

Early Church Classics

THE EPISTLE OF
THE GALLICAN CHURCHES

LUGDUNUM AND VIENNA

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING
TERTULLIAN'S ADDRESS TO MARTYRS
AND
THE PASSION OF ST. PERPETUA

TRANSLATED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE

LONDON:
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.; 43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.
BRIGHTON: 129, NORTH STREET.
NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

1900

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ΟΙΔΑ ΣΟΥ ΤΗΝ ΘΑΪΨΙΝ

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PREFACE

THE touching letter of the Gallican Churches, from which Eusebius felt impelled to give long extracts in his *Ecclesiastical History*, although he had preserved the whole of it in another work, has ever commanded the interest and won the admiration of Christian readers. Eusebius' extracts are the only portions of it which are now extant, and they are here given to readers in an English dress as a specimen of what the faith could effect in the early days of the Church when it was often tried to the uttermost by physical tortures and mental anguish.

The story of the gallant band of heroes in Gaul has been supplemented by that of the brave women in Karthage a few years later; and it is believed that no more stimulating narratives could be placed in the hands of English readers of this series of Early Church Classics.

T. H. B.

Barbados, F. of St. Perpetua, 1900.

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THE EPISTLE OF THE GALLICAN CHURCHES

INTRODUCTION

§ I. THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY IN GAUL

IT is now generally allowed that St. Paul did, between his first and second Roman imprisonments, carry into effect his long-expressed wish of preaching the gospel in Spain (Rom. xv. 24, 28). If the Apostle travelled by land, he would have followed one of the northern roads from Rome, and then struck the Via Æmilii Scauri, which would take him to Genua, and thence by the Via Julia along the coast to Nicæa, and so on through Arelate and Narbo across the Pyrenees, sowing the seeds of the gospel on the way. In this case, however, we should expect that more traces would be found of traditions connecting St. Paul with cities on the supposed route. If, on the other hand, he went by sea, he would almost certainly touch at the great sea-port of

Massilia in Gallia Narbonensis. That he did visit regions west of Italy is affirmed by Clement of Rome, who wrote in A.D. 95, and used an expression which cannot be naturally explained of Italy itself from the pen of one writing in Rome. His words are, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἔλθων,—“having reached the furthest bounds of the West” (*Corinth.* 5). Further, the Muratorian Fragment (*cir.* A.D. 180) expressly mentions Spain as the Apostle’s goal (“sed et profectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis”). A passage in 2 Tim. iv. 10, Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, was generally understood in early times to mean European Gaul,¹ and Lightfoot has shown that this would have been a natural term for the Apostle to use if he wished to designate the western country, the term Γαλλία not being in common use until a later period.² If this be so, the mission of Crescens would imply some previous connection of the Apostle with Gaul, though Gallia Cisalpina would not perhaps be excluded. The Church of Vienna (Vienne), at

¹ Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 4, Τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν ἀκολουθῶν τοῦ Παύλου Κρίσκης μὲν ἐπὶ τὰς Γαλλίας στείλαμενος ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ μαρτυρεῖται. Epiph. *Hær.* li. 11, Κρήσκης, φησὶν [ὁ Παῦλος] ἐν τῇ Γαλλίᾳ· οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῇ Γαλατίᾳ, ὥς τινες πλανηθέντες νομίζουσιν, ἀλλὰ ἐν τῇ Γαλλίᾳ. Theodoret, *comm. in loc.*, τὰς Γαλλίας οὕτως ἐκάλεσεν· οὕτω γὰρ ἐκαλοῦντο πάλαι· οὕτω δὲ καὶ νῦν αὐτὰς ὀνομάζουσιν οἱ τῆς ἔξω παιδείας μετειληχότες. Comp. Theod. Mops. *in loc.*, τὰς νῦν καλουμένας Γαλλίας· οὕτως γὰρ αὐτὰς πάντες ἐκάλουν οἱ παλαιοί. (Migne, *P. G.* lxvi. 947.)

² Lightfoot, *Galatians*, p. 3.

any rate in later times, claimed Crescens as its founder, and that of Arelate (Arles), the Apostle's earlier companion in the east, Trophimus (Acts xx. 4 ; xxi. 9).

The apostolic introduction of Christianity into Gaul must therefore remain, in the absence of more definite evidence, a matter of probability only ; but there is nothing unreasonable in postulating a date as early as the reign of Nero for some knowledge of Christ to have penetrated that country. "The Roman character of the towns in Provence, and their ready communication by sea with Italy and the whole of the Mediterranean, might lead us to think that Christianity could not long have continued unknown there."¹

It may be clearly questioned, therefore, whether the Eastern origin of Gallican Christianity has not been too hastily assumed, and repeated from writer to writer until it has come to be accepted as a commonplace. The assumption appears to rest upon two grounds, neither of which is of real validity, while there exists one very cogent argument against it. The first

¹ Burton, *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History*, p. 214. Cp. Cheetham, *Church History* i. 61 : "Gaul received its first Christianity by the well-known commercial route from Asia Minor to Marseilles. The legends of the preaching of Lazarus, of Martha, or of Mary Magdalene, in Southern Gaul, do but represent the fact that very ancient Christian communities existed there."

ground is the intimate connection between the Churches of Asia Minor and of Gaul, which is disclosed and implied in the Epistle before us. But a close connection between the two Churches in the latter half of the second century proves nothing regarding an original dependence of one upon the other for its knowledge of Christianity a hundred years earlier. Undoubtedly, from the earliest planting of Christianity in Gaul, many of its adherents would have relatives in Asia Minor, inasmuch as Massilia, which soon extended its territory's influence, was an extremely ancient colony from Phocæa in Asia Minor. Constant intercourse would in consequence be kept up between the two countries, and the intimacy may be thus naturally accounted for. Again, if the earlier date (A.D. 155) of the Gallican persecution be correct (see below, § 2), our letter may well have been a reply to that of the Smyrnæans,¹ showing that others too in the far West had their own trials of fortitude and their own triumphs of faith.

The other ground is the fact of the Gallican Churches writing in Greek instead of in Latin. But Rome itself was Greek for the first two centuries. Eleutherus is addressed in Greek; Marcus Aurelius wrote in Greek, and so did

¹ The Smyrnæan letter was particularly intended to have a wide circulation, being addressed "to all the dioceses of the Holy Catholic Church in every place;" see the Epistle in this series of Early Church Classics, *St. Polycarp*, p. 49.

Hippolytus as late as A.D. 220. Greek was indeed the ordinary unofficial language of educated Westerns at this time, except in Africa. Pothinus may or may not be a Greek name, but the fact remains, that all we know of him is contained in this letter. Of how, when, and whence he came to be appointed bishop of Lugdunum we know nothing.¹

On the other hand, one thing is quite certain. In their observance of the Paschal Rule the Gallican Churches were in direct opposition to the Asiatics, and in early days the feeling was so conservative on this point that the heredity of Churches may be almost certainly affirmed or denied on this ground alone. Even Irenæus, who was an Eastern, followed in Gaul the Western custom in this respect—a fact which proves that the Western and Catholic custom had long been observed, and was firmly rooted in Gaul when he came there. It seems better, therefore, to ascribe the beginnings of Christianity in Gaul to a Western rather than to an Eastern source.

The point is, indeed, not an important one ;

¹ It is rather astonishing to find Mr. F. E. Warren writing : " Pothinus, the first bishop of Lyons, had come directly from that country (Asia Minor), bringing with him Irenæus the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John " (*Liturgy and Ritual of Celtic Church*, p. 58). Lightfoot is more cautious : " The Christianity of Gaul was *in some sense* the daughter of the Christianity of Asia Minor " (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 51).

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but it is remarkable that total silence surrounds the history of the Churches in Gaul until it is suddenly broken by the Epistle before us, which was written to inform the Asiatic Churches of the awful sufferings lately undergone by their brethren at Lugdunum and Vienna.

It is not uninteresting to note that the close tie of friendship between the two Churches of Asia and Gaul, which is so evident from the tone of brotherly unity which breathes throughout the Epistle, led the Gallican Church at a little later time to interpose in support of the orthodox Asiatics against the Montanists, who were rending the peace of the Churches, and to send Irenæus, then a presbyter of Lugdunum, to Pope Eleutherus, and also to address a further letter to their Asiatic brethren on the same subject (Euseb. *H. E.* v. 3, 4). Once again, too, about A.D. 190, Irenæus stood as a peacemaker between Victor of Rome and Polycrates of Ephesus, when the former tried to excommunicate the latter along with his Quartodeciman fellow-bishops and their flocks (Euseb. *H. E.* v. 24).

§ 2. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

The date of the Epistle has been generally given as A.D. 177, *i. e.* in the year of the martyrdoms of which it gives such a graphic and pathetic description. But on account of some ambiguity or contradictoriness in Eusebius' use

of the imperial titles, Dr. Abbott has suggested in a very plausible paper in the *Expositor* (5th ser. iii. 111 ff.), that the persecution took place, not in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, but of his predecessor Antoninus Pius, and that it synchronized with the martyrdom of Polycarp, A.D. 155. Among other arguments in support of this date, he adduces the silence of Irenæus as to his (supposed immediate) predecessor Pothinus; his mistaken attribution of the words of the martyr Biblias to a fellow-martyr Blandina (see the Notes, p. 31); the tradition that Irenæus was a teacher in Rome at the time of Polycarp's martyrdom,¹ and therefore not then a presbyter at Lugdunum; and finally the fact that the letter which Irenæus carried to Eleutherus from Lugdunum is separated in time by Eusebius (*H. E.* v. 4) from our Epistle, which was written to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia. To these points may be added the greater likelihood of the diction of one letter being influenced by that of the other, if the respective dates of the Smyrnæan and Gallican Epistles were not separated by so long a period as twenty-two years. These coincidences of idea and of expression are clear, if not particularly striking; they do not, however, afford sufficient evidence to help us to determine

¹ See *Mart. Polyc.*, Moscow MS., οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Εἰρηναῖος κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦ μαρτυρίου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Πολυκάρπου γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ πολλοὺς ἐδίδαξεν.

which is the earlier letter. Attention is drawn to them in the notes as they occur.

