

extant in MS. in the library at Cambridge, it is said that the saint built here a church of stone, on that account called Damliag,<sup>1</sup> corrupted into Duleek. St. Cianan was descended from the royal blood of the kings of Munster. He died on the 24th of November, in 489. Duleek having suffered greatly by several fires and devastations of the Danes, its episcopal see was united to Meath.

See Usher Antiq. l. 29. and Primord. p. 1070. Ind. Chron. ad ann. 460. Ware's bishops, p. 137. and on St. Ultan, 4 Sept. p. 39.

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## NOVEMBER XXV.

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### ST. CATHARINE, V. M.

Jos. Assemani in Calend. Univ. ad. Nov. 24. t. 5. p. 375.

ST. CATHARINE, whom the Greeks call *Æcatherina*, glorified God by an illustrious confession of the faith of Christ, at Alexandria, under Maximinus II. Her acts are so much adulterated that little use can be made of them. The emperor Basil, in his Greek, Menology, relates with them that this saint, who was of the royal blood, and an excellent scholar, confuted a company of the ablest heathen philosophers, whom Maximinus had commanded to enter into a disputation with her, and that being converted by her to the faith, they were all burnt in one fire, for confessing the same. He adds, that Catharine

<sup>1</sup> *Dam*, in the old Irish, signifies a house, and *liag* a stone. Those writers must surely be mistaken, who imagine there was no other stone church in Ireland before the time of St. Malachy in the twelfth century; for the Irish annals mention many Damliags erected in that kingdom from age to age, down from the days of St. Cianan to those of St. Malachy.

was at length beheaded. She is said first to have been put upon an engine made of four wheels joined together, and stuck with sharp pointed spikes, that, when the wheels were moved, her body might be torn to pieces. The acts add, that at the first stirring of the terrible engine, the cords with which the martyr was tied were broke asunder by the invincible power of an angel, and the engine falling to pieces by the wheels being separated from one another, she was delivered from that death. Hence the name of St. Catharine's wheel.

The learned Joseph Assemani thinks that all the account we have of the particulars relating to this saint upon which we can depend, is what we meet with in Eusebius, though that historian mentions not her name. His relation is as follows:<sup>1</sup> "There was a certain woman, a Christian, and the richest and most noble of all the ladies of Alexandria, who, when the rest suffered themselves to be defloured by the tyrant, (Maximin,) resisted and vanquished his unbounded and worse than beastly lust. This lady was most illustrious for her high birth and great wealth and likewise for her singular learning: but she preferred her virtue and her chastity to all worldly advantages. The tyrant, having in vain made several assaults upon her virtue, would not behead her, seeing her ready to die, but stripped her of all her estates and goods, and sent her into banishment." Maximin, not long after, declared war against Licinius, and, after several engagements, was at length defeated by him in 313. Having lost his empire after a reign of five years, he fled to Tarsus, and there died in extreme misery. The body of St. Catharine was discovered by the Christians in Egypt about the eighth century, when they groaned under

<sup>1</sup> Eus. Hist. l. 8. c. 14, p. 400 ed. Cantabr. anno 1720.

the yoke of the Saracens. It was soon after translated to the great monastery on the top of Mount Sinai in Arabia, built by St. Helen, and sumptuously enlarged and beautified by the emperor Justinian, as several old inscriptions and pictures in Mosaic work in that place testify.<sup>1</sup>

Falconius, archbishop of San-Severino, speaks of this translation as follows:<sup>2</sup> "As to what is said, that the body of this saint was conveyed by angels to Mount Sinai, the meaning is, that it was carried by the monks of Sinai to their monastery, that they might devoutly enrich their dwelling with such a treasure.—It is well known that the name of an angelical habit<sup>3</sup> was often used for a monastic habit, and that monks on account of their heavenly purity and functions, were anciently called *Angels*." From that time we find more frequent mention made of the festival and relics of St. Catharine. St. Paul of Latra kept her feast with extraordinary solemnity and devotion. In the eleventh age, Simeon, a monk of Sinai, coming to Rouen to receive an annual alms of Richard, duke of Normandy, brought with him some of her relics, which he left there. The principal part of the mortal remains of this saint is still kept in a marble chest in the church of this monastery on Mount Sinai, described by Dr. Richard Pocock.<sup>4</sup>

