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THE LIFE
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SAINT ANNE.



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THE LIFE
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SAINT ANNE.

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THE LIFE
OF
Saint Anne,

MOTHER OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN.



THE name of Anne, which in Hebrew signifies "gracious," shall always be venerated amongst Christians, for it is the name of the mother of Mary. How great was Anne's glory in having given birth to her who was the mother of God! "How," exclaims St. John Damascene, "shall we worthily praise her from whom we have received the admirable and precious fruit that has given Jesus to us?"

St. Anne lived at Nazareth, a town of lower Galilee, a short distance from Mount Carmel. According to the opinion of St. Augustine she was of the priestly tribe. She married a just man, named Joachim, of the tribe of Juda, and of the race of David by Nathan.

Those spouses walked before God in the ways of the most perfect justice, spending their days in prayer, labour, and alms-giving; they awaited, with all the ardent faith of ancient days, the Messiah, who had been announced by the prophets, the Saviour so long promised to Israel; and according

to the predictions, the time in which he should appear was not far off.

Anne having arrived at an advanced age without children, could not, like the other women of Israel, cherish a hope that the Messiah would spring from her blood; but at the moment when this great blessing seemed to escape her, the all-powerful Wisdom ordained quite the contrary. The laws of nature are reversed before the Lord's designs; Anne, sterile for twenty years, conceives miraculously, and gives birth to her who was to bring forth the Son of God, the desired of nations, the divine Redeemer of the human race.

Thenceforth Anne could not but call herself blessed; and, in fact, was she not so? she who gave birth to her who was supereminently blessed amongst women! Ponder on the beautiful canticle of thanksgiving which she pronounced—"I will sing the praises of my God," cries the blessed mother in the transports of her joy, "I will sing the praises of my God, because he has visited me in his love, and has not left my name to opprobrium."

Twenty-four days after the birth of her child, Anne repaired to the Temple to obey a precept of the law; and, like Anne, wife of Elcana, consecrating Samuel to God, the spouse of Joachim devoted her dear Mary to the service of the Temple—Mary, that sweet flower wherewith the Lord had perfumed her old age. How much must this sacrifice have cost this tender mother! but in her gratitude she was too happy to present to the Lord that which in his love he had bestowed on her. Three years afterwards, and when Mary's reason was shining forth brilliantly, even at that early period, Anne returned to Jerusalem to fulfil her vow. Mary

being solemnly consecrated to the Lord, was left in the Temple of Jerusalem, and the pious mother went back to her home, but not without shedding tears, for upon Mary, ever since God had given her, were concentrated all the thoughts and aspirations of the pious mother.

A pious writer thus represents St. Anne going from time to time to Jerusalem to visit her daughter—"With what joy did this pious mother put on her travelling veil to go to the holy city!"

"Whether Joachim, on his death-bed, had entrusted the Virgin to the special protection of the priesthood, or whether the magistrates, on whom devolved the duty of providing for orphans, had themselves selected guardians from the illustrious family of Aaron, to whom she was allied on the maternal side, or that the guardianship of children, devoted to the service of the Temple, belonged by right to the Levites, one thing is, however, certain, that after the death of the pious authors of her existence, Mary had guardians from among the sacerdotal race. If we be allowed to hazard an opinion, we should say that it is very probable that the duties of this guardianship were particularly entrusted to the pious spouse of Elizabeth, as his high reputation for virtue, together with her claim of a near relative, would point him out as peculiarly fitted for that office. The anxiety and desire which the Blessed Virgin manifested, two or three years later, in travelling all Judea, to present her congratulations to the mother of St. John the Baptist, and her prolonged stay in the highlands of Hebron, would, indeed, point out that closer ties than those of mere relationship existed between them. According to the modes of observance strictly adopted

