

that country. His eminent spirit of mortification and prayer, his invincible meekness and silence under all injuries, his humility and his patience under three years severe sickness crowned him with the glory of the saints, to which he passed on the 25th of August, in 776. His relics were religiously kept at Utrecht, and examined in the episcopal visitations in 1421 and 1597. See his life written by his disciple St. Ludger, bishop of Munster, in Mabillon, *sec. Ben.* 3, and the dissertations of Stilling the Bollandist, t. 5, Aug. p. 241. Also Fleury, l. 44, n. 9, t. 9, and Batavia Sacra, p. 88.

ST. EBBA, (IN ENGLISH ST. TABBS,) V. A.

SHE was sister to St. Oswald and Oswi, kings of the Northumbers, and, assisted by the liberality of the latter, founded a nunnery upon the Darwent, in the bishopric of Durham, called from her Ebchester; also a double separate monastery at Coldingham in the marshes, now in Scotland, below Berwick. This latter house of nuns she governed herself till she was called to eternal bliss in 683. See Bede, l. 4, c. 19, 25, and Harpsfield.

AUGUST XXVI.

ST. ZEPHYRINUS, POPE, M.

See Tillemont, *Ant. Sandini, Vitæ Pont. Rom. ex antiquis Monum. Anastasius*, with the notes of Bianchini and Muratori. Mandosi, *Bibl. Roman.*

A. D. 219.

ST. ZEPHYRINUS, a native of Rome, succeeded Victor in the pontificate, in the year 202, in which Severus raised the fifth most bloody persecution against the church, which continued, not for two years only, as Dodwell imagined; but to the death of that emperor in 211, as Ruinart, Berti, and others prove from Sulpicius Severus, and other authorities. Under this furious storm this holy pastor was the support and comfort of the distressed flock of Christ, and he suffered by charity and compassion what every confessor underwent. The triumphs of the martyrs were indeed his joy, but his heart received many deep wounds from the fall of apostates and heretics. Neither did

this latter affliction cease by the peace which Caracalla restored to the church, and which was not disturbed by Macrinus, by whose contrivance Caracalla was murdered in Mesopotamia, in 217, nor by the successor and murderer of this latter, the impure Heliogabalus, who reigned to the year 221. The chief among these heretics were Marcion, Praxeas, Valentine, and the Montanists; for St. Optatus testifies,⁽¹⁾ that all these were vanquished by Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome.

Our saint had also the affliction to see the fall of Tertullian, which seems to have been owing partly to his pride, and partly to one Proculus, or Proculus, an eloquent Montanist, whom Tertullian highly extolled, after he had become an abettor of that heresy. This Proculus was publicly put to confusion at Rome by Caius, a most learned priest of that church, under St. Zephyrinus, who was afterwards ordained a regional bishop—that is, with a commission to preach the gospel without being fixed in any particular see, as Photius assures us. Eusebius, St. Jerom, and Photius much commend the dialogue of Caius with Proculus; a work which has not reached our times. Photius tells us that Caius also composed a treatise against Artemon, who believed that Jesus Christ was only a mere man, and several other learned works, from which Eusebius took the account he has given us of the penance of Natalis.⁽²⁾ This man lived at Rome, and having confessed the faith before the persecutors, underwent torments in defence of it; but afterwards was seduced into heresy by Asclepiodotus and Theodotus the banker, who were both disciples of Theodotus the tanner, whom Victor, bishop of Rome, had excommunicated for reviving the heresy of Ebion, affirming that Christ was no more than a mere man, though a prophet. These two heretics had persuaded Natalis to suffer them to ordain him a bishop of their sect, promising that he should be furnished monthly with one hundred and fifty silver denarii, upwards of three pounds sterling; but God having compassion on his confessor, warned him by several visions to abandon these heretics; among whom he was detained only by interest and vanity. At length he was whipped a whole night by an angel. The day following he co-

(1) S. Optat. l. 1, de Schismate, n. 9, et Albaspinæus, not. ib.

