been dispersed in the West. F. Cuper the Bollandist has collected a great number of miracles wrought through her intercession.(2)

God has been pleased by sensible effects to testify how much he is honoured by the devotion of the faithful to this saint, who was the great model of virtue to all engaged in the married state, and charged with the education of children. It was a sublime dignity and a great honour for this saint to give to a lost world the advocate of mercy, and to be parent of the mother of God. But it was a far greater happiness to be, under God, the greatest instrument of her virtue, and to be spiritually her mother by a holy education in perfect innocence and sanctity. St. Anne being herself a vessel of grace, not by name only, but by the possession of that rich treasure, was chosen by God to form his most beloved spouse to perfect virtue; and her pious care of this illustrious daughter was the greatest means of her own sanctification and her glory in the church of God to the end of ages. It is a lesson to all parents whose principal duty is the holy education of their children. By this they glorify their Creator, perpetuate his honour on earth to future ages, and sanctify their own souls. St. Paul says, that it is by the education of their children that parents are to be saved.(3) Nor will he allow any one who has had children, ever to be admitted to serve the altar, whose sons do not, by their holy con-

(1) Procop. de *Ædific. Justin.* l. 1, c. 2.

(2) Julij, t. 6, p. 250.

(3) 2 Tim. ii. 5; 1 Tim. v. 4.

duct, give proofs of a virtuous education. Nevertheless, we see parents solicitous about the corporal qualifications of their children, and earnest to procure them an establishment in the world; yet supinely careless in purchasing them virtue, in which alone their true happiness consists. This reflection drew tears from Crates, a heathen philosopher, who desired to mount on the highest place in his city and cry out with all his strength: "Citizens, what is it you think of? You employ all your time in heaping up riches to leave to your children; yet take no care to cultivate their souls with virtue, as if an estate were more precious than themselves."(1)

ST. GERMANUS, BISHOP OF AUXERRE, C.

He was born at Auxerre about the year 380, of noble parents. Having laid the foundation of sound literature at home, he studied eloquence and the civil law at Rome, and pleaded with great reputation in the court of the *Præfectus-prætorio*. He married a lady of great quality named Eustachia, and being taken notice of by the emperor Honorius, was raised by him to several honourable employments, and at last to that of duke in his own province, which dignity gave him the command over all the troops in that country. Germanus being returned to Auxerre, was careful to shun gross vices; but his religion seemed confined to principles of integrity, and his virtues were merely human; for he was unacquainted with the true spirit of mortification, humility, and prayer. The young duke had a passion for hunting, and hung up the heads of the wild beasts which he killed on a great tree in the middle of the city, as trophies of his diversion. No one could presume to show him the meanness and folly of this favourite petty vanity, by which he seemed to authorize the superstitious custom of the Pagans who did the like to honour their gods. St. Amator, who was at that time the zealous bishop of Auxerre, made him strong remonstrances on the danger of countenancing such remains of idolatry, but without effect. At last, watching an opportunity, he caused this tree to be cut down while Germanus was absent, who, upon hearing this news, grievously threatened the bishop. St. Amator withdrew for a while to Autun; where he learned