

consent of the thanes or noblemen, and by the authority of Ethelwolph, king of the West-Saxons, to whom Mercia was then tributary. Wistan turned all his thoughts towards a heavenly kingdom which will have no end; but Bertulph, like another Herod, feared lest Wistan should be called to the crown, at least at his death, and contrived to have him treacherously assassinated. His son Berfert or Brithfard, whom he designed to leave his heir, perpetrated the crime. Having invited the pious prince to meet him at a place called from that time to this day, says Capgrave, Wistanostowe, whilst the saint saluted him with a kiss of peace, he took out a sword which he carried secretly under his cloak, and with a violent blow cut off the upper part of his head. One of the assassin's attendants despatched the martyr by stabbing him through the body. This happened on the 1st of June, 849. Before the end of that year Ethelwolph, alleging that Bertulph was not sufficiently accomplished in the art of war to defend the country against the infidels, deposed him, and bestowed the crown on Burhred, the last king of Mercia. The body of St. Wistan was buried by the care of his mother Enfleda, daughter of Celwulph, at Repton, and honoured with many miracles. It was some years after translated to the monastery of Evesham. See Ingulph, Malmesbury the monk of Westminster, and Brompton, by whose histories several circumstances of the legend of St. Wistan in Capgrave are to be corrected.

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## JUNE II.

### SS. POTHINUS, BISHOP, SANCTUS, ATTALUS, BLANDINA,

#### AND THE OTHER MARTYRS OF LYONS

From the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, extant though imperfect, in Eusebius's Hist. b. 5, ch. 1, 2, 3, one of the most precious and most moving monuments of the primitive ages, as Jos. Scaliger observes, in his notes on the Chronicle of Eusebius.

A. D. 177.

AFTER the miraculous victory obtained by the prayers of the

Christians under Marcus Aurelius, in 174, the church enjoyed a kind of peace, though it was often disturbed in particular places by popular commotions, or by the superstitious fury of certain governors. This appears from the violent persecution which was raised three years after the aforesaid victory, at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, in 177; whilst St. Pothinus was bishop of Lyons, and St. Irenæus, who had been sent thither by St. Polycarp out of Asia,(1) was a priest of that city. Many of the principal persons of this church were Greeks, and came from Asia; being, doubtless, led by a zealous desire to propagate the kingdom of Christ, and invited by the great intercourse of traffic between the ports of Asia and Marseilles. The progress which the gospel had made, and the eminent sanctity of those who professed it in that country, enraged the devil, and stirred up the malice of the idolaters, who in a transport of sudden fury, resolved to extirpate their very name; not knowing that the church of Christ, planted by his cross, grew more fruitful by the sufferings of its children, as a vine flourishes by being pruned. The conflicts of the glorious martyrs, who on this occasion had the honour to seal their faith with their blood, were recorded by those who were eye-witnesses, and the companions of their sufferings, in a letter written by them on purpose to their old friends and brethren, the Christians of Asia and Phrygia. The piety, eloquence, and animated style of this epistle, seems to leave no doubt but that St. Irenæus was the principal author.(2) According to the remark of a modern historian,(3) the combats of the martyrs are here painted in so lively colours, that their spirit appears as it were living in the dead letter, and their blood spilt for Jesus Christ seems to shine throughout the relation.

It is impossible, say the authors of this letter, for us to give an exact account, nor will it be easy to conceive the extent of our present calamities, the rage of the Pagans against the saints, and the sufferings of the holy martyrs among us. For the adversary directs his whole force against us, and lets us see already what we are to expect when he is let loose, and allowed

(1) St. Greg. Turon. l. 1, Hist. France, c. 20.

(2) Vales, Not. ad. l. 5. Euseb. Tillem. t. 3, p. 2.

