

this above all other petitions: never suffer me to be separated from you by forfeiting your holy love: may I remain always *rooted and grounded in your charity*, as is the will of your Father. Eph. iii.

ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA,

PENITENT.

From her life written by her confessor, in the *Acta Sanctorum*; by Bollandus, p. 298. Wadding, *Annal. FF. Minorum* ad an. 1297; and the *Lives of the Saints of the Third Order* by Barb. t. 1. p. 508.

A.D. 1297.

MARGARET was a native of Alviano, in Tuscany. The harshness of a step-mother, and her own indulged propensity to vice, cast her headlong into the greatest disorders. The sight of the carcase of a man, half putrified, who had been her gallant, struck her with so great a fear of the divine judgments, and with so deep a sense of the treachery of this world, that she in a moment became a perfect penitent. The first thing she did was to throw herself at her father's feet, bathed in tears, to beg his pardon for her contempt of his authority and fatherly admonitions. She spent the days and nights in tears, and to repair the scandal she had given by her crimes, she went to the parish church of Alviano, with a rope about her neck, and there asked public pardon for them. After this she repaired to Cortona, and made her most penitent confession to a father of the Order of St. Francis, who admired the great sentiments of compunction with which she was filled, and prescribed her austerities and practices suitable to her fervour. Her conversion happened in the year 1274, the twenty-fifth of her age. She was assaulted by violent temptations of various kinds, but courageously overcame them, and after a trial of three years, was admitted to her profession among the penitents of the third Order of St. Francis, in Cortona. The extraordinary austerities with which she punished her criminal flesh soon disfigured her body. To exterior mortification she joined all sorts of humiliations; and the confusion with which she was covered at the sight of her own sins, pushed her on continually to invent many extraordinary means of drawing upon herself all manner of confusion before men. This model of true penitents, after twenty-three years spent in severe penance, and twenty of them in the religious habit, being

worn out by austerities, and consumed by the fire of divine love, died on the 22nd of February, in 1297. After the proof of many miracles, Leo X. granted an office in her honour to the city of Cortona, which Urban VIII. extended to the whole Franciscan Order, in 1623, and she was canonized by Benedict XIII. in 1728.

SS. THALASSIUS AND LIMNEUS, CC

THEY were cotemporaries with the great Theodoret, bishop of Cyr, and lived in his diocess. The former dwelt in a cavern, in a neighbouring mountain, and was endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, but was a treasure unknown to the world. His disciple, St. Limneus, was famous for miraculous cures of the sick, while he himself bore patiently the sharpest cholics and other distempers, without any human succour. He opened his enclosure only to Theodoret, his bishop, but spoke to others through a window. See Theodoret, Phil. c. 22.

SAINT BARADAT, C.

HE lived in the same diocess, in a solitary hut, made of wood in trellis, like windows, says Theodoret,* exposed to all the severities of the weather. He was clothed with the skins of wild beasts, and by conversing continually with God, he attained to an eminent degree of wisdom, and knowledge of heavenly things. He left his wooden prison by the order of the patriarch of Antioch, giving a proof of his humility by his ready obedience. He studied to imitate all the practices of penance, which all the other solitaries of those parts exercised, though of a tender constitution himself. The fervour of his soul, and the fire of divine love, supported him under his incredible labours, though his body was weak and infirm. It is sloth that makes us so often allege a pretended weakness of constitution, in the practice of penance and the exercises of devotion, which courage and fervour would not even feel. See Theodoret, Phil. c. 22. t. 3. p. 868, and c. 27.

* This passage of Theodoret shows that the windows of the ancients were made of trellis or wicker, before the invention of glass; though not universally; for in the ruins of Herculaneum, near Portichi, were found windows of a diaphanous thin slate, such as the rich in Rome sometimes used.