

## ST. WINEFRIDE, VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

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Her father, whose name was Thevith, was very rich, and one of the prime nobility in the country, being son to Elnith, the chief magistrate, and second man in the kingdom of North Wales, next to the king. Her virtuous parents desired above all things to breed her up in the fear of God, and to preserve her soul untainted amidst the corrupt air of the world. About that time St. Benno, a holy priest and monk, who is said to have been uncle to our saint by the mother, having founded certain religious houses in other places, came and settled in that neighborhood. Thevith rejoiced at his arrival, gave him a spot of ground free from all burden or tribute, to build a church on, and recommended his daughter to be instructed by him in Christian piety. When the holy priest preached to the people, Winefride was placed at his feet, and her tender soul eagerly imbibed his heavenly doctrine, and was wonderfully affected with the great truths which he delivered, or rather which God addressed to her by his mouth. The love of the sovereign and infinite good growing daily in her heart, her affections were quite weaned from all things of this world; and it was her earnest desire to consecrate her virginity by vow to God, and instead of an earthly bridegroom, to choose Jesus Christ for her spouse. Her parents readily gave their consent shedding tears of joy, and thanking God for her holy resolution. She first made a private vow of virginity in the hands of St. Benno; and some time after received the religious veil from him, with certain other pious virgins, in whose company she served God in a small nunnery which her father had built for her, under the direction of St. Benno, near Holy Well. After this, St. Benno returned to the first monastery which he had built at Clunock, or Clynog Vaur, about forty miles distant, and there soon after slept in our Lord. His tomb was famous there in the thirteenth century. Leland mentions, that St. Benno founded Clunock Vaur, a monastery of white monks, in a place given to him by Guithin, uncle to one of the princes of North Wales. His name occurs in the English Martyrology.

After the death of St. Benno, St. Winefride left the Holy Well, and after putting herself for a short time under the direction of St. Deifer, entered the nunnery of Gutheriu in Den-