

positions of fervour the saint closed her penitential life in 692.

One who has truly in spirit renounced the world, sees its figure pass before his eyes, condemns the smoke of its enjoyments, shudders at the tragical scenes of its ambition, dreads its snares, and abhors its cheating promises, magnificent impostures, and poisonous pleasures, by which it ceases not to enchant many unhappy souls. With the security and tranquillity of a man who is in the harbour, he beholds the boisterous raging and the violent tossings of this tempestuous sea, in the midst of which the unhappy Egyptians struggle against the fury of the waves, and after toiling for some time sink on a sudden one after another, and are buried in the abyss. Those only escape this ruin whose souls soar above it, so that their affections are no way entangled or engaged.

NOVEMBER VI.

ST. LEONARD, HERMIT, C.

His life published in Surius was written a considerable time after his death.

SIXTH AGE.

ST. LEONARD OR LIENARD, was a French nobleman of great reputation in the court of Clovis I. and in the flower of his age was converted to the faith by St. Remigius, probably after the battle of Tolbiac. Being instructed in the obligations of our heavenly warfare, wherein the prize of the victory is an assured crown of immortal glory, he resolved to lay aside all worldly pursuits, quitted the court, and became a constant disciple of St.

Remigius. The holy instructions and example of that saint made every day deeper impressions upon his tender soul, and Leonard seemed to have inherited the very spirit of his master, and to be animated with the same simplicity, disinterestedness, modesty, zeal, and charity. He preached the faith some time; but finding it very difficult to resist the king's importunities, who would needs call him to court, and, burning with a desire of giving himself up entirely to the exercises of penance and contemplation, he retired privately into the territory of Orleans, where St. Mesmin or Maximin governed the monastery of Micy, (called afterward St. Mesmin's,) which his uncle St. Euspicius had founded, two leagues from the city, in 508. In this house St. Leonard took the religious habit, and inured himself to the fervent practices of regular discipline under the direction of St. Mesmin and of St. Lie or Lætus, a holy monk of that house, who afterward died a hermit. St. Lifard, brother to our saint, who had renounced the world in the fortieth year of his age, laid the foundation of a religious community at Meun in that country, which is at present a collegiate church of canons which bears his name.

St. Leonard himself aspiring after a closer solitude, with the leave of St. Mesmin left his monastery, travelled through Berry, where he converted many idolaters, and coming into Limousin, chose for his retirement a forest, four leagues from Limoges. Here, in a place called Nobiliac, he built himself an oratory, lived on wild herbs and fruits, and had for some time no other witness of his penance and virtues but God alone. His zeal and devotion sometimes carried him to the neighbouring churches, and some who by his discourses were inflamed with a desire of imitating his manner of life, joined him in his desert, and formed a community which, in succeeding times

out of devotion to the saint's memory, became a flourishing monastery, called first Noblat, afterward St. Leonard le Noblat. The reputation of his sanctity and miracles being spread very wide, the king bestowed on him and his fellow-hermits a considerable part of the forest where they lived. The saint, even before he retired to Micy, had been most remarkable for his charity toward captives and prisoners, and he laid himself out with unwearied zeal in affording them both corporal and spiritual help and comfort, and he obtained of the governors the liberty of many. This was also the favourite object of his charity after he had discovered himself to the world in Limousin, and began to make frequent excursions to preach and instruct the people of that country. It is related that some were miraculously delivered from their chains by his prayers, and that the king out of respect for his eminent sanctity, granted him a special privilege of sometimes setting prisoners at liberty; which about that time was frequently allowed to certain holy bishops and others. But the saint's chief aim and endeavours in this charitable employment were to bring malefactors and all persons who fell under this affliction, to a true sense of the enormity of their sins, and to a sincere spirit of compunction and penance, and a perfect reformation of their lives. When he had filled up the measure of his good works, his labours were crowned with a happy death about the year 559, according to the new Paris Breviary. In honour of the saint his church, which has been long served by regular canons, (though now half the number is secularized,) enjoys still great exemptions from public burdens and exactions. Many other places in France bear his name, and he is honoured there with particular devotion. Many great churches in England, of which he is the titular saint, and our ancient calendars, show his

name to have been formerly no less famous in England. In a list of holidays published at Worcester, in 1240, St. Leonard's festival is ordered to be kept a half-holiday, with an obligation of hearing mass, and a prohibition of labour except that of the plough.¹ He was particularly invoked in favour of prisoners, and several miracles are ascribed to him.² His name occurs in the Roman and other Martyrologies.

Solitude has always charms to the devout servant of God, because retirement from the world is very serviceable to his conversing with heaven. This appears from the practice of the Nazarites, prophets, and devout persons in the old law, and from that of Christ and all the saints in the new. Isaac went out into the field when he would meditate; and when Moses met God, it was in the desert. Solitude and silence settle and compose the thoughts; the mind augments its strength and vigour by rest and collection within itself, and in this state of serenity is most fit to reflect upon itself and its own wants, and to contemplate the mysteries of divine grace and love, the joys of heaven, and the grounds of our hope. This solitude must be chiefly interior, that of the mind still more than of the place, by freeing and disengaging ourselves from worldly cares and business, from the attachment to our senses, and from all those things and even thoughts, which soften, allure, disturb, or distract us, or which breed in us vanity or vexation. If we cut not off these things, under the name of retirement, we shall be more persecuted with a dissipation of thoughts, and

1 See Sir H. Spelman's *Councils*, t. 2. p. 358. Johnson's *English Canons*, ad an. 1362. n. 3.

2 In the same sixth age St. Leonard of Yandeuvre led an eremitical life in the desert of that name in the diocess of Mans, and at length formed his disciples into a community, was made the first abbot, and died about the year 560. His relics were translated hence in the ninth age to the abbey of Corbigny, in Nivernois, in the diocess of Autun. See Le Cointe, *Annal. Eccl. Franc.* Bulteau, l. 2. c. 30. The History of Mans, &c.

the noise and cravings of our passions, than in the midst of the most active and busy life. How shall a Christian, who lives in the world, practice this retirement? By not loving its spirit and maxims, by being as recollected as may be in the midst of business, and bearing always in mind that salvation is the most important and only affair: by shunning superfluous amusements, and idle conversation and visits; and by consecrating every day some time, and a considerable part of Sundays and great festivals to the exercises of religious retirement, especially devout prayer, self-examination, meditation, and pious reading.

ST. WINOC, ABBOT.

AMONG the Britons, who, flying from the swords of the English Saxons, took refuge in the maritime province of Armorica in Gaul, several turned their afflictions into their greatest spiritual advantage, and from them learned to despise transitory things, and to seek with their whole hearts those which are eternal. Hence Armorica, called from them Brittany, was for some ages a country particularly fruitful in saints. Conan founded this principality of Lesser Britain in 383. His grandson and successor, Solomon I. was murdered by his own subjects, provoked by his zeal to reform their morals, in 434. Some think this prince, rather than the third of that name, to be the Solomon whose name has been inserted in some Armorican calendars. Gratton, the third prince, founded the abbey of Landevenec. Budic, the seventh of these princes, was defeated by the Franks, and seems to have been slain by king Clovis about the year 509. His son Riowald or Hoel I. gathered an army of Britons dispersed in the islands about Great Britain, and returning in 513, recovered the principality in the