

pagans. See Adam of Bremen, who wrote his most faithful History of the Church in the North, in 1080, l. 2. c. 44. Albert Kranxius, l. 4. Metrop. c. 8. Baron. ad an. 1028. n. 10.

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JANUARY XIX.SS. MARIS, MARTHA, AUDIFAX, AND  
ABACHUM, MM.

Abridged from their acts, concerning which see Bollandus, who allows them, Tillem. T. 4. p. 673; and Chatelain, notes, p. 339.

A.D. 270.

MARIS, a nobleman of Persia, with his wife Martha, and two sons, Audifax and Abachum, being converted to the faith, distributed his fortune among the poor, as the primitive Christians did at Jerusalem, and came to Rome to visit the tombs of the apostles. The emperor Aurelian then persecuted the church, and by his order a great number of Christians were shut up in the amphitheatre, and shot to death with arrows, and their bodies burnt. Our saints gathered and buried their ashes with respect; for which they were apprehended, and after many torments under the governor Marcianus, Maris and his two sons were beheaded; and Martha drowned, thirteen miles from Rome, at a place now called Santa Ninfa.\* Their relics were found at Rome in 1590. They are mentioned with distinction in all the western Martyrologies from the sacramentary of St. Gregory. Their relics are kept principally at Rome; part in the church of St. Adrian, part in that of St. Charles, and in that of St. John Calybite. Eginhart, son-in-law and secretary of Charlemagne, deposited a portion of these relics which had been sent him from Rome in the abbey of Selghenstadt, of which he was the founder, in the diocess of Mentz.

The martyrs and confessors triumphed over the devil by prayer; by this, poor and weak as they were, they were rendered invincible; by engaging Omnipotence itself to be their comfort, strength, and protection. If the art of praying well be

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\* Ninfa, or Nympha, in the corrupted ages of the Latin tongue, signifies water. In this place are several pools called by the Italians from these martyrs, Sancta Ninfa. See Chatelain, p. 340, and Du Cange.

the art of living well, according to the received maxim of the fathers and masters of a spiritual life,\* nothing is certainly of greater importance, than for us to learn this heavenly art of conversing with God in the manner we ought. We admire the wonderful effects which this exercise produced in the saints, who by it were disengaged from earthly ties, and made spiritual and heavenly; perfect angels on earth: but we experience nothing of this in ourselves. Prayer was in them the channel of all graces, the means of attaining all virtues, and all the treasures of heaven. In us it is fruitless: the reason is plain; for the promises of Christ cannot fail: "we ask, and receive not, because we ask amiss."

### ST. CANUTUS, KING OF DENMARK, M

From his life faithfully written by Elnoth, a monk of Canterbury, who had lived twenty-four years in Denmark, and wrote in 1105. It was printed at Copenhagen, in 1602. See also Saxo Grammaticus, the most elegant and judicious of the Danish historian.

A.D. 1086.

ST. CANUTUS, or KNUT, the fourth of that name, king of Denmark. was natural son of Swein III, whose great uncle Canutus had reigned in England. Swein having no lawful issue, took care of the education of Canutus, who being endowed with excellent qualities both of mind and body, answered perfectly well the care of his preceptors and governors. It is hard to say, whether he excelled more in courage, or in conduct and skill in war; but his singular piety perfectly eclipsed all his other endowments. He scourged the seas of pirates, and subdued several neighbouring provinces which infested Denmark with their incursions. The kingdom of Denmark was elective till the year 1660; wherefore, when Swein died, many pitched upon our saint, whose eminent virtues best qualified him for the throne; but the majority, fearing his martial spirit, preferred his eldest natural brother Harold, the seventh king of that name, who for his stupidity and vices, was commonly called the Slothful. Canutus retired into Sweden to King Halstan, who received him with the greatest marks of kindness and esteem; but the king could never induce him to undertake any expedition against Denmark; on the contrary, the Christian hero employed all his power and interest

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\* Vere novit rectè vivere, qui rectè novit orare. Inter. Serm. S. Augustini, Sermon 55, in Appendix, ed. Ben. t. 5. p. 101.