

afterwards in Ireland under St. Finian, to whose famous school, in his monastery of Cluain-Irraird, the lovers of true wisdom repaired from all sides. The zeal and labours of St. Kenny, in propagating the practice of Christian perfection throughout Ireland, have ranked him among the most glorious saints whose virtue has been the greatest ornament of that island. St. Kenny was intimately connected by holy friendship with St. Columkille, whom he sometimes visited in the isle of Hij. He founded himself the great monastery of Achadbho (or The Ox's Field) which grew up into a town, and was formerly the seat of the bishops of Ossory, who now reside at Kilkenny, a city which takes its name from this saint, that word signifying *Cell* or *Church of Kenny*. See Usher, *Antiq. Britan.* pp. 493, 495, &c.; Adamnan, *Vit. S. Columb.* l. 1, c. 4, l. 3, c. 17; Sir James Ware, *Antiqu. Hibern.* p. 314.

OCTOBER XII.

ST. WILFRID, BISHOP OF YORK, C.

From his life written by Eddi Stephani, precentor of the church of Canterbury, in the same age, prior to Bede, ap. Mabill. *Act. Ben.* t. 3, p. 170; t. 5, p. 676. Bede, *Hist.* l. 3, c. 25, &c. Also Fredegodus, by order of St. Odo of Canterbury, and Eadmer, secretary to St. Anselm, wrote his life. Among the moderns, Mr. Peck has compiled his life at large in his history of Stamford, l. 2. See also Johnson's Collection of English Canons, and Mr. Smith's App. in Bedam, n. 18, 19. His life in the English-Saxon language, MSS. Bibl. Cotton. Julius, A. X.

A. D. 709.

ST. WILFRID, in English-Saxon Willferder, to whose zealous labours several churches both in our island and abroad were indebted for their conversion to Christ, was born in the kingdom of Northumberland, towards the year 634. At fourteen years of age he was sent to the monastery of Lindisfarne that he might be trained up in the study of the sacred sciences, in which he discovered an application, penetration, and maturity of judgment beyond his years. A desire of greater improvement than he could attain to in that house, where he perceived the discipline that was practised to be imperfect, put him upon a project of travelling into France and Italy. He made some stay at Canterbury, where he studied the Roman discipline,

and learned the psalter according to the Roman version, instead of that of St. Jerom, which he had used before. In 653, according to Mr. Smith, St. Bennet Biscop, his countryman, passed through Kent on his first journey to Rome; and St. Wilfrid, who had set out with the same design, crossed the seas with him, but with an intention to visit the most famous monasteries in his way, the better to instruct himself in the rules of Christian perfection. At Lyons they were detained a whole year by St. Delphinus, surnamed Annemund, archbishop of that city, who conceived so great an affection for Wilfrid that he offered him his niece in marriage, and promised to procure him a considerable employment; but the saint continued steadfast in the resolution he had taken to devote himself to God, and proceeded on his journey the year following. At Rome he devoutly visited every day the tombs of the martyrs, and contracted a friendship with Boniface, the archdeacon, who was a very pious and a very learned man; he was secretary to the holy pope St. Martin, and took as much delight in instructing young Wilfrid as if he had been his own child. He carefully explained to him the four gospels, and the right calculation of Easter against the erroneous practice of the Britons and Irish; likewise the other rules of ecclesiastical discipline. At length he presented him to the pope, who gave him his blessing by the imposition of his hands, and prayer. After this, Wilfrid left Rome, from whence he brought relics, and returned to Lyons to the archbishop, whom he revered as his father. He staid three years at Lyons, and received the ecclesiastical tonsure from St. Delphinus, who desired to make him his heir; but was put to death at Challons upon the Saone, by the order of Ebroin, in 658. He is honoured at Lyons as a martyr on the 29th of September, being commonly called St. Chaumont. Wilfrid accompanied him to the place of execution, and would have been glad to have died for him or with him. After he had interred his spiritual father, he returned into England loaded with relics.

