

## ST. WALSTAN, CONFESSOR.

From Capgrave, fol. 285, and his old manuscript life. See Blomfield, Hist. of Norfolk, t. 1. p. 641.

A. D. 1016.

ST. WALSTAN was formerly much honoured at Cossey and Bawburgh, commonly called Baber, two villages four miles from Norwich. He was born at Baber, and of a rich and honourable family. The name of his father was Benedict, that of his mother Blida. By their example and good instructions he, from his infancy, conceived an ardent desire to devote himself to God with the greatest perfection possible. In this view, at twelve years of age he renounced his patrimony, left his father's house, and entered a poor servant at Taverham, a village adjoining to Cossey. He was so charitable that he gave his own victuals to the poor, and sometimes even his shoes, going himself barefoot. He applied himself to the meanest and most painful country labour in a perfect spirit of penance and humility; fasted much, and sanctified his soul and all his actions by assiduous, fervent prayer, and the constant union of his heart with God. He made a vow of celibacy, but never embraced a monastic state. God honoured his humility before men by many miracles. He died in the midst of a meadow where he was at work, on the 30th of May in 1016. His body was interred at Baber: it was carried thither through Cossey or Costessye, where a well still bears his name, as does another which was more famous at Baber, a little below the church. These places were much resorted to by pilgrims, especially to implore the intercession of this saint for the cure of fevers, palsies, lameness, and blindness. His body was enshrined in the north chapel of that church, which chapel was on that account pulled down in the reign of

Henry VIII. though the church is still standing. All the mowers and husbandmen in these parts constantly visited it once a year, and innumerable other pilgrims resorted to it, not only from all parts of England, but also from beyond the seas. The church is sacred to the memory of the Blessed Virgin, and of St. Walstan.

## ST. FERDINAND III. CONFESSOR,

### KING OF CASTILE AND LEON.

HE was eldest son to Alphonsus, king of Leon, and of Berangera of Castile, elder sister<sup>1</sup> of Blanche, mother of St. Lewis of France, and was born about the end of the year 1198 or some time in 1199. Berangera had been obliged by pope Innocent III. to a separation from Alphonsus of Leon after having borne to him two sons, Ferdinand and Alphonsus, and two daughters, because though in the third degree of consanguinity, they had been married, without a dispensation, which was at that time very difficult to be obtained. But because this marriage had been contracted *bonâ fide* by the decrees of the pope, and the states of the two kingdoms, their children were declared their lawful heirs. Berangera returned to her father Alphonsus IX. of Castile, one of the most valiant and most virtuous kings that ever reigned in Spain, and who was to her the most tender and best of fathers. He dying in 1214, his son Henry, eleven years of age, succeeded him under the tutorship and regency of his mother in Eleonor of England. But she followed her husband to the grave within twenty-five days; grief for having lost him being the cause of her death. Berangera was charged with the guardianship of her

<sup>1</sup> Roderiguez, at that time first dean, then archbishop of Toledo, assures us that Berangera was the eldest of all the children of this king, and next heir to the kingdom after her brother's death. It is therefore a notorious mistake of those who call Blanche the elder sister.