(3) Du Bosquet, l. 2 Hist. Eccles. ch. 18.

to attack the church in the end of the world. He makes his assaults boldly, and stirs up his agents against the servants of God. Their animosity runs so high that we are not only driven from private houses, from the baths and public places, but even forbidden to show ourselves at all. But the grace of God, which is an overmatch for all the powers of hell, hath rescued the weak from the danger, and from the temptation of the fiery trial,\* and exposed such only to the combat as are able by an invincible patience to stand their ground, like so many unshaken pillars of the faith, and dare even invite sufferings, and defy all the malice and strength of the enemy. These champions have fought the powers of darkness with success, borne all manner of infamy, and the most inhuman torments, looked on all their sufferings as nothing, but rushed through them with an intrepidity that spoke them thoroughly persuaded that all the miseries of this life are not fit to be allowed any consideration, when weighed against the glory of the world to come. At first the people attacked them in a tumultuous manner, struck them, dragged them about the streets, threw stones at them, plundered, confined them, fell on them with all the exorbitancies of an incensed mob, when allowed to take their own revenge of their enemies; all which the Christians bore with an inexpressible patience. After this first discharge of their rage they proceeded more regularly. The tribune and the magistrates of the town ordered them to appear in the public place, where they were examined before the populace, made a glorious confession of their faith, and then were sent to prison, where they were to await the arrival of the governor. When that judge came to town, they were carried before him, and used with so much cruelty, that Vettius Epagathus,† one of our number, fired with a holy resentment at our treatment,

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\* The humility of the authors of this letter, in order to show they had no share in the praise of the martyrs, made them ascribe to their own weakness and cowardice that they had escaped the fury of the persecutors, though their style speaks them animated with the same heroic spirit.

† Vettius is mentioned in the acts as a person of high rank, and he is called by St. Gregory of Tours, the first senator of all the Gauls. The Vettii, or Vectii, were a most ancient and noble family, which often adorned the first dignities in the commonwealth at Rome.

desired to be heard on that subject. He was full of the love of God and his neighbour; a man so exactly virtuous, that though young, the character of old Zacharias might justly be applied to him; for he walked in all the commandments blameless. His heart was inflamed with an ardent zeal for the glory of God; and he was active and indefatigable whenever his neighbour wanted his assistance. This excellent person undertook the defence of the injured brethren; and promised to make it appear, that the Christians were guilty of no impious practices. But the whole crowd, who were too well acquainted with his merit, opposed the motion in a noisy and tumultuous manner; and the governor, determined not to grant him that reasonable request, which impeached him and his associates for injustice, interrupted him, by asking whether he was a Christian? Upon his declaring his faith boldly, he was ranked among the martyrs, with the additional title of The Advocate of the Christians; which, indeed, was justly his due. And now it was easy to distinguish between such as came thither well provided for the trial, and resolved to suffer all extremities, and such as were not prepared for the battle. The former finished their glorious course with the utmost alacrity; while the latter started back at the near view of what was prepared for them upon persevering in the faith, and quitted the field; which was the case of ten persons. Their cowardice and apostacy not only proved an inexpressible affliction to us, but also cooled the zeal of several, who were not yet apprehended, and had employed their liberty in a constant attendance on the martyrs, in spite of all the dangers to which their charity might expose them. We were all now in the utmost consternation, which did not arise from the fear of torments, but the apprehension of losing more of our number in the way. But our late loss was abundantly repaired by fresh supplies of generous martyrs, who were seized every day, till our two churches were deprived of all their eminent men, whom we had been used to look on as the main support of religion among us.

As the governor's orders for letting none of us escape were very strict, several Pagans in the service of Christians were taken with their masters. These slaves, fearing they should be