Alcfrid, natural son of Oswi, who at that time reigned over the Deiri, (his father contenting himself with Bernicia,) being informed that Wilfrid had been instructed in the discipline of the Roman Church, sent for him, and received him as an angel

from heaven. After he had discoursed with him concerning several customs of that church, he conjured him to continue with him, to instruct him and his people in ecclesiastical discipline. This St. Wilfrid consented to, and the prince entered into an intimate friendship with him, and gave him land at Rippon to found a monastery upon, which our saint governed and richly endowed. Assisted by the munificence of the king, he distributed very considerable sums in alms, was exceedingly beloved and respected on account of his virtues, and was even looked upon as a prophet. Agilbert, bishop of the West-Saxons, coming to pay a visit to King Oswi and his son, Aelfrid entreated him to ordain Wilfrid priest, that he might remain always near his person. Agilbert said, that a person of such merit ought to be promoted to a bishopric; and ordained him priest in 663, in the monastery of Rippon. The Northumbrians had relapsed into idolatry after the death of King Edwin; but St. Oswald obtained St. Aidan, the holy Irish monk of Hij, for bishop, and planted the faith again in that kingdom. St. Aidan resided, not at York, as St. Paulinus had done, but at Lindisfarne. Finan and Colman, his countrymen, succeeded him, and had all the kingdom of Northumberland for their diocess. These Scots or Irish followed an erroneous calculation of Easter; and King Oswi who had been instructed by them, and his queen Eanfleda, daughter of Edwin, who came from Kent, sometimes kept Lent and Easter at different times in the same court. The Scots and Britons herein were not schismatics, as Rapin and some others pretend; for they did not coincide with the Quartodecimans, who had been condemned by the church, nor had this difference between the Scots and the universal church then proceeded to a breach of communion. To put an end to this dispute, in 664 a conference was held in the great monastery of St. Hilda, at Streaneshalch, now Whitby, before the kings Oswi and Aelfrid. Colman brought thither his Scottish clergy; on the other side, Agilbert, bishop of West-Sex or Dorchester, had with him Agatho, a priest from Paris, Romanus, the abbot Wilfrid, and the deacon James. Colman alleged the example of his predecessors, and of St. Columba himself, and pretended that practice to have been established in Asia, by St. John the Evangelist; which asser-

tion it would have been a difficult task to prove.* Wilfrid replied, that the agreement of all the churches in Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, Gaul, Rome, Italy, and the rest of the world, ought to have more weight than that of the Picts and Britons in a part of the two remotest islands of the ocean; that St. John could not reject at once all the observances of the law, so long as the church judaized in some points; but that after the death of St. John the custom which St. Peter established at Rome, was observed by his successors in Asia, and by the universal church, and was commanded by the Nicene council: that the Britons and Picts neither followed St. Peter, nor St. John, neither the law nor the gospel; that Columba and the rest of their ancestors were without fault, because they knew no better; but that they were inexcusable who refused to be instructed. He added that Christ said to St. Peter: *Thou art Peter, &c.*(1) Hereupon King Oswi said: "Do you all acknowledge, of both parties, that our Lord said this particularly to Peter, and that the Lord gave him the keys of the kingdom of heaven?" They replied: "We acknowledge it." Then he concluded: "I declare, that I will not oppose this keeper of the gate of heaven, and that I will obey his orders to the utmost of my power, lest he shut that gate against me." This resolution of the king was approved by the whole assembly. Rapin confesses that Oswi acknowledged a prerogative of St. Peter above the rest of the apostles, and that on this account he preferred the practice which he had established at Rome, to that which

(1) Matt. xvi. 18.

* If any of the apostles who lived among the Jews tolerated for some time a coinciding of Easter with the Jewish Pasch, at least the contrary rule was always the general discipline of the church, which the apostles established to show the distinction and the liberty of the new law, as for the same purpose they changed the Sabbath into Sunday. When the general council of Nice, in 325, had condemned the custom of keeping Easter with the Jews on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month nearest the spring equinox, those who obstinately persisted in that practice were called Quartodecimans, and were schismatics, &c. They who held that practice to be of precept from the Jewish law, were always heretics. The Scots or Irish, in the fifth and sixth centuries, kept Easter on a Sunday, not on the fourteenth day, with the Quartodecimans and Jews, unless when this fourteenth day was the Sunday, by which they differed widely from the practice that was condemned at Nice, yet fell short of perfect conformity with the universal church.

