

not gods; renounce their worship. He alone for whom I suffer and die, is the true God. He comforts and upholds me in the condition you see me. To die for him is to live; to suffer for him is to enjoy the greatest delights." Discoursing in this manner to those about him, he expired on the 12th of January, the pagans being struck with astonishment at such a miracle of patience. The Christians gathered together his scattered limbs, and laid them in one tomb. The Roman and other Martyrologies make honourable mention of him on this day.

We belong to God by numberless essential titles of interest, gratitude, and justice, and are bound to be altogether his, and every moment to live to him alone, with all our powers and all our strength: whatever it may cost us to make this sacrifice perfect and complete, if we truly love him, we shall embrace it with joy and inexpressible ardour. In these sentiments we ought, by frequent express acts, and by the uninterrupted habitual disposition of our souls, to give all we are and have to God, all the powers of our souls, all the senses and organs of our bodies, all our actions, thoughts, and affections. This oblation we may excellently comprise in any of the first petitions of our Lord's prayer: the following is a form of an oblation to our divine Redeemer which St. Ignatius of Loyola drew up and used to repeat, "O sovereign King, and absolute Lord of all things, though I am most unworthy to serve you, nevertheless, relying on your grace and boundless mercy, I offer myself up entirely to you, and subject whatever belongs to me to your most holy will; and I protest in presence of your infinite goodness, and in presence of the glorious Virgin, your mother, and your whole heavenly court, that it is my most earnest desire, and unshaken resolution, to follow and imitate you the nearest I am able, in bearing all injuries and crosses with meekness and patience, and in labouring to die to the world and myself in a perfect spirit of humility and poverty, that I may be wholly yours, and you may reign in me in time and eternity."

ST. BENEDICT BISCOP,

COMMONLY CALLED BENNET.

He was nobly descended, and one of the great officers of the court of Oswi, the religious king of the Northumbers; he was very dear to his prince, and was beholden to his bounty for

many fair estates, and great honours; but neither the favours of so good and gracious a king, nor the allurements of power, riches, and pleasures, were of force to captivate his heart, who could see nothing in them but dangers, and snares so much the more to be dreaded, as fraught with the power of charming. At the age therefore of twenty-five, an age that affords the greatest relish for pleasure, he bid adieu to the world, made a journey of devotion to Rome, and at his return devoted himself wholly to the studies of the scriptures and other holy exercises. Some time after his return to England, Alcfrid, son of king Oswi, being desirous to make a pilgrimage to the shrines of the apostles, engaged Biscop to bear him company to Rome. The king prevented his son's journey; nevertheless our saint travelled thither a second time, burning with an earnest desire of improving himself in the knowledge of divine things, and in the love of God. From Rome he went to the great monastery of Lerins, then renowned for its regular discipline; there he took the monastic habit, and spent two years in the most exact observance of the rule, and penetrated in every exercise with its true spirit: after this he returned to Rome, where he received an order of Pope Vitalian to accompany St. Theodorus, archbishop of Canterbury, and St. Adrian, to England. When he arrived at Canterbury, St. Theodorus committed to him the care of the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul, near that city, which abbacy he resigned to St. Adrian upon his arrival in England. St. Bennet staid about two years in Kent, giving himself up to religious exercises and sacred studies, under the discipline of those two excellent persons. Then he took a fourth journey to Rome, with a view of perfecting himself in ecclesiastical discipline, and the rules and practice of monastic life; for which purpose he made a considerable stay at Rome and other places; he brought home with him a choice library, relics and pictures of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and other saints. When he returned to Northumberland, king Egfrid (in whose father's court St. Bennet had formerly lived) bestowed on him seventy ploughs or families of land for building a monastery:* this the saint founded on the mouth of the river Were, whence it was called Weremouth. When the monastery was built, St. Bennet went over to France,

* A plough, or family of land, was as much as one plough, or one yoke of oxen, could throw up in a year or as sufficed for the maintenance of a family.

and brought back with him skilful masons, who built the church for this monastery of stone, and after the Roman fashion; for till that time stone buildings were very rare in Britain, even the church of Lindisfarne was of wood, and covered over with a thatch of straw and reeds, till bishop Eadbert procured both the roof and the walls to be covered with sheets of lead, as Bede mentions. (1) St. Bennet also brought over glaziers from France, for the art of making glass was then unknown in Britain. In a fifth journey to Rome, St. Bennet furnished himself with a larger stock of good books, especially the writings of the fathers, also of relics and holy pictures, with which he enriched his own country.