among the Hebrews, the roof under which Mary dwelt, during a visit so prolonged, must be as sacred as the paternal roof itself. Whoever the priests were on whom devolved the guardianship of the blessed daughter of St. Anne, they strictly acquitted themselves of the obligations imposed on them ; and when the Virgin had attained her fifteenth year, they thought to unite her in marriage to a spouse worthy of her. This project filled Mary with no little anxiety. Her lofty, pure, and contemplative soul had divined the Gospel, and virginity appeared to her to be the most perfect, the most holy, and the most honourable state which a woman could embrace. A very ancient author, cited by St. Gregory of Nyssa, relates that she refused for a long time, but with a great deal of modesty, complying with the intentions of her guardians, and that she supplicated in humble tones her family to consent to the life which she was leading in the Temple—a life innocent, retired, and exempt from every tie, except the ties of the Lord. Her request caused no little surprise among those who had the disposal of her person. That which she implored as a favour was nothing less than sterility, that is, opprobrium, a state solemnly accursed by the law of Moses ; a state of celibacy she made choice of, that is, a total extinction of the name of her father, a thought little less than impious among the Jews, who considered it a dire calamity, if their name should not be perpetuated in Israel. The vow of virginity, by which she bound herself to God, could not be urged by her as a plea, for such could be annulled by the mere will of her family. Woman at any epoch of her life was always considered a minor before the establishment of that immortal code which has enfranchised man,

and placed the woman and the slave on terms of equality with him."

The young virgin had passed about nine years in the Temple, when Joachim, the patriarch of pure and simple life, slept his last sleep to go and repose for ever in Abraham's bosom.

St. Anne followed her spouse soon afterwards to the tomb. Some pious authors have thought that at this last hour a revelation from on high allowed the holy mother of Mary to behold the glorious destinies to which Heaven called her daughter. A celestial joy illuminated her countenance as she gazed on this glory; and it was in this state of blessedness that she bowed her head and breathed her latest sigh.

St. Anne and St. Joachim were both publicly honoured in the Church during the first ages. St. John Damascene pronounced the grandest eulogies on their virtues, and churches were built at Sephoris, a town of the tribe of Zabulon, at Nazareth, and in other regions that belonged to their patrimony. About the year 550, the Emperor Justinian I. caused a church to be built in Constantinople under the invocation of St. Anne. The Emperor Justinian II. founded another in 705. We are informed that the body of the Saint was brought to Constantinople from Palestine in 710, and since that period many of the western Churches glory in having obtained some portions of her relics. The Church will ever celebrate the maternal piety of St. Anne; and generation after generation will reflect the incomparable glory of the daughter on her holy mother.

Surely nothing can be more pleasing to Mary than to venerate her holy mother. The Blessed

Virgin appeared once to a pious servant of hers who was wont to repeat many prayers daily in her honour, and above all the Ave Maria. The reason of this condescension was, that she might exhort him to salute and pray to St. Anne, her glorious mother. The pious servant replying, that he knew not how to pray to her, the Blessed Virgin instructed him thus:—"In reciting the Ave Maria, when you shall have said, '*and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus,*' you will add—And blessed be holy Anne, thy mother, from whom was taken thy virginal and immaculate flesh. You will then continue—Holy Mary pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Reciting the Rosary in this manner, we can offer a double homage to the ever-glorious Virgin.

PRAYER.

Oh! most holy mother of Mary, heaven and earth bless thee! God the Father has loved thee as the mother of his cherished daughter. The Word Incarnate has loved thee because thou art the mother of his mother. And the Holy Spirit has loved thee because thou art the mother of his perfect spouse. The angels and the elect honour thee as the sacred tree which produced the flower whose perfume and beauty charm them; and here on earth the sinners and the just will always appeal to thy powerful intercession with Jesus, the divine Son of her to whom thou gavest birth. Oh! blessed mother, plead for us with thy dearly-loved daughter, and implore her to beseech Jesus, the fruit of her womb, for us, miserable sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Life of Saints Martha and Mary,

SISTERS OF LAZARUS.

[First Century.]

THE life of Martha and Mary is little known : but what the Gospel tells us of both is replete with interest. It is difficult to peruse these passages of Scripture without experiencing a sentiment of sweetest emotion for the goodness of the Lord, and a holy admiration of the virtues of those two women, whose souls were always inflamed with the fires of faith, hope, and charity.

Martha, it is commonly believed, was the eldest sister of Lazarus her brother and of Mary. This holy family was one of the most distinguished in the country of Bethania, a small town situate two miles from Jerusalem, where they dwelt together.