he thought derived from St. John.(1) It is evident from the very silence of both parties, that the Scots or Irish and Britons never called in question the supremacy of the bishop of Rome. Another difference which regarded the tonsure was agitated in this conference. The Romans made it quite round the head, to resemble, they said, our Lord's crown of thorns. This was called St. Peter's Tonsure: the other, called by derision Simor Magus's, was only a semicircle shaved from ear to ear above the forehead, not reaching to the hinder part, which was covered with hair.* Bede mentions no decision with regard to this point, which was left to the custom of each place. St. Cedd, bishop of Essex or London, who was present at this conference, and, being a native of Deira, had followed the Scottish customs, declared upon the spot that he embraced the Roman discipline: but Colman said he would consult with his brethren, the monks of Jona, and retired to them with his Scottish priests. Tuda was consecrated bishop of Northumberland in his room, but soon after died of a pestilence which raged in England in 664. He had been educated and ordained by the Southern Irish, but conformed to the Roman discipline; he was much lamented on account of his virtue. King Alfrid desired to have his own priest Wilfrid placed in the episcopal see, and sent him into France, to receive consecration at the hands of his old friend Agilbert, who, seeing his diocese of West-Sex divided, and another bishop, named Wina, placed at Venta, called by the Saxons Wintacestir, now Winchester, returned to France, which was his native country, where the bishopric of Paris was given him. Wilfrid being absent a long time on this journey, Oswi caused St. Ceadda, or Chad, abbot of Lestingau, a disciple of St. Aidan, to be ordained bishop. The see of Canterbury being vacant by the death of Deusdedit, he was consecrated by Wina, bishop of Winchester, who was the only bishop at that time in Great Britain that had been

(1) Rapin Thoyras, *Hist. d'Angleterre*, l. 3, t. 1, p. 246, ed. Gallic.

* There was likewise the Oriental Tonsure called St. Paul's, which some monks used also in the West; this consisted in shaving the whole head. The use of ecclesiastical tonsures seems only to have been introduced in the fourth or fifth century after the persecutions, as a mark of a person's being consecrated to God, and in imitation of Christ's crown of thorns. See *Bona Rerum Liturg.* Smith in *Bed. Append.* p. 715; Fleury, l. 39.

canonically ordained. Agilbert joyfully received Wilfrid, and, with twelve other bishops, performed the ceremony of his ordination with great solemnity at Compiègne. St. Wilfrid was then in the thirtieth year of his age, in 664; he was carried by the bishops in a golden chair, according to the custom of the Gauls.

At his return into England he would not dispute the election of St. Chad; but retired to Rippon, which monastery he made his residence for three years, though he was often called into Mercia by King Wulfere, to ordain deacons and priests and to perform other episcopal functions. Oswi having defeated and slain Penda in 655, conquered all that kingdom; but, three years after, made Peada, Penda's son, to whom he had given his daughter in marriage, king of that part which lay south of the Trent; but Peada dying soon after, Oswi again united that country to his own dominions. Not long after, the Mercians took up arms, and placed Wulfere, Penda's second son, upon the throne in 659. This prince was for some time a pagan, or at least favoured the pagans; but at length became a zealous propagator of the faith, and governed by the counsels of St. Wilfrid, who founded monasteries and churches in several parts of Mercia. Mr. Peck endeavours to prove,⁽¹⁾ that the priory of St. Leonard, about a quarter of a mile out of Stamford, was built by St. Wilfrid, though rebuilt, in honour of St. Leonard, by William, bishop of Durham, in the reign of the Conqueror, and only then dedicated in honour of St. Leonard.*

(1) History of Stamford, l. 2.

* Bede tells us, that King Alcfrid bestowed on St. Wilfrid land of thirty families at Stamford, where he built a monastery before he founded that of Rippon. Mr. Smith is inclined to think this Stamford was situated on the Derwent in Yorkshire. But ancient MSS. and writers call it Stamford in Lincolnshire, as Mr. Smith confesses; and after Oswi's victory over Penda, all Mercia was subjected to the Northumbrians, till Oswi constituted Peada rather viceroy than king of South-Mercia; so that St. Wilfrid might build a church in that country. (See Mr. Peck's History of Stamford.) After King Wulfere, his brother became independent in Mercia, Lindsey, and probably almost all Lincolnshire, was again conquered by the Northumbrians, and obeyed them for some years. This church of St. Leonard's, near Stamford, was formerly a place of great devotion. The nave, or middle aisle is still standing, and shows the remains of a stately pile, and of costly and excellent workmanship, though it is now converted into a barn, for the use of a new farm-house. In digging the foundations of this house some stone coffins were found, which are

