

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

* 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

Damasus assures us, that, when a child, he learned all these particulars from the mouth of the executioner himself,* and he has inserted them in a Latin epitaph with which he adorned their tomb. Anastasius the librarian testifies, from ancient registers, that Constantine the Great built here a church in honour of these martyrs, in which he caused his mother St. Helena to be buried under a porphyry tomb, on the Lavican road, three miles from Rome, and that he gave to this church a paten weighing thirty-five pounds,† of pure gold, with many other rich presents; which are also mentioned by Bede,(1) Ado,(2) and Sigebert.(3) The porphyry mausoleum of St. Helena is still shown among other antiquities near the Lateran basilic. Honorius I., and Adrian I., repaired this church and cemetery of St. Tiburtius, and SS. Marcellinus and Peter, as Anastasius mentions. Not long after the bodies of SS. Marcellinus and Peter were translated into Germany on the following occasion: Eginhard, a German, the favourite secretary of Charlemagne, and his wife Emma, by mutual consent, made a vow of perpetual continency; and becoming a monk, was chosen abbot of Fontenelle, and, in 819, abbot of Ghent. Emma died in 836, to his great affliction, as appears from the letters of Lupus, abbot of Ferrieres, to him. This great man, in 827, sent his secretary to Rome, to procure from Pope Gregory IV., some relics of martyrs to enrich the monasteries which he had founded or repaired. The pope sent him the bodies of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, which Eginhard translated to Strasburg. But soon after he deposited them first at Michlenstad; and afterwards at Malinheim, since called Selgenstad, three leagues from Francfort, and two from Achaffenburgh; where, in 829, he built to their honour a church and monastery, of which he died the first abbot. Besides the life of Charlemagne, and the annals of France, during the reigns of Pepin, Charlemagne, and

(1) Beda l. de temporibus.

(2) Ado in martyrol.

(3) Chron. ad an. 849.

* Percussor retulit Damaso mihi cum puer essem, ib.

† The paten used at the altar was anciently of a much larger size than at present, that the offerings or the hosts of all the congregation who communicated at mass, might be laid on it. Whence, during that part of the sacrifice in which it was not used, it was taken off the altar, and held by the subdeacon. See Vert and Le Brun sur Les Liturg. t. 1.

Lewis Debonnaire, he wrote four books in prose, and one in verse, on the translation of SS. Marcellinus and Peter. This translation is also mentioned by Sigebert, Aymoinus, Rabanus Maurus, &c. Pope Gregory the Great preached his twenty homilies on the gospels in the church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter at Rome; as appears from some of them, and from the testimony of John the Deacon.(1) See their acts and the history of their translation in Papebroke, t. 1, Junij, p. 170, and Laderchius, Diss. de Basilicis SS. Marcellini & Petri. Romæ. 1705.

S. ERASMUS, BISHOP AND MARTYR.

HE suffered torments and a cruel death in the persecution of Dioclesian at Formiæ, in the year 303. St. Gregory the Great testifies that his body remained in that city in the sixth age.(2) Formiæ being destroyed by the Saracens in the ninth century, the sacred treasure was translated with the episcopal see to Cajeta, in 842. This saint is corruptly called St. Elmo* for Ermo, the abbreviation for Erasmus; and he was usually invoked by sailors in the Mediterranean. St. Erasmus is commemorated in the new Paris Breviary, and a portion of his relics is possessed by a nunnery near Gournay, in that diocese, much frequented by pilgrims. See the Bollandists.

JUNE III.

ST. CECILIUS, C.

From Minutius Felix's Dialogue called Octavius; and Pontius in his life of St. Cyprian. See Tillemont, t. 3. Ceillier, t. 2, p. 222. Reeve's preliminary dissertations, and Orsi's elegant abstract of this dialogue. Hist. t. 2, l. 5, p. 453.

A. D. 211.

ST. CECILIUS, Octavius, and Marcus Minutius Felix, were three eminent and learned men, who formed together a triumvirate of

(1) Joan. Diac. in vita S. Gregorii, M. l. 2, n. 18.

(2) St. Greg. b. 1, ep. 8.

* St. Peter Gonzales, whom see on the 14th of April, is also a patron of mariners, and called St. Elm.