

cell by his chapel near his own house, he gave himself up to holy contemplation and to the most perfect practices of penance and mortification. In the mean time, he took all possible care of his wife and family, being solicitous, in the first place, to bring them over to virtuous courses. Herein he so far succeeded by perseverance that his wife became a remarkable penitent. In this manner he served God nine years, and went to receive the recompence of his patience and charity in 774. This village, of which he was lord, was then called Nivesdone, afterwards Ledo and now Lire: from the devotion of the people to this saint, it became a considerable town. The saint's relics were preserved for several ages in the above-mentioned chapel which he had built, and were visited by the bishop's order in 1369 and 1406. The saint's shrine was plundered by the Calvinists; but the relics were saved by Catholics, and are kept in the collegiate church at Lire. He is honored in Brabant with singular veneration, and named on the 11th of October, in the Roman Martyrology. See his life in Surius, Miræus and Gramaye, *Antiqu. Antwerp*, c. 8. *Vite de Santi*, t. 2. p. 251.

#### ST. ETHELBURGE OR EDILBURGE, V. ABBESS.

THIS saint was an English Saxon princess, sister to St. Erconwald, bishop of London. To the end that she might live entirely to herself and God, she in her youth renounced the world, and neither riches nor the tempting splendour of a court could shake her resolution; for the world loses all its influence upon a mind which is wholly taken up with the great truths of faith and eternal salvation. A soul which is truly penetrated with them, listens to no consideration in the choice of a state of life but to what virtue and piety suggest, and being supported by those noble principles which religion inspires, whether she is placed in the world or in a religious state, whether in opulence or poverty, amidst honours or in contempt, equally carries all her desires to their proper mark, and studies with constancy and perseverance to acquit herself of every duty of her state, and to act up to the dignity of her heavenly vocation. This makes saints who live in the world the best princes, the best subjects, the best parents, the best neighbours, the most dutiful

children, and the most diligent and faithful tradesmen or servants. The same principle renders them in a cloister the most humble, the most obedient, the most devout, and the most fervent and exact in every point of monastic discipline. St. Erconwald considered only the perfection of his sister's virtue, not flesh and blood, when he appointed her abbess of the great nunnery which he had founded at Barking in Essex. Ethelburge, by her example and spirit, sweetly led on all the chaste spouses of Christ in that numerous house in the paths of true virtue and Christian perfection. How entirely they were dead both to the world and to themselves, and how perfectly divine charity reigned in their souls, appeared by the ardour with which they unanimously sighed after the dissolution of their earthly tabernacle, desiring to be clothed with immortality; in the mean time exerting continually their whole strength and all their affections that they might not be found naked when they should appear before God. When a raging pestilence swept off a part of this community, in 664, all rejoiced in their last moments, and thought even every day and every hour, long before they went to the possession of their God, to love and praise whom with all their powers, and without interruption for eternity, was the pure and vehement desire with which they were inflamed; and the living envied the dying. The comfort of those that survived was in the divine will, and in knowing their retardment could be but for a moment, that they might labour perfectly to purify their hearts, before they were united to their friends, the saints, and swallowed up in a glorious immortality. St. Ethelburge survived this mortality for the support and comfort of the rest. Having sent before her so many saints to heaven, she met her own death with a great spirit,<sup>(1)</sup> and her glory was manifested by miraculous visions. See Bede, l. 4, c. 6, 10. St. Ethelburge's body was honoured at Nunnaminstre in Winchester. Leland Collect. t. 1, p. 10.

#### ST. CANICUS OR KENNY, ABBOT IN IRELAND.

THE Irish Annals fix the birth of this illustrious saint in 527, and his death in 599. In his youth he studied some time in Wales under a celebrated and holy abbot named Docus, and

(1) Ecclus. xlviii. 24.