put to the same torments which they saw the saints endure, at the instigation of the devil and the soldiers, accused us of feeding on human flesh, like Thyestes, engaging in incestuous marriages, like Œdipus, and several other impious extravagances, which the principles of our religion forbid us to mention, of even think of, and which we can hardly persuade ourselves were ever committed by men. These calumnies being divulged, the people were so outrageously incensed against us, that they who till then had retained some sparks of friendship for us, were transported against us with hatred, and foamed with rage. It is impossible to express the severity of what the ministers of Satan inflicted on the holy martyrs on this occasion, to force some blasphemous expression from their mouths. The fury of the governor and soldiers, and the people, fell most heavily upon Sanctus, a native of Vienne, and a deacon : also on Maturus, who, though but lately baptized, was yet bold and strong enough for the combat ; on Attalus, a native of Pergamus, but who had ever been the pillar and support of our church : and on Blandina, a slave, in whom Christ has shown us that those whom men look on with contempt, and whose condition places them below the regard of the world, are often raised to the highest honours by Almighty God for their ardent love of him, manifested more by works than words or empty show. She was of so weak a constitution, that we were all alarmed for her, and her mistress, one of the martyrs, was full of apprehensions that she would not have the courage and resolution to make a free and open confession of her faith. But Blandina was so powerfully assisted and strengthened, that she bore all the torments her executioners, who relieved each other, could ply her with from break of day till night ; they owned themselves conquered, protested they had no more torments in reserve, and wondered how she could live after what she had endured from their hands ; declaring that they were of opinion that any one of the torments inflicted on her would have been sufficient to despatch her, according to the common course of nature, instead of the many violent ones she had undergone. But that blessed person, like a valiant combatant, received fresh strength and vigour from the confession of her faith. The frequent repetition of these words : " I am a Christian ; no wickedness is transacted

among us:" took off the edge of her pains, and made her appear insensible to all she suffered.

The deacon Sanctus, too, endured most exquisite torments, with more than human patience. The heathens, indeed, hoped these severities would at last force some unbecoming expressions from him; but he bore up against their attacks, with such resolution and strength of mind, that he would not so much as tell them his name, his country, or station in the world; and to every question they put to him, he answered in Latin: "I am a Christian;" nor could they get any other answer from him. The governor, and the persons employed in tormenting the martyr, were highly incensed at this; and, having already tried all other arts of cruelty, they applied hot plates of brass to the tenderest parts of his body: but, supported by the powerful grace of God, he still persisted in the profession of his faith. His body was so covered with wounds and bruises, that the very figure of it was lost. Christ, who suffered in him, made him a glorious instrument for conquering the adversary, and a standing proof to others, that there is no grounds for fear, where the love of the Father dwells; nor is there anything that deserves the name of pain, where the glory of Christ is concerned. Some days after, the martyr was brought on the stage again; for the pagans imagined, that his whole body being so sore and inflamed that he could not bear to be touched, it would now be an easy matter to overcome him by a repetition of the same cruelties; or, at least, that he must expire under their hands, and thus strike a horror into the other Christians. But they succeeded in neither of these views; for, to the amazement of all, his body under the latter torments recovered its former strength and shape, and the exact use of all his limbs was restored: so that by this miracle of the grace of Jesus Christ, what was designed as an additional pain, proved an absolute and effectual cure. The devil thought himself secure of Biblis, one of the unhappy persons who had renounced the faith; and desirous to enhance her guilt and punishment by a false impeachment, caused her to be arraigned, believing it would be no hard matter to bring one so weak and timorous to accuse us of impieties. But the force of the torments had a very different effect upon her; they awakened her, as it were,

out of a profound sleep; and those transitory pains turned her thoughts upon the everlasting torments of hell. So that, contrary to what was expected of her, she broke out into the following expostulation: "How can it be imagined that they should feed upon children, whose religion forbids them even to taste the blood of beasts?"\* From that moment she publicly confessed herself a Christian, and was ranked amongst the martyrs. The most violent torments being thus rendered ineffectual by the patience of the martyrs, and the power of Jesus Christ, the devil had recourse to other devices. They were thrown into a dark and loathsome dungeon, had their feet cramped in wooden stocks, and extended to the fifth, or last hole; and all those severities exercised upon them, which are commonly practised by the enraged ministers of darkness upon their prisoners; so great, that numbers of them died of the hardships they endured there. Others, after having been so inhumanly tortured, that one would have thought all the care imaginable could not have recovered them, lay there destitute of all human succour; but so strongly supported from above, both in mind and body, that they comforted and encouraged the rest: whilst others but lately apprehended, and who had as yet undergone no torments, soon died, unable to bear the leatherness of the prison.