§ 3. TESTIMONY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The whole of the narrative, as Dr. Westcott remarks (*Canon of the New Testament*, p. 339), is penetrated by Scriptural language and thought. No book of the New Testament is referred to by name, but there are clear and unmistakable citations from passages in the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John, from the Acts of the Apostles, from the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians and Philip-
pians, from 1 St. Peter and 1 St. John, and from the Apocalypse—one quotation from the latter book (Rev. xxii. 11) being introduced by the words *ὅσα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ*. There are also evident allusions to passages in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. The importance of this testimony is manifest when we remember that it is the witness of a Church which was linked to the apostolic age in the person of its bishop Pothinus, who must have been born before the books of the New Testament were all written, as he was already ninety years old at the time of the persecution.

Further, as Dr. Lightfoot pointed out (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 254), the citations and allusions are incidental, and therefore more

valuable, showing that the canonical writings could be used without comment as familiarly in the middle of the second century as they are in our own day. See also Dr. Robinson's note in *Pass. of S. Perpetua*, Texts and Studies, i. 2. 97.

The following are the main references and allusions, twenty-five in number, and in the following translation they are generally distinguished by thicker type.

1. Rom. viii. 18 (*verbatim*).
2. Luke i. 6 (*verbatim*).
3. Rom. xii. 11 ("fervent in spirit").
4. John xiv. 16 (παράκλητος).
5. Luke i. 67.
6. Rev. xiv. 4 (*verbatim*).
7. John xvi. 2 (nearly *verbatim*).
8. 1 Tim. iii. 15 (στύλον καὶ ἑδραίωμα).
9. 1 Cor. i. 25—29.
10. Rev. xxi. 6; John iv. 14; vii. 38 ("fountain of water of life").
11. 2 Cor. ii. 15 (εὐωδία χριστοῦ).
12. 1 Cor. iv. 9 ("spectacle to the world").
13. Gal. iii. 27 ("put on Christ").
14. Acts ix. 2 (τὴν Ὁδόν).
15. John xvii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 3 ("sons of perdition").
16. Acts ii. 47 (προσετέθησαν).
17. Rev. xxii. 11 (not *verbatim*).
18. 1 Cor. xi. 1; cp. Eph. v. 1 ("imitators of Christ").
19. Phil. ii. 6 (*verbatim*).
20. Rev. iii. 14 ("the faithful and true Witness").
21. Rev. i. 5 (ὁ πρωτοτόκος τῶν νεκρῶν).
22. Acts iii. 15 (ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς).
23. 1 Pet. v. 6.
24. Acts vii. 60 (*verbatim*).
25. 1 Tim. iv. 3 f. ("creatures of God").

§ 4. SOURCE OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle was extracted by Eusebius from a document or volume (γραφή) which contained several accounts of Gallican martyrdoms and letters, which, however, have not always been accurately distinguished by the historian, whose chronology cannot be implicitly trusted.

The whole of the Epistle was incorporated in Eusebius' *Collection of Martyrdoms*, a work compiled during the Diocletian persecution, but which is not now extant. In his *Ecclesiastical History* (v. 1—3) he only gives fragments of it, which, however, probably represent by far the most important portions.

§ 5. THE GALLICAN PERSECUTION.

There can be little doubt that, from the time of Nero, Christianity was a capital offence, and its professors could be proceeded against at any moment under the ordinary administrative powers which the Roman city and provincial executive possessed. Not that Nero promulgated any special law or edict on the subject, but, probably during the investigation of the alleged connection of the Christians with the fire of Rome, the jealous eye of the government fancied that it discerned a general hostility to the ordinary good discipline and peace of the

empire, an intense dislike for the claims of civilization—for that is the meaning of Tacitus' charge of *odium generis humani* (Ann. xv. 44)—which was inimical to the social stability of the state. When this view of the Christian tenets and practices was once adopted, the mere profession of Christianity, *nomen ipsum*, became a standing offence, and Nero's regulations concerning it are on this ground ranked by Suetonius (*Nero*, 16) along with other police measures of a permanent nature. The exact method of procedure in each case lay in the discretion of the magistrate. He might condemn on the simple ground of Christianity, or on any of the charges, such as atheism, sacrilege, disloyalty, or abominable crimes, which were believed to be inherently connected with the Christian religion. All the evidence goes to show that in the majority of cases the persecutions, from the time of Nero to that of Decius, originated in popular outbreaks or private malice, and that the frequency and severity of the Christians' sufferings depended on the cruelty, good nature, or indifference of the provincial governors who might instigate, check, or moderate the attacks of the mob.

This hatred of the Christians by the populace was due to several causes.

1. In so far as the Christians were looked upon as a religious body connected with or sprung out of Judaism, they inherited the general ridi-

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cule and dislike which pursued the Jews in every quarter of the world.

2. Christianity, too, interfered with the success of certain trades which thrived upon the lax morality and superstitions of the lower class of citizens. St. Paul himself had suffered from this cause at Philippi and at Ephesus (Acts xvi. 19 ff.; xix. 26 ff.).

3. The general behaviour of Christians in the world was regarded as unsociable and misanthropic, while many of their tenets—notably their admission of slaves to equal privileges with the free-born in a new and secret brotherhood, and their mysterious theories of another citizenship with higher claims upon their allegiance—would appear to be dangerous and revolutionary.

4. By their neglect of the prescribed worship of the state gods, and through their lack of any temples and altars, the Christians incurred the charge of impiety (*sacrilegium*) and atheism. Hence the popular outcry, *Αἶρε τοὺς ἀθεοὺς*,—Away with the Atheists! (*Mart. Polyc.* 3).

5. The absence of any visible objects of worship suggested to the pagan mind the conclusion that the Christians met in secret to indulge in religious rites of an abominable kind which would not bear the light of day. They were consequently credited with magical practices and impure orgies which involved infanti-

cide, cannibalism, and incest. Once convinced that these enormities took place, the pagans would easily find evidence in rumours, or extort it under the rack from timid members and terrified slaves. This very Epistle affords an instance of heathen slaves, out of the mere fear of torture, making false statements of this nature at the instigation of the soldiers (p. 26).

6. By their refusal to adopt the imperial cult, and to sacrifice to the Emperor's statue or to swear by his genius, the Christians offended against the law of *majestas*, and were branded as bad subjects (*hostes publici*), guilty of treason to the commonwealth.

Thus in many ways Christianity collided with the Roman government, and also incurred the hostility of the masses. The identification of its professors would therefore never be a matter of difficulty, and they were the favourite victims pounced upon by the populace in times of unreasoning panic and superstitious terror, when public disasters and calamities woke up the slumbering paganism of the empire, and frightened its professed devotees into a retaliation upon the godless insulters of their ancient deities.

Eusebius himself states in the opening words of his Fifth Book, and our Epistle makes it distinctly evident, that the persecution in Gaul

arose from the mob.¹ The victims who confessed their Christianity were imprisoned by the chiliarch to await the arrival of the governor, and when he came they were treated with great harshness, although they protested their innocence of either atheism or impiety. Those who recanted were imprisoned along with the rest, and were branded now, not as Christians, but as guilty of murder and abominable impurities. The Emperor (whether Pius or Aurelius), on being consulted with respect to the case of Roman citizens, replied that the usual penalty of death must of course be paid, but re-affirmed the ruling of Trajan to Pliny that recantation purchased pardon. So far, therefore, the Emperor's ruling mitigated the extreme cruelty of the governor.

The picture which is disclosed of the miserable plight of the prisoners under duress is confirmed and illustrated by accounts of other persecutions, in Africa, only a little later in time than the Gallican Epistle, which are given in Tertullian's *Address to the Martyrs* and in the *Passion of Perpetua*. The *Letter of the Smyrnæans* also furnishes some interesting and pathetic parallels.

¹ We are not told the immediate cause of the outbreak. It may have been due to panic caused by the ravages of the Eastern pest, or by some fresh inroad of barbarian invaders; or again, it may be that the abstention of the Christians from participating in some pagan national festival excited the ire of the populace.

We may note particularly the same horrible description of the dungeons, black with darkness and fetid with suffocating stench, the cruel stocks and intolerable rack ; and alongside all this, the liberty strangely allowed to undetected or undenounced fellow-Christians of visiting and encouraging their arrested friends ; and the custom, which in Africa at least was often abused, of the lapsed seeking *libelli* from imprisoned confessors, by whose intercession they were restored to the Church.

The Epistle itself is one of the most striking pieces of early Christian literature, its powerful effect being due to its absolute simplicity and transparent genuineness. Nowhere else do we find a delineation of such exalted enthusiasm and devotion untarnished by either fanaticism or pride. Good sense and humility, courage and affection, distinguish alike the martyrs and their historians.

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THE servants of Christ who sojourn in Vienna and Lugdunum of Gallia to the Brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia who hold the same faith and hope with us of redemption, peace, and grace and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

* * * * *

The magnitude, however, of the tribulation in these parts, and the intensity of the fury of the Gentiles against the saints, and the variety of the sufferings which the blessed martyrs endured, we are neither able to state with accuracy nor indeed is it possible for them to be embraced in writing. For the adversary darted upon us with all his might, preluding thus soon his fearless coming which is about to be. He practised withal every device,¹ accustoming and training his own agents against the servants of God, so that not only were we excluded from houses

Cp. *Smyrn. Epist.* 2: "The devil was devising many wiles against them," etc.

and baths and markets, but actually the mere appearance of any one of us in any place whatever was forbidden.

But the grace of God was our general in the fight, rescuing the weak and ranging them in battle-array as strong pillars, enabling them through patient endurance to draw upon themselves all the violence of the Evil One; and indeed they advanced to close quarters with him, enduring every form of reproach and punishment; finally, making light of their sufferings, they hastened to Christ, truly showing that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us-ward (Rom. viii. 18).

First, they nobly endured all that had to be borne at the hands of the mob and rabble; they were hooted, assaulted, pulled about, plundered, stoned, and forced to barricade themselves in;¹ in fact they suffered every indignity which an infuriated mob is accustomed to inflict upon its supposed adversaries and foes. At length, being brought into the forum by the chiliarch and chief men of the city, they were examined in the presence of the whole multitude, and having confessed (their Christianity), were

¹ *συγκλείσεις* does not mean "imprisonment" here, but "forced retirement within their own houses for purposes of self-defence." Renan has given the picture correctly: *Marc Aurèle*, p. 305.

put into prison to await the arrival of the governor. Subsequently, when they were brought before him and he was treating us with great harshness, Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, a man filled with the fulness of love towards God and towards his neighbour, whose life as a citizen was so upright that, although so young a man, he equalled the testimony borne to the aged Zacharias,¹ for indeed **he walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless** (Luke i. 6), being also tireless in every act of service to his neighbour, very zealous towards God, and **fervent in spirit** (Rom. xii. 11); Vettius, I say, being of such a character, could not endure that such unreasonable judgment should be given against us ; and so, being highly indignant, he claimed himself also to give evidence in defence of the brethren, to the effect that "there is nothing impious or sacrilegious amongst us." But those around the judgment-seat shouted him down (for he was a man of note²), and the governor refused the just claim which he thus put forward, merely asking if he were

¹ An early tradition mistakenly identified the Baptist's father with the prophet Zacharias of Matt. xxiii. 35, Luke xi. 51 ; and it is quite possible that the writers of this Epistle believed that Zacharias perished as a martyr. If so, the reference gains in point.