The Saviour, who, at first, had his ordinary residence in Galilee, having located himself principally in Judea, during the third year of his public mission, frequently honoured the house of this virtuous family with his presence. Let us hear how the Scripture, in its expressive and inimitable simplicity, narrates this fact:—

“ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain town; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word. But Martha was

busy about much serving. Who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her, therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her."—Luke, x. 38–42.

On this first visit of Jesus, Martha, as we perceive, manifested the greatest anxiety in her mode of receiving him, and gave all her attentions to him, ministering with her hands; but, probably, there may have been something personal in the solitudes she entertained for him and his disciples. She did not act with perfect simplicity, for where this simplicity exists, there all is calm and tranquillity. Mary, on the other hand, remained seated at the feet of Jesus; well she knew that her sister's heart was occupied with vain and useless preparations; she took no part in them, knowing that she conferred greater pleasure on her Divine Guest by listening to the words of eternal life that fell from his lips. This was his object in visiting them, just as when a few years before he tarried by a fountain, where there stood a woman of Samaria, of whom he asked a draught of water, that she in return might ask him for those waters that spring up into eternal life. To Mary, all these moments were precious, and nothing could distract her thoughts. She might have said, with all the fervour of her heart—"My beloved to me." Oh! how her heart must have glowed in her bosom, whilst she listened to the words of Jesus Christ! "My beloved to me, and I to him who feedeth among the lilies"—that is, amongst chaste

souls and flowers flinging out the perfume of virtues.

The two sisters have been regarded as an image of active and contemplative life. Their house, according to St. Augustine, was, moreover, a faithful image of God's family on the earth; there, no one is idle, each one has his occupation; some, like the solitaries in the recesses of the deserts, given entirely to contemplation; others consecrating themselves to active life; others, again, labouring for the salvation of their neighbours, and discharging the external functions of the sacred ministry; some devoting themselves to the care of the poor and sick; and finally, multitudes, who although living in the midst of the world's concerns and cares, discharge their various duties with a view to please God, and walk according to his commandments. The one thing necessary is, that we walk incessantly in the presence of the Lord, and that we should seek, in thoughtfulness of heart and soul, that sweet calm that is not to be ruffled by external acts—to accomplish God's holy will in all things. Truly he is the greatest saint who, whatsoever may be his condition, tends to perfection with unabated ardour.

Mary, doubtless, would have taken part in her sister's over-anxious labours, had she not perceived that Martha was too solicitous, and thus lost the precious moments which the Son of God spent under their roof. "Everything in its proper time," saith inspired Wisdom: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to refresh the Son of God: for when we clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty, or shelter the outcast, we are doing all this to Him of whom the poor are repre-

sentatives. This is truly a holy vocation, and one of the conditions on which our salvation depends. But there is also a time for seeking God in the silence of our homes, or at the foot of his altars. There is a proper time for presenting ourselves to him with the heavy burden of our miseries, as there is also a time for casting ourselves into the boundless ocean of his mercy; and whosoever striveth not to derive comfort from God, and strength in solitude, can hardly preserve that interior calm which is so necessary amidst the world's distractions and conflicts. God has marked out for every one a regular series of duties, which imperatively demands the deepest consideration of their hearts. On the faithful discharge of these our all depends, and it is by frequently recurring to him in solitude that we will not lose the one thing necessary amidst the noise and whirl of the world.

Jesus Christ himself, the author of our salvation, has taught us, by his doctrine and by his example, in what the one thing necessary consists, "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, that I may perfect his work."

The life of our Lord, and that of a great number of his Saints, was partly active and partly contemplative, and this *mixed life*, says St. Thomas, is the most excellent. Let us who are not called to a purely contemplative life, like the anchorets in the desert—let us attach ourselves to the mixed life of Martha and Mary, and our reward shall be like her's—the better part shall not be taken from us; nay, we shall be like unto the angels who, whilst exercising the external functions wherewith they are charged, never lose sight of the presence of God, but adore him and meditate on him incessantly.

That Jesus loved Martha's family with the most affectionate love, is clearly proved by the resuscitation of Lazarus.

