

know no other glory but what is placed in the service of God, and that we look upon ignominies suffered for the sake of virtue as our greatest gain and honour. We are his disciples who hath told us,—*If the world hateth you, know that it hated me first,* John xv. 18.

### ST. ALBAN, PROTOMARTYR OF BRITAIN.

From Bede, Usher's Collections, &c., his Ancient Life, and the English-Saxon abstract of it, in Bibl. Cotton. Julius, A. X.

A. D. 303.

THE Christian faith had penetrated into England in the times of the apostles, and had received an increase by the conversion of King Lucius, in the year 180. But the first persecutions seem not to have reached this island, where, perhaps, the Christians, in times of danger, retired to places distant from the Roman colonies; or the mildness of their governors, in a province so remote as to seem another world, might sometimes shelter them. But the rage of Dioclesian penetrated into these recesses, and many of both sexes here received, by unheard of torments, the crown of martyrdom, as Gildas and Bede testify. The first and most renowned of these Christian heroes was St. Alban, whose death was rendered more illustrious by many miracles and other extraordinary circumstances, and whose blood was an agreeable sacrifice to God, a glorious testimony to the honour of his name, and to his holy faith, and a fruitful seed of divine blessings on his country. So great was the glory of his triumph, that his name was most famous over the whole Church, as Fortunatus assures us.(1) A copy of the ancient Acts of his Martyrdom was published by Bishop Usher, and the principal circumstances are mentioned by St. Gildas, and recorded by venerable Bede.(2)

Alban\* seems to have been a Roman name, and this saint seems to have been a person of note, as some ancient monuments quoted by Leland, Usher, Alford, and Cressy affirm. He was a native of Verulam,† which was for many ages one of

(1) Fortun. Poëm.

(2) Hist. l. 1, c. 1.

\* Called in English-Saxon, *Albaner*.

† Verulam was called in the English-Saxon, *Watlinge Ceaster*.

the strongest and most populous cities in Britain, till having suffered much by sieges under the Saxon conquest it fell to decay, and the present town of St. Alban's rose up close by its ruins, of which no vestiges are now to be seen, except some broken foundations of walls and chequered pavements; and Roman coins have been often dug up there.(1) The river Werlame ran on the east, and the great Roman highway, called Watlingstreet, lay on the west side of the town. Alban travelled to Rome in his youth to improve himself in learning and in all the polite arts, as appears by authorities which the judicious Leland produces. Being returned home he settled at Verulam, and lived there with some dignity; for he seems to have been one of the principal citizens of the place. Though a stranger to the Christian faith he was hospitable and compassionate, and in recompense of his charitable disposition God was pleased to conduct him to the light of the gospel, and to discover to him the inestimable jewel of immortal life. He was yet a Pagan when the edicts of the emperors against the Christians began to be put rigorously in execution in Britain. A certain clergyman, called by some writers Amphibalus, sought by flight to escape the fury of the persecutors, and Alban afforded him a shelter, and kindly entertained him in his house. Our saint was much edified by the holy deportment of this stranger, and admired his faith and piety, and in particular his assiduity in prayer, in which the faithful servant of God watched night and day. Alban was soon engaged to listen to his wholesome admonitions and instructions, and in a short time became a Christian. And with such ardour did he open his heart to the divine grace, that he was at once filled with the perfect spirit of this holy religion, and rejoicing that he had found so precious a treasure he no longer regarded anything else, despising for it the whole world and life itself. He had harboured this apostolic man some days when an information was given in to the governor, that the preacher of the Christian religion, after whom the strictest inquiry was making, lay hid at Alban's house. Soldiers were despatched thither to make di-

(1) See the map and description of the ancient Verulamium, published by Dr. Will. Stukelle in 1720, among the prints of the Society of Antiquaries.