² This parenthetical remark suggests the inference that the majority of the Gallican Christians were not people of means or position.

himself also a Christian ; and when he confessed it with a clear voice, he was himself also taken into the order of the witnesses,¹ being designated "the Christians' Advocate," having the Advocate (cf. John xiv. 16) in himself, the Spirit (cf. Luke i. 67) in greater measure than Zacharias, as he showed by the fulness of his love, being well pleased to lay down even his own life for the defence of the brethren. For he was, and is, a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth (Rev. xiv. 4).

Thereupon the rest were scrutinized,² and the first witnesses were forward and ready, who with all eagerness completed the confession of their witness. Likewise the unready and untrained were made manifest, moreover also the weak, who were unable to bear the strain

¹ εἰς τὸν κλῆρον τῶν μαρτύρων. The expression is peculiar, and denotes a definite rank thus attained. From the further expression, "he was *and is* a disciple," Renan concluded that Vettius Epagathus was not really martyred ; but the subsequent words cited from the Apocalypse may be held to point to the life after death. The question depends on the force given to the phrase "taken into the order of witnesses." It is used again below, twice, of Biblias and of others, who certainly were martyred ; and the fragmentary character of these extracts may explain why there is no mention of Vettius' death. The Roman citizens were not dealt with until Cæsar's rescript came, and then they were simply beheaded.

² διεκρίνοντο : a technical word for the preliminary examination of candidates before they were permitted to engage in contest. Its use here is felicitous, inasmuch as this preliminary scrutiny led to the separation of the fit from the unfit.

of a great contest. Of these about ten miscarried,¹ who both caused us great grief and sorrow unmeasured, and also hindered the eagerness of the others who were unarrested, and who, although suffering all terrors, were nevertheless constantly present with the confessors, and would not leave them. Then, indeed, were we all greatly anxious, through uncertainty as to their confession, not dreading the punishments to be endured, but fixing our gaze on the end, and fearing lest any might fall away. Each day, however, those who were worthy were arrested, and filled up the others' places, so that there were gathered together from the two Churches all the zealous ones through whose instrumentality especially our affairs had been established. They arrested also certain heathen domestic slaves of ours, for the governor ordered that we should all be examined in public; and these falling into a plot of Satan, and fearing the tortures which they saw the saints suffering, on being instigated to this course by the soldiers, falsely accused us of Thyestean banquets and Œdipodean intercourse,² and of other deeds of

¹ ἐξέπεσαν: an unusual word, and therefore likely to be correct. It is used again below; ἐξέπεσον, which is the reading of some MSS., would be an obvious alteration.

² i. e. of infanticide, devouring of children, and incest. These charges probably originated in ignorant and distorted rumours of the Christian Love-feast and Eucharist, which may have been circulated by the Jews in the first instance (Just. Mart.,

which it is not lawful for us either to speak or think, nor even to believe that the like is ever done amongst mankind. These statements being reported, all were infuriated against us, so that if there were any who from ties of kinship had hitherto been lenient, even these were now greatly enraged and mad with anger against us. Then that was fulfilled which was spoken by our Lord : "The time shall come wherein every one that killeth you will think that he doeth God service"¹ (John xvi. 2). Hereupon the holy witnesses endured punishments beyond all description, Satan being ambitious that some of the slanders might be admitted by them also. The whole wrath of the populace and of the governor and of the soldiers was directed in excessive measure against Sanctus, a deacon from Vienna,² and

Dial. 17, 108, 117; Tertullian, *adv. Jud.* 13, *ad Nat.* i. 14; Origen, *c. Cels.* vi. 27), and which easily won credence amongst a people not themselves distinguished for purity of life and conduct : see Tertullian, *Apol.* 7 foll. It is not unlikely too that some support would be found for such charges in the antinomian tendencies of certain Gnostic sects, who, from their rejection of the belief in the resurrection of the flesh, asserted that gross licentiousness was a matter of indifference (Iren. iii. 19, 4; Agrippa Castor *apud* Euseb. *H. E.* iv. 7; [Clem-Rom.] ii. 9, with Lightfoot's note; Tertullian, *de præscr. hæer.* 4, *ad Scap.* 4).

¹ λατρεῖαν προσφέρειν = "to offer a religious service to God." The slaughter of the Christians thus constituted a *προσφορά*, *hostia*, to appease an outraged deity : see Westcott's note *ad loc.*

² δίδκονον ἀπὸ Βιέννης. The expression need not imply that Sanctus was a deacon of Vienna, but as the faithful of both Churches suffered it seems natural to understand that he was,

against Maturus, a very recent convert but a noble warrior, and against Attalus, a Pergamene by race, who had ever been **a pillar and a foundation** (1 Tim. iii. 15) of our Church, and against Blandina, through whom Christ showed how what appears to men worthless and uncomely and despicable is deemed worthy of great glory by God, because of that love toward Him which is manifested in power and not boasted of in mere show (cf. 1 Cor. i. 25 f.). For while we were all afraid for her, and her earthly mistress, who was herself also one of the witnessing combatants, dreaded lest she should be unable through bodily weakness boldly to make confession, Blandina was filled with such power that she was set free from and contrasted with those who tortured her with every kind of torture in turn from morning to evening, and who confessed that they were conquered, since they had nothing left which they could any longer do to her, and that they marvelled at breath remaining in her when her whole body was lacerated and laid open, testifying that one of the tortures by itself

Cp. Euseb. v. 19, where Serapion describes Ælius Publius as bishop, ἀπὸ Δεβελτοῦ meaning bishop "of Debeltum." Nothing is said in the Epistle about a *bishop* of Vienna. Probably the whole district was under the bishop of Lugdunum; for Eusebius (*H. E.* v. 23), in his enumeration of the bishops in the time of Commodus (A.D. 180-193), speaks of Irenæus as having episcopal charge of all the Gallican dioceses (τῶν κατὰ Γαλλίαν δὲ παροικιῶν ἅς Εἰρηναῖος ἐπισκόπει).

was sufficient to end life, let alone so many and such great ones. But the blessed woman, like a noble athlete, gained her strength by her confession, finding refreshment and freedom from pain in saying "I am a Christian," and, "We do nothing vile."

Sanctus also nobly endured with boundless and superhuman courage all the outrages put upon him, the ungodly hoping that from the persistency and magnitude of his tortures something would be heard from his lips of the Christians' unlawful doings; but with such confidence did he array himself against them, that he did not even tell his own name or race or city, nor whether he were a slave or free, but to all their interrogations he returned answer in the Latin tongue, "I am a Christian."¹ This he owned for name, for city, for race, for everything besides, nor did the heathen hear from him any other word.² On this account there was kindled a great emulation against him on the part of the governor and the torturers, so

¹ "Christianus sum." Cp. *Pass. Perpetuæ*, 2: "Ego aliud me dicere non possum nisi quod sum Christiana" (Tertullian, *Apol.* 2). Many of the Gallican Christians were no doubt bi-lingual, if not tri-lingual. The Greek and Latin languages would be familiar to them as well as the Keltic vernacular: cp. Varro, in *Isid. Etym.* xv. 1, who terms the inhabitants of Massilia "trilingues."

² Cp. Pacian, *Epist.* 1. 7: "Christian is my name, Catholic is my surname."

that when no other form of torture remained to be inflicted on him, as a last resort they affixed hot brazen plates to the tenderest parts of his body. These were burned, but he remained unmoved and unyielding, steadfast in his confession, refreshed and empowered by the heavenly **fountain of the water of life** (cf. Rev. xxi. 6 ; John iv. 14 ; vii. 38) which proceeds from the heart of Christ. His poor body was a witness to his sufferings, being one entire wound and scar, drawn together and broken out of all human shape. In him Christ suffered and achieved great glory, bringing the adversary to naught, and showing that there is nothing fearful where the Father's love is nor painful where is Christ's glory. For when after some days the wicked men again tortured this witness, thinking that, if they repeated the same punishments upon his limbs, which were so swollen and inflamed that he could not bear the touch of a hand, they would overcome him, or that, dying under his tortures, he would strike fear into the rest, not only did nothing of this sort happen, but contrary to all human expectation he lifted his head and straightened his body under the second tortures, recovering his own former appearance and the use of his limbs, so that by the grace of Christ the second torture became for him no punishment but a means of healing.

Biblias, too, one of those who had denied

Christ, the devil thought that he had gulped down, and wishing to condemn her also through (forcing her to utter) slanders, brought her to punishment, to compel her to say impious things about us, as being one already crushed and cowardly. But under the torture she recovered her senses, and, as it were, awoke from a deep sleep, being reminded by the temporal anguish of the eternal punishment in Gehenna ;¹ and she determinedly contradicted the slanders, saying, "How could those persons eat children to whom it is not lawful to eat the blood even of irrational animals?"² Thereupon she confessed

¹ Cp. *Smyrn. Epist.* 2 : "purchasing at the cost of one hour a release from eternal punishment . . . for they set before their eyes the escape from the eternal fire."

² Blood, being the visible representation of the life, was forbidden to be used as an article of food in the earliest præ-Mosaic legislation (Gen. ix. 4-6) ; and the prohibition was reinforced in the Levitical code (Lev. xvii. 10-14), and again was recommended at the Conference at Jerusalem to Gentile converts in Syria (Acts xv. 20). It has ever continued the rule in the East, and was long observed in the West. References will be found in Tertullian, *Apol.* 9, *de Monog.* 5 ; Clem. Alex., *Pæd.* iii. 3 ; *Strom.* iv. 15 ; Origen, *c. Cels.* viii. 30 ; Cyr. Jer., *Cat.* ix. 28 ; xvii. 29.

