

The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other Principal Saints

Compiled from Original Monuments and other Authentic Records
Illustrated with the Remarks of Judicious Modern Critics and Historians

by

The Reverend Alban Butler

Book Six

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Table of Contents

	Approbation	v
	Publisher's Notes	ix
October 1	St. Remigius	1
	St. Bavo	17
	St. Piat	19
	St. Wasnulf.....	20
	St. Fidharleus	21
	The Festival of the Holy Rosary	21
October 2	Feast of the Holy Angel-Guardians.....	32
	St. Thomas	41
	St. Leodegarius.....	45
October 3	St Dionysius the Areopagite	51
	St. Gerard.....	57
	The Two Ewalds, Martyrs.....	60
October 4	St. Francis of Assisi.....	62
	Sts. Marcus, Marcian, and Their Companions.	99
	St. Petronius.....	99
	St. Ammon.....	101
	St. Aurea	102
	St. Edwin	103
	The Martyrs of Triers	108
October 5	St. Placidus and Companions.....	108
	St. Galla	112
October 6	St. Bruno.....	113
	St. Faith and Companions.....	129
October 7	St. Mark.....	132
	Sts. Sergius and Bacchus.....	133
	Sts. Marcellus and Apuleius.....	134
	St. Justina of Padua	134
	St. Osith.....	135

October 8	St. Bridget.....	136
	St. Thais.....	144
	St. Pelagia.....	146
	St. Keyna.....	148
October 9	St. Dionysius.....	149
	St. Dominus.....	153
	St. Guislain.....	154
	St. Lewis Bertrand.....	154
October 10	St. Francis Borgia.....	164
	St. Paulinus.....	195
	St. John of Bridlington.....	198
October 11	Sts. Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus.....	199
	St. Gummar.....	212
	St. Ethelburge.....	214
	St. Canicus.....	215
October 12	St. Wilfrid.....	216
October 13	St. Edward.....	230
	Sts. Faustus, Januarius, and Martialis.....	257
	Seven Friar Minors.....	257
	St. Colman.....	258
	St. Gerald.....	259
October 14	St. Calixtus.....	261
	St. Donatian.....	276
	St. Burckard.....	277
	St. Dominic.....	278
October 15	St. Teresa of Avila.....	280
	St. Tecla.....	350
	St. Hospicius.....	351
October 16	St. Gall.....	352
	St. Lullus.....	356
	St. Mummolin.....	358
October 17	St. Hedwiges.....	359
	St. Anstrudis.....	368
	St. Andrew of Crete.....	369
October 18	St. Luke the Evangelist.....	369
	St. Julian Sabas.....	377
	St. Justin.....	377
	St. Monon.....	378

October 19	St. Peter of Alcantara.....	378
	Sts. Ptolemy, Lucius, and a Third Companion.....	391
	St. Frideswide.....	392
	St. Ethbin.....	394
October 20	St. Artemius.....	395
	St. Barsabias and his Companions.....	396
	St. Zenobius.....	398
	St. Sindulphus.....	399
October 21	Sts. Ursula and Her Companions.....	400
	St. Hilarion.....	403
	St. Fintan.....	413
October 22	St. Philip and Companions.....	414
	Sts. Nunilo and Alodia.....	418
	St. Donatus.....	421
	St. Mello.....	421
	St. Mark.....	422
October 23	St. Theodoret.....	422
	St. Romanus.....	426
	St. John Capistran.....	428
	St. Ignatius.....	437
	St. Severin.....	448
	St. Severin.....	449
October 24	St. Proclus.....	449
	St. Felix.....	453
	St. Magloire.....	454
October 25	Sts. Chrysanthus and Daria.....	456
	Sts. Crispin and Crispinian.....	457
	St. Gaudentius of Brescia.....	463
	St. Boniface I.....	465
October 26	St. Evaristus.....	467
	Sts. Lucian and Marcian.....	468
October 27	St. Frumentius.....	470
	St. Elesbaan.....	474
	St. Abban.....	476
October 28	St. Simon.....	477
	St. Jude.....	479
	St. Faro.....	482
	St. Neot.....	486

October 29	St. Narcissus	502
	St. Chef.....	504
October 30	St. Marcellus	506
	St. Germanus	508
	St. Asterius	508
October 31	St. Quintin.....	511
	St. Wolfgang.....	515
	St. Foillan.....	518
November 1	All Saints	521
	St. Cæsarius.....	537
	St. Mary	537
	St. Marcellus	538
	St. Benignus	540
	St. Austremonius	541
	St. Harold VI	541
November 2	All Souls Day.....	542
	St. Victorinus	559
	St. Marcian.....	559
	St. Vulgan.....	561
November 3	St. Malachy	562
	St. Hubert.....	575
	St. Wenefride.....	579
	St. Papoul.....	587
	St. Flour	587
	St. Rumwald	587
November 4	St. Charles Borromeo	588
	Sts. Vitalis and Agricola.....	632
	St. Joannicius	632
	St. Clarus	633
	St. Brinstan	634
November 5	St. Bertille	635
November 6	St. Leonard.....	639
	St. Winoc.....	642
	St. Iltutus	646
November 7	St. Willibrord	647
	St. Werenfrid.....	656
	St. Prosdecimus	656
November 8	The Four Crowned Brothers	657

	St. Willehad	658
	St. Godfrey.....	662
November 9	The Dedication of the Church of Our Savior...	664
	St. Theodorus.....	673
	St. Mathurin	676
	St. Vanne.....	677
	St. Benignus.....	677
November 10	St. Andrew Avellino.....	678
	Sts. Trypho, Respicius, and Nympha	684
	St. Justus	686
	St. Milles, St. Abrosimus, and St. Sina.....	687
November 11	St. Martin	691
	St. Mennas	711
November 12	Pope St. Martin	712
	St. Nilus	717
	St. Livin	720
	St. Lebwinn.....	721
November 13	St. Homobonus.....	723
	St. Didacus.....	728
	St. Stanislas Kostka.....	731
	St. Mitrius.....	737
	St. Constant	737
	St. Brice	737
	St. Chillen.....	737
November 14	St. Laurence	738
	St. Dubricius.....	747
November 15	St. Gertrude	749
	St. Leopold.....	752
	St. Eugenius	756
	St. Malo	756
November 16	St. Edmund.....	757
	St. Eucherius	769
November 17	St. Gregory Thaumaturgus	772
	St. Dionysius.....	784
	St. Gregory.....	790
	St. Hugh	792
	St. Anian	798
November 18	Dedication of the Churches of Sts. Peter and Paul	800

