

dition against the Saracens: which vision, being declared to the troops, was to them a great encouragement, and they soon after defeated the enemy.(1) St. George is usually painted on horseback, and tilting at a dragon, under his feet; but this representation is no more than an emblematical figure, purporting, that, by his faith and Christian fortitude, he conquered the devil, called the dragon in the Apocalypse.

Though many dishonour the profession of arms by a licentiousness of manners, yet, to show us that perfect sanctity is attainable in all states, we find the names of more soldiers recorded in the martyrologies than almost of any other profession. Every true disciple of Christ must be a martyr in the disposition of his heart, as he must be ready to lose all, and to suffer anything, rather than to offend God. Every good Christian is also a martyr, by the patience and courage with which he bears all trials. There is no virtue more necessary, nor of which the exercise ought to be more frequent, than patience. In this mortal life we have continually something to suffer from disappointments in affairs, from the severity of the seasons, from the injustice, caprice, peevishness, jealousy, or antipathy of others; and from ourselves, in pains either of mind or body. Even our own weaknesses and faults are to us subjects of patience. And as we have continually many burdens, both of our own and others, to bear, it is only in patience that we are to possess our souls. This affords us comfort in all our sufferings, and maintains our souls in unshaken tranquillity and peace. This is true greatness of mind, and the virtue of heroic souls. But, alas! every accident ruffles and disturbs us: and we are insupportable even to ourselves. What comfort should we find, what peace should we enjoy, what treasures of virtue should we heap up, what an harvest of merits should we reap, if we had learned the true spirit of Christian patience! This is the martyrdom, and the crown of every faithful disciple of Christ.

#### ST. ADALBERT, BISHOP OF PRAGUE, MARTYR.

HE was born of noble parentage in Bohemia, in 956, and received at baptism the name of Woytiech, which, in the Scla-

(1) See Dr. Heylin's History of St. George.

vonian tongue, signifies, Help of the Army. In his childhood his parents saw themselves in great danger of losing him by sickness, and in that extremity, consecrated him to God by vow, before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, saying: "O Lord, let not this son live to us, but to you, among the clergy, and under the patronage of your Mother." The child, hereupon recovering, was sent by them, without delay, to Adalbert, archbishop of Magdebourg, to be educated in piety and learning. The archbishop provided him with the ablest masters, and, at confirmation, gave him his own name, Adalbert, or Albert. The noble pupil, in his progress in learning, outdid the highest expectations of his spiritual father and master; but made piety his principal study. The hours of recreation he spent chiefly in prayer, and in secretly visiting and relieving the poor and the sick. After nine years the archbishop died, in 981, and our saint returned into Bohemia, with a useful library which he had collected. In 983, he was promoted to holy orders by Deithmar, bishop of Prague. That prelate fell sick soon after, and drawing near his end, cried out, in a manner that terrified all the by-standers, that the devils were ready to seize his soul on account of his having neglected the duties of his charge, and pursued with eagerness the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world. Adalbert, who had been present at that prelate's death in these sentiments, was not only terrified with the rest, but being touched with the liveliest sentiments of compunction for whatever he had done amiss in the former part of his life, put on a hair-shirt, went from church to church in the habit of a penitent to implore God's mercy, and dealt out his alms with a very liberal hand. An assembly was held a few days after for the choice of a successor, and Adalbert's opposition proving ineffectual to prevent his election to the vacant bishopric, he received episcopal ordination at the hands of the archbishop of Mentz, in 983. From that day he was never seen to smile, and being asked the reason, made this answer: "It is an easy thing to wear the mitre and a cross; but it is a most dreadful circumstance to have an account to give of a bishopric to the Judge of the living and the dead." He entered Prague barefoot, and was received by Boleslas, prince of Bohemia, and all the people with great joy. His first care was

to divide the revenues of his see into four parts, allotting the first to the support of the fabric and ornaments of his church ; the second to the maintenance of his canons ; and the third to the relief of the poor : reserving the fourth for himself and his household, in which he constantly maintained twelve poor men, in honour of the twelve apostles, and allowed provisions to a much greater number on festivals, besides employing his own patrimony in alms. He had in his chamber a good bed, but on which he never lay ; taking his short rest on a sackcloth, or on the bare floor. His fasts were frequent, and his whole life most austere. He preached almost every day, and visited the poor in their cottages, and the prisoners in their dungeons. A great part of his diocese had continued till then involved in the shades of idolatry, and the rest mere barbarians in their manners, slaves to their passions, and Christians only in name. Finding them, by inveterate habits and long connivance, incorrigibly fixed in their evil courses, he made a journey to Rome, and obtained of Pope John XV. leave to retire, in 989. He visited Mount Cassino, and put on the monastic habit, together with his brother Gaudentius, at St. Boniface's in Rome. He took the last place in the monastery, and preferred always the meanest offices in the house. After five years, the Archbishop of Mentz, in 994, urged the pope to send him back to his bishopric. His Holiness, upon mature deliberation on the affair, ordered him to return ; but declared him at full liberty to withdraw a second time, in case the people continued disobedient and incorrigible as before. At his arrival in Prague, the inhabitants received him with great acclamations, and readily promised an exact obedience to his directions, but proved as deaf to his admonitions as ever. Seeing himself useless here, and only in danger of losing his own soul, he left them, pursuant to the license he had received, and preached the gospel in Hungary ; where, among others, he instructed their king, Stephen, famous afterwards for his sanctity. Though this event more probably happened on his former departure from Prague, about six years before. At his return to his monastery, in Rome, his abbot, Leo, made him prior, in which station he behaved with his usual humility and condescension to the meanest officers of the house. The emperor, Otho III., was so much delighted with his conver-

