

to the divine Majesty. Every mother, in imitation of the Blessed Virgin, ought to perform this triple duty of thanksgiving, petition, and oblation, and through her hands, who, on the day of her purification, set so perfect a pattern of this devotion.

ST. LAURENCE,

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

HE was one of those who accompanied St. Austin into this island, about the year 597, and was his immediate successor in the see of Canterbury, in 608, in which he sat eleven years. When Eadbald, son and successor to the holy king Ethelbert, not only refused to follow his father's example in embracing the faith, but gave into idolatry, and incestuously took to his bed his father's widow. Laurence having laboured hard for his conversion to no purpose, and despairing of reclaiming him, thought of nothing but retiring into France, as some others had already done. But he was severely scourged by St. Peter, in a dream, on the eve of his intended departure, with reproaches for designing to forsake that flock for which Christ had laid down his life. This did not only prevent his going, but had such an effect upon the king, when he was shown the marks of the stripes he had received on this occasion, that he became a thorough convert, doing whatever was required of him, both for his own sanctification and the propagation of Christianity in his dominions. St. Laurence did not long survive this happy change, dying in the year 619. He is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology. See Bede, Hist. b. 2. c. 4. 6, 7.* Malmesb. l. 1. Pontif. Angl.

FEBRUARY III.

ST. BLASE, BISHOP AND MARTYR.

The four modern different Greek acts of this saint are of small authority. Bollandus has supplied this deficiency by learned remarks.

A.D. 316.

HE was bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, and was crowned with martyrdom in the persecution of Licinius, in 316, by the command

* From these words of Bede, b. 1. c. 27. Austin sent to Rome Laurence the priest, and Peter the monk, some modern historians infer that Saint

of Agricolaus, governor of Cappadocia and the lesser Armenia. It is mentioned in the acts of St. Eustratius, who received the crown of martyrdom in the reign of Dioclesian, and is honoured on the 13th of December, that St. Blase, the bishop of Sebaste, honourably received his relics, deposited them with those of St. Orestes, and punctually executed every article of the last will and testament of St. Eustratius. His festival is kept a holiday in the Greek church on the 11th of February. He is mentioned in the ancient Western Martyrologies which bear the name of St. Jerom, Ado and Usuard, with several more ancient manuscript Martyrologies, quoted by Chatelain, which place his name on the 15th. In the holy war his relics were dispersed over the West, and his veneration was propagated by many miraculous cures, especially of sore throats. He is the principal patron of the commonwealth of Ragusa.(1) No other reason than the great devotion of the people to this celebrated martyr of the church seems to have given occasion to the wool-combers to choose him the titular patron of their profession: on which account his festival is still kept by them with a solemn guild at Norwich. Perhaps also his country might in part determine them to this choice: for it seems that the first branch, or at least hint of this manufacture, was borrowed from the remotest known countries of the East, as was that of silk: or the iron combs, with which he is said to have been tormented, gave occasion to this choice.

The iron combs, hooks, racks, swords, and scaffolds, which were purpled with the blood of the martyrs, are eternal proofs of their invincible courage and constancy in the divine service. But are they not at the same time subjects of our condemnation and confusion? How weak are our resolutions! How base our pusillanimity and cowardice in the pursuit of virtue! We have daily renewed our most sacred baptismal engagements, and our purposes of faithfully serving God; these we have often repeated at the feet of God's ministers, and in presence of his holy altars; and we have often begun our conversion with great fervour. Yet these fair blossoms were

(1) See Bollandus, Pagi ad an. 316. Chatelain, *Notes on the Martyr*. p. 507. and Jos. Assemani in *Cal. Univ.* ad 11 Feb. t. 6. p. 123.

Laurence was no monk, but a secular priest; though this proof is weak. See Collier, *Dict. Suppl.* Henschenius v. 290. and Le Quien, *Oriens Christ.* T. 1. p. 421.

always nipped in the bud: for want of constancy we soon fell back into our former sloth and disorders, adding to our other prevarications that of base infidelity. Instead of encountering gibbets and wild beasts, we were scared at the sight of the least difficulty; or we had not courage to make the least sacrifice of our passions, or to repulse the weakest and most contemptible assaults of the world. Its example, or that dangerous company from which we had not resolution to separate ourselves, carried us away: and we had not courage to withstand those very maxims which we ourselves condemn in the moments of our serious reflections, as contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Perhaps we often flew back for fear of shadows, and out of apprehensions frequently imaginary, lest we should forfeit some temporal advantage, some useful or agreeable friend. Perhaps we were overcome by the difficulties which arose barely from ourselves, and wanted resolution to deny our senses, to subdue our passions, to renounce dangerous occasions, or to enter upon a penitential life. Blinded by self-love, have we not sheltered our dastardly pusillanimity under the cloak of pretended necessity, or even virtue?

ST. ANSCHARIUS, C.

ARCHBISHOP OF HAMBURG AND BREMEN.

From his excellent life compiled by St. Rembert his successor, with the remarks of Mabillon, *Act. Bened.* t. 4. p. 401. and the preliminary discourse of Henschenius, p. 391. Adam Bremensis, *Hist. Episc. Hamb.* and Olof Dolin, in his new and excellent history of Sweden in the reigns of Listen, Bel, and Bagnar, c. 16.

A.D. 865.

HE was a monk, first of Old Corbie in France, afterwards of Little Corbie in Saxony. Harold, or Heriold, prince of Denmark, having been baptized in the court of the emperor Lewis Debonnaire, Anscharius preached the faith with great success, first to the Danes, afterwards to the Swedes, and lastly in the North of Germany. In 832, he was made archbishop of Hamburg, and legate of the holy see, by Pope Gregory IV. That city was burnt by an army of Normans, in 845. The saint continued to support his desolate churches, till, in 849, the see of Bremen becoming vacant, Pope Nicholas united it to that of Hamburg, and appointed him bishop of both. Denmark and Sweden had relapsed into idolatry, notwithstanding the labours of many