St. Theodorus, archbishop of Canterbury, in his visitation, found the election of St. Chad to have been irregular, and removed him; but, charmed with his humility and virtue, placed him in the see of Litchfield. At the same time he put St. Wilfrid in possession of the see of York, in 669, before the death of Oswi, which happened in 670. Upon his demise, Alfrid was obliged by the people to leave the throne to Egfrid, the eldest legitimate son of Oswi. St. Wilfrid consecrated the great church of St. Peter, which he had built at Rippon, in presence of the new king, in 670; and afterwards that of St. Andrew at Hexham, and several others. Being a man of most persuasive oratory and strict virtue, he promoted everywhere religion and piety with incredible success. He invited out of Kent the precentor Eddi Stephani, who became from that time his constant companion, and afterwards wrote his life. With his assistance the saint established, in all the churches of the north, the use of Plain-song, which St. Gregory the Great instituted in the church-music, and admirably well adapted it to every different part of the divine office, as Franchini observes;* in which it is easier and more becoming than that

used for troughs, and the bones of the illustrious dead interred there were scattered about the fields with an indecency which the pagan Romans would have called sacrilegious. Mr. Hearn, in his Preface to *Textus Roffensis*, p. 43, speaking of the ruins of Rewley, (alias North-Ousney,) an abbey of Cistercians, near Oxford, says: "Great quantities of men's bones are frequently dug up, which are often barbarously used, without considering that the persons there buried were renowned for all sorts of virtues, particularly for justice, clemency, and bounty towards the poor. But I foresee what the advocates of sacrilege will say," &c. See the like invectives of Mr. Stephens and others, which might seem too harsh if here inserted. The pagan Romans punished a wilful violation, or removing the stones, of a sepulchre, with great rigour, calling it a sacrilege, and a crime against the public next in guilt to that of treason. See Gutherius *De Jure Manium*, l. 3, c. 25; *De Sepulchro violato ap. Grævium*, *Antiq. Roman.* t. 12.

* Guido, a monk of Arezzo, in Tuscany, in 1009, was the inventor of the gamma-ut or gamut, and the six notes, *Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La*; which syllables are taken from the three first verses of the hymn of St. John Baptist, *Ut queant laxis*, &c. Without the use of the gamut, a person could not in a little time become perfect master of plain-song. Guido says, in a letter which he wrote: "I hope they who come after us will not forget to pray for us. For we make a perfect master of singing in a year or two; whereas till now a person could scarcely attain this science, even imperfectly, in ten years." The gamut is the first note, but oftener taken for the whole scale of music, or series of sounds rising or falling toward acuteness or gravity from any given pitch or tone. Plain-song

which is performed with a harmonious discord of voices and variation of melody.(1) The monastic state was a principal object of St. Wilfrid's care; and this he settled among the Midland and Northern English, as St. Austin had established it in Kent.(2)

King Egfrid had taken to wife St. Audry, who preferring a religious life, according to the liberty which the church has always understood, by constant tradition, to be allowed by the divine law before cohabitation, St. Wilfrid endeavoured at first to engage her to change her resolution; but finding her inflexible in it, at length consented to give her the veil. This action exceedingly provoked the king; and his new Queen Ermenberga employed every base and little means entirely to ruin him in the opinion of her husband. In order to undermine him, a project was set on foot for dividing his bishopric, after the holy prelate had spent ten years in settling Christianity in it. Theodorus, the archbishop of Canterbury and metropolitan of all England, was gained by specious pretences, and parcelled his great diocese, consecrating Bosa to the see of York, for the Deiri; Eata to that of Lindisfarne, for Bernicia; and Eadhed to the church of Lindissi or great part of Lincolnshire, which Egfrid had won from Mercia.(3) This passed in the year 678. Eadhed resided first at Sidnacester, near Gainsborough; but after King Wulfere had recovered Lindsey and all Lincolnshire, he retired to Rippon. Wilfrid, for opposing this partition, was rejected; but appealed to the pope. Dreading a disturbance or schism, he raised no clamour; but being too well versed in the canons not to see the irregularity and nullity of many steps that had been taken against him embarked for Rome. Being driven by contrary winds at sea upon the coast of Friesland, he was moved to compassion upon seeing the spiritual blindness and idolatry of the inhabitants, and preached the faith to them.

