

shire, which she governed, giving herself up totally to fasting watching, and holy prayer; humble both to God and man, meek and tender to others, but always austere to herself. She never ceased to exhort her sisters to live up to the dignity of spouses of the King of heaven, to keep their hearts free from all affection to the things of this world, and ever to sigh after their heavenly home. Being purified by a long and painful illness, and strengthened with the viaticum of the precious body of Christ, she passed to everlasting bliss on the 31st of August, in the beginning of the eighth century. She is commemorated in the Sarum Breviary. See William of Malmesbury in king Ina, Leland, Harpsfield, Alford, and Cressy.

ST. AIDAN, OR ÆDAN, BISHOP OF LINDIS-
FARNE, C.

WHEN the holy king Oswald * desired the bishops of Scotland to send him a person honoured with the episcopal character to preach the faith to his Anglo-Saxon pagan subjects, and plant the church among them, the first person who came was of a rough austere temper, and therefore could do little good, and being soon forced to return home again, he laid the fault on the rude indocile dispositions of the English. Hereupon the Scottish clergy called a synod to deliberate what was best to be done. Aidan, who was present, told the prelate, on his blaming the obstinacy of the English, that the fault lay rather in him, who had been too harsh and severe to an ignorant people, who ought first to be fed with the milk of milder doctrine, till they should be able to digest more solid food. At this discourse the whole assembly turned their eyes upon him, as one endued with prudence, the mother of other virtues; and he was appointed to the great and arduous mission.

Aidan was a native of Ireland, (then called Scotland,) and a monk of Hij, the great monastery which his countryman, St. Columba, had founded, and to which the six neighbouring islands were given, as Buchanan mentions. He was most graciously received by king Oswald, who bestowed on him for his episcopal seat the isle of Lindisfarne.† Of his humility and

* See his life on the 5th of August.

† Lindisfarne, so called from the river Lindis, is eight miles in circumference; it is only an island at high water, and remains a peninsula when

riety Bede gives an edifying account, and proposes him as an excellent pattern for succeeding bishops and clergymen to follow. He obliged all those who travelled with him, to bestow their time either in reading the scriptures, or in learning the psalms by heart. By his actions he showed that he neither sought nor loved the good things of this world; the presents which were made him by the king, or by other rich men, he distributed among the poor; or expended in redeeming captives. He rarely would go to the king's table, and never without taking with him one or two of his clergy, and always after a short repast made haste away to read or pray in the church, or in his cell. From his example even the laity took the custom of fasting till none, that is, till three in the afternoon, on all Wednesdays and Fridays, except during the fifty days of the Easter time. Our venerable historian admires his apostolic liberty in reproving the proud and the great, his love of peace, charity, continence, humility, and all other virtues, which he not only practised himself, but, by his spirit and example, communicated to a rough and barbarous nation, which he imbued with the meekness of the cross.* Aidan fixed his see at Lindisfarne, and founded a monastery there in the year of our Lord 635, the hundred and eighty-eighth after the coming of the English Saxons into Britain, the thirty-ninth after the arrival of St. Augustine, and the second of the reign of king Oswald. From this monastery all the churches of Bernicia, or the northern part of the kingdom

the tide leaves the strand dry. From the great number of saints who lived and lie buried there, it was called by our ancestors holy island.

* Bede relates many miracles and prophecies of St. Aidan, (l. 3, c. 15,) and gives the following portrait of the clergy and people of this nation soon after their conversion to the faith: "Wherever a clergyman or monk came, he was received by all with joy as a servant of God; and when any one was travelling on his way, they would run up to him, and, bowing down, would be glad to be signed by his hand, or blessed by his prayer. They gave diligent attention to the words of exhortation which they heard from him, and on Sundays flocked with great eagerness to the churches or monasteries to hear the word of God. If any priest happened to come into a village, the inhabitants presently gathering together were solicitous to hear from him the words of life; nor did the priests or other ecclesiastics frequent the villages on any other account but to preach, visit the sick, and take care of souls; and so free were they from any degree of the bane of avarice, that no one would receive lands or possessions for building monasteries, unless compelled to it by the secular power." (Hist. l. 3, c. 26.)

