

Henschenius would have it to be taken in this place, because it was at that time the capital of Britain. In the ancient copy of Bede's martyrology, which was used at St. Agnan's at Orleans, he is called St. Augustus; in some others St. Augurius. The French call him St. Aule. Chatelain thinks him to be the same saint who is famous in some parts of Normandy under the name of St. Ouil.

FEBRUARY VIII.

ST. JOHN OF MATHA,

FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE TRINITARIANS.

From several bulls of Innocent III. and the many authors of his life, especially that compiled by Robert Gaguin, the learned general of this Order, in 1490, collected by Baillet, and the *Hist. des Ordres Relig.* by F. Helyot. See also *Annales Ordinis SS. Trinitatis*, auctore Bon. Baro, Ord. Minor. Romæ. 1684, and *Regula et Statuta Ord. SS. Trinitatis*, in 12mo. 1576.

A.D. 1213.

ST. JOHN was born of very pious and noble parents, at Faucon, on the borders of Provence, June 24th, 1169, and was baptized John, in honour of St. John the Baptist. His mother dedicated him to God by a vow from his infancy. His father Euphemius sent him to Aix, where he learned grammar, fencing, riding, and other exercises fit for a young nobleman. But his chief attention was to advance in virtue. He gave the poor a considerable part of the money his parents sent him for his own use: he visited the hospital every Friday, assisting the poor sick, dressing and cleansing their sores, and affording them all the comfort in his power.

Being returned home, he begged his father's leave to continue the pious exercises he had begun, and retired to a little hermitage not far from Faucon, with the view of living at a distance from the world, and united to God alone by mortification and prayer. But finding his solitude interrupted by the frequent visits of his friends, he desired his father's consent to go to Paris to study divinity, which he easily obtained. He went through these more sublime studies with extraordinary success, and proceeded to doctor of divinity with uncommon applause, though his modesty gave him a reluctancy to that honour. He was

soon after ordained priest, and said his first mass in the bishop of Paris's chapel, at which the bishop himself, Maurice de Sully, the abbots of St. Victor and of St. Genevieve, and the rector of the university assisted; admiring the graces of heaven in him, which appeared in his extraordinary devotion on this occasion as well as at his ordination.

On the day he said his first mass, by a particular inspiration from God, he came to a resolution of devoting himself to the occupation of ransoming Christian slaves from the captivity they groaned under among the infidels: considering it as one of the highest acts of charity with respect both to their souls and bodies. But before he entered upon so important a work, he thought it needful to spend some time in retirement, prayer, and mortification. And having heard of a holy hermit, St. Felix Valois, living in a great wood near Gandelu, in the diocese of Meaux, he repaired to him and begged he would admit him into his solitude, and instruct him in the practice of perfection. Felix soon discovered him to be no novice, and would not treat him as a disciple, but as a companion. It is incredible what progress these two holy solitaries made in the paths of virtue, by perpetual prayer, contemplation, fasting, and watching.

One day, sitting together on the bank of a spring, John disclosed to Felix the design he had conceived on the day on which he said his first mass, to succour the Christians under the Mahometan slavery, and spoke so movingly upon the subject that Felix was convinced that the design was from God, and offered him his joint concurrence to carry it into execution. They took some time to recommend it to God by prayer and fasting, and then set out for Rome in the midst of a severe winter, towards the end of the year 1197, to obtain the pope's benediction. They found Innocent III. promoted to the chair of St. Peter, who being already informed of their sanctity and charitable design by letters of recommendation from the bishop of Paris, his holiness received them as two angels from heaven; lodged them in his own palace, and gave them many long private audiences. After which he assembled the cardinals and some bishops in the palace of St. John Lateran, and asked their advice. After their deliberations he ordered a fast and particular prayers to know the will of heaven. At length being convinced that these two holy men were led by the spirit of God and that great advantages would accrue to the church from

such an institute, he consented to their erecting a new religious order, and declared St. John the first general minister. The bishop of Paris, and the abbot of St. Victor, were ordered to draw up their rules, which the pope approved by a bull, in 1198. He ordered the religious to wear a white habit, with a red and blue cross on the breast, and to take the name of the order of the Holy Trinity. He confirmed it some time after, adding new privileges by a second bull, dated in 1209.

The two founders having obtained the pope's blessing and certain indults or privileges, returned to France, presented themselves to the king, Phillip Augustus, who authorized the establishment of their Order in his kingdom, and favoured it with his liberalities. Gaucher III. lord of Chatillon, gave them land whereon to build a convent. Their number increasing, the same lord, seconded by the king, gave them Cerfroid, the place in which St. John and St. Felix concerted the first plan of their institute. It is situated in Brie, on the confines of Valois. This house of Cerfroid, or de Cervo frigido, is the chief of the order. The two saints founded many other convents in France, and sent several of their religious to accompany the counts of Flanders and Blois, and other lords, to the holy war. Pope Innocent III. wrote to recommend these religious to Miramolin, king of Morocco; and St. John sent thither two of his religious in 1201, who redeemed one hundred and eighty-six Christian slaves the first voyage. The year following, St. John went himself to Tunis, where he purchased the liberty of one hundred and ten more. He returned into Provence, and there received great charities, which he carried into Spain, and redeemed many in captivity under the Moors. On his return he collected large alms among the Christians, towards this charitable undertaking. His example produced a second order of Mercy, instituted by St. Peter Nolasco, in 1235.