	Sts. Alphæus, Zachæus, Romanus, and Barulas	804
	St. Odo	805
	St. Hilda.....	807
November 19	St. Elizabeth of Hungary	811
	St. Pontian	823
	St. Barlaam.....	823
November 20	St. Edmund.....	825
	St. Humbert.....	831
	St. Felix of Valois.....	831
	St. Bernward	834
	St. Maxentia.....	835
November 21	The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary....	835
	St. Columban.....	839
	St. Gelasius.....	848
November 22	St. Cecilia.....	851
	St. Theodorus.....	854
	Sts. Philemon and Appia	861
November 23	St. Clement	864
	St. Amphilochius.....	870
	St. Tron	874
	St. Daniel.....	874
November 24	St. John of the Cross	875
	St. Chrysogonus.....	889
	Sts. Flora and Mary	889
	St. Cianan	890
November 25	St. Catharine of Alexandria	891
	St. Erasmus	894
November 26	St. Peter.....	895
	St. Nicon.....	899
	St. Sylvester Gozzolini.....	901
	St. Conrad.....	902
November 27	St. Maximus.....	906
	St. James	908
	St. Maharsapor.....	912
	St. Virgil.....	913
	St. Secundin	914
November 28	St. Stephen the Younger	914
	St. James	918

November 29	St. Saturninus.....	921
	St. Radbod	923
November 30	St. Andrew	924
	St. Narses	931
	Sts. Sapor, Isaac, Mahanes, Abraham, and Simeon.....	933



October

October 1

St. Remigius

Confessor

Archbishop of Rheims

From his ancient life now lost, but abridged by Fortunatus, and his life compiled by Archbishop Hincmar, with a history of the translation of his relics. See also St. Gregory of Tours, 1. 2; Fleury, 1. 29, n. 44, etc.; Ceillier, t. 16; Rivet, Hist. Litter, de la Fr. t. 3, p. 155; Suysken the Bollandist, t. 1, Octob. pp. 59, 187.

A. D. 583

St. Remigius, the great apostle of the French nation, was one of the brightest lights of the Gaulish church, illustrious for his learning, eloquence, sanctity, and miracles. An episcopacy of seventy years, and many great actions, have rendered his name famous in the annals of the church. His very birth was wonderful, and his life was almost a continued miracle of divine grace. His father Emilius, and his mother Cilinia, both descended of noble Gaulish families, enjoyed an affluent fortune, lived in splendor suitable to their rank at the castle of Laon, and devoted themselves to the exercise of all Christian virtues. St. Remigius seems to have been born in the year 439.¹ He had two brothers older than himself, Principius, bishop of Soissons, and another whose name is not known, but who

¹ The chronology of this saint's life is determined by the following circumstances. Historians agree that he was made bishop when he was twenty-two years old. The saint says, in a letter which he wrote in 512, that he had then been bishop fifty-three years, and St. Gregory of Tours says that he held that dignity above seventy years. Consequently, he died in 533, in the ninety-fourth year of his age; was born in 439, and in 512 was seventy-five years old.

was father of St. Lupus, who was afterwards one of his uncle's successors in the episcopal see of Soissons. A hermit named Montanus foretold the birth of our saint to his mother; and the pious parents had a special care of his education, looked upon him as a child blessed by heaven, and were careful to put him into the best hands.

His nurse Balsamia is reckoned among the saints, and is honored at Rheims in a collegiate church which bears her name. She had a son called Celsin, who was afterwards a disciple of our saint, and is known at Laon by the name of St. Soussin. St. Remigius had an excellent genius, made great progress in learning, and in the opinion of St. Apollinaris Sidonius, who was acquainted with him in the earlier part of his life, he became the most eloquent person in that age.² He was remarkable from his youth for his extraordinary devotion and piety, and for the severity of his morals. A secret apartment in which he spent a great part of his time in close retirement, in the castle of Laon, while he lived there, was standing in the ninth century, and was visited with devout veneration when Hincmar wrote. Our saint earnestly thirsting after greater solitude and the means of a more sublime perfection, left his father's house

and made choice of a retired abode, where, having only God for witness, he abandoned himself to the fervor of his zeal in fasting, watching, and prayer. The episcopal see of Rheims³ becoming vacant by the death of Bennagius, Remigius, though only twenty-two years of age, was compelled, notwithstanding his extreme reluctance, to take upon him that important charge; his extraordinary abilities seeming to the bishops of the province a sufficient reason for dispensing with the canons in point of age. In this new dignity, prayer, meditation on the holy scriptures, the instruction of the people, and the conversion of infidels, heretics, and sinners, were the constant employment of the holy pastor.

³ The origin of the episcopal see of Rheims is obscure. On Sixtus and Sinicius, the apostles of that province, see Marlot, l. 1, c. 12, t. 1; Hist. Metrop., Rhem., and chiefly Dom. Dionysius de Ste. Marthe, Gallia Christiana, Nov. t. 9, p. 2. Sixtus and Sinicius were fellow laborers in first planting this church; Sinicius survived and succeeded his colleague in this see. Among their disciples many received the crown of martyrdom under Rictius Varus, about the year 287, namely Timotheus, Apollinaris, Maurus a priest, Macra a virgin, and many others whose bodies were found in the city itself, in 1640 and 1650, near the church of St. Nicasius: their heads and arms were pierced with huge nails, as was St. Quintin under the same tyrant: also St. Piat, etc. St. Nicasius is counted the eleventh, and St. Remigius the fifteenth archbishop of this see.

