

## NOVEMBER VIII.

THE FOUR CROWNED BROTHERS,  
MARTYRS.

See Bosius and Aringhi, in *Roma Subterranea*, l. 3. c. 8. Baronius, Annot. in Martyr.

A. D. 304.

Four brothers in the persecution of Dioclesian employed in offices of trust and honour at Rome were apprehended for declaring against the worship of idols, and whipped with scourges loaded with plummets of lead, till they expired in the hands of their tormentors. They were buried on the Lavican Way, three miles from Rome, and were at first called the Four crowned Martyrs: their names were Severus, Severianus, Carpophorus, and Victorius. Pope Gregory the Great mentions an old church of the four crowned martyrs in Rome. Pope Leo IV. in 841, caused the church to be repaired, and the relics of these martyrs to be translated thither out of the cemetery on the Lavican Way. When this church had been consumed by fire Paschal II. rebuilt it; upon which occasion the relics of these martyrs were discovered under the altar in two rich urns, the one of porphyry, the other of serpentine marble, deposited in a stone vault. The new altar was built upon the same spot; and these relics were again found in the same situation under Paul V. This church is an ancient title of a cardinal-priest. Five other martyrs, called Claudius, Nicostratus, Symphorianus, Castorius, and Simplicius, who had suffered in the same persecution, were buried in the same cemetery. Their precious remains were translated by Leo IV. in

the same church, and are likewise honoured there to this day. These martyrs are named in the Martyrology of Bede and others. These five are said to have been put to death, because being carvers by profession, they refused to make idols.

The rage of tyrants, who were masters of the world, spread the faith which they vainly endeavoured, by fighting against heaven, to extinguish. The martyrs, who died for it, sealed it with the blood, and gave a testimony to Jesus Christ, which was, of all others, the strongest and most persuasive. Other Christians, who fled, became the apostles of the countries whither they went. Whence St. Austin compares them to torches, which, if you attempt to put them out by shaking them, are kindled, and flame so much the more. The martyrs, by the meekness and fervour of their lives, and their constancy in resisting even to death, converted an infidel world, and disarmed the obstinacy of the most implacable enemies of the truth. But what judgments must await those Christians who, by the scandal of their sloth and worldly spirit, dishonour their religion blaspheme Christ, withdraw even the faithful from the practice of the gospel, and tempt a Christian world to turn infidel?

## ST. WILLEHAD, CONFESSOR,

BISHOP OF BREMEN AND APOSTLE OF SAXONY.

WILLEHAD was an Englishman, a native of the kingdom of Northumberland, and was educated from his infancy in learning and piety. The austerity of his life, his humility, the readiness of his obedience, and his constant attendance on prayer, engaged his bishop to promote him to the dignity of the priesthood. The great spiritual conquests which many of his countrymen had