

[70r/129]

St Kynauc or Canoc eldest son of Brychan is very little mentioned by Authors yet our English Martyrology saith he was great Vnkell to St. David and very Famous for his Holy life through all Wales. John Colgan in the lives of the Irish Saints on the 9th of February saith he was Abbot and Founder of the Monastery of Glinnensis on the confines of Logenie in Ireland and no less famous in that Kingdom then [sic] in Wales and John Capgrave from the Antiquities of Glasenbury saith his Torce or Wreath was held as a very sacred Relick in his dayes which was the time of King Edward the fourth And that God as a perpetuall Testimony of his great Purity of Life would not permit any man to commit Perjury before it; and if any had been guilty of that Detestable sin & were again examined before the sacred Relick would be forced to swear the Truth to their greate confution, and salvation of their souls by Repentance to the great Glory of God and the saint. This is all we can finde of him in History, but to supply this defect and show how Pretious the Memory of the Saints are in the Eyes of the Almighty the Divine Goodness has wrote his Memory upon Stone Walls in a Multitude of Churches throughout all Wales and a greate part of the Country of Brecknock called of his name the hundred of Merther Kynauc or St Kynog Martire and in the mindes of the poor Ignorant Country People where he suffered Martirdom who gave me this Tradition of his Holy life Torce and Martirdom about the yeare 1702 when I visited all the Places memorable of him in Brecknockshire.

In his youthfull dayes forsaking this World for the Next He retired from his Fathers Court to a Cott or Hermitage not far from the high Roade betwene Brecknock and Battle, about a Mile from Carevong his fathers Metropolitan City (from whence perhaps as Colgan writes from Aengussius Keledeius Lib. 4c. 76 who lived in the later end of the 7th Centuri he might transport himselfe into Ireland) and from [71v/130] thence to avoyd the Honours paid him, back again to England where he conceale himselfe from the World he traviled up and downe in a Poor Miserable Habit and made himselfe a heavy boult or Ring of Iron for his head roughly twisted together like a Torce or Wreath in steed of a Crowne of Gold to Inpress in his memory the Thornes woren by his Lord & Saviour King of Kings and to oblige him always to cast his Eyes downe to the ground. This rendered him to those that consult the outward Man only the Scorn & Derition of all that saw him from which he was nick named Kynog Camarch that is the Despised Kynog all which he bore with exeding greate Patience, how acceptable this Humble life was to Almighty God he was Pleased to testifie by a Wonderfull Miracle. There was in those days a savage Reprobate People that Inhabited the Woods & Desarts called Ormests or [a space left here] and in old Welsh Tails Keurey or Giants that Robed & Pillaged the Civill Inhabitants Destroyed their Houses laying Waste whole Countries in the Night and eaven Eate up mens flesh: These doing much Damage in the Country where Kynog abode a poor Widow who had severall small Children and no body to Defend her from their Rage & Fury seeing one Day St Kynauc pass by her dore earnestly intreated him to take Compassion upon her & her Children and to Deliver them from these Ormests who but the Night before had Destroyed many of her Neighbours the Holy man overcome with the Tears & Prayers of of the Poor Woman resolved to Guard her house that night which he spent in Prayer before her Dore when about Midnight these Ormests came who understanding by their Spyes there was no man to opose them but Kynauc they first set upon him & sirrounded him like so many furious Wolfes prepared for Slaughter who resigned to Divine Goodness remained immoueable all the time on his Knees Imploring Divine Aids till a Voyce from Hevine commanded him to throw his Torce at them having no other Wepon of Defence whereupon he hit their Ringleader such a blow that he Instantly fell downe Dead and his Bowells which had Devoured much Inocent Blood like Judas's burst in sunder & fell to the Ground which so Terified the rest of the Crew that they presently Flead leaving the Dead body as a Testimony of the Miracle and were never heard off in the country after. This wrought in some an Honour & Respect for the Holy man & in others new Indignities so that passing one Day by a smiths shop where were a parcell of Idle fellows scoffing at the story the Smith call'd him in for Sport & Derition and taking from him his Torce or Wreath & striking it upon his Anvill in scorne said this never Kil'd an Ormest with which a little peece of it flew of & perced it Braine that he presently dropt downe Dead a

Splinter of it being sufficient to Kill a misbeleiver & struck them all into a fear & Reverance of the Holy man as took away all Doubt of the Story & caused it to be bruted all over the Countrey.

Some persons may Object against this Story that since the Romans never make mention of any such Barberous Men Eaters from whence came these now? to which I answer they were a Barberous people call'd Attacotti who Inhabited the most Northen Mountains of Scotland never Conquered by the Romans who upon the decay of that greate Empire first invaided the Civill Britains invited there to by the Irish Scots & Picts in the first year of Valentinians Reigne Anno 365 as Marcellinus saith Lib 26c his words are: The barbarous Nations on all sides of the Roman Empire as if universally excited by a Trumpet broke their limits & made furious Incursions into the Roman Provinces. The Almani wasted Gaule & Rhetia the Sarmatians & Quadi made irruptions into Pannonia, and the Picts Saxons Scots and Attacotti vexed the Britains with Incessant calamities. Nor were these People exterpated till the Dayes of King Arthur and passed over from hence into France as St Hierome writes who gives us a more perticuler account of their barbarity lib. 2. cont. Jovinion What shall I say of the immanity of other Nations? I my selfe in my youth saw in Gaule the Attacotti a Brittish Nation who nourished them selves with human flesh : These men [71r/131] in the Forrests meeting with heards of Beeves Sheep & Swine, neglected them and cut of the Hanches of the Pastours & Brests of the Women and feed upon them accounting these to be their principall Delicacies. They had promiscuous Wives and common Children.

