Dialogues

Sulpicius Severus (c. AD 363–425)

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Chapter I.

When I and a Gallic friend had assembled in one place, this Gaul being a man very dear to me, both on account of his remembrance of Martin (for he had been one of his disciples), and on account of his own merits, my friend Postumianus joined us. He had just, on my account, returned from the East, to which, leaving his native country, he had gone three years before. Having embraced this most affectionate friend, and kissed both his knees and his feet, we were for a moment or two, as it were, astounded; and, shedding mutual tears of joy, we walked about a good deal. But by and by we sat down on our garments of sackcloth laid upon the ground. Then Postumianus, directing his looks towards me is the first to speak, andsays,-

”When I was in the remote parts of Egypt, I felt a desire to go on as far as the sea. I there met with a merchant vessel, which was ready to set sail with the view of making for Narbonne. The same night you seemed in a dream to stand beside me, and laying hold of me with your hand, to lead me away that I should go on board that ship. Ere long, when the dawn dispersed the darkness, and when I rose up in the place in which I had been resting, as I revolved my dream in my mind, I was suddenly seized with such a longing after you, that without delay I went on board the ship. Landing on the thirtieth day at Marseilles, I came on from that and arrived here on the tenth day-so prosperous a voyage was granted to my dutiful desire of seeing you. Do thou only, for whose sake I have sailed over so many seas, and have traversed such an extent of land, yield yourself over to me to be embraced and enjoyed apart from all others.”

”I truly,” said I, ”while you were still staying in Egypt, was ever holding fellowship with you in my mind and thoughts, and affection for you had full possession of me as I meditated upon you day and night. Surely then, you cannot imagine that I will now fail for a single moment to gaze with delight upon you, as I hang upon your lips. I will listen to you, I will converse with you, while no one at all is admitted to our retirement, which this remote cell of mine furnishes to us. For, as I suppose, you will not take amiss the presence of this friend of ours, the Gaul, who, as you perceive, rejoices with his whole heart over this arrival of yours, even as I do myself.” ”Quiteright,” said Postumianus, ”that Gaul will certainly be retained in our company; who, although I am but little acquainted with him, yet for this very reason that he is greatly beloved by you, cannot fail also to be dear to me. This must especially be

the case, since he is of the school of Martin; nor will I grudge, as you desire, to talk with you in connected discourse, since I came hither for this very purpose, that I should, even at the risk of being tedious, respond to the desire of my dear Sulpitius ”and in so speaking he affectionately took hold of me with both his hands.

Chapter II.

”Truly” said I, ”you have clearly proved how much a sincere love can accomplish, inasmuch as, for my sake, you have traveled over so many seas, and such an extent of land, journeying, so to speak, from the rising of the sun in the East to where he sets in the West. Come, then, because we are here in a retired spot by ourselves, and not being otherwise occupied, feel it our duty to attend to your discourse, come, I pray thee, relate to us the whole history of your wanderings. Tell us, if you please, how the faith of Christ is flourishing in the East; what peace the saints enjoy; what are the customs of the monks; and with what signs and miracles Christ is working in his servants. For assuredly, because in this region of ours and amid the circumstances in which we are placed, life itself has become a weariness to us, we shall gladly hear from you, if life is permitted to Christians even in the desert.”

In reply to these words, Postumianus declares, ”I shall do as I see you desire. But I beg you first to tell me, whether all those persons whom I left here as priests, continue the same as I knew them before taking my departure.” Then I exclaim, ”Forbear, I beseech thee, to make any enquiry on such points, which you either, I think, know as well as I do, or if you are ignorant of them, it is better that you should hear nothing regarding them. I cannot, however, help saying, that not only are those, of whom you enquire, no better than they were when you knew them, but even that one man, who was formerly a great friend of mine, and in whose affection I was wont to find some consolation from the persecutions of the rest, has shown himself more unkind towards me than he ought to have been. However, I shall not say anything harsher regarding him, both because I once esteemed him as a friend, and loved him even when he was deemed my enemy. I shall only add that while I was silently meditating on these things in my thoughts, this source of grief deeply afflicted me, that I had almost lost the friendship of one who was both a wise and a religious man. But let us turn away from these topics which are full of sorrow, and let us ratherlisten to you, according to the promise which you gave some time ago.”

” Let it be so,” exclaimed Postumianus. Andon his saying this, we all kept silence, while,moving his robe of sackcloth, on which he had sat down, a little nearer me, he thus began.

Chapter III.