According to a statement of Œcumenius, *Comment. on 1 Pet.* ii. 12, Migne, *P. G.* cxix. 536, a similar disclaimer was attributed by Irenæus to Blandina. It is, however, quite possible that the mistake—if it be a mistake, for it will be seen that both the setting of the story and the words themselves are by no means identical—is due not to Irenæus, but to his abbreviator. Œcumenius' words are : "If any one would learn this, he will have it exactly out of what was written by Irenæus,

herself a Christian, and was added to the order of the witnesses. The tyrannous punishments being thus brought to naught by Christ through the patient endurance of the witnesses, the devil conceived other contrivances—close confinement in the prison in the dark, and in a most loathsome situation, extending the feet in the stocks,¹ stretching them to the fifth hole, and other cruelties such as enraged underlings who are full of the devil are wont to inflict upon their prisoners. So that very many were suffocated in the prison; those whom the Lord willed thus to depart, showing forth His glory. For those who had suffered such acute tortures, that it seemed impossible

bishop of Lugdunum in Celtica, about Sanctus and Blandina." He then introduces the condensed passage with the words *ὡς δὲ διὰ βραχέων παραθέσθαι, ἔστι ταῦτα*. The passage itself is as follows: "For the Greeks seized the slaves of Christian catechumens and tortured them, that so they might learn from them some secret thing respecting the Christians. But the slaves were unable to gratify their torturers, save in so far as, having heard from their masters that the divine communion is the Blood and Body of Christ, they supposed it to be really blood and flesh, and made this answer to the inquirers. And as soon as these learnt that this was done by the Christians, they sent word to the other Greeks, and put Sanctus and Blandina to the rack to extort a confession of it. To whom Blandina well and courageously replied, 'How could they endure such things, who on account of discipline refrain from the enjoyment of even lawful meats?'"

¹ Cp. Acts xvi. 24, where St. Paul and Silas underwent similar treatment. Tertullian, *ad Mart.* 2: "Habet tenebras, sed lumen estis ipsi. . . . Nihil crus sentit in nervo cum animus in caelo est;" *de res. carn.* 8; *Pass. Perp.* 1.

for them to continue to live even with every nursing care, remained alive in the prison, destitute indeed of all human care, but strengthened and empowered in body and soul by the Lord, exhorting and encouraging the rest. Whereas the younger ones, and those only just arrested, whose bodies had not been previously ill-treated, could not bear the confinement, and died in the prison.

Now the blessed Pothinus, who had been entrusted with the ministry of the bishopric in Lugdunum, and was more than ninety years of age and quite feeble in body, scarce indeed able to breathe from long bodily weakness, yet strengthened by his eager spirit because of his immediate desire for martyrdom, was himself haled to the judgment-seat, his body broken down with age and disease, his soul preserved within him in order that Christ might triumph through it. And he, being brought to the judgment-seat, and escorted by the police-magistrates and rabble with all kinds of hooting as though he were the Christ, rendered a glorious witness (cp. 1 Tim. vi. 13). Being asked during his examination by the governor who the God of the Christians was, he replied, "If thou art worthy, thou shalt know." Thereupon he was unsparingly pulled about, and was maltreated with all kinds of blows, the nearest ones insulting him in every way with hands and feet, not even respecting

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his age, while those at a distance hurled at him whatever each could lay hold of, every one thinking it a gross carelessness and impiety if any act of wanton cruelty were omitted; for so they thought to avenge their own gods. Thus, scarcely breathing, he was cast into prison, and after two days yielded up his spirit.

Hereupon a remarkable instance of God's providence occurred, and the measureless mercy of Jesus was shown—an occurrence seldom happening in the brotherhood, but not beyond the power of Christ. For those who on their first arrest had denied Christ, were imprisoned along with the others and shared their miseries,¹—for not even in the present time was their denial of any benefit to them—while those who confessed what they were, were imprisoned as “Christians,” no other charge being brought against them; the former being detained as guilty of manslaughter and abominable impurity, and being punished two-fold in comparison with the latter. The confessors were comforted by the joy of martyrdom and the hope of the things promised and the Father's Spirit, while the recanters were greatly tormented by their conscience, so that their countenances distinguished them from all

¹ This was irregular. Recantation ought to have procured pardon, as Trajan had laid down in his rescript to Pliny (*Epist.* x. 97), and so the Emperor ruled when referred to: see below.

the rest when they were led out. The confessors came forth joyously, with glory and much grace on their countenances, so that even their bonds encircled them like a comely decoration, as a bride is decked with fringes of cunningly-worked¹ gold, and they were scented with the **sweet savour of Christ** (2 Cor. ii. 15), so that some fancied they had actually been anointed with material ointment.² But the others were dejected and ashamed and sad-looking, filled to the full with all disgrace, besides being reviled by the heathen as ignoble and cowardly, branded as murderers, and deprived of the all-worthy and glorious and life-giving name. The rest beholding this were strengthened, and when arrested, confessed unhesitatingly, giving no heed to the suggestions of the devil.

* * * * *

Subsequently their martyrdoms embraced every kind of death. For out of different hues and various kinds of flowers they wove one wreath and offered it to the Father. It was indeed right that such noble athletes, who had patiently undergone manifold contests and had greatly conquered, should receive the splendid wreath of incorruption.³

¹ πεποικιλμένοις : Ps. xliv. 13.

² Cp. *Smyrn. Epist.* 15: "Moreover we perceived a sweet odour such as that of wafted incense or some other precious spice."

³ τὸν τῆς ἀφθαρσίας στέφανον. The same expression is used

Accordingly Maturus and Sanctus and Blandina and Attalus were led forth to the beasts in the public place, and for the popular exhibition of heathen cruelty, a day for beast-fighting being granted directly on our account. Maturus and Sanctus once more went through every form of punishment in the amphitheatre, just as though they had suffered nothing at all before, or rather as having already in many bouts wrested the position from the adversary, and now contending for the wreath itself. They again endured the scourgings in procession which are customary on such occasions,¹ and the halings by the beasts, and all else that the maddened populace yelled for and demanded. Finally they were placed on the iron chair on which their bodies were fried, and the exhalation overwhelmed them. Nor did they even then desist, but became even more maddened against them, wishing to overcome their patience. Yet even so they heard nothing from Sanctus but that word of confession which he had constantly uttered from the first. These two, then, their life

below of Blandina, and occurs twice in the Smyrnæan Epistle, 17, 19. It appears to be peculiar to these two Epistles.

¹ The show began with a hideous procession of the condemned, who filed naked past the guards, and were lashed on the back. Cp. Tertullian, *ad Mart.* 5 : "inter venatorum taureas scapulis patientissimis inambulaverunt ;" *ad Nat.* 18, *Pass. Perp.* 18 : "populus exasperatus, flagellis eos vexari pro ordine venatorum postulavit."

having been preserved through all this great and varied agony, were at last sacrificed,¹ having been made a **spectacle to the world** (1 Cor. iv. 9) throughout that day in place of all the various gladiatorial combats.

Now Blandina, hanging upon a stake, was exposed as food for the wild beasts that were driven in. And because she seemed to be hanging on a cross, and because of her intense prayers, she inspired great courage in the combatants, who saw in this contest, and with their outward eyes in the form of their sister, Him who was crucified for them, that He might persuade those who believe on Him that all who suffer for the glory of Christ have an abiding fellowship with the living God.² And when none of the beasts would touch her, she was taken down from the stake and sent back again to the prison, being reserved for another contest, in order that, being victorious in many trials, she might make the condemnation of **the crooked serpent** (Isa. xxvii. 1) irrevocable, and encourage the brethren; for she, small and weak and despised as she was, **put on Christ** (Gal. iii. 27), the great and resistless Athlete, and having worsted the adversary

ἐρύθηναι : it was customary to finally dispatch the criminals, if necessary, with the sword. So Polycarp died (*Smyrn. Epist.* 16; cp. Euseb. *Mart. Pal.* ii.).

For the idea underlying this phrase cp. *Smyrn. Epist.* 6, where Polycarp is described as "a fellow-sharer with Christ" (*κοινωνὸς χριστοῦ*).

in many contests,¹ won through conflicts the wreath of incorruption.

Attalus also was loudly demanded by the people, for he was a man of repute; and he readily entered as a combatant because of his good conscience, since he had been genuinely trained in the Christian rule and had ever been a witness amongst us of the truth. He was led round the amphitheatre, having in front a tablet on which had been written in Latin, THIS IS ATTALUS THE CHRISTIAN.² The people indeed were bursting with eagerness for him, but the governor, hearing that he was a Roman, bade him be taken back again with the rest who were in prison, respecting whom he had written to Cæsar, and an answer was awaited from him.

The intervening period was not idle nor fruitless, but through their patient endurance the boundless mercy of Christ was shown forth. For through the living (confessors), the dead (in sins) were quickened: witnesses showed favour to non-witnesses, and there was great joy to the virgin mother as she received back alive those whom she had untimely brought forth as dead.³

¹ κλήρων: the combatants were selected by lot.

² HIC EST ATTALUS CHRISTIANUS. Roman criminals had a *titulus* or brief specification of their crime affixed to their persons or to the instrument of their punishment. So in our Lord's case (John xix. 19). Cp. Tertullian, *Apol.* 44; Sueton. *Calig.* 32.

³ ἐξέτρωσεν.

For through their influence most of the lapsed were restored,¹ being both conceived anew and endowed with fresh life ; and they learned to confess, and living now and nerved, they went to the tribunal to be again interrogated by the governor, God, **who willeth not the death of a sinner** (Ezek. xxxiii. 11), but is gracious to penitence, shedding sweetness on them.

Now the rescript of Cæsar was that they should be put to death by torture,² but that those who recanted should be released.

At the beginning of the public festival held here,³ which is thronged with men who attend it from all nations, the governor brought the blessed ones to his tribunal as a spectacle, and displayed them in procession to the crowd. Whereupon he again examined them, and those who appeared to be Roman citizens he beheaded, the rest he sent to the beasts. And Christ was greatly glorified in the case of those who had previously denied Him but now confessed Him, contrary to the expectation of the heathen. Moreover

¹ There is a further reference below to the reconciliation of penitents or lapsed by confessors (p. 46).

² ἀποτυμπανισθῆναι : cp. Heb. xi. 35. The word strictly means "pounded to death on the rack," but it seems to be used in a more general sense of death by torture of any kind.