(1) Smith, in Bed. App. n. 12, p. 720.

(2) See F. Reyner's learned work, entitled, *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Angliâ*.

(3) Johnson's Collect. of English Canons. an. 679, pref.

is that in which all sing in unison; it is executed by fixing the musical notes within due limits, and ordering or disposing the changes, risings, and fallings of the voice according to the natural series of the musical sounds.

During that winter and the following spring he staid among them, converted and baptized many thousands, with several lords of the country. Thus he opened that harvest which St Willibrord and others, excited by his example, afterwards cultivated. Wilfrid is honoured to this day as the apostle of that country.(1) Ebroin, either through the solicitations of the saint's enemies in England, or on the score of his enmity on account of St. Delphinus of Lyons, sent letters to Adalgise, king of Friesland, promising to give him a bushel of gold, if he would send him Bishop Wilfrid, or his head. The king read the letters publicly before Wilfrid, the messengers, and his own officers, and tearing them to pieces with indignation, threw them into the fire, expressing the utmost execration of so detestable a treachery.

Next summer Wilfrid, leaving his new converts with great reluctance under the direction of proper pastors, travelled through Austrasia, where King Dagobert II. entertained him most honourably, and entreated him to fill the bishopric of Strasburg, which happened then to be vacant. Upon his refusal, this prince made him very considerable presents, and sent Adeodatus, bishop of Toul, to accompany him to Rome, where he arrived late in the year 679. He found Pope Agatho already apprised of what had passed in England, by a monk whom Theodorus had despatched on his side with letters. The pope was preparing to hold a great council against the Monothelites. In the meantime, to discuss this cause, he assembled a synod in October, 679, in the Lateran basilic, or church of our Saviour, consisting of above fifty bishops and priests, chiefly of the Suburbicarian churches (*i. e.* of part of Italy and those of Sicily), though their names are strangely mangled in Sir Henry Spelman's copy.(2) The causes of the dissension in the British church having been weighed, it was decreed, by the authority of St. Peter, that there should be in it one archbishop honoured with the pall, who should promote and canonically ordain the bishops to the other sees; but that none of the bishops should presume to meddle with the rights of any other prelate, but all should study to instruct and convert the people.

(1) See *Batavia Sacra*, p. 25.

(2) Spelman, *Conc. Brit.* vol. 1, p. 158; Labbe's *Councils*, t. 6, p. 579.

After this, St. Wilfrid was admitted to the council, though Johnson thinks this a second council, held soon after the first, in the same place; and that St. Wilfrid was not arrived at Rome when the first was convened, but had only stated his case to the pope by letters. Having presented his petition in person to the pope and bishops assembled, the synod exceedingly commended his moderation, in that he had raised no disturbance or resistance by contumacy, but had been content calmly to enter his protestation and appeals, professing that he would submit to whatever was determined: and it was definitively decreed, that he should be restored to his bishopric. Mr. Johnson takes notice that St. Wilfrid never claimed any archiepiscopal jurisdiction, and that this synod(1) expressly says, the sacerdotal primacy in Britain was settled by St. Gregory and St. Austin in the see of Canterbury; whence this author imagines St. Gregory altered his first decree or purpose by some posterior regulation. St. Wilfrid staid above four months at Rome, and assisted at the great Lateran council of one hundred and twenty-five bishops, in which he, with the rest, condemned the Monothelite heresy. When he arrived in England, he repaired to the king, and showed him the sealed decrees of the pope. The prince, when he had first caused them to be read to the prelates of his own faction that were in the room with him, cried out, they had been obtained by bribery, and commanded a certain reeve (or steward of the church for secular affairs) to commit Wilfrid to prison, where he was detained nine months. They took from him everything but the clothes which he then wore, and sent his attendants some one way, and some another. Queen Ermenberga took away his case of relics, which she hung up in her chamber, and carried about with her in her chariot, when she went out. The holy bishop's guards heard him sing psalms in his dark dungeon, and beheld a light which terrified them; and the saint having cured the governor's wife with holy water, he refused to guard him any longer, and the king ordered him to be removed to another prison. At length the queen was seized with a sudden fit of sickness in a monastery, the abbess whereof (who was Ebba, the king's aunt) represented to her the injustice done to St. Wilfrid:

(1) Can. 7.

whereupon he was set at liberty, his relics were restored, and his companions were sent back to him.