Such was the fire and unction with which he announced the divine oracles to all ranks of men, that he was called by many a second St. Paul. St. Apollinaris Sidonius⁴ was not able to find terms to express his admiration of the ardent charity and purity with which this zealous bishop offered at the altar an incense of sweet odor to God, and of the zeal with which by his words he powerfully subdued the wildest hearts, and brought them under the yoke of virtue, inspiring the lustful with the love of purity, and moving hardened sinners to bewail their offences with tears of sincere compunction. The same author, who, for his eloquence and piety, was one of the greatest lights of the church in that age, testifies,⁵ that he procured copies of the sermons of this admirable bishop, which he esteemed an invaluable treasure; and says that in them he admired the loftiness of the thoughts, the judicious choice of the epithets, the gracefulness and propriety of the figures, and the justness, strength, and closeness of the reasoning, which he compares to the vehemence of thunder; the words flowed like a gentle river, but every part in each discourse was so naturally connected, and the style so even and smooth, that the whole carried with it an irresistible force.

4 L. 8, c. 14
5 L. 9, ep. 7

The delicacy and beauty of the thoughts and expression were at the same time enchanting, this being so smooth, that it might be compared to the smoothest ice or crystal upon which a nail runs without meeting with the least rub or unevenness. Another main excellency of these sermons consisted in the sublimity of the divine maxims which they contained, and the unction and sincere piety with which they were delivered; but the holy bishop's sermons and zealous labors derived their greatest force from the sanctity of his life, which was supported by an extraordinary gift of miracles. Thus was St. Remigius qualified and prepared by God to be made the apostle of a great nation.

The Gauls, who had formerly extended their conquests by large colonies in Asia, had subdued a great part of Italy, and brought Rome itself to the very brink of utter destruction⁶, were at length reduced under the Roman yoke by Julius Caesar, fifty years before the Christian era. It was the custom of those proud conquerors, as St.

6 See D. Brezillac, a Maurist monk, *Histoire des Gaules, et des Conquetes des Gaulois*, 2 vols. 4to., printed in 1752; and *Cæsar's Commentaries De Bello Gallico*, who wrote and fought with the same inimitable spirit. Also *Observations sur la Religion des Gaulois, et sur celle des Germains*, par M. Freret, t. 34, des *Memoires de Literature de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, An. 1751.

Austin observes,⁷ to impose the law of their own language upon the nations which they subdued.⁸

7 De Civ. l. 19, c. 7.

8 The Gauls became so learned and eloquent, that among them several seemed almost to rival the greatest men among the Romans. Not to mention Virgil, Livy, Catullus, Cornelius Nepos, the two Plinies, and other ornaments of the Cisalpine Gaul; in the Transalpine, Peronius Arbitrator, Terentius Varro, Roscius, Pompeius Trogus, and others are ranked among the foremost in the list of Latin writers. How much the study of eloquence and the sacred sciences flourished in Gaul when the faith was planted there, appears from St. Martin, St. Sulpicius Severus, the two Sts. Hilaries, St. Paulinus, Salvian of Marseilles, the glorious St. Remigius, St. Apollinaris Sidonius, etc.

Dom. Rivet proves (Hist. Lit. t. 1) that the Celtic tongue gave place in most parts to the Roman, and seems long since extinct, except in certain proper names, and some few other words. Samuel Bochart, *the father of conjectures*, (as he is called by Menage in his Phaleg,) derives it from the Phoenician. Borel (Pref. sur les Recherches Gauloises and Marcel, (Hist. de l'Origine de la Monarchie Francoise, t. 1, p. 11) from the Hebrew. The latter ingenious historian observes, that a certain analogy between all languages shows them to have sprung from one primitive tongue; which affinity is far more sensible between all the western languages. St. Jerome, who had visited both countries, assures us that, in the fourth age, the language was nearly the same that was spoken at Triers and in Galatia, (in Galat. Praef. 2, p. 255.) Valerius Andrieas (in Topogr. Belgic., p. 1) pretends the ancient Celtic to be

After Gaul had been for the space of

preserved in the modern Flemish; but this is certainly a bastard dialect derived from the Teutonic, and no more the Celtic than it was the language of Adam in Paradise, as Goropius Becanus pretended. The received opinion is, that the Welsh tongue, and that still used in Lower Brittany, (which are originally the same language,) are a dialect of the Celtic, though not perfectly pure; and Tacitus assures us that the Celtic differed very little from the language of the Britons (Vita Agricola, c. 11) which is preserved in the Welsh tongue.

Dom. Pezron in his Antiquities of the Ancient Celts, has given abundant proofs that the Greek, Latin, and Teutonic, have borrowed a great number of words from the Celtic, as well as from the Hebrew and Egyptian. M. Bullet, royal professor of the university of Besançon, has thrown great light on this subject; he proves that the primeval Celts, and Scytho-Celts, have not only occupied the western regions of Europe, but extended themselves into Spain and Italy; that in their progress through the latter fine country, they met the Grecian colonies who were settled in its southern provinces; and that having incorporated with one of those colonies on the banks of the Tiber, the Latin tongue had in course of time been formed out of the Celtic and Greek languages. Of this coalition of Celts and Grecians in ancient Latium, and of this original of the Latin language, that learned antiquary has given unexceptionable proofs, and confirms them by the testimonies of Pliny and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

In its original, the Celtic, like all other eastern tongues, after the confusion at Babel, was confined to between four and five hundred words, mostly mono-

about five hundred years one of the

syllables. The wants and ideas of men being but few in the earliest times, they required but few terms to express them by; and it was in proportion to the invention of arts, and the slow progress of science, that new terms have been multiplied, and that signs of abstract ideas have been compounded. Language, yet in its infancy, came only by degrees to the maturity of copious expression and grammatical precision. In the vast regions occupied by the ancient Celts, their language branched out into several dialects; intermixture with new nations on the continent, and the revolutions incident to time produced them; and ultimately these dialects were reduced to distinct tongues, so different in texture and syntax, that the tracing them to the true stock would not be easy, had we not an inerrable clue to lead us in the multitude of Celtic terms common to all. The Cumaraeg of the Welsh and Gadelic of the Irish, are living proofs of this fact. The Welsh and Irish tongues preserved to our own time in ancient writings, are undoubtedly the purest remains of the ancient Celtic. Formed in very remote periods of time, and confined to our own western isles, they approached nearer to their original than the Celtic tongues of the continent; and according to the learned Leibnitz, the Celtic of Ireland (a country the longest free from all foreign intermixture) bids fairer for originality than that of any other Celtic people.

