

into a dark dungeon. The faithful having bribed the guards, visited them day and night, to be instructed by them, and mutually to encourage one another to suffer for the faith of Christ. The king being informed of this, commanded them to be more closely confined, loaded with heavier irons, and tortured with inventions of cruelty which had never been heard of till that time. Soon after, he condemned them to be put into an old ship, and burnt at sea. The martyrs walked cheerfully to the shore, contemning the insults of the Arians as they passed along. Particular endeavours were used by the persecutors to gain Maximus, who was very young; but God, who makes the tongues of children eloquent to praise his name, gave him strength to withstand all their efforts, and he boldly told them, that they should never be able to separate him from his holy abbot and brethren, with whom he had borne the labours of a penitential life for the sake of everlasting glory. An old vessel was filled with dry sticks, and the seven martyrs were put on board and bound on the wood; and fire was put to it several times, but it went out immediately, and all endeavours to kindle it were in vain. The tyrant, in rage and confusion, gave orders that the martyrs' brains should be dashed out with oars; which was done, and their bodies were cast into the sea, which, contrary to what was usual on that coast, threw them all on the shore. The Catholics interred them honourably with solemn singing, in the monastery of Bigua, near the church of St. Celerinus. They suffered in the year 483. See their authentic acts, published by Ruinart, at the end of his edition of Victor Vitensis's History of the Vandalic Persecution.

AUGUST XVIII.

SAINT HELEN, EMPRESS.

From Eusebius's life of Constantine, Baronius and Alford's Annals, Jacutius, O. S. Ben. Syntagm. de Hist. Constantini M. Romæ, 1755. Ledarchius, Diss. de Basilis SS. Marcellini et Petri. Aringhi, Rom. subter. l. 4, c. 9; Pinius, t. 3, Aug. p. 548.

A. D. 328.

WE are assured by the unanimous tradition of our English his-

torians, that this holy empress was a native of our island.* William of Malmesbury, the principal historian of the ancient state of our country after Bede,⁽¹⁾ and before him, the Saxon author of the life of St. Helen, in 970, quoted by Usher, expressly say that Constantine was a Briton by birth; but an authority which is certainly decisive, is that of the anonymous, elegant, and learned panegyrist, who, haranguing Maximian and Constantine upon the marriage of the latter to Fausta, said to Constantine: "He (Constantius) had freed the provinces of Britain from slavery; you ennobled them by your origin.†"

(1) L. 1, de Reg. Ang.

* Several modern French historians pretend she was an inn-holder (Stabularia) in Bithynia when Constantius married her. Their mistake is founded on Procopius and Julius Firmicus. This latter, who is an unknown Christian writer, who lived soon after the death of Constantius, in his book *On the Error of profane Religions*, says Constantine was born and received his first education under his mother at Tarsus, some others say at Naissus, near the Dardanelles; but this, as Camden shows, is spoken of Constantius. Procopius (l. 5, *De edific. Justiniani*) affirms that Constantine beautified and fortified Drepanum in Bithynia, and gave it the name of Helenopolis, because his mother was born there; but that this circumstance is a mistake is clear from the acts of St. Lucian, by which we are informed that St. Helen had a particular regard for that city, and adorned it for the sake of that martyr. This then was the reason why it was called by her name. Sozomen informs us, that Constantine, to honour her, gave the name of Helenopolis also to a city in Palestine. Zosimus and Julian the Apostate call her Constantius's concubine, but mean a wife of inferior rank to the daughter of Maximian; for it is certain she was married to him. The Jews and Pagans called her, out of contempt, Stabularia, as appears from St. Ambrose. Baronius thinks she was so called, because Constantius lodged at the house of her father in Britain. Camden imagines the only reason to have been, because she founded a church where the stable stood in which Christ was born; which the enemies of the Christian name turned into ridicule. St. Ambrose writes thus of her, (*Or. de obitu Theodos.*) "They say she was first a Stabularia, or one who entertained strangers, and so became known to Constantius, who afterwards arrived at the empire. A good Stabularia, who sought so diligently the crib of the Lord; who chose to be reputed as dung, that she might gain Christ."