ligent search after the man of God; but he was then secretly fled. Christ promises that he who receives a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall meet with the recompense of a prophet. This was fulfilled in Alban, who, by entertaining a confessor of Christ, received the grace of faith, and the crown of martyrdom. He exchanged clothes with his guest, that the preacher might more easily escape in that disguise to carry the news of salvation to others; and himself put on the stranger's long robe, called Caracalla.\* Alban earnestly desiring to shed his blood for Christ, whom he had but just learned to know, presented himself boldly in this habit to the soldiers, and was by them bound and led to the judge, who happened at that very time to be standing at the altar, and offering sacrifice to his idols. When he saw Alban he was highly provoked at the cheat which the saint had put upon him by substituting himself for his guest, and ordering him to be dragged before the images of his gods, he said: "As you have chosen to conceal a sacrilegious person and a blasphemer, the punishment which he should have suffered shall fall upon you, in case you refuse to comply with the worship of our religion." The saint answered with a noble courage, that he would never obey such an order. The magistrate then asked him of what family he was? Alban replied: "To what purpose do you inquire of my family? If you would know my religion, I am a Christian." The judge asked his name? To which he answered: "My name is Alban, and I worship the only true and living God, who created all things." The magistrate said: "If you would enjoy the happiness of life, sacrifice instantly to the great gods." Alban replied: "The sacrifices you offer are made to devils, who

---

\* The Caracalla was a long garment like the habit of a modern monk, sometimes with and sometimes without a hood or cowl. It was originally Gaulish; Antoninus Basianus, son of the Emperor Severus, was surnamed Caracalla, because he introduced the frequent use of this kind of garment at Rome. See Aurelius Victor, Ferrarius de Re Vestiarum. Rom. Hoffman Lexic. Univ.

Thomas Walsingham assures us, that this large woollen garment of St. Alban was kept in the church of Ely, in a great chest: which was opened in the reign of Edward II. in 1314. The upper part appeared yet stained with the martyr's blood, which looked as fresh as if it had been but just spilt.

neither help their votaries nor grant their petitions. Whoever shall sacrifice to these idols, shall receive for his reward the everlasting pains of hell." The judge, enraged beyond measure at these words, commanded the holy confessor to be scourged; and seeing him bear with an unshaken constancy, and even with joy, the most cruel tortures, he at last condemned him to be beheaded. An exceeding great multitude of people went out to behold his execution, and the judge remained almost alone in the city without attendance. In the road was a river, and the stream in that part, which was pent up by a wall and sand, was exceedingly rapid. So numerous was the crowd that was gone out before, that the martyr could scarcely have passed the bridge that evening had he waited for them to go before him. Therefore, being impatient to arrive at his crown, he went to the bank, and lifting up his eyes to heaven made a short prayer. Upon this the stream was miraculously divided, and the river dried up in that part, so as to afford a passage to the martyr and a thousand persons.

This river must have been the Coln, which runs between Old Verulam and new St. Alban's. The executioner was converted at the sight of this miracle, and of the saintly behaviour of the martyr, and throwing away his naked sword, he fell at the feet of the saint, begging to die with him, or rather in his place. The sudden conversion of the headsman occasioned a delay in the execution. In the mean time the holy confessor, with the crowd, went up the hill, which was a most pleasant spot, covered with several sorts of flowers, about five hundred paces from the river. There Alban falling on his knees, at his prayer a fountain sprung up, with the water whereof he refreshed his thirst. A new executioner being found, he struck off the head of the martyr, but miraculously lost his eyes, which fell to the ground at the same time. Together with St. Alban, the soldier, who had refused to imbrue his hands in his blood, and had declared himself a Christian, was also beheaded, being baptized in his own blood. This soldier is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology. Capgrave calls him Heraclius; some others Araclius. Many of the spectators were converted to the faith, and following the holy priest, who had converted St. Alban, into Wales, to the number of one thou-