It is certain that the Irish Celtic, as we find it in old books, exhibits a strong proof of its being the language of a cultivated nation. Nervous, copious, and pathetic in phraseology, it is thoroughly free from the consonantal harshness which rendered the Celtic dialects of

richest and most powerful provinces

ancient Gaul grating to Roman ears; it furnishes the poet and orator very promptly with the vocal arms, which give energy to expression, and elevation to sentiment. This language, in use at present among the common people of Ireland, is falling into the corruptions which ever attend any tongue confined chiefly to the illiterate vulgar. These corruptions are increasing daily. The Erse of Scotland is still more corrupt, as the inhabitants of the Highlands have had no schools for the preservation of their language for several ages, and as none of the old writings, of their bards and seanachies have been preserved. The poems, therefore, published lately by an able writer under the name of Ossian, are undoubtedly his own, grafted on traditions still sung among his countrymen; and similar to the tales fathered on Oisín, the son of Fin-mac-Cumhal, sung at present among the common people of Ireland. It was a pleasing artifice. The fame of composition transferred to old Ossian, returned back in due time to the true author; and criticism, recovered from the surprise of an unguarded moment, did him justice. The works of Ossian, if any he composed, have been long since lost; not a trace remains; and it was soon discovered that the Celtic dialect of a prince, represented by Mr. Macpherson as an illiterate bard of the third century, could not be produced in the eighteenth, and that a publication of those poems in modern Erse would prove them modern compositions. For further observations on the ancient Celtic language, and on the poems of Ossian, we refer the reader to O'Connor's excellent *Dissertations on the History of Ireland*, Dublin, 1766.

of the Roman empire, it fell into the hands of the French; but these new masters, far from extirpating or expelling the old Roman or Gaulish inhabitants, became, by a coalition with them, one people, and took up their language and manners.⁹

Bonamy (*Diss. sur l'Introduct. de la Langue Latine dans les Gauls*, Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscriptions, vol. 24) finds fault with Rivet for making his assertion too general, and proves that the Franks kept to their own old Teutonic language for some time at court, and in certain towns where they were most numerous; and always retained some Teutonic words, even after the Latin language of the old inhabitants prevailed; but he grants that, out of thirty French words, it is hard to find one that is not derived from Latin. Rivet would probably have granted as much; for he never denied but some few French words are of Teutonic extraction, or that the Franks for some time retained their own language among themselves, though they also learned usually the old Latin language of the Gauls, among whom they settled, which is evidently the basis of all the dialects spoken in France, except of that of Lower-Brittany, and a considerable part of the Burgundian; yet there is everywhere some foreign alloy, which is very considerable in Gascony, and part of Normandy. Even the differences in the Provençal and others are mostly a corrupt Latin.

⁹The Franks or French have been sought for by different authors in every province of Germany, and by some near the Palus Moeotis; but the best writers now agree with Spener, the most judicious of the modern German historians, (*Notit. Germ. antiq.*, t. 1.) that

Clovis, at his accession to the

the Franks were composed of several German nations, which entered into a confederacy together to seek new settlements, and defend their liberty and independency; from which liberty, according to some, they took the name of Franks, unknown among the German nations when Tacitus wrote; but the word Frenk or Frank signified in the old German tongue, Fierce or Cruel, as Bruzen de la Martiniere observes, in his additions to Puffendor's Introduction to Modern History t. 5. The Franks are first mentioned by the writers of the Augustan History in the reign of Gallien. From Eumenius's panegyric in praise of Constantine, the first book of Claudian upon Stilico, and several passages of Apollinaris Sidonius, it appears that they originally came chiefly from nations settled beyond the Elbe, about the present duchies of Sleswick, and part of Holstein. This opinion is set in a favorable light in a dissertation printed at Paris in 1748; and in another written by F. Germon, published by F. Griffet, in his new edition of F. Daniel's History in 1755. F. Germon places them in the countries situated between the Lower Rhine, the Maine, the Elbe, and the Ocean, nearly the same whence the English Saxons afterwards came; after their first migrations, probably, some more remote nations had filled the void they had left. Among the Franks, there were Bructeri, Cherisci, Catici, and Sicambri; but the Salii, and Ripuarii or Ansuari, were the most considerable: the latter for their numbers, the former for their riches, nobility, and power, say Martiniere and Messieurs de Boispreaux and Sellius, in their *Histoire Générale des Provinces Unies*, (in 3 vols. 4to., 1757.) Leibnitz derives the name of Salians from the

crown, was only fifteen years old:

river Sala, and thinks the Salic laws, so famous among the French, were originally established by them. F. Daniel and M. Gundling warmly contend that they are more modern, framed since the conversion of the Franks to Christianity. De Boispreaux and Sellius will have the laws to be as ancient as Leibnitz advances, but acknowledge that the preface to them is of Christian original; perhaps changed, say they, by Clovis after his baptism.

The Franks settled first on the eastern bank of the Rhine, but soon crossed it; for Vopiscus places them on both sides of the river. The country about the Lower Rhine, from Alsace to the Germanic ocean, is the first that was called France, and afterwards distinguished by the name of *Francia Germanica*, or *Vetus*; afterwards *Eastern France*, of which the part called *Franconia* still retains the name. See Eccard at length in *Francia Orientalis*, and d'Anville, p. 18. Peutinger's map (or the ancient topographical description of that country, published by Peutinger of Augsburg, but composed in the latter end of the fourth century) places France on the right-hand bank, or eastern side of the Rhine. The Franks chose their kings by lifting them upon a shield in the army. The names of the first are Pharamund, Clodion, Merovoeus, and Childeric. In Merovams the crown became hereditary, and from him the first race of the French kings is called *Merovingian*. F. Daniel will not allow the names of these four kings, before Clovis, to belong to the history of the French monarchy, being persuaded that they reigned only in old France beyond the Rhine, and possessed nothing in Gaul, though they made frequent excursions into its provinces for plunder. This nov-

he became the greatest conqueror

ely gave offence to many, and is warmly exploded by Du Bos, Dom. Maur, Le Gendre, and others. For it is evident from incontestable monuments, produced by Bosquet and others, that the Franks from Pharamund began to extend their conquests in Belgic Gaul, though they sometimes met with checks. Henault observes, they had acquired a fixed settlement about the Rhine in 287, which was confirmed to them by the emperor Julian in 358; that under king Clodion, in 445, they became masters of Cambray and the neighboring provinces as far as the river Somme in Picardy. Their kings seem to have made Tournay for some time their residence. At least the tomb of Childeric was discovered at Tournay in 1653, with undoubted marks, some of which are deposited in the king's library at Paris. See the *Sieur Chiffiet's* relation of this curious discovery, and *Mabilion's Dissertation on the Ancient Burial-places of the kings of France*.

