

God hath committed to their charge, and with this saint they will have the greatest of all comforts in them; and will by his grace count as many saints in their family as they are blessed with children.

SS. RUFINA AND SECUNDA, VIRGINS, MM.

THEY were sisters, and the daughters of one Asterius, a man of a senatorian family in Rome. Their father promised them in marriage, the first to Armentarius, and the second to Verinus, who were then both Christians, but afterwards apostatized from the faith when the storm raised by Valerian and Gallien in 257, fell upon the church. The two virgins resisted their solicitations to imitate their impiety, and fled out of Rome; but were overtaken, brought back, and after other torments condemned by Junius Donatus, prefect of Rome, to lose their heads. They were conducted twelve miles out of Rome, executed in a forest on the Aurelian Way, and buried in the same place. It was then called the Black Forest, *Sylva Nigra*, but from these martyrs this name was changed into that of *Sylva Candida* or the White Forest. A chapel was built over their tomb, which Pope Damasus demolished, erecting a large church in its room. A town rose in the same place, which was called *Sylva Candida*, and made an episcopal see. But the city being destroyed by barbarians in the twelfth century, the bishopric was united by Calixtus II., to that of Porto, and the relics of the saints were translated at the same time, in the year 1120, to the Lateran basilic, where they are kept near the baptistery of Constantine. See their Acts abridged by Tillemont, t. 4, p. 5. Also the remarks of Pinus the Bollandist, t. 3, Julij, p. 28, and Laderchius, *Diss. de Basilicis SS. Marcellini et Petri*, c. 2, p. 6.