

brother Meresin died young, in the odour of sanctity. Her elder sisters, SS. Mildred and Milburge, are very famous in the English calendars. St. Milgitha imitated their illustrious example, and contemning the fading pleasures and delights of the world, retired into the monastery of Estrey, built by Egbert, king of Kent, not far from Canterbury, and having served God in the heroic practice of all Christian virtues, died happily about the close of the seventh century. See Menard in Martyrol. Bened. Wilson's English Martyr. Capgrave and Bolland, t. 2. p. 176.

St. NENNIUS, OR NENNIDHIUS, ABBOT,

DESPISING the vanities of the world, though of the race of the monarchs of Ireland, from his youth made the science of the cross of Christ the sole object of his ambition; and to engrave in his heart the lessons which our divine Redeemer taught by that adorable mystery, was the centre of all his desires. Having passed many years, first in the school of St. Fiechus, archbishop of Leinster, and afterwards in the celebrated monastery of Clonard, in the province of Meath, under its holy founder St. Finian, he retired into the isle of Inis-muighe-samb, in the lake of Erne, in the province of Ulster. Here, in process of time, he became the director of many souls in the paths of christian perfection, founded a great monastery, and, on account of his eminent sanctity, and the number of illustrious disciples whom he left behind him, is called one of the twelve apostles of Ireland. He flourished in the sixth century, and has been honoured in Ireland among the saints. F. Colgan was not able to meet with any acts of his life, though he is mentioned in the lives of several other Irish saints. A church in the isle of the lake, formed by the river Erne, is dedicated to God under his invocation.

JANUARY XVIII.

ST. PETER'S CHAIR AT ROME.

See Phæbeus, de Cathedra in qua S. Petrus Romæ sedit, & de antiquitate et præstantia solemnitate Cathedræ Romanæ. Romæ 1666. 8vo. also Chatelain's Notes on the Martyrology, p. 326.

ST. PETER having triumphed over the devil in the East, pursued him to Rome in the person of Simon Magus. He who had

formerly trembled at the voice of a poor maid, now feared not the very throne of idolatry and superstition. The capital of the empire of the world, and the centre of impiety, called for the zeal of the prince of the apostles. God had established the Roman empire, and extended its dominion beyond that of any former monarchy, for the more easy propagation of his gospel. Its metropolis was of the greatest importance for this enterprise. St. Peter took that province upon himself; and repairing to Rome there preached the faith and established his episcopal chair, whose *successors* the bishops of Rome have been accounted in all ages. That St. Peter founded that church by his *preaching*, is expressly asserted by Caius,(1) a priest of Rome under Pope Zephyrinus; who relates also that his body was then on the Vatican hill, and that of his fellow-labourer, St. Paul, on the Ostian road. That he and St. Paul planted the faith at Rome, and were both crowned with martyrdom at the same time, is affirmed by Dionysius,(2) bishop of Corinth, in the second age. St. Irenæus(3) who lived in the same age, calls the church at Rome "The greatest and most ancient church, founded by the two glorious apostles, Peter and Paul." Eusebius, in several places,(4) mentions St. Peter's being at Rome, and the several important transactions of this apostle in that city. Not to mention Origen,(5) Hegesippus,(6) Arnobius,(7) St. Ambrose,(8) St. Austin,(9) St. Jerom,(10) St. Optatus,(11) Orosius,(12) and others on the same subject.* St. Cyprian(13) calls Rome the *chair* of St. Peter, (as Theodoret(14) calls it his *throne*,) which the general councils and ecclesiastical writers, through every age, and on every occasion, repeat. That St. Peter at least preached in Rome, founded that church, and died there by martyrdom under Nero, are facts the most incontestable by the

(1) Apud Eus. l. 2. c. 24. alias 25. (2) Ibid. (3) L. 3. c. 3.

(4) L. 2. c. 13 and 15, &c. (5) Ib. l. 3. c. 1.

(6) L. de Excid. Hier. c. 1. and 3. (7) L. 3. (8) Ser. de Basilicis.

(9) L. de Hæres. c. 1. &c. (10) L. 17. ad Marcell.

(11) Adv. Parm. (12) L. 7. c. 1.

(13) Ep. 55. ad Cornel. pap. (14) L. 2. c. 17.

* The general opinion with Eusebius, St. Jerom, and the Roman calendar, fixes the first arrival of St. Peter at Rome in the second year of Claudius. If this date be true, the apostle returned into the East soon after; for he was imprisoned in Judæa, by Agrippa, in the year of Christ 43. Lactantius does not mention this first coming of St. Peter to Rome, but only the second, saying, that he came to Rome in the reign of Nero, who put him and St. Paul to death. L. de Mort. Persec. n. 2.

testimony of all writers of different countries, who lived near that time; persons of unquestionable veracity, and who could not but be informed of the truth, in a point so interesting, and of its own nature so public and notorious, as to leave them no possibility of a mistake. This is also attested by monuments of every kind; also by the prerogatives, rights, and privileges, which that church enjoyed from those early ages, in consequence of this title.

It was an ancient custom, as Cardinal Baronius(1) and Thomassin(2) show by many examples, observed by churches to keep an annual festival of the consecration of their bishops. The feast of the chair of St. Peter is found in ancient Martyrologies, as in one under the name of St. Jerom, at Esternach, copied in the time of St. Willibrord, in 720. Christians justly celebrate the founding of this mother-church, the centre of Catholic communion, in thanksgiving to God for his mercies on his church, and to implore his future blessings.

Christ has taught us, in the divine model of prayer which he has delivered to us, that we are bound to recommend to him, before all other things, the exaltation of his own honour and glory, and to beg that the kingdom of his holy grace and love be planted in all hearts. If we love God above all things, and with our whole hearts, or have any true charity for our neighbour, this will be the centre of all our desires, that God be loved and served by all his creatures, and that he be glorified, in the most perfect manner, in our own souls. By placing this at the head of our requests, we shall most strongly engage God to crown all our just and holy desires. As one of his greatest mercies to his church, we most earnestly beseech him to raise up in it zealous pastors, eminently replenished with his Spirit, with which he animated his apostles.

SS. PAUL, AND THIRTY-SIX COMPANIONS, MM. IN EGYPT.

From their authentic acts in Ruinart, p. 624.

In Egypt, thirty-seven Christian noblemen, all persons of high birth and plentiful fortunes; but richer in the gifts of grace, entered into a zealous confederacy to propagate the gospel throughout the country. Their leader and head was one Paul, a true imitator of the great apostle whose name he bore. They

(1) Notæ in Martyr.

(2) Tr. des Fêtes, l. 2. c. 10.