

B. THEOBALD, ABBOT.

HE was by his virtue the great ornament of the illustrious family of Montmorency in France. He was born in the castle of Marli. His father, Bouchard of Montmorency, gave him an education suitable to his birth, and trained him up to the profession of arms, in which so many heroes of that family have signalized themselves. But Theobald manifested from his infancy a strong inclination to a state of holy retirement, dreading the least shadow of danger which could threaten his innocence. He spent great part of his time in prayer, and resorted often to the church of the nunnery called Port-Royal, which had been founded in 1204 by Matthew of Montmorency, and on which his father Bouchard had bestowed so many estates that he was regarded as a second founder. Theobald took the Cistercian habit at Vaux de Cernay in 1220, and was chosen abbot of that house in 1234. He lived in the midst of his brethren as the servant of every one, and surpassed all others in his love of poverty, silence, and holy prayer. He was highly esteemed by St. Lewis. His happy death happened in 1247. His shrine in his abbey is visited by a great concourse of people on the Whitsun-holidays. His solemn festival is there kept on the 8th, and in some places on the 9th of July, probably the day on which the first translation of his relics was made. The Bollandists defer his life to the 8th of December, the day of his death. See Le Nain, *Histoire de Cîteaux*, t. 9.

ST. GRIMBALD, NATIVE OF ST. OMER, ABBOT.

HE was a monk at St. Bertin's, and with his abbot entertained King Alfred in that abbey when that prince was going to Rome. This king, afterwards, by the advice of Eldred archbishop of Canterbury, sent messengers to St. Bertin's to invite Grimbold over to England, where he arrived, Hugh being twelfth abbot of that monastery, in the year 885. Asserius, a monk of Menevia or St. David's, whom king Alfred honoured with his particular esteem, and who was afterwards bishop of Shireburn, was one of these messengers.

The Oxonian writers tell us that Grimbold was appointed

first professor of divinity at Oxford, when he is said to have founded that university; and that Asserius, John Erigena, and St. Neot taught there at the same time. The learned Mr. Hearne says not only that Grimbald built St. Peter's church in the East, but also that the eastern vault of his ancient structure is standing to this day, of which he gives a plan. Upon the death of Eldred archbishop of Canterbury, King Alfred pressed Grimbald to accept that dignity; but was not able to extort his consent, and was obliged to allow him to retire to the church of Winchester. King Alfred's son and successor Edward, in compliance with his father's will, built the new Minstre close to the old, in which he placed secular canons, says Tanner, and appointed St. Grimbald abbot over them; this title being then given to a superior of secular or regular priests. About sixty years after, Bishop Ethelwolph brought in monks in place of those secular canons. King Henry I. removed this monastery of New Minstre out of the walls of the city to the place called Hide, which still continued sometimes to be called St. Grimbald's monastery. The body of the great King Alfred was removed by his son from the Old Minstre, and that of his queen, Alswithe, from the nunnery of Nunnaminstre, and deposited together in the New Minstre, afterwards in Hide Monastery. Nunnaminstre was founded by King Alfred, or rather by his queen, Alswithe. St. Edburge, a daughter of King Edward, was a nun, and, according to Leland, abbess there. St. Grimbald in his last sickness, though extremely feeble, gathered strength when the sacred viaticum was brought, rose out of bed, and received it prostrate on the ground. After this he desired to be left alone for three days, which he spent in close union of his heart with God. On the fourth day the community was called into his chamber, and amidst their prayers the saint calmly breathed forth his happy soul on the 8th of July, in the year 903, of his age eighty-three. His body was reposed in this church, and honoured amongst its most precious relics. It was taken up by St. Elphegus, and exposed in a silver shrine. See his life written by Goscelin, monk of St. Bertin's; Capgrave; Leland, Collect. t. 1, p. 18; John Yperius in Chron. St. Bertini; Molan. in Natal. Sanct. Belgii; Hearne, Pref. in

Lelandi Collect. t. 1, p. 28, t. 2, p. 217; and Præf. in Thomæ Cæii Vindicias Oxon. contra Joan. Caium Cantabrig. p. 27; Woode Ant. Oxon. t. 1, p. 9.

JULY IX.

ST. EPHREM OF EDESSA, C.

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH.

From his works in the late Vatican edition; also from St. Gregory of Nyssa, in his panegyric of St. Ephrem; and from Palladius, Theodoret, Sozomen, &c. See t. 1, Op. St. Ephrem. Romæ, An. 1743, or St. Ephrem Syri Opera Omnia Latine. Venetiis, 1755, 2 tomis.

A. D. 378.

THIS humble deacon was the most illustrious of all the doctors, who, by their doctrine and writings have adorned the Syriac church. He was born in the territory of Nisibis, a strong city on the banks of the Tigris, in Mesopotamia. His parents lived in the country, and earned their bread with the sweat of their brows, but were ennobled by the blood of martyrs in their family, and had themselves both confessed Christ before the persecutors under Dioclesian, or his successors. They consecrated Ephrem to God from his cradle, like another Samuel, but he was eighteen years old when he was baptized. Before that time he had committed certain faults which his enlightened conscience extremely exaggerated to him after his perfect conversion to God, and he never ceased to bewail, with floods of tears, his ingratitude towards God, in having ever offended him. Sozomen(1) says these sins were little sallies of anger, into which he had sometimes fallen with his playfellows in his childhood. The saint himself mentions in his confession(2) two crimes (as he styles them) of this age, which called for his tears during his whole life. The first was, that in play he had driven a neighbour's cow among the mountains, where it happened to be killed by a wild beast; the second was a doubt which once came into his mind in his childhood, whether God's

(1) Sozom. l. 3, c. 16.

(2) T. 3, p. 23.