sand, received the sacrament of baptism at his hands, as Harpsfield's memoirs relate; but these converts were all cut to pieces by the idolaters for their faith. The priest was brought back and stoned to death at Radburn, three miles from St. Alban's, as Thomas Radburn, who was born in that place, Matthew Paris, and others affirm, from ancient records kept in St. Alban's abbey. This priest is called by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and others, St. Amphibalus, though Bishop Usher conjectures that Greek name to have been borrowed from his garment, the Caracalla. Bede testifies, that St. Alban suffered martyrdom on the 22nd of June, some say in the year 286, but most in 303, when Dioclesian began his great persecution; to which Constantius put a stop in Britain the year following. Some moderns are offended at the above-mentioned miracles; but the ingenious Mr. Collier writes thus concerning them: "As for St. Alban's miracles, being attested by authors of such credit, I do not see why they should be questioned. That miracles were wrought in the church at that time of day, is clear from the writings of the ancients. To imagine that God should exert his omnipotence, and appear supernaturally for his servants, in no age since the apostles, is an unreasonable fancy; for since the world was not all converted by the apostles, why should we not believe that God should honour his servants with the most undisputed credentials? Why then should St. Alban's miracles be disbelieved, the occasion being great enough for so extraordinary an interposition?" &c. These miracles of stopping the river, and of the spring rising in the place where St. Alban was beheaded, are expressly mentioned by Gildas, Bede, and others. The place was called in the Anglo-Saxon language, Holm-hurst, Hurst signifying a wood; and this place was once overgrown with trees, as Bishop Usher proves. In aftertimes it obtained the name of Derswoldwood, and was the spot on which the present town of St. Alban's is built. In the time of Constantine the Great, a magnificent church of admirable workmanship was erected on the place where the martyr suffered, and was rendered illustrious by frequent great miracles, as Bede testifies.<sup>(1)</sup> The pagan Saxons destroyed this edifice; but Offa, king of the Mercians, raised another in 793, with a

(1) See *Analytica Henschenii de S. Albano*, and Papebroke, t. 4, Junij.

great monastery, on which he bestowed most ample possessions.\* Several popes honoured it with the most singular privileges and exemptions, and all the lands possessed by it were freed from the payment of the Romescot or Peterpence. The church is still standing, having been redeemed from destruction when the abbey was suppressed under Henry VIII. It was purchased by the townsmen to be their parochial church, for the sum of four hundred pounds, which, according to the present value of money, would be above seven times as much.†

---

\* Offa, king of Mercia, founded the monastery of St. Alban's in the year 793, of his reign thirty-three; and in a council held at Cechyth in his dominions, in which were present fifteen bishops, with several kings, governors, and noblemen, he endowed the same with very large estates. (See Stow's Chronicle.) In the journey of devotion which he made after this to Rome, he excepted the lands of this abbey from paying the Peterpence, when he engaged each family in his kingdom which enjoyed the yearly revenue of above thirty silver pence, to pay one silver penny a year to the see of Rome, Adrian I. being then pope. His dominions then comprised the counties of Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester, Warwick, Stafford, Derby, Chester, Salop, Nottingham, Northampton, Oxford, Buckingham, Leicester, Bedford, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Middlesex, and half Hertfordshire. See the MS. life of King Offa, quoted by Spelman and Wilkins, p. 159.

† The abbot of St. Alban's took the first place among the mitred abbots in the parliament: the others sat according to the seniority of their summons. This precedence was granted to St. Alban by Pope Adrian IV. in 1154. "Sicut B. Albanus protomartyr est Anglorum, ita et Abbas, sui monasterii sedem primam habet in parlamento," which was confirmed by several kings. See Reyner, Stevens, vol. I, p. 170, and Monast. Angl. vol. I, p. 80. Dr. Brown Willis's Hist. of Mitred Abbeys, vol. I, p. 13.

Before the dissolution of monasteries in England, twenty-seven abbots, sometimes twenty-nine, and two priors, almost all Benedictines, held baronies, and sat in parliament. The abbeys which enjoyed this privilege were, 1. St. Alban's, valued at the dissolution, according to the king's books in Dugdale, at £2102 per ann. according to vulgar computation; in Speed, at £2510 per ann. 2. Glastenbury, dedicated to the B. Virgin, valued at £3311 in Dugdale; at £3500 in Speed. 3. St. Austin's at Canterbury, which was returned into the exchequer to be endowed with £1413 per ann. the cathedral priory of Christ's-church in that city being valued at £2387. 4. Westminster-abbey, valued at £3471 in Dugdale; at £3977 in Speed. Maitland, (Hist. of London and Westminster, p. 391,) observes, that £3977 at the time of the dissolution was a sum equal to £20,000 at present; and that Westminster-abbey was with this yearly income far the richest in all England. It also surpassed all the other abbeys by the surprising treasure of rich plate and precious ornaments. 5. Winchester-abbey, founded by St. Byrinus and Kynegilse, the first Christian king of the West-Saxons, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, but in later ages called St. Swithin's, was valued at £1507. 6. St. Edmund's-bury, built by King Canutus, valued at