Among the persons who suffered for their faith on this occasion was the blessed Pothinus, bishop of Lyons. He was then above ninety years old; and so weak and infirm, that he could hardly breathe. But his ardent desire of laying down his life for Jesus Christ, gave him fresh strength and vigour. He was dragged before the tribunal; for, though his body was worn out with age and infirmity, his life was preserved till that time, that Jesus Christ might triumph in him. He was brought thither by the soldiers and magistrates of the city, the whole multitude hallooing after, and reviling him with as much eagerness and rage as if he had been Christ himself. Being asked by the governor, who was the God of the Christians? Pothinus told him, to prevent his blaspheming, he should know, when he was worthy of that satisfaction. Upon which he was dragged

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\* These Christians still observed the law of abstaining from eating blood, enacted by the Apostles. Acts xv. 20.

about unmercifully, and inhumanly abused. Those who were near him, kicked and struck him without any regard to his venerable age ; and those who were at some distance, pelted him with what first came to hand ; imagining the least tenderness or regard for him would have been an enormous crime, when the honour of their gods was so nearly concerned, which they endeavoured to assert by insulting the martyr. He was scarcely alive when he was carried off, and thrown into prison, where he expired after two days' confinement.

Those who had denied their faith when first taken, were imprisoned too, and shared the same sufferings with the martyrs, for their apostacy at that time did them no service. But then there was this difference between their condition, that those who had generously owned their religion, were confined only as Christians, and no other crime alleged against them ; but the perfidious wretches were imprisoned like murderers and criminals, and thus suffered much more than the martyrs, who were comforted with the joyful prospect of laying down their lives in that glorious cause, and supported by the divine promises, the love of Jesus Christ, and the spirit of their heavenly Father ; while the apostates were tortured with the remorse of conscience. They were distinguished from the others by their very looks : when the martyrs appeared, it was easy to discover a lovely mixture of cheerfulness and majesty in their faces : their very chains appeared graceful, and seemed more like the ornaments of a bride than the marks of malefactors : and their bodies sent forth such an agreeable and pleasant savour, as gave occasion to think that they used perfumes. But those who had basely deserted the cause of Christ, appeared melancholy, dejected, and completely disagreeable. The very pagans reproached them with faint-heartedness and effeminacy, for renouncing their principle, (the honourable, glorious, and salutary name of Christian,) their former profession whereof had ranked them with murderers, an imputation they, by their apostacy, had justly incurred. This sight had a happy influence on several, strengthened them in their profession, and defeated all the attempts the devil could make on their constancy and courage. After this, great variety of torments was allotted to the martyrs ; and thus they offered to the eternal



Father a sort of chaplet, or crown, composed of every kind of flowers of different colours ; for it was fit that these courageous champions, who gained such glorious victories in so great variety of engagements, should receive the crown of immortality. A day was set when the public was to be entertained at the expense of their lives, and Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus were brought out in order to be thrown to the beasts for the barbarous diversion of the heathens. Maturus and Sanctus being conducted into the amphitheatre, were made to pass through the same torments, as if they had not before felt the force of them, and looked like champions, who had worsted the adversary several times, and were just entering on the last trial of their skill and courage. Again they felt the scourges, and were dragged about by the beasts as before ; and in a word, they suffered every torment the incensed multitude were pleased to call for ; who all joined at last in requiring they should be put into the red-hot iron chair, which was granted ; nor did the noisome smell of their roasted flesh, offensive as it was, any way abate, but seemed rather to enhance their rage. They could extort nothing more from Sanctus than his former confession : and he and Maturus, after a long struggle, had their throats cut ; and this their victory was the only entertainment that day.