From this martyr's uncommon erudition, and the extraordinary spirit of piety by which she sanctified her learning, and the use she made of it, she is chosen in the schools the patroness and model of Christian philosophers. Learning is, next to virtue, the most noble ornament, and the

<sup>1</sup> See the present situation of this great monastery, described by Mr. Thomson, in his travels, t. 2.

<sup>2</sup> In Comment. ad Capponianas Tabulas Ruthenas. Romæ, 1755, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Σχήμα ἀγγελικόν.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Richard Pocock's Travels, t. 1. p. 140. in folio,

highest improvement of the human mind, by which all its natural faculties obtain an eminent degree of perfection. The memory is exceedingly improved by exercises; those who complain that in them this faculty is like a sieve, may, especially in youth, render it by use retentive of whatever is necessary, and particularly adapted to be a storehouse of names, facts, or entire discourses, according to every one's exigency or purposes. But nothing ought to be learned by heart by children but what is excellent or absolutely necessary. To load a mind with other men's lumber, and to make it a magazine of errors, trumpery, or toys, is to pervert all the purposes of this faculty, and a certain proof of the sloth, ignorance, and stupidity of a master. As the understanding is the light of the soul, so is it plain how exceedingly this is enlarged both by exercise and by the acquisition of solid science and useful knowledge. Judgment, the most valuable of all the properties of the mind, and by which the other faculties are poised, governed, and directed, is formed and perfected by experience and regular well-digested studies and reflections; and by them it attains to true justness and taste. The mind by the same means acquires a steadiness, and conquers the aversion which sloth raises against the serious employment of its talents. It is doubtless the will of the Creator that all his works be raised to that degree of perfection of which they are capable, and, where our industry is required to this, it becomes a duty incumbent upon us. This is in nothing so essential and important as in our own mind, the dignity of our being, and the masterpiece of the invisible world. How much its perfection depends upon culture appears in the difference of understanding between the savages (who, except in treachery, cunning, and shape, scarce seems to differ from the apes which in-

habit their forests) and the most elegant civilized nations. A piece of ground left wild produces nothing but weeds and briers, which by culture would be covered with corn, flowers, and fruit. The difference is not less between a rough mind and one that is well cultivated. The same culture, indeed, suits not all persons. Geniuses must be explored, and the manner of instructing proportioned to them. Conditions and circumstances must be considered.<sup>1</sup> Generally the more sublime theological studies suit not those who are excluded from teaching, though women, upon whom the domestic instruction of children in their infancy mainly depends, ought to be well instructed in the motives of religion, articles of faith, and all the practical duties and maxims of piety. Then history, geography, and some tincture of works of genius and spirit may be joined with suitable arts and other accomplishments of their sex and condition, provided they be guided by, and referred to religion, and provided books of piety and exercises of devotion always have the first place both in their hearts and in their time.

### ST. ERASMUS, OR ELME, B. M.

HE is said to have been a native of Antioch and a bishop in some part of Syria; who, in the persecution, hid himself on Mount Libanus, where he led an eremitical life for seventeen years, often visiting his flock, till he was crowned with martyrdom, probably in the persecution of Licinius, which had been begun by Dioclesian.

<sup>1</sup> The female sex is not less capable of the sublime sciences, nor less remarkable for liveliness of genius. Witness numberless instances in polite literature, and, in theology, the celebrated Venetian lady, Helen Lucretia Cornaro, doctress in theology at Padua, in 1678, the wonder of her age for her skill in every branch of literature, and still more for the austerity of her life, and her extraordinary piety,