† "*Nobiles illic oriendo fecisti.*" (*Incerti Paneg.* 5, c. 4, p. 208.) This passage cannot be understood with Livineius and Lipsius, of his being first created Cæsar, but of his birth in Britain, as Pignarol observes with the general opinion of commentators on the ancient panegyrists; and as the learned Mr. Drake demonstrates from other passages and allusions. (*Antiquities of York*, p. 46.) Eumenius, the favourite orator of Constantius and Constantine, speaks of his assumption to the imperial dignity, when, in his panegyric to Constantine, he says, (l. 9, p. 330,) "O fortunate Britain, now more happy than all other countries of the earth, in having first beheld Constantine Cæsar! Justly hath nature enriched

Leland, the most diligent searcher of our antiquities, says,(1) Helen was the only daughter of king Coilus, who lived in constant amity with the Romans, and held of them his sovereignty. The Glastenbury historian says the same. Henry of Huntington tells us, that this was the King Coël who first built walls round the city of Colchester, and beautified it so much, that it derives from him its name. That town has for several ages boasted that it gave birth to this great empress; and the inhabitants, to testify their veneration for her memory, take for the arms of the town, in remembrance of the cross which she discovered, a knotty cross between four crowns, as Camden takes notice. Though Mr. Drake will have it that she was rather born at York, as the English orators in the councils of Constance and Basil affirmed; to which opinion he thinks the anonymous panegyrist of Constantine evidently favourable. Constantius, at that time only a private officer in the army, had the happiness to make her his first wife, and had by her Constantine his eldest son, who, as all agree, had his first education under her watchful eye.

To understand the sequel of this history, it is necessary to take a view of the state of the empire at that time. The two brothers, Carinus in the West, and Numerianus in the East, the sons, colleagues, and successors of Carus, being become detestable to all their subjects by their infamous vices, the supreme dignity was devolved upon Diocles, commonly called Dioclesian, on the 17th of September, 284, whence the epoch of his reign, or of the martyrs, as it is called, and which continued long in use, was dated. He was a Dalmatian of very low birth, had been made free by the senator Anullinus, and was at the head of an army in the East, when Numerianus was slain by a conspiracy. To oppose Carinus in the West, he declared Maximian (who took the surname of Hercules) Cæsar, on the 20th

(1) L. de Script. Britan. p. 24.

thee with all the blessings of the heavenly climate and of the soil; in which neither are the heats of summer, nor the cold of winter painful to bear; in which so abundant is the produce of corn, that it suffices for all the uses both of food and drink; the forests are free from furious wild beasts, and the earth from poisonous serpents; the ground, on the contrary, is filled with a numberless multitude of tame cattle abounding in milk, and sheep loaded with rich fleeces, &c,

of November, in the same year, 284, and after the death of Carinus, who was cut off by his own men in Upper Mysia, near the Danube, he saluted him emperor, and his colleague, on the 1st of April, 286. Maximian was a native of Sirmium, of the meanest parentage, savage in his manners, countenance, and temper, but a bold and experienced officer. He brutally indulged all his passions, was faithless, and so great a debauchee that he frequently offered violence to ladies of the first quality, and so covetous that he put many senators to death to seize their estates, and plundered all the West which he governed. Dioclesian was a soldier and a politician, but oppressed the provinces with most exorbitant taxes, maintained four times more soldiers than any of his predecessors had done before him, and was passionately fond of building; and when he had finished a palace at an expense which ruined a whole province, he would find some fault with it, and pull it down to raise it after a different manner; nor was the second building secured from a new caprice, upon which it was sometimes again levelled with the ground. So madly expensive was he, that he took it into his head to make Nicomedia, where he usually resided, equal to Rome, and made it desolate of inhabitants to fill it with magnificent palaces, hippodromes, arsenals, and what not. He was no less foolishly vain in his dress, equipage, and furniture. Yet he was so insatiably covetous, that he would always keep his exchequer full from the spoils of families and all the provinces.(1) In this the two emperors were not unlike, and they reigned together twenty years. The better to secure themselves, and carry on their wars, they associated to themselves, in 293, two other emperors of an inferior rank, under the name of Cæsars. Dioclesian chose Galerius Maximian, surnamed Armentarius, a native of Dacia, one of the most furious and profligate of men; him he compelled to divorce his wife, and marry his daughter, Valeria. Maximian Hercules pitched upon Constantius Chlorus, a prince never charged with any vice, a good soldier, and nobly born, being descended from the emperor Claudius II. and from Vespasian, from whom his family bore the prænomen Flavius. Hercules reserved to himself the rich provinces of Italy, Spain, and Africa; Constantius had