Blandina was fastened to a post to be devoured by beasts : as her arms were stretched out in the ardour of her prayer, that very posture put the faithful in mind of the sufferings of him who was crucified for their salvation, gave them fresh courage, and assured them that whoever suffers for Jesus Christ, shall partake of the glory of the living God. After she had remained thus exposed for some time, and none of the beasts could be provoked to touch her, she was untied, carried back to prison, and reserved for another combat ; in which she was to gain a complete victory over her malicious adversary the devil, (whom she had already foiled and discomfited on several occasions,) and to animate the brethren to the battle by her example. Accordingly, though she was a poor, weak, inconsiderable slave, yet, by putting on Christ, she became an overmatch for all the art and malice of her enemy, and, by a glorious conflict, attained to the crown of immortality.

Attalus was called for next, as a noted person, and the people were very loud in their demands to see him suffer : who, being one that had always borne a glorious character among us for his excellent life and courage in asserting the truth, boldly entered the field of battle. He was led round the amphitheatre, and this inscription in Latin carried before him : "*This is Attalus, the Christian.*" The whole company was ready to discharge their rage on the martyr, when the governor, understanding he was a Roman citizen, remanded him to prison, and wrote to the emperor to know his pleasure concerning him and the rest of the prisoners. During their reprieve, they gave extraordinary proofs of charity and humility. Notwithstanding such a variety of sufferings for the faith, they would by no means allow us to call them martyrs ; and severely reprimanded any of us, who, in writing or speaking, gave them that title ; which, according to their humble way of reasoning, was due only to Jesus Christ, the faithful and true martyr, or witness—the first-born of the dead, and the guide to eternal life ; or, at most, could only be extended to such as were freed from the prison of the body. These, indeed, said they, may be termed martyrs, because Christ has sealed them by a glorious death ; but we are yet no more than confessors of a mean rank. They then besought the brethren, with tears, to offer up assiduous prayers for their persevering to the end. But, though they refused the title of martyr, yet every action of theirs was expressive of the power of martyrdom ; particularly their meekness, their patience, and the intrepid freedom with which they spoke to the heathens, and which showed them to be void of fear, and in a readiness to suffer anything it was in the power of their enemies to inflict. They humbled themselves at the same time under the powerful hand of God, who hath since raised them to the highest glory ; excusing every body, accusing none ; and, like that great protomartyr, St. Stephen, praying for their persecutors. But their chief concern, on the motive of sincere charity, was how to rescue those unhappy persons from the jaws of the devil, whom that infernal serpent reckoned he had as good as swallowed up. Far from insulting over the lapsed, or valuing themselves upon the comparison, they freely administered to their spiritual wants, out of their

abundance, the rich graces with which God had favoured and distinguished them; expressing the tenderness of a mother for them, and shedding floods of tears before their heavenly Father for their salvation. Thus they asked for life, and it was granted them, so that their brethren partook of it. For their endeavours were so successful, and their discourse and behaviour so persuasive, that the church had the pleasure of seeing several of her children recover new life, ready to make a generous confession of the sacred name they had renounced, and ever offer themselves to the trial.

Among the martyrs, there was one Alcibiades, who had long been used to a very austere life, and to live entirely on bread and water.\* He seemed resolved to continue this practice during his confinement; but Attalus, after his first combat in the amphitheatre, understood, by a revelation, that Alcibiades gave occasion of offence to others, by seeming to favour the new sect of the Montanists, who endeavoured to recommend themselves by their extraordinary austerities. Alcibiades listened to the admonition, and from that time he ate of every thing with thanksgiving to God, who did not fail to visit his servants with his grace, and the Holy Ghost was their guide and counsellor. In the mean time the emperor's answer arrived, directing the execution of all who persisted in their confession, and discharging those who had recanted. The governor took the opportunity of a public festival among the pagans, which drew vast crowds from all parts; and ordered the martyrs to be brought before him with a design of entertaining the people with the sight of