It is an idle conceit of many painters, with Chifflet, to imagine from the figures of bees found in this monument, that they were the arms of France above seven hundred years before coat-armory was thought of, which was a badge of noble personages first invented for the sake of distinction at the tilts and tournaments. A swarm of bees following a leader was a natural emblem for a colony seeking a new settlement. Some think the fleur-de-lis to have been first taken from some ill-shaped half-figures of bees on old royal ornaments. See *Addition aux Dissertations concernant le Nom Patronimique de l'Auguste Maison de France*, showing that it never had a name but in each branch that of its appanage, or estate. Amsterdam, 1770, with a second Diss. *Extrait concernant*

of his age, and is justly styled the

founder of the French monarchy.

les Armes des Princes de la Maison de France. The figure of the lis in the arms of France seems borrowed from the head of the battle-axe called Francische, the usual weapon of the ancient Franks; for it perfectly resembles it, not any of the flowers which bear the name of lis or iris; though some reduce it to the Florentine iris, others to the March lily. See their figures in the botanists. On the tomb of queen Fredegundes in the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prez, fleur-de-luces, or de-lis, are found used as ornaments in the crown and royal robes; and the same occurs in some other ornaments, as we find them sometimes employed in the monuments of the first English Norman kings, etc. See Montfaucon, *Antiquites de la Monarchie Françoise*, t. I, p. 31. But Philip Augustus, or rather Louis VII, was the first that took them for his coat of arms; and Charles VI reduced their number to three. According to Le Gendre, Clodion began to reign over the Franks in 426, Merovams in 446, Childeric in 450, and his son Clovis I, or the Great, in 481. The Romans sometimes entered into treaties with them, and acknowledged them their allies. The king of the Franks, probably Childeric, with his army, joined Aetius against the Huns, and was a powerful succor to him in the entire overthrow which he gave to Attila in 481.

Clovis conquered all Gaul, except the southern provinces, which were before seized, part by the Burgundians, and part by the Goths. The western empire was extinguished in 476, when the city of Rome and all Italy fell into the hands of Odoacer, king of the Turcilingi and the Heruli, who marched thither out of Pannonia. Nevertheless, Syagrius, son of the Roman governor Egidius in

Gaul, still kept an army on foot there, though without a master; there being no longer any Roman emperor. Clovis, who passed the five first years of his reign in peace, marched against him in 486, defeated him in a great battle near Soissons, and afterwards, in 489, caused his head to be cut off. Extending his conquests, he possessed himself of Tongres in 491, and of Rheims in 493, the same year in which he married St. Clotildis. After the battle of Tolbiac in 496, he subdued the whole country as far as the Rhine; and in 479 the Roman army about the Loire, and the people of Armorica, who were become independent and had received new colonies from Britain, submitted to him. In 507 he vanquished and slew Alaric, king of the Visigoths, with his own hands, in a single combat at the head of the two armies near Poitiers, and conquered all the provinces that lie between the Loire and the Pyreneans; but being discomfited by Theodoric before Arles in 509, he left the Visigoths in possession of Septimania, now called Languedoc, and the neighboring provinces; and the Burgundians, possessed of those territories which they had seized one hundred years before. The abbé Dubos (*Histoire Critique de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Françoise dans les Gaules*, 2 vols. quarto) endeavors to prove that the Franks became masters of the greatest part of Gaul, not as invaders, but by alliances with the Romans. It is certain they gained the friendship of most of the old inhabitants, pretending they came only to rescue and protect them in their liberties; and their government was more mild and desirable than that of the Goths or Burgundians, to whom the Gauls must have otherwise been left a

Even while he was a pagan he

prey. Neither did the Franks extirpate the conquered Gauls, but mixed with them, and even learned their language. Nor did they deprive the old inhabitants of their estates, except in some particular cases; these forfeited estates given to the Franks were called Salic lands, and subject to the Salic law, by which all contests about them were to be determined by a combat of the parties and their friends. The other estates enjoyed by the Franks consisted of civil benefices, after the Roman custom, from which that word was applied to ecclesiastical livings. These benefices were governments, lucrative dignities, or estates conferred only for the life of the grantee. Under the second race of kings in France many powerful persons made these benefices hereditary in their families in imitation of the Lombards, from whom fiefs and the feudatory laws (things unknown among the Romans) were derived. By these fiefs the kingdoms of Italy, Germany, and France were extremely weakened; the kings in France began from the twelfth century to recover such alienations, and abolish all petty sovereignties in their dominions; a great project, which was not entirely completed till within our memory.