of the Northumbers from the Tine to the Firth of Edinburgh, had their beginning; as had some also of those of the Deiri, who inhabited the southern part of the same kingdom from the Tine to the Humber. The see of York had been vacant thirty years, ever since St. Paulinus had left it; so that St. Aidan governed all the churches of the Northumbers for seventeen years, till his happy death, which happened on the 31st of August in 651, in the royal villa Bebbord. He was first buried in the cemetery in Lindisfarne; but when the new church of St. Peter was built there, his body was translated into it, and deposited on the right hand of the altar. Colman when he returned into Scotland, carried with him part of his bones to St. Columb's or Hij.* He is named on this day in the Roman Martyrology. See Bede: Leland Collect. t. l. p. 512. alias 366.

* The discipline of the Scottish monks, and of Lindisfarne, was derived from the oriental monastic rules, and very austere. Roger Hoveden, Simeon of Durham, and Leland in his Collectanea, (t. 2, p. 158, alias 171.) tell us that the monks of Lindisfarne used no other drink than milk and water till wine and beer were allowed them, from the rules of the western monks in 762, when Ceolwulph, king of the Northumbers, in the ninth year of his reign, resigned his kingdom to his nephew, and became a monk at Lindisfarne. He was buried at Ubbæ, and his body afterwards translated to the church of Northam, where it is said to have been honoured with miracles. He is mentioned in the English Martyrologies on the 28th of October. Finan, the second bishop of Lindisfarne, built a new church there of hewn oak, which he covered with reeds; it was consecrated by St. Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury; Eadbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, afterwards covered it all over with lead. Finan died and was buried at Lindisfarne, having held that see ten years.—Colman succeeded him, and in the synod at Strenesbault refusing to receive the Roman custom of celebrating Easter, which St. Wilfrid maintained, having been bishop three years, returned into Scotland. Colman retired with many English and Scottish monks that followed, from the western islands of Scotland into the west of Ireland, where he built a monastery for them in an island called, in the Scottish or Irish language, Inisbofin, i. e., the island of the white calf. Tuda, a southern Scottish monk, succeeded him, but died of the plague in a year. Eata, one of the twelve English youths whom St. Aidan educated, was chosen to succeed him first as abbot, afterwards also in the bishopric. Having governed this see fourteen years, he was removed to Hexham, and St. Cuthbert chosen bishop of Lindisfarne. Eadbert succeeded him in 687, and died in 696. Eadfrid, then Ethelworth, and eight other bishops held this see, till the monastery and church being burned down by the Danes, bishop Eardulf translated this see to Cunecester or Chester upon the Street; and, in 995, Aldhun, the eighth from him, removed this see from Chester to Durham. This prelate, with the assistance of the Earl of Northumberland, and the people of the country, cut down a great wood which surrounded the spot which he chose for the church, and built a large city

and stately church, into which he, three years after, translated the uncorrupted body of St. Cuthbert, in the three hundred and thirty-ninth year after his death, and the three hundred and sixty-first from the foundation of the see of Lindisfarne by St. Aidan, as Leland relates. (In Collectan. t. 1, p. 528, ex Hist. aur. Joan Eborac.) The see of York having been restored in St. Cedde, St. Wilfrid, and their successors; a bishopric being also erected at Hexham under Eata, Bosa, and St. John of Beverley, and their successors, till this church and city being laid waste by the Danes about the year 800, the see of Hexham became extinct in Panbricht, the last bishop who governed this see, though some give him a successor named Tidfrid, (Lel. Collect. t. 2, p. 159, alias 174,) and the see of Carlisle in 1133, in the person of Athelwold, and lastly that of Chester in 1542, the thirty-third of Henry VIII the bishopric of Lindisfarne is long since parcelled out into many.

END OF VOL. VIII.