(1) Lactant. de Mort. Persec. c. 7, 8.

the countries on this side the Alps, namely Gaul and Britain; Galerius had Illyricum and the places adjacent to the Euxine sea, and Dioclesian the East. Constantius, by the articles of this association, was obliged to divorce Helen, and to marry Theodora, the daughter-in-law of Maximian. The Christians enjoyed a kind of peace, except that in the West some martyrs suffered, chiefly in the army, or by the natural cruelty of Maximian, who delighted in blood; but in the beginning of the year 302, Galerius at Nicomedia prevailed upon Dioclesian to form a project utterly to extirpate the Christian name.*

* The bloody edicts were sent from the East to Maximian, and Constantius in the West. The former willingly obeyed them; but Constantius put no man to death himself on that account, though some suffered in Britain by the obsequiousness of governors, till he put a check to their fury. He indeed suffered the churches to be pulled down. He had many Christians among his officers, and in his household. Having received the edicts of Dioclesian, he told them, that he gave them their choice either to sacrifice, or to lose their posts and his favour. Many preferred their temporal interest to their religion, and offered sacrifice. These apostates Constantius from that moment despised, and discharged from his service, saying, that persons so self-interested and treacherous to their God would never be faithful to him. On the contrary, those who continued steadfast in their faith, he kept near his person, declaring them worthy to be intrusted with the care of his person and empire. (Eus. Vit. Constant. l. 1, c. 16.) Dioclesian complained to him by his ambassadors, that he neglected to amass a public treasure to serve in time of need. Constantius promised the ambassadors, if they allowed him a little time, to show them a great treasure. He immediately made known his present necessity to his friends and the people, and desired to borrow what they could lend him for a few days. Immediately his apartments began to be filled with gold, silver, and jewels to an immense value. He then introduced the ambassadors, and seeing them astonished at what they saw, told them, that they might bear him witness that the love and riches of the people are a prince's best treasure. He was remarkably indulgent to the poor Christians. He had by Theodora two sons, Constantius Dalmatius and Annibalius, and two daughters, Constantia and Eutropia. Constantine, his eldest son, he was obliged to send to the court of Dioclesian, where he was kept as a hostage for his father's fidelity. Thus was that prince, like another Moses, brought up amidst the enemies of truth, whom he was one day to extirpate.

Dioclesian was sick all the year 304, and spent the summer at Ravenna; then went to Nicomedia before winter, where Galerius came to him, making proposals, that he and his colleague should resign the purple, which he claimed as his due, complaining that he had sustained the weight of the wars against the Persians, and on the banks of the Danube eighteen years. Dioclesian, with many tears, pressed to retain the purple, though he readily consented to give him the title of Augustus; but Galerius insisted upon his abdication, and that he should appoint two new Cæsars, Severus and Daia or Daza. This latter was Galerius's nephew, his sister's son, little better than a barbarian, to whom his uncle

Constantine, from his first accession to the throne, by his edicts, forbade the Christians to be molested on account of their religion. Fluctuating what deity to invoke before his battle

had given the name of Maximian, though he is oftener called Maximin. Severus was a dancer and a drunkard, who turned day into night. Thus Maxentius, the son of Maximian Hercules, and Constantine were excluded. This latter was a prince of untainted morals, and well formed in mind and body; he had a genius for war, and was much beloved by the soldiers, and desired for emperor by the people. Dioclesian pleaded that he should be pitched upon, but Galerius dreaded his reputation and virtue, and feared to have such a colleague. Dioclesian said of the new Cæsars, sighing, "These are not fit persons to support the state; but being compelled to acquiesce, on the 1st of May, in 305, on an eminence three miles from Nicomedia, in the presence of his officers, soldiers, and a crowd of people, he put off the purple, and said, weeping, that he was infirm, and required rest. He then declared Galerius and Constantius emperors, and Severus and Maximian Cæsars. The former was sent into the West to Maximian Hercules, who had agreed to make the like resignation. Dioclesian then retired to Dioclea, in Dalmatia, his own country.

