

church of our lady, in which the greater part is preserved in a rich shrine ; but a portion is kept in the church of St. Dionysius there, and another portion in the cathedral of Paris, where a chapel bears his name. See his anonymous life in Bollandus, also Flodoard, l. 2. Hist. Rhemens, &c.

ST. RUMON, B. C.

WILLIAM of Malmesbury informs us, that the history of his life was destroyed by the wars, which has also happened in other parts of England. He was a bishop, though it is not known of what see. His veneration was famous at Tavistock, in Devonshire, where Ordulf, Earl of Devonshire, built a church under his invocation, before the year 960. Wilson, upon informations given him by certain persons of that country, inserted his name on this day, in the second edition of his English Martyrology. See Malmesb. l. 2. De gestis Pont. Angl. in Cridiensibus.

JANUARY V.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES, C.

From the account given of him by Theodoret, one of the most judicious and most learned prelates of the church, who lived in the same country, and often visited him ; this account was written sixteen years before the saint's death. Also from St. Simeon's life written by Antony his disciple, published genuine in Bollandus, and the same in Chaldaic by Cosmas, a priest ; all three contemporaries and eye-witnesses. This work of Cosmas has been lately published by Monsignor Stephen Assemani, (1) from a Chaldaic MS. which he proves to have been written in the year 474, fifteen years only after the death of St. Simeon. Also from the ancient lives of SS. Euthymius, Theodosius, Auxentius, and Daniel Stylites. Evagrius, Theodorus Lector, and other most faithful writers of that and the following age, mention the most wonderful actions of this saint. The severest critics do not object to this history, in which so many contemporary writers, several of them eye-witnesses, agree ; persons of undoubted veracity, virtue, and sagacity, who could not have conspired in a falsehood, nor could have imposed upon the world facts, which were of their own nature public and notorious. See Tillemont, T. 14.

A.D. 459.

ST. SIMEON was, in his life and conduct, a subject of astonishment, not only to the whole Roman empire, but also to many barbarous and infidel nations. The Persians, Medes, Saracens, Ethiopians, Iberians, and Scythians, had the highest veneration

(1) Act. Mart. T. 2. app. p. 239.

for him. The kings of Persia thought his benediction a great happiness. The Roman emperors solicited his prayers, and consulted him on matters of the greatest importance. It must nevertheless, be acknowledged, that his most remarkable actions, how instrumental soever they might be to this universal veneration and regard for him, are a subject of admiration, not of imitation. They may serve, notwithstanding, to our spiritual edification and improvement in virtue; as we cannot well reflect on his fervour, without condemning and being confounded at our own indolence in the service of God.

St. Simeon was son to a poor shepherd in Cilecia, on the borders of Syria, and at first kept his father's sheep. Being only thirteen years of age, he was much moved by hearing the beautitudes one day read in the church, particularly these: *Blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the clean of heart.* The youth addressed himself to a certain old man, to learn the meaning of those words; and begged to know how the happiness they promised was to be obtained? He told him that continual prayer, watching, fasting, weeping, humiliation, and patient suffering of persecutions, were pointed out by those texts as the road to *true happiness*; and that a solitary life afforded the best opportunities for enforcing the practice of these good works, and establishing a man in solid virtue. Simeon, upon this, withdrew to a small distance, where, falling prostrate upon the ground, he besought Him, who desires all may be saved, to conduct him in the paths which lead to happiness and perfection; to the pursuit of which, under the help of his divine grace, he unreservedly from that moment devoted himself. At length, falling into a slumber, he was favoured with a vision, which it was usual with him afterwards to relate. He seemed to himself to be digging a pit for the foundation of a house, and that as often as he stopped to take a little breath, which was four times, he was commanded each time to *dig deeper*, till at length he was told he might desist, the pit being deep enough to receive the intended foundation, on which he would be able to raise a superstructure of what kind, and to what height he pleased. "The event," says Theodoret, "verified the prediction; the actions of this wonderful man were so superior to nature, that they might well require the deepest foundation of humility and fervour whereon to raise and establish them."