³ This festival, *Concilium Galliarum*, the Assembly of Gallic deputies for religious ceremonies, contests, and shows, was held annually on August 1, the anniversary of the day on which the celebrated altar was dedicated to Augustus (Sueton. *Claud.* 2).

these were examined separately, as certain to be released; but when they confessed, they were added to the order of the witnesses, those only remaining without who had no longer any trace of faith, nor of respect for their wedding garment (Matt. xxii. 11), nor idea of the fear of God, slandering the **Way** (Acts ix. 2) by their manner of life, being indeed **sons of perdition** (cf. John xvii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 3). But all the rest were **added to the Church** (Acts ii. 47). Amongst those examined was Alexander, a Phrygian, a physician by profession, who had spent many years in Gaul, and was known to almost every one for his love to God and boldness in the Word, for he was not without a share of apostolic grace. This man, standing by the judgment-seat, and with a nod encouraging the others to their confession, appeared to the bystanders as though in pains of travail.¹ And the populace, exasperated at seeing those who had before recanted once more confessing (their Christianity), hooted at Alexander as the cause of this. Then the governor, turning his attention to him,² asked him who he was, and on his replying "A Christian," he fell into a rage and condemned him to the beasts. On the next day he and Attalus entered the

¹ ὥσπερ ὠδίνων : cp. Gal. iv. 19 : τεκνία μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω.

² ἐπιστήσαντος : or perhaps "ordered him to be placed in the midst;" so Rufinus.

arena ; for the governor, to please the people, had ordered even Attalus again to the beasts.¹ These men passed through every conceivable device for torture in the amphitheatre, and having endured a magnificent contest, at last were themselves sacrificed. Alexander neither murmured nor groaned at all, but conversed with God in his heart,² while Attalus, when placed upon the iron chair and roasted, the hot odour from his poor body being borne aloft, said to the crowd in Latin, "Lo, this it is to eat men, and you are doing it ; we neither eat men, nor practise any wickedness." And when asked what name God has, he replied, "God has not a name as a man hath."³

Finally, on the last day of the gladiatorial games, Blandina was again brought forward with a lad of about fifteen, named Ponticus. These two had been brought in each day to witness the punishment of the others, and had been pressed to swear by the idols. And because they remained constant and set them at naught, the populace grew furious, so that they respected neither the youth of the boy nor the sex of the

¹ To subject a Roman citizen to such an indignity was contrary to law.

² Cp. *Smyrn. Epist.* 2 : "Not one of them let cry or groan escape him, . . . the Lord standing by their side conversed with them ;" and below, of Blandina's "converse with Christ ;" and page 64 of *Perpetua*.

³ The allusion is to the deification of the Augustus.

woman; but they made them pass through every form of terrible suffering, and through the whole round of punishments, urging them to swear after each one, but they were unable to effect this. For Ponticus, excited to zeal by his sister, so that even the heathen saw that it was she who encouraged and strengthened him, yielded up his spirit after nobly enduring every punishment. And the blessed Blandina, last of all, like a noble mother who had excited her children to zeal, and sent them forward as conquerors to the King, recapitulated in herself all the conflicts of her children and hastened to them, rejoicing and exulting in her death, like one invited to a bridal feast rather than thrown to the beasts. For after the scourging, after the beasts, after the frying, she was at last enclosed in a net and exposed to a bull; and having been many times tossed by the beast, and being no longer sensible of her sufferings on account of her hope and firm hold¹ on the things entrusted to her and her converse with Christ, she also was sacrificed, even the heathen themselves confessing that never yet amongst them had a woman suffered such manifold and great tortures.

Yet not even thus was their madness and cruel hatred towards the saints satiated. For being savage and barbarous tribes, incited by

¹ ἐποχήν.

the Wild Beast, they were not easily appeased their malice taking a fresh and peculiar start in the case of the dead bodies (of their victims). For the persecutors were not ashamed at having been defeated, because they possessed no power of human reasoning ; but rather they kindled up their rage like a wild beast, both the governor and people alike displaying unjust hatred against us ; that the scripture might be fulfilled, **He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still** (Rev. xxii. 11). For they cast to dogs those who had been suffocated in the prison, carefully guarding them by night and by day lest any one should be buried by us. Then they gathered together the remains left by the wild beasts and by the fire—how mangled and how charred !—and the heads of the others with their severed bodies, and guarded them likewise from burial with military care for many days. And some snorted and gnashed their teeth at them, seeking to take some further vengeance on them ; others sneered and mocked, magnifying their idols and ascribing to them the punishments of the martyrs. The more reasonable, and those who seemed to sympathize most, often rebuked us, saying, “Where is their God? and what did their religion profit them which they preferred before their life?” So various was the behaviour of these men ; we ourselves being overwhelmed

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with sorrow because we could not bury the bodies in the earth. For night did not help us to do this, nor could bribes persuade nor supplication shame our foes; but in every way they guarded them, looking upon it as a great point gained if they prevented them being buried.

* * * * *

For six days the bodies of the martyrs were publicly exhibited and exposed to the open air, and then they were burnt and reduced to ashes by the godless, and swept away in the river Rhodanus, which flows close by, to prevent any relic of them being seen any longer upon the earth. And this they did, imagining that they could conquer God, and deprive them of their new birth,¹ in order that (in their own words) "they may have no hope of a resurrection, through trusting in which they bring in to us a foreign and strange religion, and despise terrible sufferings, and are willing with joy to die. Now let us see whether they will rise again, and if their God is able to succour them and rescue them out of our hands."

* * * * *

The following extracts may, or may not, have formed part of the Epistle itself, the formal close of which is not given by Eusebius. He says that he took them from the same volume (ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς γραφῆς); and they are at any rate interesting as anecdotes of the time when the

¹ παλιγγενεσία.

martyrdoms were going on, and of the confessors who were awaiting their turn.

* * * *

They indeed became great zealots and imitators of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 1; cp. Eph. v. 1), **Who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God** (Phil. ii. 6), insomuch that, although they were held in great honour and had; not once, nor twice, but many times borne witness—having actually been once more resuscitated from the wild beasts, covered with burns, and stripes, and wounds,—they neither proclaimed themselves as witnesses (*μάρτυρας*) nor permitted us to salute them by this name. And if any of us, either in writing or in speech, addressed them by this title, they sharply reproved them, for they gladly yielded the salutation of “witness” (*μαρτυρία*) to Christ **the Faithful and True Witness** (Rev. iii. 14) and **First-begotten of the dead** (Rev. i. 5), and God’s **Prince of Life** (Acts iii. 15); and they reminded us of the witnesses already departed, saying, “Those are indeed ‘witnesses’ whom Christ has deemed worthy to be taken up in their confession, since He sealed their witness by their death; but we are merely humble confessors.” And with tears they besought the brethren, begging that earnest prayers might be offered, to the intent that they might be “perfected.”¹

¹ Perfected, *i. e.* by martyrdom; cp. Heb. ii. 10; v. 9.

Moreover, they showed in deed the power of witness, displaying great boldness towards all the heathen, and they made their nobility evident by their patient endurance and fearlessness and dauntlessness; nevertheless they refused the salutation of "witnesses" in comparison with their brethren, being filled with the fear of God.

* * * * *

They humbled themselves under the **Mighty hand** (1 Pet. v. 6), by which they are now highly exalted. At that time they excused all, they accused none; they absolved every one, they bound no one; they prayed even for those who had subjected them to fearful tortures, just as Stephen, the perfect martyr: **Lord, lay not this sin to their charge** (Acts vii. 60). Now if he prayed on behalf of those who stoned him, how much more on behalf of the brethren!

* * * * *

For, indeed, this became their greatest battle with him on account of the genuineness of their love, in order that the Beast, being choked, might disgorge alive those whom he supposed he had quite gulped down.¹ For they made no boasting over the fallen, but helped those who were more needy with those graces in which they themselves abounded, having maternal compassion, and shedding many tears on their behalf before the

¹ As in the case of Biblias.

Father. They asked for life and He gave it them (cp. Ps. xxi. 4), and they imparted it to their neighbours. Conquerors over all, they departed to God, having loved peace always ; and, passing on the watchword of peace to us, they went with peace to God, leaving no grief to their mother, nor faction, nor strife to the brethren, but joy and peace, and concord and love.

* * * * *

The following anecdote of a revelation vouchsafed to Attalus during the persecution was taken by Eusebius from the same volume as the Epistle, to which, indeed, if it was not actually embodied in it, it must have been an appendix.

A certain Alcibiades, who was one of them, had been accustomed to live a very austere life, and positively to touch no food of any kind, except bread and water only ; and when he attempted to live the same life in the prison, it was revealed to Attalus after the first contest which he achieved in the amphitheatre, that Alcibiades was not doing well in refusing the **creatures of God** (cp. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4), and in leaving to others an example which might be a stumbling-block. Alcibiades was persuaded, and partook freely of everything, and gave thanks to God. For they were not bereft of the grace of God, but the Holy Spirit was their Guide.

APPENDIX

1. TERTULLIAN'S ADDRESS TO MARTYRS
2. THE PASSION OF ST. PERPETUA

APPENDIX

So many references have been made in the foregoing pages to Tertullian's *Address to Martyrs* that it has been thought well to include that inspiring Tract in this volume, and also to add some passages from the *Passion of St. Perpetua* which throw especial light upon the circumstances under which early Christian martyrdoms took place.

✓ | The date of the *Address* and of the African martyrdoms is A.D. 203 ; the scene, Karthage.

The translation of the *Address* has been made from the text edited by the present writer for the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1893 ; of the *Passion* from Dr. Armitage Robinson's edition, *Texts and Studies*, i. 2, Cambridge, 1891.

TERTULLIAN'S ADDRESS TO MARTYRS.

I. Amongst the provisions for the body which not only our lady mother, the Church, from her own bosom, but also individual brethren from their own private resources supply to you in your prison, blessed martyrs¹ designate, accept something from me too,

¹ Tertullian's use of "martyrs" for those who were destined to suffer, but had not yet done so, is in accordance with the

which may serve to nourish your spirit also. For it is not well for the body to be filled and for the spirit to hunger. Surely if that which is weak receives attention, that which is weaker ought still less to be neglected. Not that I have any claims to address you ; yet to the most skilled gladiators, not only experts and their own trainers give advice, but even non-professionals and any chance onlookers from outside the ring, so that hints suggested from the very crowd have often proved profitable.

First of all, then, blessed ones, **grieve not the Holy Spirit** (Eph. iv. 30) Who hath entered with you into the prison. For if He had not entered in with you, you yourselves would not be there to-day. Therefore give heed that He may remain there with you, and so may He lead you thence to the Lord.