Constantius had by the partition, Gaul, Britain, Spain, and Africa; but Galerius withheld the two latter, and expecting he would die soon, had in his eye Licinius, an officer with whom he had contracted an intimacy from his first coming to the army; and him he intended to associate to the empire. Constantine he kept with him under a strict eye, and not daring to cut him off yet, for fear of a civil war, he exposed him to combats with wild beasts, and to other dangerous enterprises. The young prince, after many refusals, at length extorted his leave for setting out the next day to go to see his father in Britain, who had so often written to Galerius on that subject, that he could no longer resist without a rupture. Galerius intended still to stop his journey the next day, or to have him intercepted by Severus in Italy; and was enraged to hear that he was gone the night before, and had taken up the horses at all the stages, that he might not be pursued. Constantine made incredible haste, and found his father lying on his death-bed at York. Constantius recommended him to his soldiers, and appointed him his successor in the empire, and soon after died, on the 25th of July, in 306, having reigned thirteen years as Cæsar, and near fifteen months as emperor. Eusebius tells us, that before his death he professed the belief of one only God. Constantine was saluted emperor by the army; nor durst Galerius himself refuse to receive his image when it was sent to him, crowned with laurel, according to custom; but only acknowledged him Cæsar. The same year Maxentius, the son of the late Emperor Maximian Hercules, assumed the title of Cæsar in Italy, and soon after, that of emperor. His father Hercules also resumed the purple which he had quitted only by compulsion; Severus was discomfited by him, abandoned by his own men, and having surrendered himself to Hercules at Ravenna, was put to death by the opening of his veins. Hereupon Galerius declared Licinius his colleague and emperor, and, marching into Italy, intended to cut off Maxentius; but was obliged to return, seeing his own troops inclined to forsake him. Hercules acknowledged Constantine emperor, but obliged him to divorce his first wife Minervina, and to marry his daughter Fausta, who proved a firebrand in his family.

Maximinus Cæsar persecuted the Christians in the East with no less

with Maxentius, he was at length inspired to address himself to the true God, and encouraged by miraculous visions. From that time he published frequent edicts in favour of the Christian

fury than Galerius, was extremely addicted to superstition and art magic; and, being vexed to see Licinius preferred to the title of Augustus before him, assumed it himself, and Galerius was obliged to ratify what he had done. In the West, Maximian Hercules, conceiving a base jealousy against his own son, sought to depose him, but did not succeed; then coming into Gaul, he endeavoured several ways to surprise Constantine, his son-in-law, but being forsaken by his own soldiers in Belgium, fled to Arles, whither Constantine pursued him, and having taken him prisoner, spared his life; but he made new attempts upon the life of Constantine, and stabbed a eunuch, thinking to kill him. Whereupon Constantine caused him to be strangled in 308. The persecutor, Galerius, consumed by worms and putrefaction, acknowledged the hand of God, and published an edict at Sardis in favour of the Christians, in 311; and died miserably in exquisite torment. Then were the prisons opened, and the confessors released, and, among others, Donatus, to whom Lactantius dedicated his book, *On the Death of the Persecutors*.