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\* Eusebius, (ch. 3,) speaking of this action of Alcibiades, observes, that these martyrs were not unacquainted with the superstitious austerities of Montanus and his followers, and with their pretended prophecies. Many miraculous operations, wrought by the power of God at that time, in the Catholic Church, inclined some to believe at first that these fanatics had the gift of prophecy, as this historian adds: who further says, that these martyrs were better informed, and wrote several letters, whilst in prison, to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, against the errors and false prophecies of the Montanists, and that they stirred up Pope Eleutherius against the same, by a letter, of which St. Irenæus, whom they much commended to that pope, was the bearer. (Ib. ch. 4.) They therefore exhorted Alcibiades to avoid such extraordinary practices, which might seem an affected conformity with fanatics. St. Irenæus, at that very time a most holy and learned priest at Lyons, testifies, that the church fasts, especially Lent, were observed with severe abstinence from certain meats.

their sufferings. After a re-examination of them, finding them resolute, he sentenced such of them as were Roman citizens to lose their heads, and ordered the rest to be thrown to wild beasts. And now the glory of Jesus Christ was magnified in the unexpected confession of such as had before denied their faith. Those weak persons were examined apart, with a view of giving them their liberty; but, upon their declaring themselves Christians, they were sentenced to suffer with the other martyrs. Some indeed still continued in their apostacy; but then they were only such as never had the least trace of true faith, nor any regard for the wedding garment; strangers to the fear of God; who, by their way of living, had cast a scandal on the religion they professed, and who may justly be styled sons of perdition.

Alexander, a Phrygian by birth, and physician by profession, was present, when the apostates were brought this second time before the governor. He had lived many years in Gaul, and was universally remarkable for his love of God, and his freedom in publishing the gospel; for he was full of an apostolical spirit. This man being near the tribunal at that critical moment, he made several signs with his eyes and head, to exhort them to confess Jesus Christ, with as much agitation as a woman in labour; so that it was impossible he should pass unobserved. The heathens exasperated to see those confess who had recanted, clamoured against Alexander as the author of this change. Upon which the governor turning himself towards him, asked him who and what he was? Alexander answered, he was a Christian; which so enraged the governor, that, without any further inquiry, he condemned him to be thrown to the wild beasts. Accordingly, the next day, he was conducted into the arena with Attalus, whom the governor, to oblige the people, had delivered up a second time to the same punishment. Having undergone all the various torments usually inflicted in the amphitheatre, they were despatched with the sword. Alexander was not heard to sigh or make the least complaint, conversing only with God in his heart. When Attalus was placed in the iron chair, and the broiling of his body exhaled an offensive smell, he turned to the people, and said to them, in Latin: "This may, with some justice, be called devouring men, and

thus you are guilty of that inhuman act ; but we are neither guilty of this, nor any other abominable practice we are accused of." Being asked what was the name of his God, he replied : " God had not a name like us mortals."

On the last day of the combats of the gladiators, Blandina and Ponticus, a lad not above fifteen years old, were brought into the amphitheatre. They had been obliged to attend the execution of the martyrs every day, and were now urged to swear by the idols. Upon their absolutely refusing to comply with the demand, and expressing a thorough contempt of their pretended gods, the people gave a free loose to their rage ; and, without any regard either to Ponticus's youth, or the sex of Blandina, employed all the different sorts of torments upon them, pressing them from time to time, but in vain, to swear by the idols. Ponticus, encouraged by his companion, went through all the stages of his martyrdom with great alacrity, and died gloriously. Blandina was the last that suffered. She had acted like a mother, animated the other martyrs like so many favourite children, sent them victorious to the heavenly King ; and then, passing through the same trials, hastened after them with joy. She was scourged, torn by beasts, put into the burning chair ; afterwards wrapt in a net, and exposed to a wild bull, that tossed and gored her a long time. But her close conversation with Christ in prayer, and the lively hopes she had of the good things of the other life, made her insensible to all these attacks on her body ; and she too had her throat cut. The heathens themselves could not but wonder at her patience and courage, and own, that, among them, no woman had ever been known to have gone through such a course of sufferings.