The prison is also the devil's house wherein he keepeth his own family. But ye have come into the prison to trample on him in his own house. For already have ye trampled on him, having engaged with him outside. Let him not then say, "They are in my house ; I will tempt them with petty quarrels, failings, and mutual strifes." Let him fly from your sight and skulk away into his own abyss, coiled up and torpid like a charmed or out-smoked snake. Nor let him so prosper in his own kingdom as to set you at variance, but let him find you fortified and armed

Greek use of the word. See above, p. 45. They were "witnesses." Later a distinction was drawn between those witnesses who suffered but escaped death ("confessors") and those who paid the extreme penalty ("martyrs").

with concord ; because your peace is war to him. And this "peace" some in the Church having lost, have been wont to entreat from martyrs in prison.¹ Wherefore also on this account you ought to have it in yourselves, and to cherish it and guard it, so that you may be able to give it, it may be, to others also.

II. Similarly other hindrances of the soul may have accompanied you to the prison doors, just as far as your relatives did. From that point you were separated from the world itself : how much more from the spirit of the age and its affairs ! Nor will this dismay you, that you have been separated from the world. For if we regard the world itself as a prison, we shall deem you rather to have gone forth from prison than to have gone into prison. The world has the greater darkness which blindeth the hearts of men. The world puts on the heavier chains which bind the very souls of men. The world breathes the worse impurities, even the lusts of men. The world in the end contains the more criminals, namely, the whole race of men. It awaiteth accordingly the judgment, not of the proconsul, but of God. And from this prison, blessed ones, consider yourselves to have been translated, it may be, into a watch-house. It has its darkness, but **ye yourselves are light** (Matt. v. 14 ; Eph. v. 8) ; it has its chains, but ye have been **freed by God** (cp. Gal. v. 1). Its breath is evil, but ye are **an odour of sweet savour** (Eph. v. 3 ; 2 Cor. ii. 15). A judge is awaited, but ye are **destined to judge** (cp. 1 Cor. vi. 2) the very judges. It may be

¹ On this custom see above, pp. 21, 39, 46.

gloomy for him who sighs for the enjoyments of the worldly life. The Christian even outside the prison has renounced the worldly life,¹ and when in prison a prison also. It matters not to you who are beyond the world where you may be in it. And if ye have lost some of the joys of life, it is only business to lose somewhat in order to gain more. I say nothing now of the reward to which God calls martyrs. Let us for a moment compare the life of the world and of the prison, to see whether in the prison the spirit does not gain more than the flesh loses. Nay, indeed, through the care of the Church and the love of the brethren, the flesh does not lose anything that is requisite, while, in addition, the spirit gains what is always serviceable to faith. Thou dost not look upon strange gods, thou dost not come upon their images, thou dost not, by the mere fact of intercourse, participate in the solemn days of the heathen. Thou art not tormented with filthy fumes of sacrifices, thou art not pained by the shouts at the public shows, nor by the brutality and madness and indecency of the festival-keepers. Open vice doth not parade itself before thee; thou art free from causes of stumbling, temptations, evil recollections, and, now, even from persecutions. The prison is to the Christian what the desert was to the prophets. The Lord Himself very frequently used to go into retirement to pray the more freely, and to withdraw from the world. It was in a solitary place that He showed His own glory to His

¹ The reference is to the Vow of Renunciation at Baptism, for the various forms of which see Bright, *Sermons of St. Leo*, note 78, page 187.

disciples. Let us do away with the name of prison ; let us call it a retreat. Even if the body is shut in and the flesh held fast, all things are open to the spirit. In spirit roam forth, in spirit walk abroad, setting before thyself not shady walks or long porches but that way which leads to God.¹ As often as thou walkest along it in spirit so often wilt thou not be in prison. The ankle feels naught of the stocks when the mind is in heaven. The mind carries with it the whole man, and whither it wills it carries him. Now **where thy heart will be, there will be thy treasure** also (Matt. vi. 21). Let therefore our heart be where we would have our treasure.

III. Granted now, blessed ones, that the prison is grievous even to Christians. We have been called to the military service of the living God since the moment when we responded to the words of the Sacrament.² No soldier goes to a war equipped with luxuries, nor does he go forth to the battle-line from his bed-chamber, but from light and narrow tents wherein every hardship and roughness and uncomfortableness is to be found. Even in peace soldiers are already learning by toil and hardships to endure warfare by marching under arms, by manœuvring over the plain, by working in the trenches, by

¹ These words contain a reference to the recreation walk planted with trees, and to the athletic and intellectual contests in the stadium and the Porch or school of Stoic philosophers. These are contrasted with Him Who is the true "Way" (John xiv. 6).

² In the Baptismal Vow of Obedience. The metaphor of the Christian soldier comes from 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

closing files so as to form the "testudo."¹ Their occupations are all severe, lest body and mind should quake at passing from shade to sun, and from sun to cold weather, from vest to leather cuirass, from silence to clamour, from repose to tumult. Similarly do ye, blessed ones, account whatever hardships ye experience as a drill of mind and body. You are about to undergo **a good contest** (1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 4 f.; iv. 8) wherein the living God is the President,² the Holy Spirit is the Trainer, the wreath is that of eternity, **the prize** (1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 14), angelic being, **the citizenship in the heavens** (Phil. iii. 20), the glory unto ages of ages. Therefore your Master, Christ Jesus, Who anointed you with the Spirit, and hath brought you forth to this wrestling-ground, hath willed before the day of contest to set you apart from a less restrained condition unto a sterner training, that your powers may be strengthened within you. For as everybody knows, athletes are separated for a stricter training, that they may have opportunity to build up their strength. They are kept from luxury, from more agreeable kinds of food, from pleasanter kinds of drink. They are under restraint, they are racked, they are worn out with fatigue; and the more they toil in these exercises the better hope have they of victory. **And they**, says the Apostle, **that they may obtain a corruptible wreath** (1 Cor. ix. 25). Let

¹ A movement in which the soldiers interlocked their shields over their heads, so as to resemble the shell of the tortoise (*testudo*).

² The metaphor throughout this passage is that of the *palastra*.

us, who are destined to obtain an eternal one, interpret our prison as a wrestling-school,¹ so that, as persons well drilled in all kinds of hardships, we may be presented at the stadium of the judgment-seat: for virtue is built up by hardness but destroyed by softness.

IV. We know from the Lord's teaching that **the flesh is weak, the spirit ready** (Matt. xxvi. 41). Let us not therefore flatter ourselves, because the Lord allowed that the flesh is weak. For He said first that the spirit was ready because He wished to show which ought to be subject to the other; namely, that the flesh should be subservient to the spirit, the weaker to the stronger, so that itself also may receive strength from it. Let the spirit confer with the flesh about the salvation of both, not now thinking of the hardships of the prison, but of the actual contest and battle. The flesh perhaps will fear the heavy sword and the uplifted cross,² and the fury of the beasts and the extremest punishment of fire and all the ingenious devices of the torturer. But against all this, let the spirit place before itself and the flesh the fact that these tortures, although bitter, have yet been endured by many without complaint, nay, have even been

¹ It will have been noticed that the martyrs' prison is viewed under five different aspects: It is first the house of the devil, the abode of criminals, and yet to be the scene of the devil's discomfiture (chap. i.); secondly, it is a place of safety or watching (chap. ii.); thirdly, it is a retreat (chap. ii.); fourthly, a place for military training (chap. iii.); and fifthly, a wrestling-school.

² Compare the case of Blandina, p. 37.

willingly sought after, for the sake of fame and glory, and that, not only by men but also by women, so that you too, blessed women, may answer for your own sex. It would be a long tale were I to enumerate one by one those who have killed themselves with the sword; led to such an act by their own determination. Of women there is a ready example in the violated Lucretia, who stabbed herself in the sight of her relatives to win praise for her chastity. Mucius burnt his own right hand on the altar that fame might preserve the memory of his deed. Philosophers have achieved less—Heraclitus, who smeared himself with ox-dung, and burnt himself to death; Empedocles, who leaped down into the fires of Mount Ætna; Peregrinus, who no long time ago threw himself upon a funeral pyre—since, even women have despised the flames: Dido, for instance, lest she should be compelled to wed again, after the loss of her dearly beloved husband; and Hasdrubal's wife, who, when Karthage was already burning, saw her husband a suppliant before Scipio, and flew with her children into the flames of her native city. Regulus, a general of the Romans, when captured by the Karthaginians, refused to allow his single self to be exchanged for many Karthaginian prisoners, but preferred to be restored to the enemy; and then, crammed into a kind of chest, was pierced all over with nails driven in from the outside, and experienced so many crucifixions. A woman has even voluntarily desired the wild beasts and even asps—reptiles surely more dreadful than bull or bear—which Cleopatra applied to herself lest she should fall into the hands of her enemy. But, you

will say, the fear of death is not so great as that of tortures. Indeed? then the Athenian harlot¹ succumbed to the executioner!—she who, being privy to a conspiracy, was tortured by the tyrant, yet refused to betray the conspirators, and in the end spat out her tongue, which she had bitten off, in the tyrant's face, so that he might know that tortures would avail nothing in her case, though he might go on to the bitter end. Moreover, that highest solemnity to-day amongst the Lacedemonians, the flagellation, is no secret; for in that religious ceremony all the noble youths are scourged before the altar, their parents and relatives standing by and encouraging them to endure to the end. For honour and glory will be reckoned with greater reason if the soul rather than the body yield itself to stripes. Consequently, if it is allowed to earthly glory to have such sway over the powers of body and mind so that the sword and fire, and the cross, and beasts and tortures are despised for the sake of the reward of human praise, I am able to assert that those sufferings of yours which lead to the attainment of celestial glory and divine reward are unworthy of mention. Is the glass bead of such value? How much more the true pearl! Who, then, is not bound to undergo most willingly as much for the real as others do for the false?

V. I say no more of the motive of fame. Desire for notoriety too, and a certain mental disease, have ere this trampled on all these same contests of cruelty and torture. How many civilians does a desire for

¹ Her name was Leæna: see Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vii. 23; Pausanias, i. 23.

notoriety in arms bring to the sword! For the same reason they actually descend into the arena to the very wild beasts, and regard themselves as greatly improved in looks by their bites and scars. Persons, too, ere this, have hired themselves out to the flames to traverse a certain space in a burning tunic. Others have run the gauntlet of the beast-fighters' whips¹ with most enduring shoulders.