Let us now hear the Evangelist recording one of the most magnificent facts in the whole life of our adorable Redeemer. "Now there was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister. (And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick.) His sisters, therefore, sent to him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God: that the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, he still remained in the same place two days: Then after that he said to his disciples: Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to him: Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: But if he walk in the night he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. These things he said; and after that he said to them: Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples, therefore, said: Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death; and they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead; And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe: but let us go to him. Thomas, therefore, who is called

Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples : Let us also go, that we may die with him. Jesus, therefore, came and found that he had been four days already in the grave. (Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha, therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet him ; but Mary sat at home. Martha, therefore, said to Jesus : Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith to her ; Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to him : I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her : I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live. And every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this ? She saith to him : Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. And when she had said these things, she went, and called her sister Mary secretly, saying : The Master is come and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly and cometh to him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town : but he was still in that place where Martha had met him. The Jews, therefore, who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying : She goeth to the grave, to weep there. When Mary, therefore, was come where Jesus was, seeing him she fell down at his feet, and saith to him : Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus, therefore,

when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her, weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself. And said: Where have you laid him? They say to him: Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews, therefore, said: Behold how he loved him. But some of them said: Could not he that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the sepulchre: Now it was a cave; and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith: Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days. Jesus saith to her: Did not I say to thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God? They took, therefore, the stone away: And Jesus lifting up his eyes said: Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it; that they may believe that thou hast sent me. When he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding-bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go. Many, therefore, of the Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him."—John, xi. 1-45.

This miracle was another motive for the hatred of the priests and Pharisees; their persecutions became more cruel day after day; and the JUST ONE, the Most Holy, the SON of GOD, who came on earth to redeem sinners, even at the price of his adorable

blood, beheld the moment arrive in which He was to consummate the grand sacrifice.

Let us, however, narrate another fact of Mary's life. Impelled by a motive of heroic charity, she embalms the body of her Lord, and although she was unconscious of it, this embalmment was for the sepulture of the Son of God! Let us ponder on the simple recital given by the Evangelist:—

“And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to him a woman having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he was at table. And the disciples seeing it, had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing it, said to them, Why do you trouble this woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you: but me you have not always. For she, in pouring this ointment upon my body, hath done it for my burial. Amen I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her.”—Matt. xxvi. 6–13.

Now that eighteen centuries have passed away, do we not see the fulfilment of the Saviour's words? Do we not speak even now with admiration of Mary, the holy friend of Jesus, one day seating herself at the feet of her Lord to learn the one thing necessary, and on the next, pouring perfumes on his most blessed body?

The Evangelists say no more of Lazarus or of his sisters, nor do they tell us how they ended their lives.

Amongst the inhabitants of Provence, the fol-

lowing popular tradition exists:—"During the persecutions with which the nascent Church was assailed after our Lord's death, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were exiled from Jerusalem, and together with many other Christians were put on board a ship that was not sea-worthy, without sails or anchors. They were launched on the sea, in the midst of a terrible storm, and the persecutors calculated on their speedy death. But He who commands the winds and waves breathed calm over the waters, and guided the ship to the port of Marseilles, where it entered, to the astonishment of all the people. The exiled family spoke of Christ to that idolatrous people. The glad tidings were announced. God blessed the zeal of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Multitudes were converted. The governor of Marseilles, who came to inhibit the preaching, was himself converted, and the faith spread throughout the whole country. These apostles founded a Church, and Lazarus is believed to have been the first Bishop of Marseilles."

"At this epoch," continues the tradition, "the city of Tarascon, twenty leagues from Marseilles, was devastated by a monster called the Tarasque. Whenever this monstrosity was not in the Rhone, it had its haunts in a neighbouring wood, and daily destroyed various victims. The Tarasque was amphibious. This terrible animal, shaped like an ox, had the head of a lion, with long teeth, like a trenchant saw, its mane resembled a horse's, and its six feet were like those of a man; its talons were like those of a bear, and its tail like a serpent's; its back was covered with impenetrable scales; by a single stroke it overturned large ships; its aspect was fearful, and the hardness of its skin

resisted every species of weapon. To combat it, was to become its victim."

Martha was venerated throughout the country, and the Tarasconais supplicated her to come and deliver them by the power of her God, adding, that they would believe in him, if she performed this miracle. Martha, filled with faith, hope, and charity, bade farewell to her sister, and set out with the deputation from Tarascon.