Not content with the death of the martyrs, that savage and barbarous people, spurred on by the infernal beast, raised a new persecution against their dead bodies. Those who died in prison were thrown to the dogs, and a strict guard kept, day and night, to prevent our carrying them off. The remains of the other martyrs, such as the beasts or fire had spared, their scattered half-burnt limbs, the heads and trunks, were carefully laid together, and watched by the soldiers several days. Some foamed and gnashed their teeth at the sight of these relics, expressing an eager desire of inflicting more exquisite tor-

ments upon them; while others laughed and scoffed at the martyrs, extolling their own idols, ascribing to them the punishment of their enemies. Even those who had behaved themselves with the most moderation, and felt some compassion for their sufferings, could not forbear reproaching them now, by asking, Where is their God? What hath this religion availed them, which they have preferred to life itself? These were the dispositions of the heathens on this occasion, while we were most sensibly afflicted that we could not bury our brethren. The soldiers were always on the guard, not to be gained by entreaty or money, and took as much care to keep the bodies unburied, as if, by so doing, they were to have gained some mighty advantage. The martyrs' bodies lay thus exposed six days, and then were burnt to ashes and thrown into the Rhone, that no part of them might remain above ground. This they did, as if they had been superior to God, and could thereby have prevented the resurrection, the hopes of which, as they observed, had put them upon introducing a new and strange religion, making a mock of the severest torments, and meeting death with pleasure. Let us now see, said the heathens, if they will ever return again to life, and whether their God can save them, and deliver them out of our hands?

Thus far the incomparable letter of the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, which was inserted entire in Eusebius's account of the martyrs, as he himself assures us. But that piece is lost, and we have no more of this letter than what that author has given us in his *Church History*. He adds, that the churches of Vienne and Lyons subjoined, in the close of this epistle, a religious testimony conformable to holy faith, concerning the Montanists. These martyrs suffered in the beginning of the pontificate of Eleutherius, in the seventeenth year of Marcus Aurelius, as Eusebius testifies,<sup>(1)</sup> and of Christ 177, not 167, as Dodwell pretends. They are called the martyrs of Lyons, because that city was the theatre of their sufferings, though some of them were citizens of Vienne. St. Gregory of Tours says, they were forty-eight in number, and that part of their ashes was miraculously recovered. These relics were deposited under the altar of the church which anciently bore the name of the Apostles of Lyons.

(1) Euseb. Hist. l. 5, c. 1.

The fidelity, fervour, and courage, of so many saints, of every age and condition, condemn aloud our tepidity and indifference. We profess the same religion, and fight for the same cause with the primitive martyrs. Whence comes this monstrous disagreement in our conduct and sentiments? if we do not prefer God and his service to every other consideration—that is, if we are not martyrs in the disposition of our souls—we cannot hope to be ranked by Christ among his disciples, or to inherit his promises. What should we do under greater trials, who are unfaithful on the most trifling occasions? What so many followers of our Lord attained to, that may we. Their passions and infirmities were the same with ours: our trials and temptations are far less than theirs: we serve the same God, are guided by the same truths, supported by the same power, elevated by the same hopes; we have the same peace bequeathed us, the same spirit; the same heaven promised us, and we march under the conduct of the same Captain.

### SS. MARCELLINUS AND PETER, MM.

MARCELLINUS was a priest, and Peter an exorcist, both of the clergy of Rome, and eminent for their zeal and piety. In the persecution of Dioclesian, about the year 304, they were condemned to die for their faith: and by a secret order of the judge, the executioner led them into a forest, that the holy men being executed privately, no Christians might be acquainted with the place of their sepulchre.\* When he had brought them into a thicket overgrown with thorns and briers, three miles from Rome, he declared to them his sanguinary commission. The saints cheerfully fell to work themselves, grubbed up the brambles, and cleared a spot fit for their sepulchre.† After they were beheaded, their bodies were buried in the same place. Some time after, Lucilla, a pious lady, being informed by revelation,‡ and assisted by another devout lady named Firmina, took up their bodies, and honourably interred them near that of St. Tiburtius on the Lavican road in the Catacombs. Pope

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\* Nec tumulum vestrum quisquam cognoscere posset. Damasus, Carm. 12, p. 152.

† Vos alacres vestris manibus mundasse sepulchra, ib.

Postea commonitam vestrâ pietate Lucillam, ib. D