Now to returne to St Kanauc the manner of his martirdom is related thus being in his later dayes desireous of a fixed solitude for Meditation he retired into his owne Countrey and adjoynd himselfe to the society of certaine Religious men that led a hermetically life under the government of a Superior in little Cells upon the hill call'd the Vann about four miles from Brecknock and about 2 miles from Carevong the place of his birth which is now destroyed & called the Gare where he built him a hermitage under a steepe Rock neare the top of the Mountain. These men lived by the Labour of their hands & had no Water but what they fetched from the River at the fute of the Mountain, which was very troublesom to carry up the steep hill; this made them Grudg & Repine strangely while this Holy man underwent the Labour with all Chearfullness, and Reprehended them for their Murmurings and Slouth against a Labour which in it selfe was holy & worked an exceeding reward being undertaken for the Love of God, & the practice of Patience and Labour and since it was their owne choyce: such discontents must needs make it very displeasing to the Divine Majesty, who regarded more their good will then [sic] their Labour. This instead of making them more Humble & Cherefull in the service of God raised their whole spleen against himselfe, while God considering his age & good Will gave him Water upon the top of the Rock over his little Cell where he mounted every Morning for Meditation & Prayer where no man else could have any, this so enveterated their Rage thinking themselves mock'd by him that they Resolved to Murther him, where upon two of them mounting the top of the Rock one Sunday Morning found him at his Prayers and saw the Christiall spring at his feet, they furiously ran at him & cut of his head with a Sword which dropt into the Well where the Water imediately gave way to his head & dried up, nor would God Almighty suffer these Wicked Monkes to Triumph over that sacred head which had Humbled it selfe so much for his sake, for his Dead body assisted by his Holy Spirit imediately took up his head in his hands and carried it downe the Hill which a Woman gathering Pot hearbes in her Gardain at the bottom seeing cried out O Kynauc thou has dun very ill to carry thy head in thy hands to which he Answered again Not so ill as thou in Gathering Pot Herbes upon our Lord's Day and imediately her whole Gardain was Blasted as a Chastisement of her Rash Judgment (O! happy Man who had not done so much ill as gathering a few Pot Herbes upon a Sunday.) from thence he walked on to a rising ground about a fields breadh beyond the Church and layed it downe under a Bush of Brambles these three Miracles imediately succeeding his Death made all men who knew his Humble Life conclude him a Saint where upon the Priests and all the People took up his Sacred Head & Body & buried them under the High Alter but the next Morning when the Priest though [sic] to Celebrate Mass they found the Alter

thrown downe upon which it was Rebuilt againe the same Day but when they came the next morning to Church they found it overthrowne againe. upon which it was ordered to be rebuilt a third time and when they came the next Morning to Church they found the Alter not only thrown downe but the grave opened and the Head & Body taken away which searching after they found it where he had at firste laid himselfe downe therefore they looked upon it as the Will of God & the Saint that he should be buried there which was accordingly don over which was afterwards raised another Church Consecrated to the Honour of his Name which is now the Parish Church from whence the whole Hundred took its name and as a perpetuall testimony of his Martirdom is called Merther Kynauc or the Hundred of Kynoc Martir and as a farther testimoney of the manner the Parish kept the two Churches standing within a fields breadh of each other till the time of King Charles the first when Religion grew so [-old ?cold] that they cared neither for honour of God his Saints or Kings and then the oldest church was pulled downe as the simple Country People tould me who showed me the Ruins of the Church then [71v/132] remaining with the Yew Trees then growing about it then and the Church dore then to be seene upon the Thath of a House in the Village of Merther or the Martir who also showed me all the other parts aforementioned of his Martirdom who could not be in the least accused of superstion [sic] or any wayes included to Poperey but as they Received these traditions from their forefathers & were it not for all these Testimoneys I should thinke myselfe a very Confident, triffling Writer when neither the English or Irish Martirology or any other history takes any notice of his Martirdom which I thinke unquestionable there are Dedicated to him sevine Churches & Chapells in this County as the two Churches aboue mentioned with the Chapell of Battle & the Chapell of Duffrinhonthey both in Parish of Merther the Parish Church in the vilage of Devynoc the Parish Church of Penderin in the Hundred of Devynoc the Church of Lhangynauc in Bealt and I thinke another in or neare Crigcaderne.

The feast of this Saint is commemorated in our Martirology upon the 11 of February on which day perhaps he suffered Martirdom which fell upon a Sunday in the yeare of our Lord 496 which was four years later then the time mentioned in the English Martirology which falling very often in Lent could not be so hospitably kept as the People desired and as was necessary for Poor Pilgrims which might be the reason that it is now kept all over Brecknockshire upon the second Thursday in October.