

great deal that we ought to conceal there; and without understanding ourselves, or taking a review of our meaning or words, to pour out embryos of half-formed conceptions, and speak of the most noble subjects in an undress of thoughts. What proofs of our vanity and folly, what disgraces, what perplexities, what detractions, and other evils and sins should we avoid, if we were but sparing and reserved in our words! If we find ourselves to swell with an itch of talking, big with our own thoughts, and impatient to give them vent, we must by silence curb this dangerous passion, and learn to be masters of our words.

SS. PROCESSUS AND MARTINIAN, MARTYRS.

By the preaching and miracles of SS. Peter and Paul at Rome, many were converted to the faith, and among others several servants and courtiers of the emperor Nero, of whom St. Paul⁽¹⁾ makes mention.* In the year 64 that tyrant first drew his sword against the Christians, who had in a very short time become very numerous and remarkable in Rome. A journey which he made into Greece in 67, seems to have given a short respite to the Church in Rome. He made a tour through the

(1) 1 Phil. iv. 20.

* Nero reigned the first five years with so much clemency, that once when he was to sign an order for the death of a condemned person, he said, "I wish I could not write." But his master Seneca, and Burrhus, the prefect of the prætorium, to whom this his moderation was owing, even then discovered in him a bent to cruelty, to correct which they strove to give his passions another turn. With this view Seneca wrote and inscribed to him a treatise On Clemency, which we still have. But both Seneca and Burrhus connived at an adulterous intrigue in which he was engaged in his youth: so very defective was the virtue of the best among the heathen philosophers. If the tutors imagined that by giving up a part, they might save the rest, and by indulging him in the softer passions they might check those which seemed more fatal to the commonwealth, the event showed how much they were deceived by this false human prudence, and how much more glorious it would have been to have preferred death to the least moral evil, could paganism have produced any true martyrs of virtue. The passions are not to be stilled by being soothed: whatever is allowed them is but an allurements to go farther, and soon makes their tyranny uncontrollable. Of this Nero is an instance. For, availing himself of this indulgence, he soon gave an entire loose to all his desires, especially when he began to feel the dangerous pleasure of being master of his own person and actions. He plunged himself publicly, and without shame or constraint, into the most infamous debaucheries, in which such was the perversity of his heart.

chief cities of that country, attended by a great army of singers, pantomimes, and musicians, carrying instead of arms, instruments of music, masks, and theatrical dresses. He was declared conqueror at all the public diversions over Greece, particularly at the Olympian, Isthmian, Pythian, and Nemæan games, and gained there one thousand eight hundred various sorts of crowns. Yet Greece saw its nobility murdered, the estates of its rich men confiscated, and its temples plundered by this progress of Nero. He returned to Rome only to make the streets of that great city again to stream with blood. The apostles SS. Peter and Paul, after a long imprisonment were crowned with martyrdom. And soon after them their two faithful disciples Processus and Martinian gained the same crown. Their acts tell us that they were the keepers of the Mamertine jail during the imprisonment of SS. Peter and Paul, by whom they were converted and baptized. St. Gregory the Great preached his thirty-second homily on their festival, in a church in which their bodies lay, at which he says, the sick recovered their health, those who were possessed by evil spirits were freed, and those who had foresworn themselves were tormented by the devils. Their ancient church on the Aurelian road being fallen to decay, Pope Paschal I. translated their relics to St. Peter's

that, as Suetonius tells us, he believed nobody to be less voluptuous and abandoned than himself, though he said they were more private in their crimes, and greater hypocrites; notwithstanding, at that very time, Rome abounded with most perfect examples of virtue and chastity among the Christians.

There is a degree of folly inseparable from vice. But this in Nero seemed by superlative malice to degenerate into downright phrenzy. All his projects consisted in the extravagances of a madman; and nothing so much flattered his pride as to undertake things that seemed impossible. He forgot all common rules of decency, order, or justice. It was his greatest ambition to sing or perform the part of an actor on the stage, to play on musical instruments in the theatre, or to drive a chariot in the circus. And whoever did not applaud all his performances, or had not the complaisance to let him carry the prize at every race or public diversion, his throat was sure to be cut, or he was reserved for some more barbarous death; for cruelty was the vice which above all others has rendered his name detestable. At the instigation of Poppæa, a most infamous adulteress, he caused his mother Agrippina to be slain in the year 58, and from that time it seemed to be his chief delight to glut his savage mind with the slaughter of the bravest, the most virtuous, and the most noble persons of the universe, especially of those who were the nearest to him. He put to death his wife Octavia after many years ill-usage, and he cut off almost all the most illustrious heads of the empire.

church on the Vatican hill, as Anastasius informs us. Their names occur in the ancient Martyrologies. See Tillemont, *Hist. Eccl. t. 1. p. 179.* and *Hist. des Emp. Crevier, &c.*

ST. OTHO, BISHOP OF BAMBERG, CONFESSOR.

He was a native of Swabia, in Germany, and being a clergyman eminent for piety and learning, was chosen by the emperor Henry IV. to attend his sister Judith in quality of chaplain when she was married to Boleslas III. duke of Poland, that state remaining deprived of the royal dignity* from the year 1079 till it was restored in 1295, in favour of Premiaslas II. After the death of that princess, Otho returned, and was made by Henry IV. his chancellor. That prince caused the seals and crosses of every deceased bishop and great abbot to be delivered to him, and he sold them to whom he pleased. This notorious simony and oppression of the Church was zealously condemned by the pope, in opposition to whom the emperor set up the anti-pope Guibert. Otho laboured to bring his prince to sentiments of repentance and submission, and refused to approve his schism or other crimes. Notwithstanding which, so great was the esteem which the emperor had for his virtue, that resolving to make choice at least of one good bishop, he nominated him bishop of Bamberg in 1103. The saint, notwithstanding the schism, went to Rome and received his confirmation together with the pall from Pope Paschal II. He laboured to extinguish the schism, and to obviate the mischiefs which it produced; and for this purpose he displayed his eloquence and abilities in the diet at Ratisbon in 1104. Henry V. succeeding his father in 1106, continued to foment the schism; yet inherited the esteem of his predecessor for our saint, though he always adhered to the holy see, and was in the highest credit with all the popes of his time; so strongly does virtue command respect even in its adversaries, and such is the power of meekness in disarming the fiercest tyrants. St. Otho joined always with the functions of his charge the exercises of an interior life, in which he was an admirable proficient. He made many pious foundations, calling them inns which we erect on our road to eternity.

* On account of the murder of St. Stanislas, slain Poleslas II