

ardour to advance the divine honour. To pay to Almighty God the public homage of praise and love, in the name of the whole church, is a function truly angelical. Those, who by the divine appointment are honoured with this sublime charge resemble those glorious heavenly spirits who always assist before the throne of God. What ought to be the sanctity of their lives! how pure their affections, how perfectly disengaged from all inordinate attachments to creatures, particularly how free from the least filth of avarice, and every other vice! All Christians have a part in this heavenly function.

### B. COLETTE, VIRGIN AND ABBESS.

From her life, written by her confessor, Peter de Vaux. See Helyot, *Hist. des Ord. Relig.* t. 7. p. 98. Miræus and Barbaza, *Vies des Saints du Tiers Ordre de St. François*, t. 2. p. 51.

A.D. 1447.

COLETTE BOILET, a carpenter's daughter, was born at Corbie, in Picardy, in 1380. Her parents, out of devotion to St. Nicholas, gave her the name of Colette, the diminutive of Nicholas. She was brought up in the love of humiliations and austerities. Her desire to preserve her purity without the least blemish made her avoid as much as possible all company, even of persons of her own sex, unless it was sometimes to draw them from the love of the world by her moving discourses, which were attended with a singular blessing from almighty God. Humility was her darling virtue; and her greatest delight seemed to be in seeing herself contemned. She was so full of confusion at her own miseries and baseness, and was so contemptible in her own eyes, that she was ashamed to appear before any one, placed herself far below the greatest sinners, and studied by all sorts of humiliations to prevent the least motion of secret pride or self-conceit in her heart. She served the poor and the sick with an affection that charmed and comforted them. She lived in strict solitude in a small, poor, abandoned apartment in her father's house, and spent her time there in manual labour and prayer. Being very beautiful, she begged of God to change her complexion, and her face became so pale and thin that she should scarcely be known for the same person. Yet a certain majesty of virtue, shining in her countenance, gave her charms conducive to the

edification of others by the sweetness, modesty, and air of piety and divine love discernible in her looks. Her parents, who, though poor, were virtuous, and exceedingly charitable, according to their abilities, and great peace-makers among their neighbours, seeing her directed by the Spirit of God, allowed her full liberty in her devotions. After their death she distributed the little they left her among the poor, and retired among the Beguines, devout societies of women, established in several parts of Flanders, Picardy, and Lorrain, who maintain themselves by the work of their hands, leading a middle kind of life between the secular and religious; but make no solemn vows. Not finding this way of life austere enough, she, by her confessor's advice, took the habit of the third order of St. Francis, called the Penitents; and, three years after, that of the mitigated Clares, or Urbanists, with the view of reforming that order, and reducing it to its primitive austerity. Having obtained of the abbot of Corbie a small hermitage, she spent in it three years in extraordinary austerity, near that abbey. After this, in order to execute the project she had long formed of re-establishing the primitive spirit and practice of her order, she went to the convent at Amiens, and from thence to several others. To succeed in her undertaking, it was necessary that she should be vested with proper authority: to procure which she made a journey to Nice in Provence, to wait on Peter de Luna, who, in the great schism, was acknowledged pope by the French, under the name of Benedict XIII., and happened then to be in that city. He constituted her superioress-general of the whole order of St. Clare, with full power to establish in it whatever regulations she thought conducive to God's honour and the salvation of others. She attempted to revive the primitive rule and spirit of St. Francis in the convents of the dioceses of Paris, Beauvais, Noyon, and Amiens; but met with the most violent opposition and was treated as a fanatic. She received all injuries with joy, and was not discouraged by human difficulties. Some time after she met with a more favourable reception in Savoy, and her reformation began to take root there, and passed thence into Burgundy, France, Flanders, and Spain. Many ancient houses received it, that of Besançon being the first, and she lived to erect seventeen new ones. Several houses of Franciscan friars received the same. But Leo X., in 1517, by a special bull, united all the different reformations of the Franciscans under the name of

Observantines : and thus the distinction of Colettines is extinct. So great was her love of poverty, in imitation of that of Christ, that she never put on so much as sandals, going always barefoot, and would have no churches or convents but what were small and mean. Her habit was not only of most coarse stuff, but made of above a hundred patches sewed together. She continually inculcated to her nuns the denial of their own wills in all things, as Christ, from his first to his last breath, did the will of his heavenly Father : saying, that all self-will was the broad way to hell. The sacred passion of Christ was the subject of her constant meditation. On Fridays, from six in the morning till six at night, she continued in this meditation, without eating or doing any other thing, but referring all her thoughts and affections to it with a flood of tears ; also during the Holy-Week, and whenever she assisted at mass ; she often fell into ecstasies when she considered it. She showed a particular respect to the holy cross ; but, above all, to Christ present in the blessed eucharist, when she appeared in raptures of adoration and love. She often purified her conscience by sacramental confession before she heard mass, to assist thereat with the greater purity of soul. Her zeal made her daily to pour fourth many fervent prayers for the conversion of sinners, and also for the souls in purgatory, often with many tears. Being seized with her last sickness in her convent at Ghent, she received the sacraments of the church, foretold her death, and happily expired in her sixty-seventh year, on the 6th of March, in 1447. Her body is exposed to veneration in the church of that convent called Bethlehem, in Ghent. She was never canonized, nor is she named in the Roman Martyrology : but Clement VIII., Paul V., Gregory XIII., and Urban VIII. have approved of an office in her honour for the whole Franciscan order, and certain cities. Her body was taken up at Ghent, in 1747, and several miracles wrought on the occasion were examined by the ordinary of the place, who sent the process and relation of them to Rome.

#### ST. FRIDOLIN, A.

HE was an Irish or Scottish abbot, who, leaving his own country, founded several monasteries in Austrasia, Burgundy, and Switzerland : the last was that of Sekingen, in an isle in the Rhine, now one of the four forest towns belonging to the house of