

THE WORSHIP AND PATRONAGE OF ST. ANNE.

HOMAGE PAID BY THE WESTERN CHURCH.—FRANCE.

It has been rightly said : *Kingdom of France, Kingdom of Mary*. During many centuries, in this old adage, without belying it, might have been added the name of St. Anne to the name of Mary. Indeed, although Rome, and perhaps some other cities of Italy, probably preceded France in the honors paid to that venerable Mother, however it cannot be denied that France is the cradle of her devotion in the West, the centre from which it radiated over Europe and the whole world. A writer of value thus exposes this consoling tradition :

" By a special predilection of divine Providence, the city of Apt, our home, enjoys for well-nigh eighteen centuries the priceless advantage of being the resting-place of the body of St. Anne, mother of the glorious Virgin Mary. These precious relics were brought from Palestine by those who came the first to preach the Gospel in our country, and was afterwards confided to St. Auspicius, disciple of Pope St. Clement, our first Bishop. According to a tradition of venerable and sacred antiquity, these missionaries were St. Lazarus and his sisters, the two Mariés of Jacob and Salome, whose arrival in Provence is a fact of which no one doubts any more. There exist, we know it, other versions concerning the historical fact of which we are treating ; but all concur to the same end, all affirm the same thing, and that is the essential point. This very diversity of opinions, far from weakening our tradition, serves on the contrary to give it a greater sanction by the unanimous agreement on the principal subject. A very ancient *martyrologium*, formerly preserved with the greatest care in the archives of the Chapter, mentioned this translation of the body of St. Anne. Several authors affirm that it was transferred from the East to the West and deposited in Gaul. But