Maximinus carried on the persecution in Syria and Egypt, where he commanded; and after the death of Galerius, over all Asia. Licinius obtained for his share only Illyricum, Greece, and Thrace, and forebore all persecution, as did also Maxentius in Italy, though, in other respects, no less impious, tyrannical, and debauched in his manners than Maximin Daia. He declared war against Constantine, under pretence of revenging the death of his father. Constantine marched against him, and encamped over against the bridge Milvius, now called Ponte Mole, two miles from Rome. His army was inferior in number; but Constantine earnestly implored the protection of the one supreme God. After his prayer, a little after noon, as he was traversing the country with part of his forces, he saw in the sky a cross of light, with this inscription, "In this shalt thou conquer." The night following he was favoured with a vision, in which Christ ordered him to make a representation of that cross which he had seen, and use it for an ensign in battle. The emperor did so; and this was the famous banner called the Labarum. Maxentius was defeated, and by the breaking of a bridge of boats which he had caused to be thrown over the Tiber, was drowned in his flight. The senate caused a triumphal arch to be built in honour of Constantine, which is still to be seen at Rome. A statue was also erected to him in one of the public places of the city, where he appeared holding a long cross in his hand instead of a lance; and he caused this inscription to be made on the pedestal,—“By this salutary sign, the true mark of courage, I have delivered your city from the yoke of tyranny, and restored the senate and people of Rome to their ancient glory.” (Eus. in Vit. Constant. Codinus, Gillius, Du Cange, et Ball.)

Constantine went to Milan the January following, in 313, and was there met by Licinius, to whom he gave his sister Constantia in marriage. Maximin in the East, who had made an alliance with Maxentius, was jealous of the success of Constantine, and invaded Thrace, but was vanquished by Licinius near Byzantium. He fled into Asia, and being pursued, retired into the straits of Mount Taurus, where he drank poison, but survived the dose four days, and expired in excessive pain, rage, and despair, in 313. Thus died the most cruel of all the persecutors. Licinius extirpated his whole family, and caused Valeria, the widow of Ga-

faith, built stately churches, munificently adorned altars, and delighted much in the conversation of bishops, whom he often admitted to his table, notwithstanding the meanness of their outward appearance. Baronius says, that the same year in which he vanquished Maxentius, he gave to the bishop of Rome the imperial Lateran palace. In the following year, 313, Pope Melchiades held in it a synod, in the apartment of Fausta, the wife of Constantine; and accordingly we find the popes in possession of it in the fourth century. We may judge of this emperor's liberality to the bishops for the use of the church and poor, from his letter to Cæcilian, bishop of Carthage, in which he sent him an order to receive from his chief treasurer of Africa three thousand purses,* which amounted to above twenty thousand pounds sterling; adding, that if he found any thing more wanting, he should without difficulty demand it of his treasurer, who had from him an order to give him without delay whatever sum he should require. He distributed alms abundantly among the poor of all kinds, even among the Pagans. Those who were fallen from a better condition he assisted after a more generous manner, giving land to some, and places to others; he was particularly careful of orphans and widows; and gave portions to virgins.

It appears from Eusebius, that St. Helen was not converted to the faith with her son, till after his miraculous victory; but so perfect was her conversion, that she embraced all the heroic practices of Christian perfection, especially the virtues of piety and almsdeeds, in which she doubtless was a great spur to the emperor. Her dutiful son always honoured and respected her, forgetting in her regard that he was emperor of the world, unless to employ his power in serving her. He caused her to be proclaimed Augusta or empress in his armies, and through

lerius, and daughter of Dioclesian, to be beheaded with her mother Octavia, at Thessalonica, and their bodies to be thrown into the sea. Dioclesian had abdicated the empire in the seventy-first year of his age, and from that time languished rather than lived in continual alarms and anguish of mind during seven years; and hearing that Constantine had thrown down his statues at Rome, together with those of Maximian and Maxentius, died in rage and despair, in December, 312.

* A Roman *Follis* or purse of money, then consisted of two hundred and fifty silver denarii. See Du Cange, *Dissert. de Inferioris ævi Numismat.* n. 90, 91; and F. Sirmond, not. in *Serm.* 40, 1st of August.

all the provinces of his empire ; and medals to be struck in her honour, in which she is called Flavia Julia Helena. She was advanced in years before she knew Christ ; but her fervour and zeal were such as to make her retrieve the time lost in ignorance ; and God prolonged her life yet many years to edify, by her example, the church which her son laboured to exalt by his authority. Rufinus calls her faith and holy zeal incomparable ; and she kindled the same fire in the hearts of the Romans, as St. Gregory the Great assures us.⁽¹⁾ Forgetting her dignity, she assisted in the churches amidst the people in modest and plain attire ; and to attend at the divine office was her greatest delight. Though mistress of the treasures of the empire, she only made use of them in liberalities and alms ; she distributed her charities with profusion wherever she came, and was the common mother of the indigent and distressed. She built churches, and enriched them with precious vessels and ornaments.

