

ST. BETTELIN, HERMIT, C

INGULPHUS, in his history of Croyland, mentions four disciples of St. Guthlac who led penitential lives in separate cells not far from that of their director; *viz.* Cissa, a young nobleman lately converted to the faith; 2. Bettelin who served St. Guthlac, and was of all others most dear to him; 3. Egbert; 4. Tatwin. After the death of St. Guthlac they continued the same anchoretical life in their cells with the leave of abbot Kenulph, and died happily in the same manner of life. Their bodies were burnt with those of the monks and the church, in the ninth century, by the Danes, incensed at finding no treasure in the monastery.

St. Bettelin or Beccelin, patron of the town of Stafford, in which his relics were kept with great veneration, is related by Capgrave to have lived a hermit in the practice of the most austere penance, and of continual prayer, in the forest near Stafford. But the legend given us by Capgrave, which is also found in MS. before his time, is of no authority; it is not impossible but part of the relics of the disciple of St. Guthlac, might have been conveyed to Stafford before the plunder and burning of Croyland by the Danes. See Capgrave, Wilson in the first edition of his English Martyrology on the 12th of August, and in the second on the 29th of September, Molanus, and others on the ninth of September. Suysken the Bollandist on this day, p. 446.

SEPTEMBER X.

ST. NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINO, C.

His life was written by several hands, principally by three pious and learned men of his Order, very soon after his death; *viz.* Peter de Monte Rubiano in the Marca of Ancona; 2ndly, by Henry of Urimaria; 3rdly, by Jordan de Saxonia. See also Nævius, in his *Eremus Augustiniana*, p. 166; Brulius *Historiæ Peruanæ ordinis Eremitarum S^ci Augustini*, l. 15; and Suysken, *Act. SS.* t. 3, Sept. p. 636.

A. D. 1306.

THIS saint received his surname from the town which was his fixed residence for the most considerable part of his life, and in which he died. He was a native of St. Angelo, a town near

Fermo, in the Marca of Ancona, and was born about the year 1245. His parents were of mean condition in the world, but rich in virtue, and he was reputed the fruit of their prayers, and a devout pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Nicholas of Bari, in which his mother especially, who was then stricken in years, had earnestly begged of God a son who should faithfully serve him. At his baptism he received the name of his patron, and appeared by his towardly dispositions from his infancy to be prevented by an extraordinary share of divine grace. In his childhood he spent whole hours together at his prayers with wonderful application of his mind to God, and he heard the divine word with the utmost eagerness, and with a modesty which charmed all who saw him. He had a tender love for the poor, and used to conduct home those that he met, in order to divide with them whatever he had for his own subsistence. From his infancy he made it a cardinal maxim to renounce all superfluities, practised great mortifications, and from his tender age contracted a habit of fasting three days a week, namely, on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; to which, when he was grown up, he added Mondays, allowing himself on these days only one refection, and that of bread and water. From his very infancy he seemed exempt from the weaknesses and passions to which children are generally liable, his greatest pleasure was in reading good books, in his devotions, and in pious conversation, and his heart was always in the church. His parents neglected nothing that was in their power to improve his genius and happy dispositions. In his studies, as his parts were quick, apprehensions lively, and his memory and judgment strong, so his progress was rapid.

He was yet a young student when, for his extraordinary merit, he was preferred to a canonry in our Saviour's church. This situation was extremely agreeable to his inclination, as by it he was always employed in the divine service. But he aspired to a state which would allow him to consecrate his whole time and thoughts directly to God, without interruptions or avocations. Whilst he was in this disposition, a sermon preached by an Austin friar or hermit, on the vanity of the world, determined him to take a resolution absolutely to quit the world and to embrace the Order of that holy preacher

This he executed without loss of time, entering himself a religious man in the convent of that Order of Tolentino, a small town in the ecclesiastical state. He went through his novitiate under the direction of the preacher himself, and made his profession before he had completed the eighteenth year of his age. His humility made him look on all his brethren as so many superiors, and he studied in all things as much as possible to do the will of every one, that he might the more perfectly learn to deny his own, and the love of humiliations gave him particular affection for the meanest and most mortifying employments in the house, and he embraced whatever was most painful and abject with the greatest pleasure. Such was the unalterable sweetness of his temper, and the equality of his mind, that he never betrayed the least impatience or irregularity of humour: a mark of the constant tranquillity of his soul, and the perfect victory which he had gained over himself. His extraordinary fasts and austerities showed that he looked on his body as a constant enemy to his soul. The disciplines and iron girdles with which he afflicted it, are shown to this day in his convent. His ordinary food was only coarse bread with pulse or herbs; his bed was the bare floor, with a stone for his pillow. In obedience to his general, he once in time of sickness took a mouthful of flesh-meat; but immediately begged with tears, that since he had satisfied his precept, he might be allowed not to eat any more; to which the general assented.

He was sent successively to several convents of his Order at Recanati, Macerata, and others; in that of Cingole he was ordained priest by the bishop of Osimo. From which time, if he seemed an angel in his other actions, he appeared like a seraph at the altar; so wonderfully did the divine fire which burned in his breast manifest itself in his countenance, and sweet tears flowed in streams from his eyes. Devout persons strove every day to assist at his mass as at a sacrifice offered by the hands of a saint. In the secret communications which passed between his pure soul and God in contemplation, especially after he had been employed at the altar or in the confessional, he seemed already to enjoy a kind of anticipation of the delights of heaven. The last thirty years of his life he resided at Tolentino, and his zeal for the salvation of souls, produced

there wonderful fruit. He preached almost every day, and his sermons were always signalized by remarkable conversions. His exhortations, whether in the confessional or in giving catechism, were always such as reached to the heart, and left lasting salutary impressions on those who heard him. What time could be spared from those charitable functions, he spent in prayer and contemplation. He was favoured with visions, and wrought several miraculous cures. For the exercise of his virtue he was long afflicted with divers painful distempers. His holy death happened on September the 10th, in 1306, and he was canonized by Eugenius IV. in 1446. His body was buried in the church of his convent at Tolentino, in a chapel in which he used to say mass, and his tomb there is held in veneration.

The saints, how much soever they had subdued their passions, and strengthened themselves in habits of all virtues, always watched with extraordinary vigilance over all their words and actions, and every motion of their hearts, knowing this life to be a state of perpetual warfare and danger. To prevent all attacks from the enemy, it is the duty of a Christian to be always provided, and in time of peace to expect his return: this disposition will contribute to keep him at a distance; and a neglect of it will certainly invite him to take advantage of our supine sloth, and, by subtle stratagems, or by open force, easily to overthrow us at unawares. By frequent self-examination, the practice of self-denial, the dispositions of humble fear and compunction, and by watchfulness against all occasions of danger, we must continually be armed, and ready to repulse him: if we leave the avenues of our soul open or unguarded, and trust him within our gates, he enters smoothly, but, like a cancer, brings death.

ST. PULCHERIA, V., EMPRESS.

From Sozomen, l. 9; Theodorus Lector, the Paschal Chronicle of Alexandria, &c. See amongst the moderns, Tillemont, t. 15, and especially Orsi. Stilling the Bollandist, t. 3, Sept. p. 504. Pinus the Bollandist, ib. t. 5, p. 778, in an Appendix, and Benedict XIV.'s Bull to grant an office in her honour to several Congregations of Regular Canons, to the Jesuits, &c. an. 1752.

A. D. 453.

In this incomparable princess virtue shone forth on the impe-