

Lugid prescribes a monastic rule which was long observed in Ireland; in it he enjoined the strictest silence and recollection, and forbid women being ever allowed to approach the church of the monks. He passed to immortal glory on the 4th of August, 622. See Usher's Antiquities, &c.

AUGUST V.

THE DEDICATION OF ST. MARY AD NIVES.

THERE are in Rome three patriarchal churches, in which the pope officiates on different festivals, and at one of which he always resides when in the city. These are the Basilics of St. John Lateran, St. Peter's on the Vatican hill, and St. Mary Major.* This last is so called because it is, both in antiquity and dignity, the first church in Rome among those that are dedicated to God in honour of the Virgin Mary. The name of the Liberian Basilic was given it, because it was founded in the time of Pope Liberius, in the fourth century; it was consecrated under the title of the Virgin Mary, by Sixtus III., about the year 435.(1) It is also called St. Mary ad Nives, or *at the snow*, from a popular tradition, that the Mother of God chose this place for a church under her invocation by a miraculous snow that fell upon this spot in summer, and by a vision in which she appeared to a patrician named John, who munificently founded and endowed this church in the pontificate of Liberius. The same Basilic has sometimes been known by the name of St. Mary *ad Præsepe*, from the holy crib or manger of Bethlehem, in which Christ was laid at his birth. It resembles an ordinary manger, is kept in a case of massy silver, and in it lies an image of a little child,† also of silver. On

(1) See Anastasius in Liberius and Sixtus III.

* The pope's three great palaces in Rome are the Lateran and the Vatican, (both contiguous to the two great churches of the same name,) and that of Monte Cavallo. This last is situated in the most healthful part of the city. When the pope resides at this palace, he dates all bulls, &c. at St. Mary Major.

† Or *bambino*, to use the Italian word.

Christmas-day the holy manger is taken out of the case, and exposed. It is kept in a sumptuous subterraneous chapel in this church. It is well known how much this holy relic excited the devotion of St. Jerom, St. Paula, and others, when it remained yet at Bethlehem.*

This church is, at least next to Loretto, the most famous place in the whole world for the devotion of the faithful to the Mother of God. They here assemble with great fervour from many parts of Christendom, to unite their suffrages together in praising God for the mercies he has shown to this holy Virgin, and through her to the whole world; and in imploring her patronage and intercession. Supplications which are public and general are most honourable to God and powerful in obtaining his mercy. To say nothing of the precious relics of many saints which are there deposited, and the many great graces which, by the joint prayers of the faithful, have been there obtained for the whole Church; this circumstance alone suffices particularly to recommend the sanctity of this, and other such venerable churches beyond all that could set off the temple of Solomon in the Jewish law.

The church, which is always solicitous, by the mouths of her pastors, to instruct her children in the most powerful means of attaining to salvation, never ceases, from the primitive ages, strongly to excite them to make their most fervent assiduous addresses to the Mother of God, as a most efficacious means of working their sanctification. She teaches us earnestly to conjure Him who is the author of our being and of our salvation, to listen to her prayers for us; and humbly to remind Him that through her he bestowed himself upon us, and that for love of us he vouchsafed to be born of her, she always remaining a

* In this same church is the Borghesian chapel, the finest in all Rome, enriched with a picture of our Lady, which is said to have been painted by St. Luke. There is another picture of the Blessed Virgin kept in the church of the Dominicanesses in Rome, and others in other parts, which are ascribed to the same hand. They seem to be, at least, copies taken from some very ancient original, which might have been painted by St. Luke. Theodorus Lector, who flourished at Constantinople, in 518, relates (l. 1, p. 551,) that such a picture drawn by that evangelist was sent from Jerusalem to the Empress Pulcheria in the fifth age. When the Turks took Constantinople they stripped this picture of the rich frame and ornaments with which it was decorated, dragged it through the streets, and destroyed it.

spotless virgin,* &c. She excites us to call her "the mother of grace and pity," and to place a confidence in her mediation, that by it we shall more easily obtain from her Son, and through its merits, all graces. That Christian neglects a great means of succour who does not every day most earnestly recommend himself, and his particular difficulties and necessities in his main concern, to her intercession. To render our supplications the more efficacious, we ought to unite them in spirit to those of all fervent penitents and devout souls, in invoking this advocate for sinners. We ought to be ashamed not to appear among the foremost and the most ardent in our addresses, in proportion to our extreme necessities, and particular obligations,

ST. OSWALD, KING AND MARTYR.

THE English Saxon kingdom of the Northumbers was founded by Ida in 547. After his death the northern part called Bernicia was preserved by his children; but Deira, that is, the southern part, comprising Yorkshire and Lancashire, was occupied by Ælla or Alla, and after his death was recovered by Ethelfrid, grandson of Ida, who ruled the whole kingdom of the Northumbers twenty-four years. He being slain in battle by Redwald, king of the East-Angles, in 617, his sons Eanfrid, Oswald, and Oswi took refuge among the Scots, where they were instructed in the Christian faith, and received the sacrament of regeneration. In the meantime, Edwin, the son of Alla, reigned seventeen years over both kingdoms; but in 633 was killed fighting against the united forces of Penda the Mercian, and Cadwalla, king of the Britons or Welch, a Christian by profession, but a stranger to the maxims of his religion; in his manners a barbarian, and an implacable enemy to the English Saxons. Upon this revolution the three sons of Ethelfrid returned from Scotland; and Eanfrid, the eldest, obtained the kingdom of the Deira, whilst Osric, cousin-german to Edwin, was chosen King of Bernicia. Both these princes loved the glory of men more than God, and apostatized from the faith which they had embraced; but were both slain the same year

* Memento, Rerum Conditor &c.

Maria mater Gratiae, Dulcis Parens Clementiae, &c,