ation, that he could scarcely bear him out of his sight. At the repeated solicitations of the Archbishop of Mentz, Pope Gregory V. sent him once more to his diocess. On the news of his approach, the barbarous citizens, having at their head Boleslas, the wicked prince of Bohemia, massacred several of his relations, and burnt their castles and towns. The bishop, being informed of these outrageous measures, instead of proceeding on his journey to Prague, went to his friend, Boleslas, then duke, and afterwards the first king of Poland, who, after some time, advised him to send deputies to the people of Prague, to know if they would admit him as their bishop, and obey his directions, or not. The message was received with scorn, and they returned for answer, that there was too great an opposition between his ways and theirs, for him to expect to live in peace among them; that they were convinced it was not a zeal to reform them, but a desire to revenge the death of his relations, that prompted him to seek a re-admission; which, if he attempted, he might be assured of meeting with a very indifferent reception. The saint took this refusal of his people for a sufficient discharge for the present, which made him direct his thoughts to the conversion of infidels, with which Poland and Prussia then abounded. Having converted great numbers in Poland, he, with his two companions, Bennet and Gaudentius, went into Prussia, which had not as yet received the light of the gospel, and made many converts at Dantzic. Being conveyed thence into a small island, they were presently surrounded by the savage inhabitants, who loaded them with injuries; and one of them coming behind the saint, as he was reciting the psalter, knocked him down with the oar of a boat, upon which he returned thanks to God, for thinking him worthy to suffer for the sake of his crucified Redeemer. St. Adalbert and his companions attempted after this to preach the gospel in another place in the neighbourhood, but with no better success; being told on their arrival that if they did not depart the next day, it should cost them their lives. They accordingly withdrew, in order to provide for their safety, and had laid themselves down to take a little rest after their fatigues; when, being pursued, they were overtaken by a party of the infidels, by whom they were seized and bound, as victims destined for a sacrifice. St.

Adalbert offered his life to God by an ardent prayer, in which he begged of him the pardon and salvation of his murderers. The priest of the idols first pierced him in the breast with his lance, saying: "You ought now to rejoice; for you had it always in your mouth that it was your desire to die for Christ." Six others gave him each a stab with their lances; of which seven wounds he died on the 23rd of April, 997. The heathens cut off his head, and fixed it on a pole: his two companions they carried away captives. Boleslas, duke of Poland, bought the corpse of the martyr at a great price, and translated it to the abbey of Tremezzo, with great solemnity, and from thence, in 998, to Gnesna, where it is kept with great honour in the cathedral, and has been rendered famous by many miracles. In the catalogue of the rich treasury of relics, kept in the electoral palace of Hanover, printed at Hanover, in folio, in 1713, is mentioned a portion of those of St. Adalbert in a precious shrine.

St. Adalbert is styled the apostle of Prussia, though he only planted the faith at Dantzic. The present King of Prussia, in his elegant memoirs of the house of Brandenburg, (1) tells us that the conversion of the country of Brandenburg was begun by the conquests and zeal of Charlemagne, and completed in 928, under Henry the Fowler, who again subdued that territory; that the Prussians were originally Sarmatians, the most savage of all the northern idolaters; that they adored their idols under oak trees, being strangers to the elegance of temples; and that they sacrificed prisoners, taken from their enemies, to their false gods. After the martyrdom of St. Adalbert, three kings of Poland, all named Boleslas, attempted in vain to subdue them. The Teutonic knights, in 1239, conquered that country, and planted Christianity in it. See the two lives of St. Adalbert, written soon after his death, with remarks of Henschenius, Apr. t. 3, p. 174. Also John Dlugloss, alias Longinus, Hist. Polonicâ, p. 112. Dithmar, Chronici, l. 4, and Chronicon Hildesheimense.

#### ST. GERARD, BISHOP OF TOUL, C.

GERARD was descended of a noble family, and born at Cologne.

1 P. 36 and 264.