(2) Eus. l. 5, c. 28.

vered himself with sackcloth and ashes, and shedding abundance of tears, went and threw himself at the feet of Zephyrinus: he prostrated himself also before both the clergy and the laity in a manner with which the whole assembly was much affected. However, though he entreated very earnestly, and showed the marks of the stripes he had received, it was with much difficulty that St. Zephyrinus readmitted him to the communion of the church, granting him, in recompense of his great compunction, an indulgence or relaxation of the severity of the discipline, which required a penitential delay and trial. Eusebius tells us, in the same place, that this holy pope exerted his zeal so strenuously against the blasphemies of the two Theodotuses, that those heretics treated him in the most contumelious manner; but it was his glory that they called him the principal defender of Christ's divinity. St. Zephyrinus filled the pontifical chair seventeen years, dying in 219. He was buried in his own cemetery (comprised in that of Calixtus, as Aringhi shows) on the 26th of August, on which most martyrologies commemorate him; though those of Vandelbert and Rabanus, with the old martyrology, under the name of St. Jerom, published by Florentinius, mark his festival on the 20th of December, probably on account of some translation, or the day of his ordination, says Berti.(1) He is, in some martyrologies, styled a martyr, which title he might deserve by what he suffered in the persecution, though he perhaps did not die by the executioner.

God has always raised up holy pastors, zealous to maintain the sacred deposit of the faith of his church inviolable, and to watch over the purity of its morals, and the sanctity of its discipline. How many conflicts did they sustain! with what constancy, watchfulness, and courage did they stand their ground against idolatry, heresy, and the corruption of the world! We enjoy the greatest advantages of the divine grace through their labours; and we owe to God a tribute of perpetual thanksgiving and immortal praise for all those mercies which he has afforded his church on earth. We are bound also to recommend most earnestly to him his own work, praying that he exalt the glory of his divine name, by propagating his

(1) Berti in *Sec. 3. Diss. 1, t. 2, p. 158.*

holy faith on earth; that he continually raise up in his church shining examples of all virtue, pastors filled with his spirit, and a people disposed to captivate their understandings to his revealed truths, and subject their hearts to the sweet yoke of his holy love and divine law; watchful to abhor and oppose every profane innovation of doctrine, and all assaults and artifices of vice.

ST. GENESIUS, A COMEDIAN, M.

CHRIST who, to show the power of his grace, and the extent of his mercy, called a publican to the apostleship, honoured with the glory of martyrdom this saint, drawn from the stage, the most infamous school of vice and the passions, and the just abhorrence of the holy fathers of the church, of all zealous pastors, and all sincere lovers of virtue. The Emperor Dioclesian coming to Rome, was received with great rejoicings. Among other entertainments prepared for him, those of the stage were not neglected. In a comedy which was acted in his presence, one of the players took it into his head to represent, in a ludicrous manner, the ceremonies of the Christian baptism, which could not fail to divert the assembly, who held this religion, and its mysteries, in the utmost contempt and derision. This player, therefore, whose name was Genesius, and who had learned some things concerning the Christian rites from certain friends who zealously professed that religion, laid himself down on the stage, feigning himself sick, and said: "Ah! my friends, I find a great weight upon me, and would gladly be eased." The others answered: "What shall we do to give thee ease? wouldst thou have us plane thee, to make thee lighter?" "Ye senseless creatures," said he, "I am resolved to die a Christian, that God may receive me on this day of my death, as one who seeks his salvation by flying from idolatry and superstition." Then a priest and exorcist were called, that is to say, two players, who personated these characters. These sitting down by his bed-side, said: "Well, my child, why did you send for us?" Here Genesius, being suddenly converted by a divine inspiration, replied, not in jest, but seriously: "Because I desire to receive the grace of Jesus Christ and to be born again, that I may be delivered from my sins." The