St. John made a second voyage to Tunis in 1210, in which he suffered much from the infidels, enraged at his zeal and success in exhorting the poor slaves to patience and constancy in their faith. As he was returning with one hundred and twenty slaves he had ransomed, the barbarians took away the helm from his vessel, and tore all its sails, that they might perish in the sea. The saint, full of confidence in God, begged him to be their pilot. and hung up his companions' cloaks for sails, and, with a crucifix in his hands, kneeling on the deck, singing psalms, after a pros-

perous voyage, they all landed safe at Ostia, in Italy. Felix, by this time, had greatly propagated his order in France, and obtained for it a convent in Paris, in a place where stood before a chapel of St. Mathurin, whence these religious in France are called Mathurins.

St. John lived two years more in Rome, which he employed in exhorting all to penance with great energy and fruit. He died on the 21st of December in 1213, aged sixty one. He was buried in his church of St. Thomas, where his monument yet remains, though his body has been translated into Spain. Pope Honorius III. confirmed the rule of this order a second time. By the first rule, they were not permitted to buy anything for their sustenance except bread, pulse, herbs, oil, eggs, milk, cheese, and fruit, never flesh nor fish: however, they might eat flesh on the principal festivals, on condition it was given them. They were not, in travelling, to ride on any beast but asses.*

St. Chrysostom(1) elegantly and pathetically extols the charity of the widow of Sarepta, whom neither poverty nor children, nor hunger, nor fear of death, withheld from affording relief to the prophet Elias, and he exhorts every one to meditate on her words, and keep her example present to his mind. "How hard or

(1) Hom. de Elia et Vidua Sarept. p. 33. 328. ed. Montf.

* A mitigation of this rule was approved by Pope Clement IV. in 1267, which allows them to use horses, and to buy fish, flesh, and all other necessities: on which mitigations see *Historia prolixior Priorum Grandimont*, published by Martenne, *Ampliff. Collectio*, t. 6. p. 138. This order is possessed of about two hundred and fifty monasteries, divided into thirteen provinces, in France, Spain, Italy, and Portugal. That formerly in England had forty-three houses; that in Scotland nine; and that in Ireland fifty-two. The general of the order is chosen by a general chapter, which is always held at Cerfroid. Each house is governed by a superior, who is called minister. Those in the provinces of Champagne, Normandy, and Picardy, (which last includes Flanders,) are perpetual; but in Italy and Spain, triennial. Their rule is that of the canons regular of St. Austin. Their principal exercises are to sing the divine office at the canonical hours, praising and glorifying the adorable Trinity, as angels of the earth; and to gather and carry alms into Barbary for the redemption of slaves, to which work one-third of the revenues of each house is applied. A reformation was made in this order in the years 1573 and 1576, which, by degrees, has been introduced into the greater part of the convents, and into that of Cerfroid itself. These never eat meat except on Sundays, sing matins at midnight, and wear no linen. The reformation of the barefooted Trinitarians, still much more severe, was set on foot in Spain, in 1594, by John Baptist of the Conception, who suffered many persecutions in the undertaking, and died in 1613, in great reputation for sanctity and miracles, the examination of which has been commenced in order to his beatification.

insensible soever we are," says he, "they will make a deep impression upon us, and we shall not be able to refuse relief to the poor, when we have before our eyes the generous charity of this widow. It is true you will tell me, that if you meet with a prophet in want, you could not refuse doing him all the good offices in your power. But what ought you not to do for Jesus Christ, who is the master of the prophet? He takes whatsoever you do to the poor as done to himself." When we consider the zeal and joy with which the saints sacrificed themselves for their neighbours, how must we blush at, and condemn our insensibility at the spiritual and the corporal calamities of others! The saints regarded affronts, labours, and pains, as nothing for the service of others in Christ: we cannot bear the least word or roughness of temper.

ST. STEPHEN OF GRANDMONT,

ABBOT.

His life was written by Stephen de Liciac, fourth prior of Grandmont, in 1141: but this work seems now lost. Gerard Ithier, seventh prior, and his abridger, fall into several anachronisms and mistakes, which are to be corrected by the remarks of Dom Martenne, who has given us a new and accurate edition of this life, and other pieces relating to it, *Vet. Scriptorum Amplif. Collectio*, t. 6. p. 1043. See also Dom Rivet, *Hist. Liter. de la France*, t. 10. p. 410. *Gallia Christ. Nova*, t. 2. p. 646.

A.D. 1124.

ST. STEPHEN was son of the virtuous viscount of Thiers, the first nobleman of Auvergne. From his infancy he gave presages of an uncommon sanctity. Milo, a pious priest, at that time dean of the church of Paris, was appointed his tutor, and being made bishop of Beneventum in 1074, kept the saint with him, continued to instruct him in sacred learning, and in the maxims of Christian perfection, and ordained him deacon. After his death in 1076, Stephen pursued his studies in Rome during four years. All this time he seemed to himself continually solicited by an interior voice to seek a sanctuary for his soul in holy solitude, considering the dangers of the pastoral charge, the obligations of leading a penitential life, and the happiness of the exercises of holy retirement. He desired to imitate the rigorous institute of a certain monastery, which he had seen in Calabria, and obtained leave of Pope Gregory VII. to embrace an eremitical life. He therefore returned to the castle of Thiers, the seat of his late parents, to settle his affairs. He had always been