

gion, in the church which bears his name at Whithern. See his acts, and especially Bede, l. 3, c. 4. The Saxon Chronicle, ann. 560. Alcuin, ap. Usser. Primord. p. 669. William of Malmesbury, l. 3. de reg. Angl. John Fordun, Scotochron. l. 3. Leland, de Script. c. 33. Usher Ant. Eccl. Britan. c. 15, p. 347. Alford's Annals ann. 432. Sticker the Bollandist, t. 5, Sept. p. 318.

ST. EDITHA, VIRGIN.

SHE was born in 961, being natural daughter of King Edgar, by Wulfrida or Wilfrith, a noble lady whom that prince had ravished; for which he underwent a penance of seven years, as hath been related in the life of St. Dunstan. Edgar, after the death of his wife, endeavoured with great importunity to marry Wulfrida; but she constantly rejected his solicitations, and took the religious veil in the monastery of Wilton, of which house she was shortly after chosen abbess. Her daughter Editha or Eadgith, was brought up by her in this religious community, and thus rescued from the corruption of the world before she had any taste for its deceitful pleasures. Ignorance of vice being the most perfect fence of innocence, the Roman Martyrology draws from this circumstance the eulogium of St. Editha, that, "being from her tender years dedicated to God in a monastery, she may be said rather not to have known the world, than to have left it." She never knew the enchantments of sin, or the allurements and snares of the world, which she only feared at a distance; and her tender heart was always open to God, because always a stranger to any other love. Wulfrida took a particular care to improve her religious sentiments by repeating constantly to her lessons of Christian perfection, and setting before her eyes the most illustrious examples of sanctity. Editha repaid her care with an admirable docility, and proficiency in the school of virtue. She was admitted very young to her religious profession, for which the consent of the king, her father, was obtained with much difficulty. She united the active life of Martha with the contemplation of Mary, and though it was her greatest delight to hear the voice of her heavenly spouse speak to her heart in silence and retirement, she frequently deprived herself of that cele-

tial pleasure, that she might attend and serve him in his distressed members. She fed the poor, took care of the sick, and dressed their most foul and loathsome sores, preferring the leprous to the king's children. Her abstinence and other austerities were wonderful, and she wore a hair cloth next her skin. She had a great devotion to the memory of her crucified spouse, which she expressed by the constant use of the sign of the cross.

When she was but fifteen years old, her royal father pressed her to undertake the government of three different monasteries: of which charge she was judged then most capable, such was her extraordinary virtue and discretion; but she humbly declined all superiority, and chose to remain in her own community, subject to her mother, who was abbess there. Soon after this refusal, Edgar died, and was succeeded by his son, Edward the Martyr. Upon the death of the latter, the nobility, who adhered to the martyred king, desired Editha to quit her monastery, and ascend the throne; but she preferred a state of humility and obedience to the prospect of a crown, says the author of her life. She built the church of St. Denis, at Wilton; to the dedication of which she invited the holy archbishop St. Dunstan. This prelate during mass was observed to weep exceedingly; the reason of which he afterwards discovered to be, because he learned that Editha should shortly be taken out of this world, and translated to the regions of everlasting light; whilst we, said he, shall still continue sitting here below in darkness and in the shades of death. According to this prediction, forty-three days after this solemnity, she happily reposed in our Lord, on the 16th of September, 984, being but twenty-three years old. St. Dunstan, who had assisted her in her last illness, performed the funeral solemnity, she being buried in the church of St. Denis. William of Malmesbury, who lived in the beginning of the twelfth century, assures us that her festival was kept with great devotion. See her life in Capgrave; and William of Malmesbury de Pontific. Angl. l. 2, c. 4, and de Regibus, Angl. l. 2, c. 13. Suysken the Bollandist, t. 5, Sept. p. 364.

Our calendars mention another ST. EDITHA or EADGITHE, daughter to Earl Frewald, who died a nun at Ailesbury.