The inhabitants preceded Martha in a great concourse. The Saint pledged herself to be devoted to them, and she then directed her steps towards the wood, which resounded with the bellowings of the monster. The crowd, terrified, held their breath and listened. They were to witness either another victim, or an astounding miracle wrought by God. Martha entered the wood, and they soon saw her coming out with a cross in one hand, and in the other a riband, with which she led the ferocious Tarasque, which had now become as gentle as a lamb. The people could scarcely contain their surprise; they arranged themselves in a circle, whilst the gentle Tarasque obeyed the hand that led it. The people then fell on the monstrous animal and killed it, without experiencing even the slightest resistance. The entire country resounded with the praises of the heroine. They blessed the God who had wrought such a miracle, and all the people embraced the religion of Martha.

The Saint caused a small house to be built in the wood where the monster had dwelt, and to this place she retired frequently, and in this retreat she laboured to cultivate the manners of the Tarasconais. She built a chapel in their city, and then she went to Avignon, where having made new

converts, she also erected a chapel. Her return to Tarascon was a veritable triumph. They would have detained her in this town, and done her the greatest honours, but she preferred to live in her retreat. She there founded a convent of women, and it was there, according to the Provençaux, that she slept in the Lord. She was accompanied by the regrets of the people whom she had saved from a dreadful monster, and whom she had delivered from the still more dreadful monster of idolatry.

This singular tradition (which has not been yet successfully refuted) has taken such deep root in the minds of the Tarascons, that each year, to commemorate the miracle wrought by St. Martha, they are accustomed to exhibit processionally, in the town of Tarascon, a monster made of wood, and paste-board, and painted calico. This monstrous resemblance is half-bear, half-serpent, and half-fish. It is managed by eight men, four of whom are in the body, occupied rolling the eyes, and opening the mouth. This procession, semi-religious and popular, goes round the town to the chiming of bells, and the great joy of the Tarasconais, who cry Beware, beware, of the Tarasque! This day is kept as a festival. The sepulchral chapel, in which is the tomb of St. Martha, is illuminated with numberless wax-lights; but now-a-days people no longer see, as formerly, the lights flashing on the sceptre, which Clovis, the first Christian king, laid on the tomb of Martha, hoping thereby to obtain, through her powerful intercession, relief from the afflictions with which he was visited. Alas! we no longer behold the golden shrine that Louis XI. caused to be executed in honour of the

Saint, the workmanship of which excelled all that was grand in French art. On this shrine the king was represented praying, and the most remarkable acts of Martha's life were wrought in relief on a black ground. All these evidences of worship, as well as the magnificent votive offerings sent by the Kings of Jerusalem and Sicily, have disappeared; but there still remains a beautiful and simple statue of the Saint, which represents her receiving the veneration of the faithful.

As to Mary, Martha's sister, the Provençals adopt the opinion that confounds Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene, who, they assert, retired into the desert of St. Baume, a short distance from Marseilles, and there rendered herself illustrious by the life of penance that she led for a term of thirty years.

It is believed that the relics of these Saints were discovered in the thirteenth century. The relics of St. Mary were in a place now called Saint Maximin, and those of St. Martha at Tarascon. We are assured of the discovery of various monuments attesting the authenticity of these relics.

Charles I., King of Naples, was then Sovereign of Provence, under the title of Count: but as the war that he had to carry on against the house of Aragon detained him in the kingdom of Naples, he devolved the government of Provence on Charles of Anjou, his son, Prince of Salerno. The latter having been defeated by the fleet of the King of Aragon, in 1284, was made prisoner, and did not recover his liberty till four years afterwards. He attributed his liberation to the intercession of St. Mary, for whom, ever since the finding of her relics, he manifested the warmest devotion. He

had already erected the Church of St. Maximin on the spot where her relics were discovered, and he assisted at the solemn translation which took place in 1279. This church he bestowed on the Dominicans. The prior of the monastery was named by the King, and depended immediately on the General of his Order. The chief portion of the relics of St. Mary, which had been preserved in a subterranean chapel under the centre of the church, was enclosed in a porphyry urn, presented by Pope Urban VIII. in 1660, and then placed on the grand altar. Louis XIV. and many of the nobles of his court assisted at the ceremony of the translation, which was truly magnificent.