His first monastery of Weremouth was entitled from Saint Peter, prince of the apostles: and such was the edification which it gave, that the same king added to the saint a second donation of lands, consisting of forty ploughs; on which Biscop built another monastery, at a place called Girwy, now Jarrow, on the Tine, six miles distant from the former, and this latter was called St. Paul's; these two monasteries were almost looked upon as one; and St. Bennet governed them both, though he placed in each a superior or abbot, who continued subject to him, his long journey to Rome and other avocations making this substitution necessary.* In the church of St. Peter at Weremouth he placed the pictures of the Blessed Virgin, the twelve apostles, the history of the gospel, and the visions in the revelation of St. John: that of St. Paul's at Jarrow, he adorned with other pictures, disposed in such manner as to represent the harmony between the Old and New Testament, and the conformity of the figures in one to the reality in the other. Thus Isaac carrying the wood which was to be employed in the sacrifice of himself, was explained by Jesus Christ carrying his cross, on which he was to finish his sacrifice; and the brazen serpent was illustrated by our Saviour's crucifixion. With these pictures, and many books and relics, St. Bennet brought from Rome in his last voyage, John, abbot of St. Martin's, precentor in St. Peter's church, whom he prevailed with pope Agatho to send with him,

(1) Hist. l. 3. c. 25.

* The abbeys of Weremouth and Jarrow were destroyed by the Danes. Both were rebuilt in part, and from the year 1083 were small priories or cells dependent of the abbey of Durham, till their dissolution, 37th of Henry VIII.

and whom he placed at Weremouth to instruct perfectly his monks in the Gregorian notes, and Roman ceremonies for singing the divine office. Easterwin, a kinsman of St. Bennet, and formerly an officer in the king's court, before he became a monk, was chosen abbot before our saint set out for Rome, and in that station behaved always as the meanest person in the house; for though he was eminently adorned with all virtues, humility, mildness and devotion seemed always the most eminent part of his character. This holy man died on the 6th of March, when he was but thirty-six years old, and had been four years abbot, whilst St. Bennet was absent in the last journey to Rome. The monks chose in his place St. Sigfrid, a deacon, a man of equal gravity and meekness, who soon after fell into a lingering decay, under which he suffered violent pains in his lungs and bowels. He died four months before our saint. With his advice two months before his death, St. Bennet appointed St. Ceolfrid abbot of both his monasteries, being himself struck with a dead palsy, by which all the lower parts of his body were without life; he lay sick of this distemper three years, and for a considerable time was entirely confined to his bed. During this long illness, not being able to raise his voice to the usual course of singing the divine office, at every canonical hour he sent for some of his monks, and whilst they, being divided into two choirs, sung the psalms proper for the hour of the day or night, he endeavoured as well as he could to join not only his heart, but also his voice with theirs. His attention to God he seemed never to relax, and frequently and earnestly exhorted his monks to a constant observance of the rule he had given them. "You must not think," said he, "that the constitutions which you have received from me were my own invention; for having in my frequent journeys visited seventeen well ordered monasteries, I informed myself of all their laws and rules, and picking out the best among them, these I have recommended to you." The saint expired soon after, having received the viaticum on the 12th of January, in 690. His relics, according to Malmesbury,(1) were translated to Thorney abbey, in 970, but the monks of Glastenbury thought themselves possessed at least of part of that treasure,(1) The true name of our saint was Biscop Baducing, as appears from Eddius-Stephen, in his life of St. Wilfrid. The

(1) Malmes. l. 4. de Pontif.

(1) See Monast. Ang. T. 1. p. 4. and John of Glastenbury, Hist. Glasten.

English Benedictins honour him as one of the patrons of their congregation, and he is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on this day. See his life in Bede's history of the first abbots of Waremouth, published by Sir James Ware, at Dublin, in 1664.

TYGRIUS, A PRIEST,

WHO was scourged, tormented with the disjoining of his bones, stripped of all his goods, and sent into banishment; and EUTROPIUS, lector, and precentor of the church of Constantinople, who died in prison of his torments, having been scourged, his cheeks torn with iron hooks, and his sides burnt with torches; are honoured in the Roman Martyrology with the title of martyrs, on the 12th of January.

ST. AELRED,

ABBOT OF RIEVAL, OR RIDAL, IN YORKSHIRE.

HE was of noble descent, and was born in the north of England, in 1109. Being educated in learning and piety, he was invited by David, the pious king of Scotland, to his court, made master of his household, and highly esteemed both by him and the courtiers. His virtue shone with bright lustre in the world, particularly his meekness, which Christ declared to be his favourite virtue, and the distinguishing mark of his true disciples. The following is a memorable instance to what a degree he possessed this virtue: a certain person of quality having insulted and reproached him in the presence of the king, Aelred heard him out with patience, and thanked him for his charity and sincerity, in telling him his faults. This behaviour had such an influence on his adversary as made him ask his pardon on the spot. Another time, whilst he was speaking on a certain matter, one interrupted him with very harsh reviling expressions: the servant of God heard him with tranquillity, and afterwards resumed his discourse with the same calmness and presence of mind as before. His desires were ardent to devote himself entirely to God, by forsaking the world; but the charms of friendship detained him some time longer in it, and were fetters to his soul; reflecting notwithstanding that he must sooner or later be separated by death from those he loved most, he condemned his own cowardice, and broke at once those bands of friendship, which were more agreeable to him than all other sweets of life. He describes the