Our island for many ages had recourse to St. Alban as its glorious protomartyr and powerful patron with God, and acknowledged many great favours received from God, through his intercession. By it St. Germanus procured a triumph without

£1659, in Dugdale; at £2336 in Speed. 7. Ely, where the valuation of the abbey restored by St. Ethelwold was £1084, that of the bishopric £2134. 8. Abingdon, founded by Cedwalla and Ina, kings of the West-Saxons, in honour of the B. Virgin, valued at £1876. 9. Reading-abbey, built by King Henry I. valued at £1938. 10. Thorney, in Cambridgeshire, refounded by St. Ethelwold, in honour of the B. Virgin Mary, valued at £508. 11. Waltham, which was founded a noble collegiate church by Earl Harold, in 1062, and made by Henry II. a royal abbey of regular canons of St. Austin, under the title of the Holy Cross, was valued at £900 in Dugdale; at £1079 in Speed. 12. St. Peter's in Gloucester, founded by Wulfere and Ethelred, kings of Mercia, valued at £1550, made a cathedral by Henry VIII. 13. Tewksbury, valued at £1598. It was founded in 715 by Doddo, a prime nobleman of Mercia, who became a monk at Pershore. 14. Winchelcomb in Gloucestershire, valued at £759. It was founded by Offa and Kenulph, kings of Mercia. 15. Ramsay in Huntingdonshire, founded by Ailwyne, alderman of England, and earl of the East-Angles, in honour of the B. Virgin and St. Bennet, rated at £1716. 16. Bardney in Lincolnshire. After being demolished by the Danes in 870, who slew there three hundred monks, it was rebuilt by William the Conqueror. 17. Crowland, valued at £1067 in Dugdale; at £1217 in Speed. 18. St. Bennet's in Hulm, in Norfolk, founded about the year 800, valued at £585. This abbacy was given by Henry VIII. to the bishops of Norwich, in exchange for the estates formerly belonging to that see, then valued at the yearly income of £1050. From which time the bishops of Norwich remain the only abbots in England. The great monastery of the Holy Trinity in Norwich was valued at £1061 per ann. 19. Peterburgh-abbey, begun by Peada, king of Mercia, in 665; rebuilt by Adulf, chancellor to King Edgar, who became himself a monk, and died abbot of this house. The revenues of this abbey were rated, in the twenty-sixth year of Henry VIII. at £1921, according to the clear value, in Dugdale, and at £1972, according to the computed value. Henry VIII. spared this church, out of regard to the ashes of his injured queen Catherine, and converted the abbey into an episcopal see, which is now charged in the king's books, worth £414. 20. Battel-abbey in Sussex, founded by William the Conqueror, in honour of St. Martin, valued at £880. 21. Malmesbury in Wiltshire, valued at £803. 22. Whitby, anciently called Streaneshalch, founded by King Oswy in favour of St. Hilda in 657. It was destroyed by the Danes; but rebuilt for monks after the Conquest, in honour of St. Peter and St. Hilda. 23. Selby in Yorkshire, begun by William the Conqueror, in honour of St. Peter and St. Germanus, rated at £729. 24. St. Mary's at York, built in the reign of William Rufus, valued at £2085 in Speed. The other mitred abbeys were those of Shrewsbury, Cirencester, Evesham, Tavistock, and Hyde at Winchester. (See Brown Willis's History of Mitred Abbeys.) Also two priors had seats in the House of Lords, namely, of Coventry, and of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem. This last was styled Primus Angliæ Baro, and was the first lay baron, though a religious man. See Bishop Tanner's Notitia Monastica:

Christian blood, and gained a complete victory both over the spiritual and corporal enemies of this country. Of the rich shrine of St. Alban, most munificently adorned by Offa, by his son Egfrig, and many succeeding kings and others, nothing

---

according to whose most exact calculation, at the suppression of religious houses in England, the sum total of the revenues of the greater monasteries amounted to £104,919. Of the lesser, £29,702. Of the head house of the knights hospitallers, or of Malta, in London, £2385. Of twenty-eight other houses of that Order, £3026. Of seven houses of Trinitarians, (which are all we find the valuation of, the rest probably having no real foundations,) £287.

