

SS. KILIAN, BISHOP, COLMAN, PRIEST, AND  
TOTNAN, DEACON, MM.

KILIAN or Kulu was a holy Irish monk, of noble Scottish extraction. With two zealous companions he travelled to Rome in 686, and obtained of Pope Conon a commission to preach the gospel to the German idolaters in Franconia; upon which occasion Kilian was invested with episcopal authority. The missionaries converted and baptized great numbers at Wurtzburg, and among others Gosbert, the duke of that name. This prince had taken to wife Geilana, the relict of his deceased brother; and though he loved her tenderly, being put in mind by St. Kilian that such a marriage was condemned and void by the law of the gospel, he promised to dismiss her, saying that we are bound to love God above father, mother, or wife. Geilana was tormented in mind beyond measure at this resolution; jealousy and ambition equally inflaming her breast; and, as the vengeance of a wicked woman has no bounds, during the absence of the duke in a military expedition, she sent assassins, who privately murdered the three holy missionaries in 688. The ruffians were themselves pursued by divine vengeance, and all perished miserably. St. Burchard, who in the following century was placed by St. Boniface in the episcopal see of Wurtzburg, translated their relics into his cathedral. A portion of those of St. Kilian, in a rich shrine, was preserved in the treasury of the elector of Brunswic-Lunenburg in 1713, as appears from the printed description of that cabinet. See the acts of these martyrs compiled by Egilward, monk of St. Burchard's at Wurtzburg, extant imperfect in the eleventh century, in Surius, t. 4, entire in Canisius, t. 4, par. 2, p. 628, and t. 3, ed. Basn. p. 174. Also among the *Opuscula* of Serarius, printed at Mentz in 1611, in the collection of the writers of Wurtzburg published by Ludewig, p. 966, and in Mabillon and the Bollandists. See also *Thesaurus reliquiarum Electoralis Brunsvico-Luneburgicus*. Hanoveræ, 1713, and Solier, t. 2, Julij, p. 600.

ST. WITHBURGE, V.

SHE was the youngest of the four sisters, all saints, daugh-

ters of Annas the holy king of the East-Angles. In her tender years she devoted herself to the divine service, and led an austere life in close solitude for several years at Holkham, an estate of the king her father, near the sea-coast in Norfolk, where a church, afterwards called Withburgstow, was built. After the death of her father she changed her dwelling to another estate of the crown called Dereham. This is at present a considerable market town in Norfolk, but was then an obscure retired place. Withburge assembled there many devout virgins, and laid the foundation of a great church and nunnery, but did not live to finish the buildings. Her holy death happened on the 17th of March, 743. Her body was interred in the church-yard at Dereham, and fifty-five years after, found uncorrupt, and translated into the church. One hundred and seventy-six years after this, in 974, Brithnoth, (the first abbot of Ely, after that house, which had been destroyed by the Danes, was rebuilt,) with the consent of King Edgar, removed it to Ely, and deposited it near the bodies of her two sisters. In 1106 the remains of the four saints were translated into the new church and laid near the high altar. The bodies of SS. Sexburga and Ermenilda were reduced to dust, except the bones. That of St. Audry was entire, and that of St. Withburge was not only sound but also fresh, and the limbs perfectly flexible. Warner, a monk of Westminster, showed this to all the people, by lifting up and moving several ways the hands, arms, and feet. Herbert, bishop of Thetford, who in 1094 translated his see to Norwich, and many other persons of distinction were eye-witnesses hereof. This is related by Thomas, a monk of Ely,(1) which he wrote the year following, 1107. This author tells us, that in the place where St. Withburge was first buried, in the church-yard of Dereham, a large fine spring of most clear water gushes forth.(2) It is to this day called St. Withburge's well, was formerly very famous, and is paved, covered and inclosed; a stream from it forms another small well without the church-yard. See her life, and Leland, Collect, vol. iii. p. 167.

(1) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 1, p. 613, published by Wharton.

(2) *Ib.* p. 606.