

successor, died in 689, and Bonet was consecrated. But after having governed that see ten years, with the most exemplary piety, he had a scruple whether his election had been perfectly canonical; and having consulted St. Tilo, or Theau, then leading an eremitical life at Solignas, resigned his dignity, led for four years a most penitential life in the abbey of Manlieu, now of the order of St. Bennet, and after having made a pilgrimage to Rome, died of the gout at Lyons on the fifteenth of January in 710, being eighty-six years old. His relics were enshrined in the cathedral at Clermont; but some small portions are kept at Paris in the churches of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and St. Bont. near that of St. Merry. See his life wrote by a monk of Sommon in Auvergne, in the same century, published by Bollandus; also le Cointe, an. 699. Gallia Christiana Nova, &c.

#### ST. ITA, OR MIDA, V. ABBESS.

SHE was a native of Nandesí, now the barony of Dessee in the county of Waterford, and descended from the royal family. Having consecrated her virginity to God, she led an austere retired life at the foot of the mountain Luach, in the diocese of Limerick, and founded there a famous monastery of holy virgins, called Cluain-cred-hail. By the mortification of her senses and passions, and by her constant attention to God and his divine love, she was enriched with many extraordinary graces. The lesson she principally inculcated to others was, that to be perpetually recollected in God is the great means of attaining to perfection. She died January 15, in 569. Her feast was solemnized in her church of Cluain-cred-hail, in the whole territory of Hua-Conail, and at Rosmide, in the territory of Nandesí. See her ancient life in Bollandus, Jan. xvi. and Colgan, t. 1. p. 72, who calls her the second St. Bridget of Ireland.

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#### JANUARY XVI.

##### ST. MARCELLUS, POPE, M.

See the epitaph of eight verses, composed for this Pope, by St. Damasus, *carm.* 26; and Tillemont, T. 5.

A.D. 310.

ST. MARCELLUS was priest under Pope Marcellinus, whom he succeeded in 308, after that see had been vacant for three years

and a half. An epitaph written on him by Pope Damasus, who also mentions himself in it, says that by enforcing the canons of holy penance, he drew upon himself the contradictions and persecutions of many tepid and refractory Christians, and that for his severity against a certain apostate, he was banished by the tyrant Maxentius.(1) He died in 310, having sat one year, seven months, and twenty days. Anastatius writes, that Lucina, a devout widow of one Pinianus, who lodged St. Marcellus when he lived in Rome, after his death converted her house into a church, which she called by his name. His false acts relate, that among his other sufferings, he was condemned by the tyrant to keep cattle in this place. He is styled a martyr in the sacramentaries of Gelasius I. and St. Gregory, and in the Martyrologies ascribed to St. Jerom and St. Bede, which, with the rest of the Western calendars, mention his feast on the sixteenth of January. His body lies under the high altar in the ancient church, which bears his name, and gives title to a cardinal in Rome; but certain portions of his relics are honoured at Cluni, Namur, Mons, &c.

God is most wonderful in the whole economy of his holy providence over his elect: his power and wisdom are exalted infinitely above the understanding of creatures, and we are obliged to cry out, "Who can search his ways?"(2) We have not penetration to discover all the causes and ends of exterior things, which we see or feel. How much less can we understand this in secret and interior things, which fall not under our senses? "Remember that thou knowest not his work. Behold he is a great God, surpassing our understanding."(3) How does he make every thing serve his purposes for the sanctification of his servants! By how many ways does he conduct them to eternal glory! Some he sanctifies on thrones; others in cottages; others in retired cells and deserts; others in the various functions of an apostolic life, and in the government of his church. And how wonderfully does he ordain and direct all human events to their spiritual advancement, both in prosperity and in adversity! In their persecutions and trials, especially, we shall discover at the last day, when the secrets of his providence will be manifested to us, the tenderness of his infinite love, the depth of his unsearchable wisdom, and the extent of his omnipotent power. In all his appointments let us adore these his attributes, earnestly imploring

(1) Damasus, *carm.* 26. (2) Job. xxxvi. 28. (3) *Ib.*

his grace, that according to the designs of his mercy, we may make every thing, especially all afflictions, serve for the exercise and improvement of our virtue.

### ST. MACARIUS, THE ELDER, OF EGYPT.

From the original authors of the lives of the fathers of the deserts, in Rosweide, d'Andilly, Bollandus, 15 Jan. Tillemont, T. 8. p. 576, collated with a very ancient manuscript of the lives of the Fathers, published by Rosweide, &c. in the hands of Mr. Martin, of Palgrave, in Suffolk.

A.D. 390.

ST. MACARIUS, the Elder, was born in Upper Egypt, about the year 300, and brought up in the country in tending cattle. In his childhood, in company with some others, he once stole a few figs, and eat one of them: but from his conversion to his death, he never ceased to weep bitterly for this sin.(1) By a powerful call of divine grace, he retired from the world in his youth, and dwelling in a little cell in a village, made mats, in continual prayer and great austerities. A wicked woman falsely accused him of having deflowered her; for which supposed crime he was dragged through the streets, beaten, and insulted, as a base hypocrite, under the garb of a monk. He suffered all with patience, and sent the woman what he earned by his work, saying to himself: "Well, Macarius! having now another to provide for, thou must work the harder." But God discovered his innocence; for the woman falling in labour, lay in extreme anguish, and could not be delivered till she had named the true father of her child. The people converted their rage into the greatest admiration of the humility and patience of the saint.(2) To shun the esteem of men, he fled into the vast hideous desert of Scété,\* being then about thirty years of age. In this solitude he lived sixty years, and became the spiritual parent of innumerable holy persons, who put themselves under his direction, and were governed by the rules he prescribed them; but all dwelt in separate hermitages. St. Macarius admitted only one disciple with him, to entertain strangers. He was compelled by an Egyptian

(1) Bolland. 15 Jan. p. 1011. s. 39. Cotel. Mon. Gr. T. 1. p. 546.

(2) Cotel. ib. p. 525. Rosweide, Vit. Patr. l. 3. c. 99. l. 5. c. 15. s. 25. p. 623.

\* Mount Nitria was above forty miles from Alexandria, towards the South-West. The desert of Scété lay eighty miles beyond Nitria, and was rather in Lybia than in Egypt. It was of vast extent, and there were no roads thereabouts, so that men were guided only by the stars in travelling in those parts. See Tillemont on St. Amon and this Macarius.