

and by her secret order St. Prix was assassinated whilst he assisted at matins in his church in the midst of his clergy on Sunday the 25th of February. Happy should we be if under all afflictions, with this holy penitent, we considered that sin is the original fountain from whence all those waters of bitterness flow, and by labouring effectually to cut off this evil, convert its punishment into its remedy and a source of benedictions. St. Prix of Rouen is honoured in the Roman and Gallican Martyrologies. Those who with Chatelain, &c. place his death on the 14th of April, suppose him to have been murdered on Easter day; but the day of our Lord's Resurrection in this passage of our historian, means no more than Sunday. See St. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* l. 5. c. 10. 15. Fleury, l. 34. n. 52. *Gallia Christiana Nova*, t. 11. p. 11. and 638. Mons. Levesque de la Ravière in his *Nouvelle Vie de S. Gregoire, Evêque de Tours*, published in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, An. 1760, t. 26. p. 609. 60. F. Daniel, *Hist. de France*, t. 1. p. 242.

### ST. ETHELBERT, C.

#### FIRST CHRISTIAN KING AMONG THE ENGLISH.

HE was king of Kent, the fifth descendant from Hengist, who first settled the English Saxons in Britain, in 448, and the foundation of whose kingdom is dated in 455. Ethelbert married, in his father's life-time, Bertha, the only daughter of Charibert, king of Paris, and cousin-german to Clotaire, king of Soissons, and Childebert, king of Austrasia, whose two sons, Theodobert, and Theodoric, or Thierry, reigned after his death, the one in Austrasia, the other in Burgundy. Ethelbert succeeded his father Ermenric, in 560. The kingdom of Kent having enjoyed a continued peace for about a hundred years, was arrived at a degree of power and riches, which gave it a pre-eminence in the Saxon heptarchy in Britain, and so great a superiority and influence over the rest, Ethelbert is said by Bede to have ruled as far as the Humber, and Ethelbert is often styled king of the English. His queen Bertha was a very zealous and pious Christian princess, and by the articles of her marriage had free liberty to exercise her religion; for which purpose she was attended by a venerable French prelate, named Luidhard, or Lethard, bishop of Senlis. He officiated constantly in an old church dedicated to St. Martin, lying a little out of the walls of

Canterbury. The exemplary life of this prelate, and his frequent discourses on religion, disposed several Pagans about the court to embrace the faith. The merit of the queen in the great work of her husband's conversion is acknowledged by our historians, and she deserved by her piety and great zeal to be compared by St. Gregory the Great, to the celebrated St. Helen.(1)

Divine providence, by these means, mercifully prepared the heart of a great king to entertain a favourable opinion of our holy religion, when St. Augustine landed in his dominions: to whose life the reader is referred for an account of this monarch's happy conversion to the faith. From that time he appeared quite changed into another man, it being for the remaining twenty years of his life his only ambition and endeavour to establish the perfect reign of Christ, both in his own soul and in the hearts of all his subjects. His ardour in the exercises of penance and devotion never suffered any abatement, this being a property of true virtue, which is not to be acquired without much labour and pains, self-denial and watchfulness, resolution, and constancy. Great were, doubtless, the difficulties and dangers which he had to encounter in subduing his passions, and in vanquishing many obstacles which the world and devil failed not to raise: but these trials were infinitely subservient to his spiritual advancement, by rousing him continually to greater vigilance and fervour, and by the many victories and the exercise of all heroic virtues of which they furnished the occasions. In the government of his kingdom, his thoughts were altogether turned upon the means of best promoting the welfare of his people. He enacted most wholesome laws, which were held in high esteem in succeeding ages in this island: he abolished the worship of idols throughout his kingdom, and shut up their temples, or turned them into churches. His royal palace at Canterbury he gave for the use of the archbishop St. Austin: he founded in that city the cathedral called Christ Church, and built without the walls the abbey and church of SS. Peter and Paul, afterwards called St. Austin's. The foundation of St. Andrew's at Rochester, St. Paul's at London, and many other churches, affords many standing proofs of his munificence to the church, and the servants of God. He was instrumental in bringing over to the faith of Christ, Sebert, king of the East-Saxons,

(1) St. Greg. M. l. 9. ep. 60.

with his people, and Redwald, king of the East-Angles, though the latter afterwards relapsing, pretended to join the worship, of idols with that of Christ. King Ethelbert, after having reigned fifty-six years, exchanged his temporal diadem for an eternal crown, in 616, and was buried in the church of SS. Peter and Paul. His remains were afterwards deposited under the high altar in the same church, then called St. Austin's. St. Ethelbert is commemorated on this day in the British and Roman Martyrologies: he was vulgarly called by our ancestors St. Albert, under which name he is titular saint of several churches in England; particularly of one in Norwich, which was built before the cathedral, an account of which is given by Blomfield, in his history of Norfolk, and the city of Norwich. Polydore Virgil tells us that a light was kept always burning before the tomb of St. Ethelbert, and was sometimes an instrument of miracles, even to the days of Henry VIII. See Bede, Hist. Ang. l. 1. c. 25, &c. Henschen. t. 3. Febr. p. 471.

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## FEBRUARY XXV.

### SAINT TARASIVS, CONFESSOR,

#### PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

From his life written by Ignatius, his disciple, afterwards bishop of Nice, and from the church historians of his time. See Bollandus, t. 5. p. 576. Fleury, B. 44.

A.D. 806.

TARASIVS was born about the middle of the eighth century. His parents were both of patrician families. His father, George, was a judge in great esteem for his well-known justice, and his mother, Eucratia, no less celebrated for her piety. She brought him up in the practice of the most eminent virtues. Above all things she recommended to him to keep no company but that of the most virtuous. The young man, by his talents and virtue, gained the esteem of all, and was raised to the greatest honours of the empire, being made consul, and afterwards first secretary of state to the emperor Constantine and the empress Irene, his mother. In the midst of the court, and in its highest honours, surrounded by all that could flatter pride, or gratify sensuality, he led a life like that of a religious man.