Rising from the ground, he repaired to a monastery in that

neighbourhood, under the direction of an holy abbot, called Timothy, and lay prostrate at the gate for several days, without either eating or drinking; begging to be admitted on the footing of the lowest servant in the house, and as a general drudge. His petition was granted, and he complied with the terms of it with great fervour and affection for four months. During this time he learned the Psalter by heart, the first task enjoined the novices; and his familiarity with the sacred oracles it contains, greatly helped to nourish his soul in a spiritual life. Though yet in his tender youth, he practised all the austerities of the house; and, by his humility and charity, gained the good-will of all the monks. Having here spent two years, he removed to the monastery of Heliodorus, a person endowed with an admirable spirit of prayer; and who, being then sixty-five years of age, had spent sixty-two of them in that community, so abstracted from the world, as to be utterly ignorant of the most obvious things in it, as Theodoret relates, who was intimately acquainted with him. Here Simeon much increased his mortifications: for whereas those monks ate but once a day, which was towards night, he, for his part, made but one meal a week, which was on Sundays. These rigours, however, he moderated at the interposition of his superior's authority, and from that time was more private in his mortifications. With this view, judging the rough rope of the well, made of twisted palm-tree leaves, a proper instrument of penance, he tied it close about his naked body, where it remained unknown both to the community and his superior, till such time as it having eat into his flesh, what he had privately done was discovered by the stench proceeding from the wound. Three days successively his clothes, which clung to it, were to be softened with liquids, to disengage them; and the incisions of the physician, to cut the cord out of his body, were attended with such anguish and pain, that he lay for some time as dead. On his recovery, the abbot, to prevent the ill consequences such a dangerous singularity might occasion, to the prejudice of uniformity in monastic discipline, dismissed him.

After this, he repaired to an hermitage at the foot of Mount Telnescin, or Thelanissa, where he came to a resolution of passing the whole forty days of Lent in a total abstinence, after the example of Christ, without either eating or drinking. Bassus, a holy priest, and abbot of two hundred monks, who

was his director, and to whom he had communicated his design, had left with him ten loaves and water, that he might eat if he found it necessary. At the expiration of the forty days he came to visit him, and found the loaves and water untouched, but Simeon stretched out on the ground, almost without any signs of life. Taking a sponge, he moistened his lips with water, then gave him the blessed Eucharist. Simeon, having recovered a little, rose up, and chewed and swallowed by degrees a few lettuce-leaves, and other herbs. This was his method of keeping Lent during the remainder of his life; and he had actually passed twenty-six Lents after this manner, when Theodoret wrote his account of him; in which are these other particulars, that he spent the first part of the Lent in praising God standing; growing weaker, he continued his prayer sitting; and towards the end, finding his spirits almost quite exhausted, not able to support himself in any other posture, he lay on the ground. However, it is probable, that in his advanced years he admitted some mitigation of this wonderful austerity. When on his pillar, he kept himself, during this fast, tied to a pole; but at length was able to fast the whole term, without any support. Many attribute this to the strength of his constitution, which was naturally very robust, and had been gradually habituated to such an extraordinary abstinence. It is well known that the hot eastern climates afford surprising instances of long abstinence among the Indians.⁽¹⁾ A native of France has, within our memory, fasted the forty days of Lent almost in that manner.* But few examples occur of persons fasting upwards of three or six days, unless prepared and inured by habit.

After three years spent in this hermitage, the saint removed to the top of the same mountain, where, throwing together some loose stones, in the form of a wall, he made for himself an enclosure; but without any roof or shelter to protect him from the

(1) *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses.*

* Dom Claude Leauté, a Benedictin monk of the congregation of St. Maur, in 1731, when he was about fifty-one years of age, had fasted eleven years, without taking any food the whole forty days, except what he daily took at mass; and what added to the wonder is, that during Lent he did not properly sleep, but only dozed. He could not bear the open air; and towards the end of Lent he was excessively pale and wasted. This fact is attested by his brethren and superiors, in a relation printed at Sens, in 1731; and recorded by Dom L'Isle, in his *History of Fasting*; and by Feyjoo, in his *Theatro Critico Universal*.

inclemencies of the weather; and to confirm his resolution of pursuing this manner of life, he fastened his right leg to a rock with a great iron chain. Meletius, vicar to the patriarch of Antioch, told him, that a firm will, supported by God's grace, was sufficient to make him abide in his solitary enclosure, without having recourse to any bodily restraint: hereupon the obedient servant of God sent for a smith, and had his chain knocked off.