Many additions were made to the Salic laws by several ancient French kings, so that the primitive articles are not to be distinguished. The most famous point is the exclusion of females from the succession to the crown, on which see the learned dissertation of abbé Vertot, upon the origin of the Salic law, inserted into *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, t. 2. The most curious editions of the Salic law, divided into several chapters, are that of Fr. Pitton at Paris, in 1602, with a

treated the Christians, especially the bishops, very well, spared the churches, and honored holy men, particularly St. Remigius, to whom he caused one of the vessels of his church, which a soldier had taken away, to be returned, and because the man made some demur, slew him with his own hand. St. Clotildis, whom he married in 493, earnestly endeavored to persuade him to embrace the faith of Christ. The first fruit of their marriage was a son, who, by the mother's procurement, was baptized, and called Ingomer. This child died during the time of his wearing the white habit, within the first week after his baptism. Clovis harshly reproached Clotildis, and

glossary of obscure terms and Teutonic words; the of Melchior Goldast, in his *Collectio Constitutionum Imperialis*, t. 3, p. 15, at Offenbach, in 1610. Another beautiful one at Antwerp in 1649, with an excellent glossary compiled by Godfrey Wendelin; another at Paris, with the notes of the great magistrate, Jerome Bignon, together with the formularies of Marculsus; another by Baluze, with the capitulars of Charlemagne, who caused the Salic law to be revised; that of Eccard, together with the law of the Ripuarians; and lastly, that in Schitter's *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Teutonicarum*, in 1727. On the Original Constitution of the Government of the Franks, see F. Griffet, *Mélanges Historiques et Critiques*, t. 1, p. 1; Diss. Against Boulainvilliers et Gourcy, *Quel fut l'état des Personnes en France Sous la première et seconde Race de nos Rois* 1769.

said, "If he had been consecrated in the name of my gods, he had not died; but having been baptized in the name of yours, he could not live." The queen answered: "I thank God, who has thought me worthy of bearing a child whom he has called to his kingdom." She had afterwards another son, whom she procured to be baptized, and who was named Chlodimir. He also fell sick, and the king said in great anger: "It could not be otherwise: he will die presently, in the same manner his brother did, having been baptized in the name of your Christ." God was pleased to put the good queen to this trial; but by her prayers this child recovered.¹⁰ She never ceased to exhort the king to forsake his idols, and to acknowledge the true God; but he held out a long time against all her arguments, till, on the following occasion, God was pleased wonderfully to bring him to the confession of his holy name, and to dissipate that fear of the world which chiefly held him back so long, he being apprehensive lest his pagan subjects should take umbrage at such a change.

The Suevi and Alemanni in Germany assembled a numerous and valiant army, and under the command of several kings, passed the Rhine, hoping to dislodge

their countrymen the Franks, and obtain for themselves the glorious spoils of the Roman empire in Gaul. Clovis marched to meet them near his frontiers, and one of the fiercest battles recorded in history was fought at Tolbiac. Some think that the situation of these German nations, the shortness of the march of Clovis, and the route which he took, point out the place of this battle to have been somewhere in Upper Alsace.¹¹ But most modern historians agree that Tolbiac is the present Zulpich, situated in the duchy of Juliers, four leagues from Cologne, between the Meuse and the Rhine; and this is demonstrated by the judicious and learned d'Anville.¹² In this engagement the king had given the command of the infantry to his cousin Sigebert, fighting himself at the head of the cavalry. The shock of the enemy was so terrible, that Sigebert was in a short time carried wounded out of the field, and the infantry was entirely routed, and put to flight. Clovis saw the whole weight of the battle falling on his cavalry; yet stood his ground, fighting himself like a lion, covered with blood and dust; and encouraging his men to exert their utmost strength,

¹¹ See Henschenius ad 6 Febr. In S. Vastasto, and F. Barre, *Hist. d'Allemagne*, t. I, sub fine.

¹² D'Anville, *les Etats formés apres la Chute de l'Empire Romaine n Occident*, 4to., 1771.

¹⁰ S. Greg. Turon. *Hist.* I. 2, c. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

he performed with them wonderful exploits of valor. Notwithstanding these efforts, they were at length borne down, and began to flee and disperse themselves; nor could they be rallied by the commands and entreaties of their king, who saw the battle upon which his empire depended, quite desperate. Clotildis had said to him in taking leave: "My lord, you are going to conquest; but in order to be victorious, invoke the God of the Christians: he is the sole lord of the universe, and is styled the God of armies. If you address yourself to him with confidence, nothing can resist you. Though your enemies were a hundred against one, you would triumph over them." The king called to mind these her words in his present extremity, and lifting-up his eyes to heaven, said, with tears, "O Christ, whom Clotildis invokes as Son of the living God, I implore thy succor. I have called upon my gods, and find they have no power. I therefore invoke thee; I believe in thee. Deliver me from my enemies, and I will be baptized in thy name." No sooner had he made this prayer than his scattered cavalry began to rally about his person; the battle was renewed with fresh vigor, and the chief king and generalissimo of the enemy being slain, the whole army threw down their arms, and begged for quarter. Clovis granted them their lives and liberty upon condition that the country of

the Suevi in Germany should pay him an annual tribute. He seems to have also subdued and imposed the same yoke upon the Boioarians, or Bavarians; for his successors gave that people their first princes or dukes, as F. Daniel shows at large. This miraculous victory was gained in the fifteenth year of his reign, of Christ 496.

Clovis, from that, memorable day, thought of nothing but of preparing himself for the holy laver of regeneration. In his return from this expedition he passed by Toul, and there took with him St. Vedast, a holy priest who led a retired life in that city, that he might be instructed by him in the faith during his journey; so impatient was he to fulfil his vow of becoming a Christian, that the least wilful delay appeared to him criminal. The queen, upon this news, sent privately to St. Remigius to come to her, and went with him herself to meet the king in Champagne. Clovis no sooner saw her, but he cried out to her, "Clovis has vanquished the Alemanni, and you have triumphed over Clovis. The business you have so much at heart is done; my baptism can be no longer delayed." The queen answered, "To the God of hosts is the glory of both these triumphs due." She encouraged him forthwith to accomplish his vow, and presented to him St. Remigius as the most holy bishop in his dominions.

This great prelate continued his instruction, and prepared him for baptism by the usual practices of fasting, penance, and prayer. Clovis suggested to him that he apprehended the people that obeyed him would not be willing to forsake their gods, but said he would speak to them according to his instructions. He assembled the chiefs of his nation for this purpose; but they prevented his speaking, and cried out with a loud voice, "My lord, we abandon mortal gods, and are ready to follow the immortal God, whom Remigius teaches."

