

him, ask it, but if you ask any thing beneath him, you put an affront upon him, and hurt yourself by preferring to him a creature which he framed; pray in the spirit and sentiment of love, in which the royal prophet said to him: 'Thou, O Lord, art my portion.'⁽¹⁾ Let others choose to themselves portions among creatures, for my part, Thou art my portion, Thee alone I have chosen for my whole inheritance "

ST. SEBASTIAN, M.

From his acts, written before the end of the fourth age. The gladiators, who were abolished by Honorius, in 403, subsisted when these acts were compiled. See Bollandus, who thinks St. Ambrose wrote them; also Tillemont, T. 4. p. 551.

A.D. 288.

ST. SEBASTIAN was born at Narbonne, in Gaul, but his parents were of Milan, in Italy, and he was brought up in that city. He was a fervent servant of Christ, and though his natural inclinations gave him an aversion to a military life, yet, to be better able, without suspicion, to assist the confessors and martyrs in their sufferings, he went to Rome, and entered the army under the Emperor Carinus, about the year 283. It happened that the martyrs, Marcus and Marcellianus, under sentence of death, appeared in danger of being shaken in their faith by the tears of their friends: Sebastian seeing this, stepped in, and made them a long exhortation to constancy, which he delivered with the holy fire that strongly affected all his hearers. Zoë, the wife of Nicostratus, having for six years lost the use of speech, by a palsy in her tongue, fell at his feet, and spoke distinctly, by the saint's making the sign of the cross on her mouth. She, with her husband Nicostratus, who was master of the rolls,⁽²⁾ the parents of Marcus and Marcellianus, the jailor Claudius, and sixteen other prisoners, were converted; and Nicostratus, who had charge of the prisoners, took them to his own house, where Polycarp, a holy priest, instructed and baptized them. Chromatius, governor of Rome, being informed of this, and that Tranquillinus, the father of Saints Marcus and Marcellianus, had been cured of the gout by receiving baptism, desired to be instructed in the faith, being himself grievously afflicted with the same distemper. Accordingly, having sent for Sebastian, he was cured by him, and baptized with his son Tiburtinus. He

(1) Ps. lxxii. 26.

(2) Primiscrinus.

then enlarged the converted prisoners, made his slaves free, and resigned his prefectship.

Not long after, in the year 285, Carinus was defeated and slain in Illyricum by Dioclesian, who, the year following, made Maximian his colleague in the empire. The persecution was still carried on by the magistrates, in the same manner as under Carinus, without any new edicts. Dioclesian, admiring the courage and virtue of St. Sebastian, who concealed his religion, would fain have him near his person, and created him captain of a company of the pretorian guards, which was a considerable dignity. When Dioclesian went into the East, Maximian, who remained in the West, honoured our saint with the same distinction and respect. Chromatius, with the emperor's consent, retired into the country in Campania, taking many new converts along with him. It was a contest of zeal, out of a mutual desire of martyrdom, between St. Sebastian and the priest Polycarp, which of them should accompany this troop, to complete their instruction, and which should remain in the city, to encourage and assist the martyrs, which latter was the more dangerous province. St. Austin wished to see such contests of charity amongst the ministers of the church.⁽¹⁾ Pope Caius, who was appealed to, judged it most proper, that Sebastian should stay in Rome, as a defender of the church. In the year 286, the persecution growing hot, the pope and others concealed themselves in the imperial palace, as a place of the greatest safety, in the apartments of one Castulus, a Christian officer of the court. St. Zoë was first apprehended, praying at St. Peter's tomb on the feast of the apostles. She was stifled with smoke, being hung by the heels over a fire. Tranquillinus, ashamed to be less courageous than a woman, went to pray at the tomb of St. Paul, and was seized by the populace, and stoned to death. Nicostratus, Claudius, Castorius, and Victorinus were taken, and after being thrice tortured, were thrown into the sea. Tiburtius, betrayed by a false brother, was beheaded. Castulus, accused by the same wretch, was thrice put on the rack, and afterwards buried alive. Marcus and Marcellianus were nailed by the feet to a post, and having remained in that torment for twenty-four hours, were shot to death with arrows.