Licinius in the East became jealous of Constantine's prosperity, and attacked him by various hostilities. The Christian emperor defeated him in battle near Cibalis in Pannonia, in 314, and generously granted him peace. His restless ambition could not lie long dormant ; he repeated new injuries, and out of aversion to Constantine, began to persecute the Christians in 316, whom he had till then protected ; and he put to death many bishops, the Forty Martyrs, and others. He also instigated the Sarmatians to invade the Roman territories ; and made himself odious by his covetousness, licentiousness, and cruelty to his own subjects. Constantine, at length, finding all other means ineffectual declared war ; and vast preparations were made on both sides. The armies of Licinius were more numerous, and he threatened that if his gods gave him victory, as his soothsayers and magicians pretended unanimously to foretell him, he would exterminate their enemies. Constantine prepared himself before the days of each battle by prayer, fasting, and retirement ; and caused the ensign called the imperial Labarum, in which was the effigy of the cross, to be carried before his army. In battle, victory every where followed this chief standard so visibly, that Licinius, making a second stand near Chalcedon, ordered his soldiers to make no attacks on the

(1) L. 9, ep. 9.

side where the great standard of the cross was, nor to look towards it, confessing that it was fatal to him.(1) He was first vanquished near Adrianople, where he left almost thirty-four thousand dead upon the spot, in July, 324; and in a second battle near Chalcedon, in which, out of one hundred and thirty thousand men, scarcely three thousand escaped. Licinius fell into the hands of the conqueror, who spared his life, and sent him to Thessalonica, where, upon information that he was attempting to raise new disturbances, he ordered him to be strangled the year following.

Constantine being, by this victory, become master of the East, concurred in assembling the council of Nice, in 325; and, in 326, wrote to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, concerning the building of a most magnificent church upon Mount Calvary. St. Helen, though then four score years of age, took the charge on herself to see this pious work executed, desiring at the same time, to discover the sacred cross on which our Redeemer died. Eusebius, in his life of Constantine,(2) mentions no other motive of her journey but her desire of adorning the churches and oratories in the holy places, and of relieving the poor in those parts, doubtless out of devotion to the mysteries of our divine Redeemer's sufferings; but Rufin(3) attributes it to visions; Socrates(4) to admonitions in her sleep; Theophanes to divine warnings;(5) St. Paulinus(6) to her piety; saying that she undertook this journey to find the cross amongst other motives of devotion. And Constantine, in his letter to Macarius the bishop of Jerusalem, commissioned him to make search for it on Mount Golgotha of Calvary.(7) The heap of earth which had been thrown by the Pagans on the spot was removed, and the statue of Venus cast down, as St. Paulinus and St. Ambrose relate.

Another perplexing difficulty occurred in distinguishing the cross of Christ amongst the three that were found; for the nails found with it were no sufficient proof. The title which lay near it, and doubtless the marks of the nails which had fixed it, furnished an indication, as St. Chrysostom(8) and St. Am-

(1) Eus. Vit. Constan. l. 2, c. 16.

(2) L. 3, c. 42.

(3) L. 10, c. 7.

(4) L. 1, c. 17.

(5) Chronogr. p. 18.

(6) Ep. § 4, n. 43.

