

palace, banished him, upon a false accusation, to the monastery of Aumont, upon the Sambre in Hainault, where he died in the year 698. See Mab. Sæc. 2. Ben. and Annal. l. 18. Rivet, Hist. Liter. t. 4. p. 33. and t. 3. p. 646. Henschenius, Feb. t. 2. p. 342.

SAINT ATTRACTA, OR TARAHATA,

AN IRISH VIRGIN.

SHE received the veil from St. Patrick, and lived at a place called from her Kill-Attracta to this day, in Connaught. Her acts in Colgan are of no authority.

ST. ERHARD, ABBOT, C.

CALLED BY MERSÆUS AND OTHER GERMANS, EBERHARDUS.

HE was a Scotchman by birth, and being well instructed in the scriptures, went into Germany to preach the gospel, with two brothers. He taught the sacred sciences at Triers, when St. Hydulphus was bishop of that city, whom Welser and some other take for a Scot, and one of our saint's brothers. When St. Hydulphus resigned his bishopric to end his days in retirement in 753, St. Erhard withdrew to Ratisbon, where he founded a small monastery, and is said to have been honoured with miracles, both living and after his death, which happened in that city. He was commemorated on this day in Scotland, but in Germany, on the 8th of January. See Peter Merssæus, Catal. Archiep. Trevirens. M. Welserus, l. 5. Rerum Boiicar. ad an. 753. Pantaleon, Prosopographiæ, part 1.

FEBRUARY X.

ST. SCHOLASTICA, VIRGIN.

From St. Gregory the Great, Dial. l. 2. c. 33. and 34.

About the year 543.

THIS saint was sister to the great St. Benedict. She consecrated herself to God from her earliest youth, as St. Gregory testifies. Where her first monastery was situated is not mentioned; but after her brother removed to Mount Cassino, she choose her retreat at Plombariola, in that neighbourhood, where

she founded and governed a nunnery about five miles distant to the south from St. Benedict's monastery.* St. Bertharius, who was abbot of Cassino three hundred years after, says, that she instructed in virtue several of her own sex. And whereas St. Gregory informs us, that St. Benedict governed nuns as well as monks, his sister must have been their abbess under his rule and direction. She visited her holy brother once a year, and as she was not allowed to enter his monastery, he went out with some of his monks to meet her at a house at some small distance. They spent these visits in the praises of God, and in conferring together on spiritual matters. St. Gregory relates a remarkable circumstance of the last of these visits. Scholastica having passed the day as usual in singing psalms, and pious discourses, they sat down in the evening to take their refecton. After it was over, Scholastica, perhaps foreknowing it would be their last interview in this world, or at least desirous of some further spiritual improvement, was very urgent with her brother to delay his return till the next day, that they might entertain themselves till morning upon the happiness of the other life. St. Benedict, unwilling to transgress his rule, told her he could not pass a night out of his monastery: so desired her not to insist upon such a breach of monastic discipline. Scholastica finding him resolved on going home, laying her hands joined upon the table and her head upon them, with many tears begged of Almighty God to interpose in her behalf. Her prayer was scarcely ended, when there happened such a storm of rain, thunder, and lightning, that neither St. Benedict nor any of his companions could set a foot out of doors. He complained to his sister, saying: "God forgive you, sister; what have you done?" She answered: "I asked you a favour, and you refused it me: I asked it of Almighty God, and he has granted it me." St. Benedict was therefore obliged to comply with her request, and they spent the

* This nunnery underwent the same fate with the abbey of Mount Cassino, both being burned to the ground by the Lombards. When Rachim, king of that nation, having been converted to the Catholic faith by the exhortations of Pope Zachary, re-established that abbey, and taking the monastic habit, ended his life there, his queen Tasia and his daughter Ratruda rebuilt and richly endowed the nunnery of Plombariola, in which they lived with great regularity to their deaths, as is related by Leo of Ostia in his Chronicle of Mount Cassino, ad an. 750. It has been since destroyed, so that at present the land is only a farm belonging to the monastery of Mount Cassino. See Dom Mege, *Vie de St. Benoit*, p. 412. Chatelain, *Notes*, p. 605. Muratori *Antichità*, &c. t. 3. p. 400. Diss. 66. del Monasteri della Monache.