By an act which was passed in the parliament in March, 1535, by the suppression of one hundred and eighty-one lesser monasteries, a revenue of £32,000 per ann. came to the crown, besides £100,000 in plate and jewels. By the greater houses, suppressed in 1539, the king obtained a revenue of £100,000 per ann. besides plate and jewels. The houses of the knights of Malta were seized by the king in 1540. Afterwards, in 1548, were granted to King Edward VI. and suppressed, ninety colleges, one hundred and ten hospitals, and two thousand three hundred and seventy-four chantries and free chapels. The churches in all the northern kingdoms, as Denmark, Sweden, &c. were stripped much more naked by the change of religion.

The revenues of the clergy were laid only at a fourth part of the revenues of the kingdom in the twenty-seventh of Henry VIII. as may be seen in Compl. Hist. vol. 2, p. 185. And Mr. Collier, in his Eccl. Hist. vol. 2, p. 106, saith the revenues of the monks never did exceed a fifth part; and considering the leases they granted upon small rents, and easy fines, it may truly be affirmed their revenues did not exceed a tenth part of the nation. Thus Bishop Tanner, pref. p. 7.

Monasteries in England are no more; yet justice is due to an order of men which was formerly an illustrious part of this nation, and abounded with persons eminent for birth, learning, and piety. The veil which death throws over the ashes of good and great men is sacred; and to cast dirt upon their shrine is shocking to the most savage barbarians. Yet this some have made a point of merit. Bishop Burnet says the monks were become lewd and dissolute when their Order was suppressed among us. But Mr. Henry Wharton, under the name of Anthony Harmer, in his Specimen of Errors in Burnet's History of the Reformation, answers this slander in the following words. (p. 42.) "God forbid that any professors of Christianity, much less the greatest pretenders to it, should be guilty of such monstrous wickedness, or that any others should believe it of them without evident proof. Surely if the monks had been guilty of any such thing, it could not have escaped the knowledge of their visitors, who searched and divulged all their faults with the utmost industry. Nor would it have been unknown to Bale, brought up among them; nor omitted by him in his English Votaries, wherein he hath set himself to defame the monastic order, and the unmarried clergy with insatiable malice." The same learned Protestant divine and historian, in answer to another charge of Bishop Burnet, importing, that the monks about the end of the eighth century had possessed themselves of the greatest part of the riches of the nation, shows (p. 40,) that the monks had not then probably gained possession of the hundredth part of the riches of the nation.



is now remaining, as Weever writes,<sup>(1)</sup> but a marble stone to cover the place where the dust of the sacred remains lies. Over against which, on a wall, some verses are lately painted, says the same author, to tell us there was formerly a shrine in that place.\* A village in Forez in France, a league and a half

(1) *Funeral Monuments*, p. 555.

though they afterwards, in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, increased exceedingly in number and possessions. "But, after all," says he, "they will never be found to have possessed above a fifth part of the nation: and considering they were wont to lease out their lands to laymen for easy fines and small rents, they did not in reality possess the tenth part of the riches of the nation. Then for that other charge, that the best part of the soil being in such ill hands, it was the interest of the nation to have it put to better uses, it is altogether erroneous. From the beginning to the end, none ever improved their lands and possessions to better advantage than the monks, by building, cultivation, and all other methods, while they kept them in their own hands. Of this Croyland is to this day a manifest instance. And when they leased them out to others, it was the interest of the nation to have such easy tenures continued to great numbers of persons who enjoyed them. To this it may be added, that they contributed to the public charges of the nation equally with the other clergy; and the clergy did always contribute in proportion above the laity. So that we cannot find to what better uses these possessions have been since put." &c.