St. Wilfrid, who was inflamed with an ardent zeal for the conversion of infidels and the salvation of souls, repaired to the kingdom of the South Saxons, which had not yet received the light of faith. Edilwalch, the king, who had been lately baptized in Mercia, where King Wulphere was his godfather, received him with open arms; and the saint, by his preaching, converted the whole nation, with all the priests of the idols. That country was oppressed with a dreadful famine, no rain having fallen there for three years; but on the day on which St. Wilfrid first administered baptism with great solemnity to an incredible number of the nobility and people, abundant rains fell. The saint also taught the people to fish, which was a great relief to them. In the first essay they caught three hundred fishes, of which the saint induced them to give one hundred to the poor, and as many to those of whom they had borrowed their nets, keeping the like number for their own use. The king gave him land of eighty-seven families, on which he built two monasteries, Bosenham and Selsey, that is, Isle of the Sea-Calf. This latter place became an episcopal see, which was afterwards removed to Chichester. The saint sent a priest into the Isle of Wight, whither the faith had not penetrated, and he had the satisfaction to see all the inhabitants regenerated in the waters of life. Cadwalla, king of the West Saxons, to whom that island was then subject, sent for St. Wilfrid, and took his advice. The saint chiefly resided in the peninsula of Selsey, and cultivated this vineyard five years, till, upon the death of King Egfrid, he was called back into Northumberland. That prince was slain in battle by the Picts, whose country he had invaded in 685. As he left no issue, Alcfrid, his natural brother, was sent for out of Ireland, whither he had retired, and a second time mounted the throne. St. Theodorus being above fourscore years of age, and seized with frequent fits of sickness, sent to St. Wilfrid, requesting that he would meet him at London, with Erchambald, bishop of that city. He confessed to them all the actions of his life; then said to St. Wilfrid: "The greatest remorse that I feel is, that I consented with the king to deprive you of your possessions,

without any fault committed on your part. I confess this my crime to God and St. Peter; and I take them both to witness, that I will do all that lies in my power to make amends for my fault, and to reconcile you to all the kings and lords who are my friends. God hath revealed to me that I shall not live to the end of this year. I conjure you to consent that I may establish you in my life-time archbishop of my see." St. Wilfrid replied: "May God and St. Peter pardon you all our differences. I will always pray for you as your friend. Send letters to your friends, that they may restore to me part of my possessions, according to the decree of the holy see. The choice of a successor in your see will be afterwards considered in a proper assembly." Pursuant to this engagement St. Theodorus wrote to King Alcfrid, to Ethelred, king of the Mercians, to Elfleda, who had succeeded St. Hilda in the abbey of Streaneshalch, and others. Alcfrid having received these letters, recalled the holy bishop in the second year of his reign, towards the end of the year 686, and restored to him, first his monastery of Hexham, and soon after that of Rippon, and the episcopal see of York; Bosa of York, and St. John of Beverley, at Hexham, relinquishing their sees to him. Theodorus had first parcelled it into three, afterwards into five bishoprics, consecrating Tunbert to Hexham, and Trumwin to the diocese of the Southern Picts, subject to the kings of Northumberland, whose see was fixed at Withern. These bishops were holy men, well qualified for their ministry, and, in simplicity, took upon themselves a charge which their immediate superiors imposed upon them.