night in conferences on pious subjects, chiefly on the felicity of the blessed, to which both most ardently aspired, and which she was shortly to enjoy. The next morning they parted, and three days after St. Scholastica died in her solitude. St. Benedict was then alone in contemplation on Mount Cassino, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he saw the soul of his sister ascending thither in the shape of a dove. Filled with joy at her happy passage, he gave thanks for it to God, and declared her death to his brethren; some of whom he sent to bring her corpse to his monastery, where he caused it to be laid in the tomb which he had prepared for himself. She must have died about the year 543. Her relics are said to have been translated into France, together with those of St. Benedict, in the seventh century, according to the relation given by the monk Adrevald.⁽¹⁾ They are said to have been deposited at Mans, and kept in the collegiate church of St. Peter in that city, in a rich silver shrine.* In 1562 this shrine was preserved from being plundered by the Hugonots, as is related by Chatelain. Her principal festival at Mans is kept a holyday on the 11th of July, the day of the translation of her relics. She was honoured in some places with an office of three lessons, in the time of St. Lewis, as appears from a calendar of Longchamp, wrote in his reign.

Lewis of Granada, treating on the perfection of the love of God, mentions the miraculous storm obtained by St. Scholastica, to show with what excess of goodness God is always ready to hear the petitions and desires of his servants. This pious soul

(1) See Paul the deacon, *Hist. Longob.* and Dom Mege, *Vie de St. Benoit*, p. 48.

* That the relics of St. Benedict were privately carried off from Mount Cassino, in 660, soon after the monastery was destroyed, and brought to Fleury on the Loire by Aigiulph the monk, and those of St. Scholastica by certain persons of Mans to that city, is maintained by Mabillon, Menard, and Bosche. But that the relics of both these saints still remain at Mount Cassino, is strenuously affirmed by Loretus Angelus de Nuce, and Marchiarelli, the late learned monk of the Order of Camaldoli; and this assertion Benedict XIV. looks upon as certain. (*de Canoniz.* l. 4. part. 2. c. 24. t. 4. p. 245.) For Pope Zachary in his bull assures us, that he devoutly honoured the relics of SS. Benedict and Scholastica at Mount Cassino, in 746. *Lec Ostiensis* and Peter the deacon visited them and found them untouched in 1071, as Alexander II. affirms in the bull he published when he consecrated the new church there. By careful visitations made by authority, in 1486 and 1545, the same is proved. Yet Angelus de Nuce allows some portions of both saints to be at Mans and Fleury, on the Loire. Against the supposed translation of the whole shrines of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica into France, see Muratori, *Antichita.* &c. *dissert.* 58. t. 3. p. 244.

must have received strong pledges and most sensible tokens of his love, seeing she depended on receiving so readily what she asked of him. No child could address himself with so great confidence to his most tender parent. The love which God bears us, and his readiness to succour and comfort us, if we humbly confess and lay before him our wants, infinitely surpasses all that can be found in creatures. Nor can we be surprised that he so easily heard the prayer of this holy virgin, since at the command of Joshua he stopped the heavens, God obeying the voice of man! He hears the most secret desires of those who fear and love him, and does their will: if he sometimes seems deaf to their cries, it is to grant their main desire by doing what is most expedient for them, as St. Austin frequently observes. The short prayer by which St. Scholastica gained this remarkable victory over her brother, who was one of the greatest saints on earth, was doubtless no more than a single act of her pure desires, which she continually turned toward, and fixed on her beloved. It was enough for her to cast her eyes interiorly upon him with whom she was closely and inseparably united in mind and affections, to move him so suddenly to change the course of the elements in order to satisfy her pious desire. By placing herself, as a docile scholar, continually at the feet of the Divine Majesty, who filled all the powers of her soul with the sweetness of his heavenly communications, she learned that sublime science of perfection in which she became a mistress to so many other chaste souls by this divine exercise. Her life in her retirement, to that happy moment which closed her mortal pilgrimage, was a continued uniform contemplation, by which all her powers were united to, and transformed into, God.

ST. SOTERIS, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

From St. Ambrose, Exhort. Virginit. c. 12. and l. 3. de Virgin, c. 6.
Tillemont, t. 5. p. 259.

Fourth Age.

ST. AMBROSE boasts of this saint as the greatest honour of his family. St. Soteris was descended from a long series of consuls and prefects: but her greatest glory was her despising, for the sake of Christ, birth, riches, great beauty, and all that the world prizes as valuable. She consecrated her virginity to God, and to avoid the dangers her beauty exposed her to, neglected it entirely, and trampled under her feet all the vain ornaments that