raising silk, and in making silk goods, especially stockings and handkerchiefs. Lat. 45. 18. 54. Long. 8. 46. 56. E.

VIGIL, in church history, is the eve or next day before any solemn feast ; because then Christians were wont to watch, fast, and pray, in their churches.

Vigils *of Plants,* a term under which botanists com­prehend the precise time of the day in which the flowers of different plants open, expand, and shut.

VIGILANTIUS, the bold opponent of ecclesiastical corruptions in the fourth century, and the forerunner of those who have since testified for scriptural truth, and protested against certain errors of the ancient fathers. Others of the same, or of an earlier period, may have offered some occasional opposition to superstitious practices, as they crept into the church ; but Vigilantius openly denounced relic and saint worshippers as *cinerarios et idololatras.@@i* He made an uncompromising attack upon the obligation to celibacy, the adoration of saints, prayers for the dead, the use of relics, and pilgrimages, and exposed their mischievous tendency, at the critical time when they were sanctioned by such eminent men as Ambrose, Chry­sostom, Jerom, and Augustin. He was one of those reso­lute inquirers, who dare to think for themselves, and who appear at intervals, after the lapse of centuries, to remind Christians that they are to abide by the rule of thought and action, which is laid down in the book of God’s reveal­ed will, and are not to be satisfied with any canon which cannot be examined by that standard. He may therefore have a place given to him in that noble phalanx, in which Claude of Turin, Valdo of Lyons, Luther, and Calvin, took their stand, for the defence of the pure gospel.

Vigilantius was bom about the year 360, at the foot of the Pyrenees, under the warm sun which fertilizes Aqui­taine, and in the midst of that majestic scenery which calls forth latent genius, and gives a tone of independent cha­racter to the native of the mountains. Calagorris,@@1 now called Casères, was his birth-place ; not Calagorris in Spain, but a village on the northern side of the Pyrenees, so named by a band of insurgents, who were driven by Pompey from the Spanish borders, and settled on the Gallic frontier.@@3 The father of Vigilantius kept the *Mansio,@@i* or station at Calagorris, where travellers were supplied with post-horses and guides to conduct them through the passes ; and this brought the young mountaineer under the notice of Sulpi­cius Severus, the historian, who took him into his service, and employed him in the management of his estate, and in the sale of the wines which it produced.@@5 For his good conduct in this situation, he was taken into the confidence of his patron, and lived with him more in the character of a friend than a dependent. There are some beautiful let­ters still extant, which passed between Sulpicius Severus and Paulinus of Nola, in which Vigilantius is mentioned in the warmest terms of affection;@@e and no doubt he was indebted to his familiar acquaintance with these two emi­nent persons Tor his first serious impressions. Had he not been a man of uncommon strength of mind, he would have

fallen into the same errors which clouded their religious views. Happily and providentially, however, he was enabled to turn their example to advantage, even on points in which they were misguided, by avoiding the rocks on which they split ; and he became a reformer where he might have been a sceptic, or at least a scorner, with such extravagancies before his eyes as they practised under the name of reli­gion. Sulpicius, in a season of great mental distress, went to Martin, bishop of Tours,@@7 for instruction and consolation ; and it is probable that Vigilantius accompanied him on one or two of his visits to that gloomy ascetic, in 392 or 393, and witnessed some of those acts of austerity@@\* and preten­sions to miraculous power,@@9 which proved Martin to be an impostor or a crazy fanatic, and opened the eyes of the young man to the true character of a system, which turned the head of his master, and made him the victim of a spi­ritual delusion.

Sulpicius devoted the whole of his immense property to the exercise of almsgiving and hospitality. His beautiful villas at Primuliac and Elusone, near Tholouse, were made the asylums of the mendicant and the wayfaring man. He built churches ; he founded a monastery ; he entertained strangers ; he treated his domestics as if they were his near relations ; and he lived in the practice of every Christian virtue.@@10 He watched, he prayed, he fasted. But this was not enough. Wrought up to the highest pitch of religious fever by Martin, and others of a disordered imagination, he believed that his oblations of faith and piety would be un­acceptable to heaven, unless they were accompanied by the most rigid self-denial and self-infliction. But the more he tormented himself, the more did fears, utterly inconsistent with the covenant of reconciliation and the pardon of sins, offered in the gospel, prey upon his heart and understand­ing. Vigilantius observed the melancholy and maddening effects produced in the noble mind of his protector, and learnt to abominate the lessons which degraded “ the Chris­tian Sallust,” as Sulpicius was called, to the level of a credu­lous and extravagant narrator of false miracles.@@1

He likewise had opportunities of seeing how leaven of the same kind worked in Paulinus of Nola, and how it spoilt his Christianity. That illustrious and amiable saint (for saint he was, in spite of his religious mistakes), was persuaded by the advocates@@15 of an ascetic rule of life, which was falsely called Christian perfection, to renounce the com­fort and privileges of wedlock, to live with his wife as if with a sister, to desert his post of duty, to deny himself the necessaries of life, to abandon the world, to practise severities on his person, and to have recourse to supersti­tious observances, which reduced his body to a skeleton, and his mind to a state bordering on imbecility.

Vigilantius continued to pass his time in the society of Sulpicius, in Aquitaine, or of Paulinus, in Campania, until the year 394 or 395, and with them he had the best οppοrtunities of cultivating sacred learning, and of discussing theo­logical questions. But succeeding to considerable property on the death of his father, about that time, he resolved to take

@@@1 Hieron. Opera. Epist. ad Ripar. 37, vol. iv. par. ii. p.278. edit. Paris. 1706.

@@@2 Hieron. Opera, iv. par. ii. p. 282.

@@@3 Pagi Crit. Hist. Chronol. vol. ii. p. 74.

@@@4 Bergier, Hist, des Grands Chemins de l’Empire, liv. iv. c. ix. pp. 638, 646, 651.

@@@5 Vaissette, Hist. Gen. du Languedoc, i. 152. Tillemont, Memoires, xii. 193.

@@@, See especially Epist. Paulini ad Sulp. Sev. No. 1. Paulini Op. edit. Antv. 1622.

@@@, Sulp. Sever, de Vita S. Mart. c. 26.

@@@" One of them is thus described by Paulinus :

Quin et contexto setis coopertus amictu,—

Exesa assiduo compunxit acumine membra, Ut tereret tenuem vestis nimis aspera pellem,

Et cutis extentis stimulis adtacta paveret."—Pnulini Vita S. Martini, lib, ii.

@@@\* See Sulp. Sev. Dialogi de Virtutibus Martini.

@@@10 Epist. Paulini ad Sulp. Sev.

@@@“ See the miracles of Martin and of the hermits of Egypt, described by Sulpicius, in his Liber de Vita Martini, and Dialogi de Virtutibus Monachorum Orientalium.

@@@13 By Jerom, among others, who told him he must make an absolute renunciation of all he had, and voluntarily embrace entire poverty, if he wished to be perfect. It is in vain to defend the Christianity of the fourth century from the charge of fanaticism. See Epist. Hieron. ad Paul. 49. Opera iv. par. ii. p. 563.