

religion, and the infinite prejudice of our souls. Do we consider that the least exertion of meekness, humility, or charity, is something much greater and more advantageous than the conquest of empires and the whole world could be? For Alexander to have once curbed his anger on ever so small an occasion, would have been a far more glorious victory than all his conquests, even if his wars had been just. For nothing is so heroic as for a man to vanquish his passions, and learn to govern his own soul. Why then do not we take all necessary precautions to watch and to arm ourselves for these continual occasions? Why are we not prepared, and upon our guard to check all sudden sallies of our passions, and, under provocations, to show by silence, meekness, and patience, that we study truly to prove ourselves disciples of Christ?

#### ST. GATIAN, FIRST BISHOP OF TOURS, C.

ST. GATIAN came from Rome with St. Dionysius of Paris, about the middle of the third century, and preached the faith principally at Tours in Gaul, where he fixed his episcopal see. The Gauls in that part were extremely addicted to the worship of their idols. But no contradictions or sufferings were able to discourage or daunt this true apostle; and by perseverance he gained several to Christ. He assembled his little flock in grotts and caves, and there celebrated the divine mysteries. For he was obliged often to lie hid in lurking holes a long time together in order to escape a cruel death, with which the heathens frequently threatened him, and which he was always ready to receive with joy if he had fallen into their hands. Having continued his labours with unwearied zeal amidst frequent sufferings and dangers for near the space of fifty years, he died in peace, and was honoured with miracles. See St. Gregory of Tours, l. 1, c. 30; the Roman Martyrology, and Gallia Christiana.

#### ST. WINEBALD, ABBOT, C.

ST. RICHARD, the English-Saxon king, seems to have been a prince of Westsex; for he was related to St. Boniface, and set out on his pilgrimage from Hamble-Haven in that country. It is thought that he was one of those princes who ruled in part of that kingdom, till they were compelled to give way to King

Ceadwall.(1) God blessed him with three children, St. Winebald, the eldest, St. Willibald, who died bishop of Eystadt, and St. Walburga. St. Richard leaving his native country, took with him his two sons, and embarking at Hamble-Haven, landed on the coast of Normandy, and visiting all the places of devotion on his way, travelled into Italy, intending to go to Rome: but at Lucca fell sick and died about the year 722. His body was buried in the church of St. Frigidian,\* and on account of certain famous miracles wrought at his tomb, was taken up by Gregory, bishop of Lucca, by the pope's authority, and is kept in a rich shrine in that church. His name occurs in the Roman Martyrology on the 7th of February. SS. Winebald and Willibald accomplished their pilgrimage to Rome. After some stay there to perform their devotions, St. Willibald undertook another pilgrimage to the holy places in Palestine; but Winebald, who is by some called Wunibald, who was from his childhood of a weak sickly constitution, remained at Rome, where he pursued his studies seven years, took the tonsure, and devoted himself with his whole heart to the divine service. Then returning to England, he engaged a third brother and several amongst his kindred and acquaintance to accompany him in his journey back to Rome, and there dedicate themselves to God in a religious state. St. Boniface, who was our saint's cousin, coming to that city in 738, prevailed with him upon motives of charity to undertake a share of his labours in the conversion of the infidels and in founding the infant church of Germany. Winebald accompanied him into Thuringia, and being ordained priest by that holy archbishop, took upon him by his commission, the care of seven churches in that country, especially at Erfurt, as the nun informs us in the life of our saint. These churches the chronicle of Andesches and Bruschiuss call seven monasteries; but without authority or probability, as Serarius observes. St. Willibald was made bishop of Aychstadt in

(I) Bede, l. 4, c. 12.

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\* St. Frigidian, or Fridian, an Irishman, who is honoured on the 18th of March, and his translation on the 18th of November, was bishop of Lucca in the sixth century, famous for sanctity and miracles, and was buried in this church, which he had founded in honour of St. Vincent: but it since bears his name, and now belongs to a famous monastery of Olivetan monks.

Franconia in 781, and being desirous to erect a double monastery which might be a pattern and seminary of piety and learning to the numerous churches which he had planted, prevailed with his brother Winebald, and his sister Walburga, whom he invited out of England, to undertake that charge.