St. Remigius and St. Vedast therefore instructed and prepared them for baptism. Many bishops repaired to Rheims for this solemnity, which they judged proper to perform on Christmas day, rather than to defer it till Easter. The king set the rest an example of compunction and devotion, laying aside his purple and crown, and, covered with ashes, imploring night and day the divine mercy. To give an external pomp to this sacred action, in order to strike the senses of a barbarous people, and impress a sensible awe and respect upon their minds, the good queen took care that the streets from the palace to the great church should be adorned with rich hangings, and that the church and baptistery should be lighted up with a great number of perfumed wax tapers, and scented with exquisite odors. The

catechumens marched in procession, carrying crosses, and singing the Litany. St. Remigius conducted the king by the hand, followed by the queen and the people. Coming near the sacred font, the holy bishop, who had with great application softened the heart of this proud barbarian conqueror into sentiments of Christian meekness and humility, said to him, "Bow down your neck with meekness, great Sicambrian prince: adore what you have hitherto burnt; and burn what you have hitherto adored." Words which may be emphatically addressed to every penitent, to express the change of his heart and conduct, in renouncing the idols of his passions, and putting on the spirit of sincere Christian piety and humility. The king was baptized by St. Remigius on Christmas day, as St. Avitus assures us.¹³ St. Remigius afterwards baptized Albofleda, the king's sister, and three thousand persons of his army, that is, of the Franks, who were yet only a body of troops dispersed among the Gauls. Albofleda died soon after, and the king being extremely afflicted at her loss, St. Remigius wrote him a letter of consolation, representing to him the happiness of such a death in the grace of baptism, by which we ought to believe she had received the crown of virgins.¹⁴ Lantilda, another

¹³ Fleury, l. 30, n. 46, etc.; Avitus, ep. 166, etc. See Suysken, Sec. 7 p. 80.

¹⁴ In App. Op. S. Greg. Tur. P. 1326, et apud



sister of Clovis, who had fallen into the Arian heresy, was reconciled to the Catholic faith, and received the unction of the holy chrism, that is, says Fleury, confirmation; though some think it only a rite used in the reconciliation of certain heretics. The king, after his baptism, bestowed many lands on St. Remigius, who distributed them to several churches, as he did the donations of several others among the Franks, lest they should imagine he had attempted their conversion out of interest. He gave a considerable part to St. Mary's church at Laon, where he had been brought up; and established Genebald, a nobleman skilled in profane and divine learning, first bishop of that see. He had married a niece of St. Remigius, but was

separated from her to devote himself to the practices of piety. Such was the original of the bishopric of Laon, which before was part of the diocese of Rheims. St. Remigius also constituted Theodore bishop of Tournay in 487; St. Vedast, bishop of Arras in 498, and of Cambrai in 510. He sent Antimund to preach the faith to the Morini, and to found the church of Terouenne. Clovis built churches in many places, conferred upon them great riches, and by an edict invited all his subjects to embrace the Christian faith. St. Avitus, bishop of Vienne, wrote to him a letter of congratulation upon his baptism, and exhorts him to send ambassadors to the remotest German nations beyond the Rhine, to solicit them to open their hearts to the faith.

When Clovis was preparing to march against Alaric, in 506, St. Remigius sent him a letter of advice how he ought to govern his people so as to draw down upon himself the divine blessings.¹⁵ "Choose," said he, "wise counsellors, who will be an honor to your reign. Respect the clergy. Be the father and protector of your people; let it be your study to lighten as much as possible all the burdens which the necessities of the state may oblige them to bear: comfort and relieve the poor; feed the orphans; protect the widows; suffer no extortion. Let the gate of your palace be open to all, that everyone may have recourse to you for justice: employ your great revenues in redeeming captives," etc.¹⁶ Clovis,

after his victories over the Visigoths, and the conquest of Toulouse, their capital in Gaul, sent a circular letter to all the bishops in his dominions, in which he allowed them to give liberty to any of the captives he had taken, but desired them only to make use of this privilege in favor of persons of whom they had some knowledge.¹⁷ Upon the news of these victories of Clovis over the Visigoths, Anastatius, the eastern emperor, to court his alliance against the Goths, who had principally concurred to the extinction of the western empire, sent him the ornaments and titles of Patrician, Consul, and Augustus: from which time he was habited in purple, and styled himself Augustus. This great conqueror invaded Burgundy to compel king Gondebald to allow a dower to his queen, and to revenge the murder of her father and uncle; but was satisfied with the yearly tribute which the tyrant promised to pay him. The perfidious Arian afterwards murdered his third brother; whereupon Clovis again attacked and vanquished him; but at the entreaty of Clotildis, suffered him to reign tributary to him,

¹⁵ Conc. T. 4, p. 1402.

¹⁶ We have two other letters of St. Remigius extant, written to fellow bishops, in all, four, not five, as Baillet mistook. The Testament of St. Remigius, even without the interpolations found in some copies, is rejected by Rivet, etc., though it is judged genuine by Mabillon, Du Cange, and Ceillier, and was known to Hincmar and Flodoard. The churches of Rheims, Laon, Arras, and others, enjoy to this day the lands which are by it bequeathed to them. St. Remigius gave to the church of Rheims a silver chalice, ornamented with several images, and on it he caused three verses to be engraved, which express the Catholic doctrine concerning the blessed eucharist.

*"Hauriat hinc populus vitam de sanguine sacro,
Injecto æterns quem fudit vulnere Christus,*

Remigius reddit Domino sua vota sacerdos."
Hincmar, in vitâ Remigii.

This chalice was sold in Hincmar's time for the ransom of captives taken by the Normans.