St. Wilfrid, after his restoration, reduced Hexham and Rippon to their original condition of mere monasteries; and St. Cuthbert who had from the beginning sustained the episcopal charge only in obedience and by compulsion, retired to Farne upon St. Wilfrid's return, and died there the following year, 687; so that St. Wilfrid was obliged to take upon him the care also of the diocese of Lindisfarne, till a new bishop could be chosen. The irreproachable conduct, the vigilancy, and the indefatigable zeal of our holy prelate ought to have stopped the mouths of his enemies; but these very virtues, which enraged the devil, raised new storms against him. King Alcfrid would

have a new bishopric elected at Rippon : St. Wilfrid opposed the project, and was obliged once more to fly, in 691, five years after he had been restored. He retired to Ethelred, King of the Mercians, who received him most graciously, and entreated him to take upon himself the care of the see of Litchfield, which was then vacant. The good bishop's discourses on the vanity of the world, and the infinite importance of salvation, made such an impression on the king, that, in hopes more easily to secure a happy eternity, he soon after relinquished his crown, and put on the monastic habit. Our saint founded many monasteries and churches in Mercia, and usefully employed there his labours ; till, finding his enemies in Northumberland had gained Brithwald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and were soliciting a sentence of deposition against him, he appealed a second time to Rome, and took another journey thither in 703. His accusers appeared there against him, but to their own confusion. Pope John VI. honourably acquitted the saint, who had in every thing proceeded according to the canons. His very enemies always acknowledged his life to be irreproachable ; and a bishop cannot be deposed unless a canonical fault be proved against him in a synod. If it was necessary to divide his bishopric, this was not to be done without his concurrence, and withal reserving to him his own see ; the authority at least not of some small consistory, but of a full provincial council, in the West, also of the pope, and in the East of the patriarch of that part, ought to intervene, as many instances in France and other places long before that time, clearly show. Moreover, this persecution was raised by court envy, jealousy, and resentment. These were the instruments which conjured up the storm, and the secret springs which put in motion the engines that were employed against this servant of God through the simplicity or ignorance of many, the malice of some, and the complaisance and condescension of others. The holy prelate being the best skilled in sacred learning and in the canons of the Church in all Britain, as St. Theodorus on his death-bed acknowledged him to be, was too great a disciplinarian for some at court. How pure his views were, and how remote from avarice and ambition, appeared from his charity towards his persecutors, the meekness with which he maintained the rights of his see, and the discipline of

the Church, and the humility and disinterestedness with which he refused the bishopric of the Mercians, and excused himself from acquiescing in the earnest request of St. Theodorus, when he desired to make him his coadjutor in the metropolitical see of Canterbury.* If he was rich, he knew no other use of what he possessed than to employ it in the foundation of churches, and in the relief of the poor. He rejoiced to see others share the fruits of his harvest; and though traversed in every advance that he made, he never threw away the labouring oar, or grew remiss in his ministry, or in quickening others to the utmost exertion of their zeal in the cause of God. Such a character appeared in the most shining light to all impartial judges, and St. Wilfrid met at Rome with that protection and applause which were due to his heroic virtue. Pope John VI. in 704, sent letters(1) by an express messenger to the kings of Mercia and Northumberland in favour of the persecuted bishop, charging Archbishop Brithwald to call a synod which should do him justice; in default of which he ordered the parties to make their personal appearance at Rome.

St. Wilfrid, in his return, was taken dangerously ill at Meaux in France: under which distemper Bede relates(2) that he was assured by a heavenly vision, that Christ, through the intercession of his mother, the Holy Virgin Mary, and at the prayers of his friends, had prolonged his life four years. When he landed in England, Archbishop Brithwald promised him heartily to concur to his restoration to his former see. Ethelred, the late King of Mercia, then abbot of Bardney, received him with great joy, and warmly recommended him to his nephew Coënnred, to whom he had resigned his crown when he forsook the world. Coënnred was so inflamed with the love of heavenly things by the converse he had with the holy man, that he con-

(1) Extant in Spelman, pp. 179, 204; but in the latter place falsely ascribed to Pope John VII. as if it were a different letter.

(2) Hist. l. 5, c. 19.

* His modesty is remarkable in never soliciting the metropolitical jurisdiction, which St. Gregory had ordained should be settled at York, and which had been granted to St. Paulinus. It had failed in the Scottish bishops who resided at Lindisfarne; but was recovered in 734, by Egbert or Egbright, brother to Eadbyrht, king of Northumberland, a prelate still more eminent for his superiority in knowledge than for his high birth, as Bede testifies. He was Alcuin's master.