(7) Theoph. ib

(8) Hom. 85, al 84, in Joan. ed. Ben t. 8, p. 503.

brose(1) mention. Yet some doubt remained, to remove which, the most wise and divine Bishop Macarius, as he is called by Theodoret, who was one of the prelates who had condemned the impiety of Arius at Nice the year before, suggested that a miraculous proof should be asked of God. The pious empress therefore went, attended by the bishop and others, to the house of a lady of quality who lay very sick in the city. The empress having made a prayer aloud, recorded by Rufin,(2) the bishop applied the crosses, and the sick person was restored instantly at the touch of the true cross, as all these historians relate. Sozomen, St. Paulinus, and Sulpicius Severus(3) add, that a person dead was by the like touch raised to life; but this deserves little notice, being only related upon report, as Sozomen expresses it. St. Helen, when she had discovered the holy cross, "adored not the wood, but the King, Him who hung on the wood. She burned with an earnest desire of touching the remedy of immortality." These are the words of St. Ambrose. Part of the cross she recommended to the care of the Bishop Macarius, and covered it with a rich silver case, of which the Bishop of Jerusalem was the guardian, and which he every year exposed to the adoration of the people, says St. Paulinus; and oftener according to the devotion of pilgrims.* She built a most sumptuous church on the spot to receive this precious relic. The other part of the cross she sent to her son the emperor at Constantinople, where it was covered and exposed to the veneration of the people with the greatest solemnity. Of the nails, one she put in a bridle, another in a diadem for her son, says St. Ambrose. A third she threw into the Adriatic gulf in a storm; on which account the sailors entered on that sea as sanctified, with fastings, prayer, and singing hymns to this day, says St. Gregory of Tours.(4) Eusebius, intent on the actions of the son Constantine in his life, speaks not directly of the discovery of the cross, yet mentions it indirectly in the letter of Constantine to Macarius about building the church,(5) and describes

(1) Or. de Obitu Theodosii.

(2) Hist. l. 10, c. 8.

(3) Hist. Sacrae, l. 2.

(4) De Glor. Mart. l. 1, c. 6.

(5) L. 3, c. 30, De Vita Const.

* Adorandum populo princeps ipse venerantium promittit. Paulin. ep. cit.

the two magnificent churches which the empress built, one on Mount Calvary, the other on Mount Olivet.⁽¹⁾ The same historian says: ⁽²⁾ "In the sight of all she continually resorted to the church, adorned the sacred buildings with the richest ornaments and embellishments, not passing by the chapels of the meanest towns, appearing amidst the women at prayer in a most humble garment." Suidas adds: "She was affable, kind, and charitable to all ranks, but especially to religious persons." To these, says Rufin,⁽³⁾ she showed such respect as to serve them at table as if she had been a servant, set the dishes before them, pour them out drink, hold them water to wash their hands; "though empress of the world and mistress of the empire, she looked upon herself as servant of the hand-maids of Christ." She built a convent for holy virgins at Jerusalem, mentioned by Suidas. Eusebius adds, that whilst she travelled over all the East with royal pomp and magnificence, she heaped all kind of favours both on cities and private persons, particularly on soldiers, the poor, the naked, and those who were condemned to the mines; distributing money, garments, &c.; freeing many from oppression, chains, banishment, &c.⁽⁴⁾ She beautified and adorned the city of Drepanum, in Bithynia, in honour of St. Lucian, martyr, so that Constantine caused that city to be called from her Helenopolis. At last, this pious princess returned to Rome,* and perceiving her last hour to approach, gave her son excellent instructions how to govern his empire according to the holy law of God. Then bidding him and her grandchildren a moving farewell, she expired in their presence in the month of August, 328, or, according to some, in 326, which year was the twentieth of her son's reign, who on that occasion gave magnificent feasts at Rome during three months. Constantine ordered her to be interred with the utmost pomp with a stately mausoleum, and a porphyry urn, the largest and richest in the world, which is now shown in a gallery belonging to the cloister of the Lateran basilic.† He erected a statue to her memory,

(1) C. 43.

(2) C. 45.

(3) L. 10, c. 7.

(4) Eus. Vit. Constan. c. 44; Sozom. l. 2, c. 2, &c.

* She seems not to have died in Rome itself, because Eusebius says, that after her death her son caused her body to be conveyed to the city with royal magnificence.

† This urn was made so large in order to contain not the ashes but the

together with his own, and a large cross, in the middle of a great square in Constantinople; he also erected her statue at Daphne, near Antioch. Her name occurs in the Roman Martyrology on the 18th of August, the day of her death.