Winebald, therefore, translated his monastery from Schwanfeld to Heidenheim, where, having purchased a wild spot of ground covered with shrubs and bushes, he cleared it and built first little cells or mean cottages for himself and his monks, and shortly after erected a monastery. A nunnery was founded by him in the neighbourhood, which St. Walburga governed. The idolaters often attempted the life of St. Winebald by poison and by open violence: but by the divine protection he escaped their snares, and continued by his zealous labours to extend on every side the pale of Christ's fold. He was solicitous in the first place to maintain in his religious community the perfect spirit of their holy state, teaching them above all things to persevere *instant in prayer*,<sup>(1)</sup> and to keep inviolably in mind the humility of our Lord, and his meekness and holy conversation, as the standard from which they were never to turn their eyes. They who find a reluctance arising from the corruption of their passions, must nevertheless force themselves cheerfully to all that which is good, especially to divine love, fraternal compassion, patience when they are despised, meekness, and assiduous prayer; for God, beholding their conflicts and the earnestness of their desires and endeavours, will in the end grant them the true grace of prayer, meekness, and the bowels of mercy, and will fill them with the fruits of the Spirit, in which state the Lord seems to perform all things in them; so sweet do humility, love, meekness, and prayer become. Thus our holy abbot encouraged his spiritual children, and strengthened in them the spirit of Christ; but he inculcated to them both by word and example, that Christ never plants his spirit nor establishes the kingdom of his grace in souls which are not prepared by self-denial, mortification, obedience, simplicity, a life of prayer, and profound humility; for self-elevation is the greatest abasement, and self-abasement is the highest exaltation, honour, and dignity. For only he can cleave to the Lord who

(1) Rom. xiii. 12.

has freed his heart from earthly lusts, and disengaged his affections from the covetousness of the world. St. Winebald was afflicted many years with sickness, and had a private chapel erected in his own cell, in which he said mass when he was not able to go to church. Once, being looked upon as brought by his distemper to extremity, and almost to the point of death, he made a visit of devotion to the shrine of St. Boniface, once his spiritual father and much honoured friend in Christ; and in three weeks' time was restored to his health. Some time after, he relapsed into his former ill state of health, and in his last moments earnestly exhorted his disciples to advance with their whole might towards God without stopping or looking behind them; for no one can be found worthy to enter the holy city, who strives not by doing his utmost that his name be written in heaven with the first-born. For this, in the earnestness of our desires, we ought to pour out tears day and night. Our saint had made them, as it were, the very food of the soul, and having been tried and purified by a lingering sickness as the pure gold in the furnace, went to God on the 18th of December, 760. After his death St. Willibald committed the superintendency over the monastery of monks to the holy abbess St. Walburga so long as she lived. The monastery of Heidenhem was finally dissolved upon the change of religion in the province of Brandenburg Anspach, in which it was situated. The nun who wrote the life of St. Winebald assures us, that several miraculous cures were performed at his tomb. St. Ludger also writes in the life of St. Gregory of Utrecht, "Winebald was very dear to my master Gregory, and shows by great miracles since his death what he did whilst living." Rader testifies, that St. Winebald is honoured among the saints in several churches in Germany, though his name is not inserted in the Roman Martyrology, as Mabillon and Basnage remark. See his life, written, not by St. Walburga, as some have said, but by another contemporary nun of her monastery, who had before wrote the life of St. Willibald. In that of St. Winebald we have an account of the manner of canonizing saints in that age, and of the twofold labour to which monks then applied themselves, in tilling land and making that which was wild arable; and in instructing and preaching. This work was published

entire by Canisius in his *Lectiones Antiquæ*, t. 4, more correctly by Mabillon, *Act. Ben.* t. 4, and most accurately by Basnage in his edition of Canisius in 1725, t. 2, part 2.

## DECEMBER XIX.

### SAINT NEMESION, M. &c.

From St. Dionysius of Alex. quoted by Eusebius, *Hist.* l. 6, c. 41, p. 307, ed. Cantabr.

A. D. 250.

IN the persecution of Decius, Nemesion, an Egyptian, was apprehended at Alexandria upon an indictment for theft. The servant of Christ easily cleared himself of that charge, but was immediately accused of being a Christian. Hereupon he was sent to the Augustal prefect of Egypt, and confessing his faith at his tribunal, he was ordered to be scourged and tormented doubly more grievously than the thieves: after which he was condemned to be burnt with the most criminal amongst the robbers and other malefactors; whereby he had the honour and happiness more perfectly to imitate the death of our divine Redeemer. There stood at the same time near the prefect's tribunal four soldiers, named Ammon, Zeno, Ptolemy, and Ingenuus, and another person, whose name was Theophilus, who, being Christians, boldly encouraged a confessor who was hanging on the rack. They were soon taken notice of, and presented to the judge, who condemned them to be beheaded: but was himself astonished to see the joy with which they walked to the place of execution. Heron, Ater, and Isidore, both Egyptians, with Dioscorus, a youth only fifteen years old, were committed at Alexandria in the same persecution. First of all the judge took the youth in hand, and began to entreat him with fair speeches; then he assailed him with various torments; but the generous youth neither would bow at his flatteries, nor could be terrified or broken by his threats or torments. The rest, after enduring the most cruel rending and disjointing of their limbs, were burnt alive. But the judge discharged Dioscorus, on account of the tenderness of his years, saying, he allowed him time to repent, and consult his own advantage, and expressing that he was struck with admiration at the dazzling beauty of his countenance. In the Roman Mar-