ceived a great desire also to renounce the world ; which project he afterwards executed in the year 709, of his reign the fourth, when he travelled to Rome with Offa, king of the East-Saxons, and both put on the monastic habit, and, persevering with great fervour to their last hours, died happily in that city. Alcfred, King of Northumberland, yet made difficulties ; but died in 705, and, in his last sickness, repented of the injustice he had done to St. Wilfrid, as his sister Elfeda, abbess of Streaneshalch, gave testimony. His restitution, therefore, was easily agreed to by the whole kingdom, under Osred, who being only eight years old, succeeded his father, Brithric being regent during his minority. St. Wilfrid took possession of the diocese of Hexham, but chiefly resided in his monastery of Rippon, leaving York to St. John of Beverley. He governed the monasteries in Mercia, of which he had been the founder, and which were afterwards destroyed by the Danes. He died at one of these at Undalum, now called Oundle, in Northamptonshire, on the 24th of April, 709, having divided his treasures between his monasteries, churches, and the former companions of his exile. His body was buried in his church of St. Peter at Rippon.(1) That monastery having been destroyed by the wars, the greatest part of his remains was translated to Canterbury in the time of St. Odo, and deposited under the high altar, in 959. They were enshrined by Lanfranc, and deposited on the north side of the altar by St. Anselm, on the 12th of October : the day of which translation became his principal festival. These relics are said now to repose near the monument of that truly great man, Cardinal Pole.

True virtue is always of a piece with itself, is always governed by the same principle, and always steers the same course. In prosperity it is humble, modest, and timorous ; in adversity, magnanimous, and equally active and brave. To suffer from good men is often the severest of trials : but from whatever quarter persecution comes, it is our duty not to sink under it, but sincerely humbling ourselves both before God and man, we must not be daunted, considering that on one side it is the part of cowards only to be pusillanimous, or to despair ; and, on the

(1) See Dugdale's History of the Collegiate Church of St. Peter at Rippon, which was dissolved 27 Henry VIII.

other, it is arrogance and pride to fall into impatience, or to repay injuries with revenge, insults, or ill will. St. Wilfrid saw the clouds gather, and ready to burst over his head; yet was undaunted. He never reviled his persecutors—never complained of the envy and malice of those who stirred up whole kingdoms against him. Envy died with him: and immediately the whole world gave due praise to the purity of his intentions, the ardour of his zeal for virtue and discipline, and the sanctity of his life. The historians of our nation unanimously conspire in paying a grateful tribute to his memory, which is consecrated in the Roman and other Martyrologies.

OCTOBER XIII.

SAINT EDWARD, KING AND CONFESSOR.

From William of Malmesbury, (de Reg. Angl. 2, c. 13,) whom Sir H. Saville calls the best historian of our nation, and who wrote in 1140; Matthew of Westminster, or whoever compiled the Flores Hist. Angl. from Matthew Paris, &c.; the life of St. Edward, C. written by St. Ælfred, abbot of Rieval, who died in 1166, of which work the most complete and accurate edition is that of Roger Twysden, (inter 10 Angl. Scriptores, Londini, an. 1652, t. 1, p. 370.) An accurate account of his death is given by Sulcard, a monk of Westminster, in the reign of the Conqueror, who wrote, by order of his abbot, Vitalis, a short history, (De Constructione Westmonasterii,) of which two beautiful MS. copies were lent me from the Cotton Library, and the archives of Westminster. See also Ingulphus, published by Gale, Brompton by Twysden, Knyghton, *ibid.* Hoveden and Matt. Paris, ad an. 1066. Harpfield, Sæc. xi. c. 3. Likewise the historians of Normandy, Odericus Vitalis in Hist. Normann. Gulielmus Pictav. de Gestis Gul. Ducis, &c. The Letter of Innocent II. on the Canoniz. of St. Edw. an. 1138, ap. Wilk. Conc. Br. t. 1, p. 419; the bull of Alexander III. *ibid.* p. 424; that of Greg. IX. in 1227; and Rymer's Fœdera, t. 1, p. 297.

A. D. 1066.

God often gives bad princes in his wrath; but in a good king he bestoweth a great public blessing on a nation. *A wise king is the upholding of his people.*(1) *As the judge of the people is himself, so are his officers: and what manner of man the ruler of the city is, such also are they that dwell therein. An unwise king destroyeth his people; but through the prudence of them that are in authority, the city shall be inhabited.*(2) The happiness of

(1) Wisd. vi. 26.

(2) Ecclus. x. 2, 3.