

embrace Christianity, as not only to gain him over to the faith, but to inspire him with an eager desire of laying down his life for the same. He openly declared himself a Christian, and was apprehended and condemned to cruel tortures. The executioners being weary with tormenting him, betook themselves to the method of argument and persuasion in order to prevail with him to renounce Christ. The tears and cries of his wife Paulina, of his children, and of his father-in-law, Felix, were sufficient to have shaken a mind not superior to all the assaults of hell. But Polyeuctus, strengthened by God, grew only the firmer in his faith, and received the sentence of death with such cheerfulness and joy, and exhorted all to renounce their idols with so much energy on the road to execution, that many were converted. He was beheaded on the 10th of January, in the persecution of Decius, or Valerian, about the year 250, or 257. The Christians buried his body in the city. Nearchus gathered his blood in a cloth, and afterwards wrote his acts. The Greeks keep his festival very solemnly: and all the Latin martyrologies mention him. There was in Melitine a famous Church of St. Polyeuctus, in the fourth age, in which St. Euthymius often prayed. There was also a very stately one in Constantinople, under Justinian, the vault of which was covered with plates of gold, in which it was the custom for men to make their most solemn oaths, as is related by St. Gregory of Tours. (1) The same author informs us, in his history of the Franks, (2) that the kings of France of the first race used to confirm their treaties by the name of Polyeuctus. The martyrology ascribed to saint Jerom, and the most ancient Armenian calendars, place his feast on the 7th of January, which seems to have been the day of his martyrdom. The Greeks defer his festival to the 9th of January: but it is marked on the 13th of February in the ancient martyrology, which was sent from Rome to Aquileia in the eighth century, and which is copied by Ado, Usuard, and the Roman Martyrology. See his acts taken from those written by Nearchus, the saint's friend, and Tillem. t. 3. p. 424. Jos. Assemani in calend. ad 9 Januarii, t. 6.

ST. GREGORY II. POPE, C.

HE was born in Rome, to an affluent fortune, and being educated in the palace of the popes, acquired great skill in the holy

(1) De Glor. Mart. c. 103.

(2) Hist. l. 7. c. 6.

scriptures and in ecclesiastical affairs, and attained to an eminent degree of sanctity. Pope Sergius I. to whom he was very dear, ordained him subdeacon. Under the succeeding popes, John the sixth and seventh, Sisinnius, and Constantine, he was treasurer of the church, and afterwards library keeper, and was charged with several important commissions. The fifth general council had been held upon the affair of the three chapters, in 553, in the reign of Justinian, and the sixth against the Monothelites, in those of Constantine Pogonatus and Pope Agatho, in 660. With a view of adding a supplement of new canons to those of the aforesaid two councils, the bishops of the Greek church, to the number of two hundred and eleven, held the council called Quini-sexth, in a hall of the imperial palace at Constantinople, named Trullus, in 692, which laid a foundation of certain differences in discipline between the Eastern and Western churches; for in the thirteenth canon it was enacted, that a man who was before married should be allowed to receive the holy orders of subdeacon, deacon, or priest, without being obliged to leave his wife, though this was forbidden to bishops. (can. 12.) It was also forbidden (can. 55.) to fast on Saturdays, even in Lent. Pope Sergius I. refused to confirm this council; and, in 695, the emperor Justinian II. surnamed Rhinotmetus, who had succeeded his father, Constantine Pogonatus, in 685, was dethroned for his cruelty, and his nose being slit, (from which circumstances he received his surname,) banished into Chersonesus. First Leontius, then Apsimarus Tiberius ascended the throne; but Justinian recovered it in 705, and invited Pope Constantine into the East, hoping to prevail upon him to confirm the council in Trullo. The pope was received with great honour, and had with him our saint, who, in his name, answered the questions put by the Greeks concerning the said council. After their return to Rome, upon the death of Constantine, Gregory was chosen pope, and ordained on the 19th of May, 715. The emperor Justinian being detested both by the army and people, Bardanes, who took the name of Philippicus, an Armenian, one of his generals, revolted, took Constantinople, put him and his son Tiberius, only seven years old, to death, and usurped the sovereignty in December, 711. In Justinian II. was extinguished the family of Heraclius. Philippicus abetted warmly the heresy of the Monothelites, and caused the sixth council to be prescribed in a pretended synod at Constantinople. His reign was very

short; for Artemius, his secretary, who took the name of Anastasius II., deposed him, and stepped into the throne on the 4th of June, 713. By him the Monothelites were expelled; but, after a reign of two years and seven months, seeing one Theodosius chosen emperor by the army which had revolted in January, 716, he withdrew and took the monastic habit at Thessalonica. The Eastern army having proclaimed Leo III., surnamed the Isaurian, emperor on the 25th of March, 717, Theodosius and his son embraced an ecclesiastical state, and lived in peace among the clergy.