These things, blessed ones, the Lord hath permitted to be in the world not without cause, but both for our encouragement now, and for our confusion **in that day** (2 Tim. iv. 8), if we through dread have avoided suffering for the truth's sake unto salvation those things which others have eagerly entered upon for vanity's sake unto perdition.

VI. But let us say no more of these examples of endurance arising from desire of notoriety. Let us turn to the simple contemplation of ordinary human life, and learn instruction also from those accidents which have to be bravely borne, which happen whether we will or no. How often have the flames burned men alive! How often have wild beasts devoured men both in their natural forests, and in the midst of cities when they have escaped from their dens! How many have been put an end to by brigands with the sword, and by enemies even on the cross, after having first been tortured, ay, and finally disposed of with every kind of insult! One will even suffer for the sake of a man² what he hesitates to undergo in the

¹ See above, p. 36, and below, p. 73.

² An emperor, for instance, or a usurper. The following words refer to the ruthless punishment inflicted by Severus on

cause of God. On this point, indeed, even the present times may furnish us with proof, when so many persons of dignity are meeting with deaths never dreamt of for them in view of their family, rank, bodily condition and age—and all in the cause of a man, being punished either by himself if they have acted against him, or by his opponents if they have ranged themselves on his side.

THE PASSION OF ST. PERPETUA.

I. IF ancient examples of faith and proofs of God's grace and deeds edifying to men have on that account been collected and written down, so that by the reading of them as though it made them once more present, both God is honoured and man is strengthened, why should not modern examples also be collected which are equally suitable for both these ends? Surely equally with these those ancient examples were destined sometime to be, and were necessary for those who came after, although in their own age they were deemed of less importance, on account of the veneration which is given to that which is old. But away with those who determine the one power of the one Holy Spirit in accordance with times and seasons; since all latter deeds must

the followers of his rivals, Albinus in the west, and Niger in the east, in the earlier years of his reign; Spartian, *Severus*, 12; Dion. Cass. lxxv. 8, lxxvi. 4; Herodian, iii. 8, 12.

be regarded as the greater, as being later than the last, in accordance with the pre-eminence of the grace promised in the last age of the world. For in the **last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and their sons and daughters shall prophesy, and upon My servants and hand-maids will I pour out of My Spirit; and young men shall see visions and old men shall dream dreams** (Acts ii. 17). Consequently, we who recognize and honour equally the prophecies and the new visions which were alike promised, deem the other powers of the Holy Spirit to be for the equipment of the Church, to whom He has been sent administering all gifts to all, according as the Lord hath allotted to each, and we both naturally collect them, and proclaim them in public reading to the glory of God. Thus we prevent any weakness or failure of faith, thinking that it was only with the ancients that divine grace was associated, whether in the glory of martyrs or of revelations; when God always performs what He has promised, as a witness to unbelievers and as a boon to believers. Therefore, brethren and sons, **we too announce to you what we have heard and handled** (1 John i. 1), so that both you who were present may call again to mind the glory of the Lord, and you who now learn by the ear may **have communion with** (1 John i. 3) the holy martyrs, and through them with the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen.

II. Revocatus, and Felicitas his fellow-slave, Saturninus and Secundulus were arrested, and along with these, Vibia Perpetua, of excellent family and

education, a wife and a mother. She had father and mother and two brothers, one of whom was also a catechumen, and an infant son at the breast. In age she was about two-and-twenty.

She herself has narrated the whole story of her martyrdom from this point onwards, and it is given in her own words.

III. "From the time that I joined my companions my father not only wished to turn me from my purpose with arguments, but also persisted in trying to break down my faith through his affection for me. 'Father,' said I, 'do you see this vessel lying here—a jug, or whatever it is?' 'I see it,' said he. 'Can one call anything by any other name than what it is?' 'No,' said he. 'So neither can I call myself anything else but what I am, a Christian.' Angered at this word my father threw himself upon me as though to tear out my eyes; but he only shook me, and forthwith was overcome along with the devil's arguments. Then for a few days, because I missed my father, I gave thanks to God and was refreshed by his absence. In that brief space of time we were baptized; and the Spirit intimated to me that I was not to expect anything else from my baptism but sufferings of the flesh. A few days later we were received into the prison, and I shuddered because I had never experienced such gloom. O awful day! fearful heat arising from the crowd and from the jostling of the soldiers! Finally I was racked with anxiety for my infant there. Then Tertius and Pomponius, blessed deacons who were ministering to us, arranged by bribery for us to go forth for a few hours and gain refreshment

in a better part of the prison. And so going forth we all were free to attend to ourselves. I suckled my child, who was already weak from want of nourishment. In my anxiety for him I spoke to my mother, and comforted my brother, and entrusted my child to them. And I pined excessively because I saw them pining away because of me. For many days I suffered these anxieties ; and I then gained the point that my child should remain with me in the prison. And immediately I gained strength, being relieved from anxiety about the child ; and my prison suddenly became to me a palace, so that I preferred to be there rather than anywhere else.

IV. "Then my brother said to me, 'My lady sister, thou art already in such a position of dignity that thou mayest ask both for a vision and that it may be shown thee whether we are to suffer or to be released.' And I, who knew myself to be holding converse with the Lord, for Whose sake I had experienced such great trials, faithfully promised him, saying, 'To-morrow, I will tell thee.' And I prayed, and this vision was shown to me : I see a brazen ladder of wondrous size reaching up to heaven ; narrow, moreover, so that only one could go up it at once, and on its sides every kind of iron instrument fixed—swords, lances, hooks, daggers—so that if one went up carelessly, or not fixing one's attention upwards one would be torn, and pieces of one's flesh would be left on the iron implements. There was also lying under the ladder a dragon of wondrous size, which laid snares for those climbing it, and frightened them from the ascent. Now Satorus went up first.

He had given himself up voluntarily after our arrest on our account, because he had taught us the faith, and he had not been present on the occasion of our trial. When he got to the top of the ladder he turned and said to me, 'Perpetua, I am waiting for you ; but take care that that dragon does not bite you.' And I said, 'In the name of Jesus Christ he shall not hurt me.' And the dragon, as if afraid of me, slowly thrust his head underneath the ladder itself ; and I trod upon his head as if I were treading on the first step. And I went up and saw a large space of garden, and in the midst a man with white hair sitting, in the garb of a shepherd, tall, milking sheep ; and a white-robed host standing round him. And he lifted his head and saw me, and said, 'Welcome, child ;' and he called me and gave me a piece of the cheese which he was making, as it were a small mouthful, which I received with joined hands and ate ; and all those around said 'Amen.' And at the sound of the word I awoke, still tasting something sweet.

"This vision I told at once to my brother, and we understood that we were about to suffer martyrdom, and we began to give up every earthly hope.

V. "After a few days a rumour ran round that our case was to be heard. Moreover my father came up from the city, worn out with disgust ; and he came to break down my faith, saying, 'Daughter, pity my grey hairs ; pity your father, if I am worthy to be called father by you, if I have brought you up with my own hands to your present comely age, if I have preferred you to all your brothers : do not make me disgraced

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before men. Behold your brothers ; behold your mother and your aunt ; look at your son, who cannot live without you. Alter your determination : do not cut us off entirely ; for no one of us will ever hold up his head again if anything happens to you.' This my father said out of his affection for me, kissing my hands, and throwing himself at my feet, and with tears calling me not 'daughter' but 'lady.' And I was distressed at my father's state, for he alone of my kindred would not rejoice at my martyrdom. So I comforted him, saying, 'This will be done on that stage which God has willed : for know that we have not been placed in our own power but in God's.' And he left me very sorrowfully.

VI. "On another day, when we were breakfasting, we were suddenly carried off to our trial, and we were taken to the forum. The rumour of it immediately got about the neighbourhood and an immense crowd gathered. We go up into the dock. The others when questioned confessed. Then my turn came. And my father appeared on the spot with my boy, and drew me down from the step, praying to me, 'Pity thy child.' Then Hilarian the procurator, who at that time was administering the government in place of the proconsul Minucius Timinianus, deceased, said, 'Spare thy father's grey hairs ; spare thy infant boy. Sacrifice for the safety of the Emperor.' And I replied, 'I do not sacrifice.' 'Art thou a Christian?' asked Hilarian ; and I said, 'I am.' And when my father persisted in endeavouring to make me recant, he was ordered down by Hilarian and beaten with a rod. And I felt it as keenly as though I had been

struck myself; and I was sorry for his miserable old age.

"Then he pronounced sentence against us all, and condemned us to the beasts; and we joyfully went down to the prison. Then, because my child had been accustomed to be suckled by me and to remain with me in the prison, I sent Pomponius the deacon immediately to my father for the child, but he refused to give it up. And somehow God willed it that neither the child any longer desired the breasts, nor did they cause me pain; and thus I was spared anxiety about the child and personal discomfort."

VII. VIII. [In these sections Perpetua narrates the substance of two further visions vouchsafed to her, one whilst all were engaged in prayer, and the other on a day when the imprisoned confessors were placed in the stocks.]

IX. "Then, after a few days, Pudens the adjutant, the governor of the prison, began to make much of us, perceiving our fortitude, and let a number of people in to see us, so that we and they were eventually comforted. Now as the day of our exhibition drew near, my father came again to me, worn out with disgust, and began to tear out his beard and throw it on the ground, and to prostrate himself, and to plead with me on account of his years, and to utter such taunts as to turn the world upside down. I grieved for his unhappy old age.

X. "On the day before we were to fight, I saw in a vision Pomponius the deacon coming hither to the door of the prison and knocking violently. And I went out and opened to him. He was clothed in a

loose white robe, and wore embroidered shoes. And he said to me, 'Perpetua, we are waiting for you; come. And he took my hand, and we began to traverse rough and winding passages. At last with difficulty we arrive panting at the amphitheatre, and he led me into the middle of the arena, and said to me, 'Fear not: I will be here with thee, and will assist thee.' And he departed. And I behold a vast crowd eagerly watching. And because I knew that I was to be given to the beasts, I wondered why the beasts were not sent to me. And a certain Ægyptian of terrible aspect came forth against me along with his assistants, ready to fight with me. There came also to me comely young men as my assistants and helpers. And I was smoothed down and changed my sex. And they began to rub me down with oil, as is customary for a contest. •And I see that Ægyptian opposite rolling in the dust. And a certain man came forth, of wondrous size, whose height was greater than the amphitheatre, wearing a loose purple robe with two broad stripes over the middle of his breast, and embroidered shoes wrought of gold and silver. He carried a rod like a fencing-master, and a green branch on which were golden apples. Calling for silence he said, 'This Ægyptian, if he conquer her, shall kill her with the sword, but if she conquer him she shall receive this branch.' And he went away. And we approach each other, and begin to exchange blows. He was trying to catch me by the feet, but I was striking his face with my heels. And I was borne aloft in the air, and began to strike him as though I were not treading upon the ground. But when I saw

we were wasting time I joined my hands and interlocked my fingers. Then I caught him by the head, and he fell on his face and I trampled on his head. And the people began to shout, and my assistants to sing psalms. And I went up to the fencing-master and received the branch. And he gave me a kiss, and said to me, 'Daughter, peace be with thee.' And I began to walk with glory to the gate Sanavivaria.¹ And I awoke; and I understood that I was destined not to fight with the beasts, but against the devil; but I knew that victory would be mine.