The mountain began to be continually thronged, and the retreat his soul so much sighed after, to be interrupted by the multitudes that flocked, even from remote and infidel countries, to receive his benediction; by which many sick recovered their health. Some were not satisfied unless they also touched him. The saint, to remove these causes of distraction, projected for himself a new and unprecedented manner of life. In 423, he erected a pillar six cubits high, and on it he dwelt four years; on a second, twelve cubits high, he lived three years; on a third, twenty-two cubits high, ten years; and on a fourth, forty cubits high, built for him by the people, he spent the last twenty years of his life. Thus he lived thirty-seven years on pillars, and was called Stylites, from the Greek word *Stylos*, which signifies a pillar. This singularity was at first censured by all, as a mark of vanity or extravagance. To make trial of his humility, an order was sent him, in the name of the neighbouring bishops and abbots, to quit his pillar and new manner of life. The saint, ready to obey the summons, was for stepping down; which the messenger seeing, said, that as he had shown a willingness to obey, it was their desire that he might follow his vocation in God. His pillar exceeded not three feet in diameter on the top, which made it impossible for him to lie extended on it; neither would he allow a seat. He only stooped, or leaned to take a little rest, and often in the day bowed his body in prayer. A certain person once reckoned one thousand two hundred and forty-four such reverences of adoration made by him in one day. He made exhortations to the people twice a day. His garments were the skins of beasts and he wore an iron collar about his neck. He never suffered any woman to come within the enclosure where his pillar stood. His disciple Antony mentions, that he prayed most fervently for the soul of his mother after her decease.

God is sometimes pleased to conduct certain fervent souls through extraordinary paths, in which others would find only dangers of illusion, vanity, and self-will, which we cannot

sufficiently guard ourselves against. We should notwithstanding consider, that the sanctity of these fervent souls does not consist in such wonderful actions, or miracles, but in the perfection of their unfeigned charity, patience, and humility; and it was the exercise of these solid virtues that rendered so conspicuous the life of this saint; these virtues he nourished, and greatly increased, by fervent and assiduous prayer. He exhorted people vehemently against the horrible custom of swearing; as also, to observe strict justice, to take no usury, to be assiduous at church and in holy prayer, and to pray for the salvation of souls. The great deference paid to his instructions, even by barbarians, is not to be expressed. Many Persians, Armenians, and Iberians, with the entire nation of the Lazi in Colchis, were converted by his miracles and discourses, which they crowded to hear. Princes and Queens of the Arabians came to receive his blessing. Vararanes V. king of Persia, though a cruel persecutor, respected him. The emperors Theodosius the younger, and Leo, often consulted him, and desired his prayers. The emperor Marcian visited him, disguised in the dress of a private man. By his advice the empress Eudoxia abandoned the Eutychian party a little before her death. His miracles and predictions are mentioned at large in Theodoret and others. By an invincible patience he bore all afflictions, austerities, and rebukes, without ever mentioning them. He long concealed a horrible ulcer in his foot, swarming with maggots. He always sincerely looked upon, and treated himself, as the outcast of the world, and the last of sinners; and he spoke to all with the most engaging sweetness and charity. Domnus, patriarch of Antioch, administered unto him the holy communion on his pillar; undoubtedly he often received that benefit from others. In 459, according to Cosmas, on a Wednesday, the 2nd of September, this incomparable penitent, bowing on a pillar, as if intent on prayer, gave up the ghost, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. On the Friday following his corpse was conveyed to Antioch, attended by the bishops and the whole country. Many miracles, related by Evagrius,⁽¹⁾ Antony, and Cosmas, were wrought on this occasion; and the people immediately, over all the East, kept his festival with great solemnity.*

(1) Evagrius, l. 1. c. 13, 14.