Pope Gregory signalized the beginning of his popedom by deposing John VI. the Monothelite, false patriarch of Constantinople, who had been nominated by Philippicus, and he promoted the election of St. Germanus, who was translated to that dignity from Cyzicus, in 715. With unwearied watchfulness and zeal he laid himself out in extirpating heresies on all sides, and in settling a reformation of manners. Besides an hospital for old men, he rebuilt the great monastery near the church of St. Paul at Rome, and, after the death of his mother, in 718, changed her house into the monastery of St. Agatha. The same year he re-established the abbey of Mount Cassino, sending thither, from Rome, the holy abbot St. Petronax to take upon him the government, one hundred and forty years after it had been laid in ruins by the Lombards. This holy abbot lived to see monastic discipline settled here in so flourishing a manner, that in the same century Carloman, duke or prince of the French, Rachis, king of the Lombards, St. Willebald, St. Sturm, first abbot of Fulda, and other eminent persons, fled to this sanctuary. (1) Our holy pope commissioned zealous missionaries to preach the faith in Germany, and consecrated St. Corbinian bishop of Frisingen, and St. Boniface bishop of Mentz. Leo the Isaurian protected the catholic church during the first ten years of his reign, and St. Gregory II. laid up among the archives of his church several letters which he had received from him, from the year 717 to 726, which proved afterwards authentic monuments of his perfidy. For being infatuated by certain Jews, who had gained an ascendant over him by certain pretended astrological predictions, in 726 he commanded holy images to be abolished, and enforced the execution of his edicts of a cruel persecution. St. Germanus, and other orthodox prelates in the East, endeav-

(1) Bulteau, *Hist. Mon. d'Occid.* t. 2. l. 4. c. 2. p. 8.

voured to reclaim him, refused to obey his edicts, and addressed themselves to Pope Gregory. Our saint employed long the arms of tears and entreaties; yet strenuously maintained the people of Italy in their allegiance to their prince, as Anastasius assures us. A rebellion was raised in Sicily, but soon quelled by the death of Artemius, who had assumed the purple. The pope vigorously opposed the mutineers, both here and in other parts of the West. When he was informed that the army at Ravenna and Venice, making zeal a pretence for rebellion, had created a new emperor, he effectually opposed their attempt, and prevented the effect. Several disturbances which were raised in Rome were pacified by his care. Nevertheless he by letters encouraged the pastors of the church to resist the heresy which the emperor endeavoured to establish by bloodshed and violence. The tyrant sent orders to several of his officers, six or seven times, to murder the pope: but he was so faithfully guarded by the Romans and Lombards, that he escaped all their snares. St. Gregory II. held the pontificate fifteen years, eight months, and twenty-three days, and died in 731, on the 10th of February; but the Roman Martyrology consecrates to his memory the 13th, which was probably the day on which his corpse was deposited in the Vatican church.

ST. MARTINIANUS, HERMIT AT ATHENS.

MARTINIANUS was born at Cæsarea in Palestine, during the reign of Constantius. At eighteen years of age he retired to a mountain near that city, called, The place of the Ark, where he lived for twenty-five years, among many holy solitaries in the practice of all virtues, and was endowed with the gift of miracles. A wicked strumpet of Cæsarea, called Zoe, hearing his sanctity much extolled, at the instigation of the devil undertook to pervert him. She feigned herself a poor woman, wandering in the desert late at night, and ready to perish. By this pretext she prevailed on Martinianus to let her remain that night in his cell. Towards morning she threw aside her rags, put on her best attire, and going in to Martinianus, told him, she was a lady of the city, possessed of a large estate and plentiful fortune, all which she came to offer him with herself. She also instanced, in the examples of the saints of the Old Testament, who were rich and engaged in the conjugal state, to induce him to abandon his