"I have brought this narrative up to the day before the show. If any one wishes, he may write what was done on the day itself."

XI. Moreover, the blessed Saturus published this vision of his which he himself wrote out.

"We had suffered," said he, "and had departed from the flesh, and we began to be carried by four angels to the east, not a hand of whom was touching us. Now we were proceeding, not turned on our backs and moved from beneath, but as if we were climbing a gentle ascent. And when first freed from the world we saw a great light; and I said to Perpetua, who was by my side, 'This is what the Lord promised to us; we see His promise.' And while we were being borne along by the four angels, there was made for us a splendid open space like as it were a pleasure-garden, with rose-trees

¹ The gate Sanavivaria was reserved for those combatants who survived the contests in the arena: see below, chap. xx. Another gate, termed "porta Libitensis," was used for carrying out the bodies of those who were dead: see Lamprid., *Commod.* 16,

and all kinds of flowers. The height of the trees was after the manner of cypresses, whose leaves were singing without ceasing. Now there in the pleasure-garden those four angels were brighter than the rest ; and those who saw us there gave us honour, and said to the other angels, ' Here they are, here they are ! ' with wonder. And those four angels who carried us shuddered and put us down. And we traversed on our feet a walk studded with violets, where we found Jocundus and Saturninus and Artaxius, who were burnt alive in the same persecution, and Quintus, who had as a martyr died in prison, and we were asking them where they were, when the other angels said to us, ' Come first and enter, and salute the Lord.'

XII. " And we approached a place, the walls of which were as though they were built of light, and before the door four angels were stationed, who robed those entering with white garments. And we entered in and heard a chorus of voices saying incessantly, ' Holy, holy, holy ! ' And we saw in that place as it were an old man sitting, with snowy hair but a youthful countenance, whose feet we saw not. And on his right hand and on his left four elders ; and behind them many more elders were standing. And entering in with wonder we stood before the throne. And the four angels raised us up, and we kissed him, and with his own hand he passed across our face.¹ And the

¹ et de manu sua trajecit nobis in faciem. Dr. Robinson suggests that this difficult phrase may be interpreted in the light of Rev. vii. 17 : " And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes,"

rest of the elders said to us, 'Let us stand.' And we stood and gave the sign of peace. And they said to us, 'Go and play.' And I said to Perpetua, 'You have your desire ;' and she said to me, 'Thanks be to God, that, however happy I was in the flesh, I am happier here now.'

XIII. "And we went forth, and we saw before the gates Optatus the bishop on the right hand, and Aspasius the presbyter and doctor on the left, separated and sad. And they threw themselves at our feet and said, 'Reconcile our differences ; for you have gone and have left us thus.' And we said to them, 'Art not thou our father, and thou our presbyter ? Why do you throw yourselves at our feet ?' And we were distressed and embraced them. And Perpetua began to talk with them in Greek ; and we drew them aside into the pleasure-garden under a rose-tree. And while we were talking with them the angels said to them, 'Permit these others to refresh themselves ; and if you have any differences, free yourselves from them.' And they put them to confusion. And they said to Optatus, 'Correct thy flock ; for they come to thy assemblies as if returning from the circus and contending about the factions.'¹ And it seemed to us as though they wished to shut the gates ; and we began to recognize there many brethren, and also martyrs. We were all being nourished with an ineffable odour which sustained us ; then, rejoicing, I awoke."

XIV. These are the very remarkable visions of

¹ This is the technical term for the rival parties in the chariot races. See Gibbon, chap. xl. § 2 (iv. 218, ed. Bury).

those most blessed martyrs Saturus and Perpetua which they themselves wrote down.

Now God called away Secundulus while still in prison by an earlier departure from this world, so that he escaped the beasts; yet certainly his body, though not his soul, knew the sword.¹

XV. [A description of Felicitas' case in giving birth in the prison to an eight months child. One sentence must be rescued]—One of the prison torturers said to her, "What will you, who cry out so much now, do when thrown to the beasts?" . . . And she replied, "Now it is I who suffer; but then there will be Another by my side Who will suffer for me, because it is for Him that I shall be suffering." . . .

XVI. XVII.

XVIII. The day of their victory dawned, and they went forth from the prison into the amphitheatre as if to heaven—joyful, and with radiant countenances, trembling, if at all, with joy, not with fear. Perpetua followed with bright step as a bride of Christ, as the darling of God, with the flash of her eyes quelling the gaze of the populace. Felicitas, likewise, rejoicing that she had been safely delivered, so that she could fight with the beasts, passed from one effusion of blood to another, from the midwife to the gladiator, about to be washed after child-birth with a second baptism. And when they were brought to the gate, and were being compelled to put on costumes, the men that of the priests of Saturn, and the women that of devotees of Ceres, her magnificent firmness up to

¹ Possibly he was beheaded; but "sword" may be used metaphorically for "sufferings."

the last fought against this disgrace ; for she said, " We have so far come to this willingly, lest our liberty should be taken away ; we have pledged our life that we will do no such thing ; this is the very bargain we have made with you." Injustice recognized justice : the tribune allowed them to be led in simply in whatever attire they were. Perpetua sang a psalm, already trampling on the head of the Ægyptian.¹ Revocatus and Saturninus and Saturus uttered warning threats to the spectators on this fashion ; when they came within sight of Hilarian they began with gestures and head-shakings to say to him, " You may judge us, but God will judge you." This infuriated the people, and they demanded that we should be punished with scourges in front of the line of beast-fighters.² And they only rejoiced, because they had attained to something even of the Lord's sufferings.

XIX. Now He who had said " Ask and ye shall receive," had granted to these petitioners the particular death which each one had desired. For sometimes when they used to converse together concerning their wish for martyrdom, Saturninus professed that he wished to be thrown to all the beasts, that so he might obtain a more glorious crown. And so, being called at the beginning of the show, he measured his strength with a leopard, and placed upon a platform, was harassed by a bear. Now Saturus deprecated suffering from a bear more than anything ; but he had already made up his mind that he would perish by one bite from a leopard. Consequently, when he was

¹ Referring to the incident in her vision, chap. x.

² See above, pp. 36, 60.

exposed to a wild boar, the professional fighter who had tied him to the beast was pierced instead, and died soon after the show was over. Saturus was only dragged about. And when he was tied up to the bear on the bridge, the bear refused to come out of his cell ; and so a second time Saturus was called back unhurt.

XX. Now for the young women the devil prepared a mad cow, infuriated for that very purpose contrary to custom, wishing to rival their sex with that of the beast. And so they were brought forth, stripped and enclosed in nets. The crowd shuddered, seeing one, a delicate girl, and the other fresh from child-bed with dripping breasts. In such plight they were called back and clothed with loose garments. Perpetua was tossed first and fell on her loins, and sitting up she drew back the tunic, which had been torn from her side, to cover her thigh, mindful of her modesty rather than of her sufferings. This done she tied up her loosened hair ; for it was not becoming for a martyr to suffer with dishevelled hair, lest she should seem to be mourning in her glory. So she arose, and when she saw Felicitas tossed, she approached her and gave her her hand and lifted her up. Both stood equally firm, and, the cruelty of the crowd being conquered, they were called back to the gate Sanavivaria. There Perpetua was received by a certain catechumen named Rusticus, who had attached himself to her, and, as if awaking out of sleep (so completely was she in the Spirit and in an ecstasy), she began to look round and, to the utter astonishment of every one, said, " I wonder when we are going to be led forth to

that cow." And when she had heard that it had already happened she did not at first believe it, until she saw some marks of the tossing on her body and her dress. Then, having sent for her brother, she addressed him and the catechumen, saying, "Stand fast in the faith and let all love each other; and let not our sufferings be a stumbling-block to you."

XXI. Likewise Saturus at another gate was exhorting Pudens the adjutant, saying, "In a word, as I expected and foretold, I have up to now absolutely escaped every one of the beasts. Now, do thou believe with thy whole heart.¹ Lo, I am about to come forth thither, and by one bite of the leopard I am to be destroyed." And forthwith, at the end of the show, when a leopard was let loose, Saturus poured forth from one bite so great a quantity of blood that the people shouted out to him as he turned round what amounted to a testimony to his second baptism, "Well washed; well washed!" Truly, indeed, was he "well washed" who had washed in this manner. Then he said to Pudens, "Farewell: remember me and my faith; and let not these things trouble you, but strengthen you." At the same time he took from his finger a small ring, and having dipped it in his wound, gave it back to him for a keepsake, as a pledge and memorial of his sufferings. Thereupon, already half dead, he is laid along with the others in the accustomed place for the throat-cutting. And when the people demanded that they should be brought into the midst in order that they might feast their eyes on

It had been noted in chap. xvi. that the adjutant had himself by that time become a believer,

the sight of the sword piercing their bodies, they voluntarily rose up and transferred themselves whither the crowd wished. They had already before this mutually exchanged the kiss, in order to complete the martyrdom by the solemn rite of the peace. The rest were unable to move and received the sword in silence. Satorus, as was natural, since he had first climbed the ladder,¹ was the first to yield his spirit; for he was waiting for Perpetua. And she, in order to taste somewhat of sorrow, was moaning amongst the pierced bones, and guided the uncertain hand of the clumsy gladiator to her own throat. Perchance so noble a woman, who was feared by the unclean spirit, could not have otherwise been put to death except she herself wished it.

O most brave and blessed martyrs! O truly called and elect for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! How ought he who magnifies and honours and glorifies you to read for the edification of the Church surely also these not less signal examples than the older ones, so that new powers also may testify that one and the ever same Holy Spirit is still working, and the Almighty God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and unmeasured power for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ Referring to Perpetua's vision in chap. iv.

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