* Monsignor Majelli, a domestic prelate to Pope Benedict XIV., in his dissertation on the *Stylites*, or religious men living on pillars. represents the
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The extraordinary manner of life which the saint led, is a proof of the fervour with which he sought to live in the most perfect sequestration from creatures, and union with God and heaven. The most perfect accomplishment of the divine will was his only view, and the sole object of his desires; whence upon the least intimation of an order from a superior, he was ready to leave his pillar; nor did he consider this undertaking as any thing great or singular, by which he should appear distinguished from others. By humility he looked upon himself as justly banished from among men and hidden from the world in Christ. No one is to practise or aspire after virtue or perfection upon a motive of greatness, or of being exalted by it. This would be to fall into the snare of pride, which is to be feared under the cloak of sanctity itself. The foundation of christian perfection is a love of humiliation, a sincere spirit of humility. The heroic practice of virtue must be undertaken not because it is a sublime and elevated state, but because God calls us to it, and by it we do his will, and become pleasing to him. The path of the cross, or of contempt, poverty, and sufferings, was chosen by the Father for his divine Son, to repair his glory, and restore to man the spiritual advantages of which sin had robbed him. And the more perfectly we walk in his spirit, by the love and esteem of his cross, the greater share shall we possess in its incomparable advantages. Those who in the practice of virtue prefer great or singular actions, because they appear more shining, whatever pretexts of a more heroic virtue, or of greater utility to others they allege, are the dupes of a secret pride, and follow the corrupt inclinations of their own heart, whilst they affect the language of the saints. We are called to follow Christ by bearing our crosses after him, leading at least in spirit a

pillar of St. Simeon enclosed with rails around the top. Whenever he slept a little, he leaned on them, or his staff. This author shows the order of the *Stylites* to have been propagated in the East from St. Simeon, down to the Saracens and Turkish empires. The inclemency of the air makes that manner of life impracticable in the West. However, St. Gregory of Tours mentions one (l. 8. c. 15.) Vulfilack, a Lombard, and disciple of the abbot St. Yrier, who leaving Limousin, went to Tiers, and lived some time on a pillar in that neighbourhood. He engaged the people of the villages to renounce the worship of idols, and to hew down the great statue of Diana at Ardens, that had been famous from the time of Domitian. The bishop ordered him to quit a manner of life too severe for this cold climate. He instantly obeyed, and lived afterwards in a neighbouring monastery. He seems to have been the only *Stylite* of the West. See Fleury, l. 35. A. D. 54.

hidden life, always trembling in a deep sense of our frailty, and humbled in the centre of our nothingness, as being of ourselves the very abstract of weakness, and an unfathomed abyss of corruption.

ST. TELESOPHOS, P. M.

HE was a Grecian by birth, and the seventh bishop of Rome. Towards the end of the year 128, he succeeded Saint Sixtus I. sat eleven years, and saw the havoc which the persecution of Adrian made in the church. "He ended his life by an illustrious martyrdom," says Eusebius; (1) which is also confirmed by St. Irenæus. (2)

ST. SYNCLETICA, V.

SHE was born at Alexandria in Egypt, of wealthy Macedonian parents. From her infancy she had imbibed the love of virtue, and in her tender years she consecrated her virginity to God. Her great fortune and beauty induced many young noblemen to become her suitors for marriage; but she had already bestowed her heart on her heavenly spouse. Flight was her refuge against exterior assaults, and, regarding herself as her own most dangerous enemy, she began early to subdue her flesh by austere fasts and other mortifications. She never seemed to suffer more than when obliged to eat oftener than she desired. Her parents, at their death, left her heiress to their opulent estate; for the two brothers she had, died before them and her sister being blind, was committed entirely to her guardianship. Syncletica, having soon distributed her fortune among the poor, retired with her sister into a lonesome monument, on a relation's estate; where, having sent for a priest, she cut off her hair in his presense, as a sign whereby she renounced the world, and renewed the consecration of herself to God. Mortification and prayer were from that time her principal employment, but her close solitude, by concealing her pious exercises from the eyes of the world, has deprived us in a great measure of the knowledge of them.

The fame of her virtue being spread abroad, many women resorted to her abode to confer with her upon spiritual matters. Her humility made her unwilling to take upon herself the task of instructing, but charity, on the other side, opened her mouth.

(1) Hist. l. 4. c. 10.

(2) L. 3. c. 3.