¹⁷ Conc. T. 4, p. 1402. Du Chesne, Hist. Francor. Script. T. 1, p. 836; and Append. Op. S. Greg. Turon. P. 1327.

and allowed his son Sigismond to ascend the throne after his death. Under the protection of this great monarch, St. Remigius wonderfully propagated the gospel of Christ by the conversion of a great part of the French nation; in which work God endowed him with an extraordinary gift of miracles, as we are assured not only by Hincmar, Flodoard, and all other historians who have mentioned him, but also by other incontestable monuments and authorities. Not to mention his Testament, in which mention is made of his miracles, the bishops who were assembled in the celebrated conference that was held at Lyons against the Arians in his time, declared they were stirred up to exert their zeal in defense of the Catholic faith by the example of Remigius, "Who," say they,¹⁸ "hath everywhere destroyed the altars of the idols by a multitude of miracles and signs." The chief among these prelates were Stephen, bishop of Lyons, St. Avitus of Vienne, his brother Apollinaris of Valence, and Eonius of Arles. They all went to wait upon Gondebald, the Arian king of the Burgundians, who was at Savigny, and entreated him to command his Arian bishops to hold a public conference with them. When he showed much unwillingness they all prostrated themselves before him, and wept bitterly. The

king was sensibly affected at the sight, and kindly raising them up, promised to give them an answer soon after. They went back to Lyons, and the king returning thither the next day, told them their desire was granted. It was the eve of St. Justus, and the Catholic bishops passed the whole night in the church of that saint in devout prayer; the next day, at the hour appointed by the king, they repaired to his palace, and, before him and many of his senators, entered upon the disputation, St. Avitus speaking for the Catholics, and one Boniface for the Arians. The latter answered only by clamors and injurious language, treating the Catholics as worshippers of three gods. The issue of a second meeting, some days after, was the same with that of the first: and many Arians were converted. Gondebald himself, some time after, acknowledged to St. Avitus, that he believed the Son and the Holy Ghost to be equal to the Father, and desired him to give him privately the unction of the holy chrism. St. Avitus said to him, "Our Lord declares, Whoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father. You are a king, and have no persecution to fear, as the apostles had. You fear a sedition among the people, but ought not to cherish such a weakness. God does not love him, who, for an earthly kingdom, dares not confess him

18 Conc. T. 4, p. 1318. Spicileg. T. 5, p. 110.

before the world.”¹⁹ The king knew not what to answer; but never had the courage to make a public profession of the Catholic faith.²⁰ St. Remigius by his zealous endeavors promoted the Catholic interest in Burgundy, and entirely crushed both idolatry and the Arian heresy in the French dominions. In a synod he converted, in his old age, an Arian bishop who came thither to dispute against him.²¹ King Clovis died in 511. St. Remigius survived him many years, and died in the joint

reign of his four sons, on the 13th of January in the year 533, according to Rivet, and in the ninety-fourth year of his age, having been bishop above seventy years. The age before the irruption of the Franks had been of all others the most fruitful in great and learned men in Gaul; but studies were there at the lowest ebb from the time of St. Remigius's death, till they were revived in the reign of Charlemagne.²² The body of this holy archbishop was buried in St. Christopher's church at Rheims, and found incorrupt when it was taken up by archbishop Hincmar in 852. Pope Leo IX, during a council which he held at Rheims in 1049, translated it into the church of the Benedictine abbey, which bears his name in that city, on the 1st of October, on which day, in memory of this and other translations, he appointed his festival to be celebrated, which, in Florus and other calendars, was before marked on the 13th of January. In 1646 this saint's body was again visited by the archbishop with many honorable witnesses, and found incorrupt and whole in all its parts; but the skin was dried, and stuck to the winding-sheet, as it was described by Hincmar above eight hundred years before. It is now above twelve hundred years since his death.²³

19 S. Greg. Tur. Hist. l. 2, c. 34.

20 In the Gombette law, framed by this Gondebald, king of Burgundy, art. 45, the first mention is made of duels, to which men were commanded to refer those contests which they refused to determine by oaths. The Lombard laws of Italy authorized the same, but only with a buckler and clubs, cum fustibus et clypeo. This execrable practice became more pernicious when more dangerous weapons were used, and it was usurped by private authority; and though it was of barbarous extraction, unknown to all civilized nations most renowned for true valor, (as the Jews, Greeks, and Romans,) and itself the basest as well as the most horrible and unnatural crime, it has been able, by maxims equally shocking to reason and religion, to pass, by a false prostitution of those names, for a test of courage, and a point of honor; especially since the challenge sent by Francis I of France to the emperor Charles V, whom he could no longer face with an army, as Spelman takes notice.

21 Conc. T. 4, p. 1572, from Hincmar, and Flodoard, c. 16.

22 See Hist. Littérar. De la Fr. T. 1, 2, 3.

23 Gall. Chr. Nov. t. 9, p. 13, et 220.

Care, watchings, and labors were sweet to this good pastor, for the sake of souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Knowing what pains our redeemer took, and how much he suffered for sinners, during the whole course of his mortal life, and how tenderly his divine heart is ever open to them, this faithful minister was never weary in preaching, exhorting, mourning, and praying for those that were committed to his charge. In imitation of the good shepherd and prince of pastors, he was always ready to lay down his life for their safety: he bore them all in his heart, and watched over them, always trembling lest any among them should perish, especially through his neglect: for he considered with what indefatigable rage the wolf watched continually to devour them. As all human endeavors are too weak to discover the wiles, and repulse the assaults of the enemy, without the divine light and strength, this succor he studied to obtain by humble supplications; and when he was not taken up in external service for his flock, he secretly poured forth his soul in devout prayer before God for himself and them.

St. Bavo

Anchoret
Patron of Ghent

This great model of penance, called Allowin, surnamed Bavo,

was a nobleman, and native of that part of Brabant called Hasbain, at present comprised in the territory of Liege. After having led a very irregular life, and being left a widower by the death of his wife, he was moved to a sincere conversion to God by a sermon which he heard St. Amand preach. The apostolical man had no sooner finished his discourse, but Bavo followed him, and threw himself at his feet, bathed in a flood of tears. Sobs expressed the sorrow and emotions of his heart more eloquently than any words could have done, and it was some time before his voice was able to break through his sighs. When he had somewhat recovered himself, he confessed himself the basest and most ungrateful of all sinners, and earnestly begged to be directed in the paths of true penance and salvation. The holy pastor, who saw in his unfeigned tears the sincerity of his compunction, was far from flattering him in the beginning of his work, by which his penance would have remained imperfect; and while he encouraged him by the consideration of the boundless mercy of God, he set before his eyes the necessity of appeasing the divine indignation by a course of penance proportioned to the enormity of his offences, and of applying powerful remedies to the deep wounds of his soul, that his inveterate distempers might be radically cured, his vicious