Bishop Tanner also observes, that the church lands, after the Conquest, contributed to all public burdens equally with the laity. Walsingham (p. 180,) and Patrick (in his addit. to Gunton, p. 321,) say, that 2 Richard II. A. D. 1379, every mitred abbot paid as much to the tax as an earl; and 6s. 8d. for every monk in his monastery. In 18 Edward II. A. D. 1289, the abbot of St. Edmond's-bury paid £666 13s. 4d. to the fifteenth. See Cowell's interpreter, sub voce Quinsieme. Also Rymer, vol. 2, p. 75, and Stevens, App. p. 108. See a justification and apology for monks and monastic Orders in *Monasticon Favershamense*, or a survey of the monastery of Feversham, by Tho. Southouse, of Gray's-Inn, Lond. 1634.

Of the Benedictin Order were all our cathedral priories, except Carlisle, and most of the richest abbeys in England. Reyner (vol. 1, p. 217,) says, that the revenues of the Benedictins were almost equal to those of all the other Orders. Sir Robert Atkyns says, there were in England before the Reformation, 45,009 churches and 55,000 chapels; now only about 10,000. Dr. Bentley, under the name of Philolentherus Lipsiensis, in Remarks upon a late Discourse of Free-Thinking, says, that out of 10,000 parish churches there are 6000, the yearly income of which does not exceed £50 each. On the present state of the church revenues in England, see that treatise, and Dean Prideaux, on the Original and Right of Tithes.

\* Nought but this marble stone of Alban's shrine is left:

The work of all form else hath changing time bereft.

Papebroke mentions another St. Alban, martyr, whose relics are honourably preserved at Burano near Venice.

Some have thought St. Alban of Mentz, who is much honoured in a

from Rouanne, bears the name of St. Alban, famous for mineral waters, abounding with nitrous salt, described by Mr. Spon and Piganiol, t. 2. p. 9. ed. 3. ann. 1754.

---

## JUNE XXIII.

### ST. ETHELDREDA, OR AUDRY, V. A.

From her life, by Bede, b. 4, c. 19, 20, and more at large by Thomas, a monk of Ely, in his History of Ely; in Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, p. 597, and Papebroke's Notes, p. 489, t. 4, Junij. See also Bradshaw's life of St. Wereburga, c. 18. Bentham, *Hist. Ely*, ed. 1766.

A. D. 679.

ST. ETHELDREDA or EDILTRUDIS, commonly called Audry, was third daughter of Annas or Anna, the holy king of the East Angles, and St. Hereswyda. She was younger sister to St. Sexburga and to St. Ethelburga, who died a virgin and nun in France, and was eldest sister to St. Withburga. She was born at Ermynge, a famous village in Suffolk, and brought up in the fear of God. In compliance with the desire of her friends she married Tonbercht, prince of the southern Girvij;\* but

famous church and monastery founded in 804, which bear his name at Mentz, to be our English protomartyr, as appears from Sir Thomas More's book against Tindal; and from Ruinart's Notes on the History of the Vandalic Persecution. But Rabanus Maurus, in his Martyrology says, he was an African bishop, who being banished by Huneric for the faith, coming to Mentz, there fell into the hands of the Huns, and was by them put to death for the faith. Mabillon, *Annal. Ben.* l. 28, and Papebroke, Junij, t. 4, p. 68, upon this authority of Rabanus, take St. Alban of Mentz to have been an African; but Ruinart, the most judicious scholar of Mabillon, justly calls it in question. Monsignor Georgi, in his Notes on Usuard's Martyrology, inclines to the opinion of Ruinart. The great collegiate church of Namur was founded in honour of St. Alban by Albert II. earl of Namur, in 1047. The abbot of St. Alban's near Mentz, enriched it with precious relics; and it is possessed of a large portion of the cross, which was sent by Henry, emperor of Constantinople, to his brother Philip, earl of Namur, in 1205. This church was made an episcopal cathedral by Paul IV. in 1559. St. Alban of Mentz is honoured on the 21st of June. See Papebroke, t. 4, Junij, p. 86, and Serarius, *Rerum Mogunt. cum annotationibus et Supplemento a Georgio Christiano Joannis*, pp. 176, 177, printed at Francfort, in 1722.

\* The Girvij inhabited the counties of Rutland, Northampton, and Huntingdon, with part of Lincolnshire, and had their own princes, dependent on the kings of Mercia.