

LIVES

OF THE

FATHERS, MARTYRS, AND OTHER PRINCIPAL SAINTS.

SEPTEMBER I

SAINT GILES, ABBOT.

The life of St. Giles was compiled by one who collected whatever memoirs he could amass together, without discernment, and who confounded the saint with the Abbot of Arles of the same name. See Mabillon, *Annal. Ben.* t. 3, p. 433 et Sæc. 3, Bened. in Proleg. And especially the learned dissertation and remarks of Stilling the Bollandist, *Sept. t. 1*, p. 284. Also the Maurist monks, *Hist. Littér. de la France*, t. 10, p. 60.

ABOUT THE END OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

THIS saint, whose name has been held in great veneration for several ages in France and England, is said to have been an Athenian by birth, and of noble extraction. His extraordinary piety and learning drew the admiration of the world upon him in such a manner, that it was impossible for him to enjoy in his own country that obscurity and retirement which was the chief object of his desires on earth; and he dreaded the sunshine of temporal prosperity and the applause of men, as fraught with dangerous poison, which easily insinuates itself into the heart. Therefore, leaving his own country, he sailed to France, and chose an hermitage first in the open deserts near the mouth of the Rhone, afterwards nigh the river Gard, and lastly, in a forest in the diocess of Nismes. He passed many years in this close solitude, using no other subsistence than wild herbs or roots, and water, conversing only with God, and living rather like an angel than a man; so perfectly was he disengaged from earthly cares, and with so great purity of affections, with such constancy and ardour was his soul employed in

the exercises of heavenly contemplation. His historian relates, that he was for some time nourished with the milk of a hind in the forest, and that a certain prince discovered him in hunting in those woods, by pursuing the chase of that hind to his hermitage, where the beast had sought for shelter at his feet. The reputation of the sanctity of this holy hermit was much increased by many miracles which he wrought, and which rendered his name famous throughout all France. Some, by mistake, have confounded this saint with one Giles, whom St. Cæsarius made abbot of a monastery near the walls of Arles, and whom he sent to Rome with his secretary, Messianus, in 514, to Pope Symmachus, to obtain of him a confirmation of the privileges of the metropolitan church of Arles. But the Bollandists prove very well, in a long and learned dissertation, that the great St. Giles lived only in the end of the seventh, and beginning of the eighth century, not in the sixth; and that the French were at that time masters of the country about Nismes. Messianus and Stephen, in the second book of the life of St. Cæsarius, inform us, that the French took Arles in 541, the year before the death of St. Cæsarius; after which, the Goths yielded up to them that whole province. St. Giles was highly esteemed by the French king; but could not be prevailed upon to forsake his solitude. He, however, admitted several disciples, and settled excellent discipline in the monastery of which he was the founder, and which, in succeeding ages, became a flourishing abbey of the Benedictin Order, though it has been long since converted into a collegiate church of canons. A considerable town was built about it, called St. Giles's, which was famous in the wars of the Albigenses. This saint is commemorated in the Martyrologies of Bede, Ado, and others; and is the patron of many churches in France, Germany, Poland, &c.

Entire constant solitude, is a state which few are able to bear with unabated fervour in the uninterrupted exercises of arduous penance and contemplation. A man in solitude, whom sloth often warps, or whose conversation is not always with God and his holy angels, is his own most dangerous tempter and worst company. Aristotle having defined man a social creature,*

* Ζῶον Πολιτικόν.

or one born for society, added, that he who lives alone must either be a god or a beast. But that philosopher was unacquainted with the happiness of religious contemplation. The ancient Christian proverb is more exact, that he who lives always alone is either an angel or a devil. This state therefore is not without snares and dangers; nor does an hermitage necessarily make a saint; but when a person, by an extraordinary call, embraces it with fervour, and strenuously applies himself to all the exercises of holy retirement and penance, such a one being disengaged in his affections from all earthly ties, exchanges the society of a vain and sinful world for that of God and holy spirits, and the contagious commerce of foolish toys for the uninterrupted glorious employment of the angels, and has certainly attained the highest degree of happiness under heaven; this state is its novitiate, and in some degree an anticipation of its eternal sweet and noble employ. He who accompanies these most fervent exercises of contemplation and divine love with zealous and undaunted endeavours to conduct others to the same glorious term with himself, shall be truly *great in the kingdom of heaven.*(1)

TWELVE BROTHERS, MARTYRS.

FELIX, Donatus, Arontius, Honoratus, Sabinianus, Septimius, Januarius, Felix, Vitalis, Satyrus, and Repositus were natives of Adrumetum in Africa, and after suffering grievous torments for the faith in that city, were sent into Italy, where they finished their glorious martyrdom at Benevento, in the persecution of Valerian in 258, or according to others in that of Dioclesian. See Baronius Annot. in Martyr Rom. and Georgi Annot. in Adonis Martyrol.

ST. LUPUS, OR LEU, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS, C.

HE was a saint from the cradle, and brought up in the sanctuary, like another Samuel, in learning and piety among the clergy of Orleans, his native city. It was always a favourite devotion with him to visit often the tombs of the martyrs, honouring God in his faithful servants who had glorified his divine name by the sacrifice of their lives. Studying to walk in their

(1) Matt. v. 19.