The other relics of the Saint repose in the subterranean chapel, and there also is preserved her head enshrined in a golden reliquary, and surmounted with the crown of Charles II., King of Sicily, and Count of Provence. Before the shrine is a beautiful statue, in enamelled gold, of Queen Anne of Bretagne, who is represented kneeling. Two leagues from St. Maximin, in the direction of Marseilles, stood a convent of Dominicans, built on a commanding eminence, and surrounded on all sides by sterile mountains. • This was called *SAINTE BAUME*, which, in the Provençal idiom, signifies the Holy Grotto. It was an ancient and far-famed hermitage, to which were wont to flock great multitudes of pilgrims.

The relics of St. Martha repose in a beautiful subterranean chapel of the collegiate Church which is under her invocation.

PRAYER.

Holy friends of Jesus, oh! Martha and Mary, who had the happiness of knowing him on earth, nay, of seeing him, serving him, and learning from his lips the divinest lessons; oh! now that you are amongst his saints in heaven, where you shall continue to love and contemplate him for ever and ever; oh! holy Saints, aid us with your powerful intercession, and beseech the Master to send down his benedictions on us, poor disciples, who are still pilgrims in this valley of tears.

Life of St. Julia.

GENSERIC, King of the Vandals, having conquered all Africa, tiring of his wars against men, began to make war on God, pillaging the churches, exterminating the Catholics, and establishing Arianism by fire, sword, and the most revolting barbarities. Carthage fell a prey to his soldiers, and matrons and maidens of the highest rank were sold as slaves.

In the midst of this terrible disaster, Julia, who belonged to one of the best families in that city, became the slave of a Syrian merchant named Eusebius, and a Pagan.

Though a mere girl, Julia was well prepared, by her Christian virtues, for the reverses with which Providence was pleased to visit her. Her humility and patience, in all her trials, were truly admirable; and, in her love for Jesus, she preferred her state of servitude to any other that she might have enjoyed.

The resignation with which she discharged her duties evidenced the calmness and interior liberty of her soul. She devoted every leisure moment to prayer, and the perusal of pious books. She fasted every day in the week except Sunday, and notwithstanding her laborious occupations she practised many other austerities. Her master, though a Pagan, could not but admire her piety and exemplarity. Her constant prayer was, that she might have the blessedness of shedding her blood for God; and he who was charmed with her holiness soon granted the realization of her wishes.

After passing some years in Syria, her master's commercial pursuits called him to the island of Corsica, and he cast anchor at Capo d'Istria on the very day that the inhabitants were celebrating a festival of one of their false gods. Julia kept away from this profanity, but she could not help inveighing against the folly of the Pagans.

Felix, the governor, being informed of this, ordered that Julia should be brought before him. To this Eusebius replied, that his slave was a Christian, and that he had not been able to make her change her religion. Nevertheless, said he, she has always been exact and faithful in the performance of her duties, and for this reason I never thought of dismissing her. Felix then offered him six slaves in exchange for her, but Eusebius answered, that he would rather forfeit all that was dear to him.

Felix thereon invited the master to his table, and after setting him drunk, sent for Julia, and ordered her to sacrifice to the gods, promising her her liberty if she would only obey. "Never," said the heroic maiden, "will I be guilty of this base apostacy;

I want not freedom, for every one who serves Jesus Christ faithfully is truly free." The reply enraged the governor, who smote her on the face, and tore her hair. "It is well for me," said the holy sufferer, "that, like my divine Master, I, too, am buffeted and subjected to those outrages." Felix, growing still more indignant, ordered her to be scourged and then hanged. Several pious persons, hearing of the martyrdom of the Saint, hastened from Leghorn and gave her Christian burial; and Didier, King of Lombardy, caused her relics to be translated to Brescia in 763.

From the example of this blessed martyr, learn to bear patiently with whatsoever lot Providence may have awarded you, and know that every trial you may have to encounter can be turned to most profitable account; use it so, that you may perfect yourself in virtue.

PRAYER.

Holy Julia, thou who didst triumph over the wickedness of thy persecutors, obtain for us of God entire submission to His most holy will, and that Christian heroism which we need to combat the assaults of the enemies of our salvation.

THE END.

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