Notker, abbot of Hautvilliers, in the diocese of Rheims, in 1095, wrote a history of the translation of the relics of St. Helen from Rome to that abbey, which was performed with pomp in 849. The author gives an authentic account of several miracles wrought through the intercession of this saint. He testifies that he had been eyewitness to many of them, and had learned the rest from the very persons on whom they had been performed. Part of this work, which is well written, was published by the Messieurs of Ste-Marthe,(1) and by Mabillon,(2) and almost the whole is inserted by the Bollandists,(3) in their great work. The entire manuscript is preserved at Hautvilliers, with an appendix written by the same author, containing an account of two other miracles performed by the relics of this saint.(4)

This holy empress, and the great prince her son, paid all possible honour to bishops and pastors of the church. He who truly loves and honours God and religion, has a great esteem for whatever belongs to it; consequently respects its ministers.

(1) Gall. Christ. t. 4, p. 1.

(2) Act. SS. Ord. S. Bened. t. 6, pp. 154, 156.

(3) Bolland. ad 18 Aug. pp. 607, 611.

(4) Hist. Littér. de la France.

whole body of this empress. It was discovered in 1672, in the time of Pope Urban VIII. The carvings on the urn of a lion and many other figures, without any heathenish emblems, are in a middle taste of architecture, such as that of the first figures on the triumphal arch of her son Constantine. This vast mausoleum was situated near the road to Palestrina; the ruins are now called Torre Pignattara, on the Via Laviniana, about three miles from Rome. See Keyser's Travels, t. 2; and Venuti, the celebrated antiquary to the Popes Benedict XIV. and Clement XIII. in his *Accurata Descrizione Topografica delle Antichità di Roma*, in 4to. Rome, 1763, t. 1, p. 125, part. 1, c. 7. The ruins also of the private baths built with great magnificence in Rome for her use by her son, still bear the name of *Thermæ S. Helenæ*, in Italian *Terme di S. Elena*. See a fine stamp with the description in the same author, t. 1, p. 131, with a fragment of an inscription still remaining there in the Villa Conti, as follows: "D. N. Helena. ven. Aug. Mat. Avia. Beatis.—Therma," &c. The ashes of St. Helen are now kept in a rich shrine of porphyry under the high altar of the church of Ara Cœli. See Keyser's Travels, t. 3

The first zealous Christian princes were thoroughly sensible that it is impossible to inspire the people with a just value and awful reverence for religion itself, and its immediate object, without a reasonable respect for its sacred ministers. Upon this principle were immunities granted to the church. Even Numa, and other heathen legislators, observe this maxim, to impress upon men's minds religious sentiments, though towards a false worship. Scandals in pastors, when notorious, are most execrable sacrileges; and circumspection is necessary, that we be not drawn aside or imposed upon by any, because, like Alcimus, they are of the seed of Aaron; but a propensity to censure rashly, and detract from those persons who are invested with a sacred character, is inconsistent with a religious mind, and leads to a revolt. True pastors indeed, in the spirit of the apostles, far from ever resenting, or so much as thinking of any slights that may be put upon their persons, or desiring, much less seeking, any kind of respect, rejoice and please themselves rather in contempt, which in their hearts they sincerely acknowledge to be only their due. Humility is the ornament and the ensign of the sacred order which they hold in the Church of Christ.

ST. AGAPETUS, M.

HE suffered in his youth a cruel martyrdom at Præneste, now called Palestrina, twenty-four miles from Rome, under Aurelian, about the year 275. His name is famous in the sacramentaries of St. Gelasius, and St. Gregory the Great, and in the ancient calendars of the church of Rome. Two churches in Palestrina, and others in other places are dedicated to God under his name.

ST. CLARE OF MONTE FALCO, V

SHE was born at Monte Falco, near Spoleto, in Italy, about the year 1275. She was from her childhood an admirable model of devotion and penance. Having embraced the rule of St. Austin, she was chosen abbess yet very young; in which charge her charity, her example, and her words, inspired all who had the happiness to enjoy her conversation with an ardent desire of the most sublime perfection. Her profound recollection was the effect of the constant union of her soul with God. If she spoke any word which seemed superfluous, she condemned her-