St. Sebastian, having sent so many martyrs to heaven before him, was himself impeached before the Emperor Dioclesian who,

⁽¹⁾ Ep. 180.

having grievously reproached him with ingratitude, delivered him over to certain archers of Mauritania, to be shot to death. His body was covered with arrows, and he left for dead. Irene, the widow of St. Castulus, going to bury him, found him still alive, and took him to her lodgings, where, by care, he recovered of his wounds, but refused to fly, and even placed himself one day by a staircase, where the emperor was to pass, whom he first accosted, reproaching him for his unjust cruelties against the Christians. This freedom of speech, and from a person too whom he supposed to have been dead, greatly astonished the emperor; but recovering from his surprise, he gave orders for his being seized and beat to death with cudgels, and his body thrown into the common sewer. A pious lady called Lucina, admonished by the martyr in a vision, got it privately removed, and buried it in the catacombs,* at the entrance of the cemetery of Calixtus. A church was afterwards built over his relics, by Pope Damasus, which is one of the seven ancient stationary churches at Rome, but not one of the seven principal churches of that city, as some moderns mistake; it neither being one of the five patriarchal churches, nor one of the seventy-two old churches which give titles to cardinals. Vandelbert, St. Ado, Eginard, Sigebert, and other cotemporary authors relate, that in the reign of Lewis Debonnair, Pope Eugenius II. gave the body of St. Sebastian to Hilduin, abbot of St. Denys, who brought it into France, and it was deposited at Saint Medard's at Soissons, on the 9th of December, in 826, with it is said to have been brought a considerable portion of the relics of St. Gregory the Great. The rich shrines of SS. Sebastian, Gregory, and Medard, were plundered by the Calvinists, in 1564, and the sacred bones thrown into a ditch in which there was water. Upon the declaration of two eye-witnesses, they were afterwards found by the Catholics; and in 1578, enclosed in three new shrines, though the bones of the three saints could not be distinguished from each other.(1) The head of this martyr, which was given to St. Willibrord, by Pope Sergius, is kept at Esternach, in the dutchy of Luxemburg. Portions of his relics are shown in the cathedral at St. Victor's; the Theatins and Minims at Paris; in four churches at Mantua; at Malaca, Seville, Toulouse, Munich in the ducal

(1) Chatelain, notes, p. 355. Baillet.

* On Catacombs, see in S. Calixtus. Oct. 14.

palace, Tournay in the cathedral, Antwerp in the church of the Jesuits, and at Brussels, in the chapel of the court, not at St. Gudula's as some have mistaken. (1) St. Sebastian has been always honoured by the church, as one of her most illustrious martyrs. We read in the life of Paul the deacon, in what manner, in the year 680, Rome was freed from a raging pestilence, by the patronage of this saint. Milan, in 1575, Lisbon, in 1599, and other places, have experienced, in like calamities, the miraculous effects of his intercession with God in their behalf.

ST. EUTHYMIUS, ABBOT.

From his life, faithfully written forty years after his death, by Cyril of Scythopolis, a monk of his monastery, one of the best writers of antiquity, and author of the life of St. Sabas. See it accurately published by Dom Lottin, *Annal. Græc. T. 1.* and Cotelier, *Mon. Græc. T. 2. p. 200.*

A.D. 473.

THE birth of this saint was the fruit of the prayers of his pious parents, through the intercession of the martyr Polyeuctus. His father was a noble and wealthy citizen of Melitene in Armenia. Euthymius was educated in sacred learning, and in the fervent practice of prayer, silence, humility and mortification, under the care of the holy bishop of that city, who ordained him priest, and constituted him his vicar and general overseer of the monasteries. The saint often visited that of St. Polyeuctus, and spent whole nights in prayer on a neighbouring mountain; as he also did all the time from the octave of the Epiphany till towards the end of Lent. The love of solitude daily growing stronger in his breast, he secretly left his own country, at twenty-nine years of age; and, after offering up his prayers at the holy places in Jerusalem, chose a cell six miles from that city, near the Laura* of Pharan. He made baskets, and procured, by selling them, both his own subsistence and alms for the poor. Constant prayer was the employment of his soul. After five years, he retired with one Theoctistus, an holy hermit, ten milés further towards Jericho, where they lived together on raw herbs in a cave. In this place he began to receive disciples about the year 411.

(1) Bollandus, and Chatel. *ib.*

* A Laura consisted of cells at a little distance from one another, and not under the same roof as a monastery.