”Threeyears ago, Sulpitius, at which time, leaving this neighborhood, I bade thee farewell, after setting sail from Narbonne, on the fifth day we entered a port of Africa: so prosperous, by the will of God, had been the voyage. I hadin my mind a great desire to go to Carthage, tovisit those localities connected with the saints, and, above all, to worship at the tomb of themartyr Cyprian. On the fifth day we returned to the harbor, and launched forth into the deep. Our destination was Alexandria; but as thesouth wind was against us, we were almost drivenupon the Syrtis; the cautious sailors, however, guarding against this, stopped the ship by casting anchor. The continent of Africa then lay before our eyes ; and, landing on it in boats, when we perceived that the whole country round was destitute of human cultivation, I penetrated farther inland, for the purpose of more carefully exploring the locality. About three miles from the sea-coast, I beheld a small hut in the midst of the sand, the roof of which, to use the expression of Sallust, was like the keel of a ship.

It was close to the earth, and was floored with good strong boards, not because any very heavy rains are there feared (for, in fact, such a thing as rain has there never even been heard of), but because, such is the strength of the winds in that district, that, if at any time only a little breath of air begins there to be felt, even when the weather is pretty mild, a greater wreckage takes place in those lands than on any sea. No plants are there, and no seeds ever spring up, since, in such shifting soil, the dry sand is swept along with every motion of the winds. But where some promontories, back from the sea, act as a check to the winds, the soil, being somewhat more firm, produces here and there some prickly grass, and that furnishes fair pasturage for sheep. The inhabitants live on milk, while those of them that are more skillful, or, so to speak, more wealthy, make use of barley bread. That is the only kind of grain which flourishes there, for barley, by he quickness of its growth in that sort of soil, generally escapes the destruction caused by the fierce winds. So rapid is its growth that we are old it is ripe on the thirtieth day after the sowing of the seed. But there is no reason why hen should settle there, except that all are free from the payment of taxes.

The sea-coast of he Cyrenians is indeed the most remote, bordering upon that desert which lies between Egypt and Africa, and through which Cato formerly, when fleeing from Caesar, led an army.

Chapter IV.

I Therefore bent my steps toward the hut which I had beheld from a distance. There I find an old man, in a garment made of skins, turning a mill with his hand. He saluted and received us kindly. We explain to him that we had been forced to land on that coast, and were prevented by the continued raging of the sea from being able at once to pursue our voyage; that, having made our way on shore, we had desired, as is in keeping with ordinary human nature, to become acquainted with the character of the locality, and the manners of the inhabitants. We added that we were Christians, and that the principal object of our enquiry was whether there were any Christians amid these solitudes. Then, indeed, he, weeping for joy, throws himself at our feet; and, kissing us over and over again, invites us to prayer, while, spreading on the ground the skins of sheep, he makes us sit down upon them. He then serves up a breakfast truly luxurious, consisting of the half of a barley cake. Now, we were four, while he himself constituted the fifth. He also brought in a bundle of herbs, of which I forget the name but they were like mint, were rich in leaves, and yielded a taste like honey. We were delighted with the exceedingly sweet taste of this plant, and our hunger was fully satisfied."

Upon this I smiled, and said to my friend the Gaul, "What, Gaul, do you think of this? Are you pleased with a bundle of herbs and half a barley cake as a breakfast for five men?" Then he, being an exceedingly modest person, and blushing somewhat, while he takes my joke in good part, says, "You act, Sulpitius, in a way like yourself, for you never miss any opportunity which is offered you of joking us on the subject of our fondness for eating. But it is unkind of you to try to force us Gauls to live after the fashion of angels; and yet, through my own liking for eating, I could believe that even the angels are in the habit of eating; for such is my appetite that I would be afraid even singly to attack that half barley cake. However, let that man of Cyrene be satisfied with it, to whom it is either a matter of necessity or nature always to feel hungry; or, again, let those be content with it from whom, I suppose, their tossing at sea had taken away all desire for food. We, on the other hand, are at a distance from the sea; and, as I have often testified to you, we are, in one word, Gauls. But instead of wasting time over such matters, let our friend here rather go on to complete his account of the Cyrenian."

Chapter V.

” Assuredly,” continues Postumianus, ”I shall take care in future not to mention the abstinence of any one, in case the difficult example should quite offend our friends the Gauls. I had intended, however, to give an account also of the dinner of that man of Cyrene-for we were seven days with him-or some of the subsequent feasts; but these things had better be passed over, lest the Gaul should think that he was jeered at. However, on the following day, when some of the natives had come together to visit us, we discovered that that host of ours was a Presbyter-a fact which he had concealed from us with the greatest care. We then went with him to the church, which was about two miles distant, and was concealed from our view by an intervening mountain. We found that it was constructed of common and worthless trees, and was not much more imposing than the hut of our host, in which one could not stand without stooping. On enquiring into the customs of the men of the district, we found that they were not in the habit of either buying or selling anything. They knew not the meaning of either fraud or theft. As to gold and silver, which mankind generally deem the most desirable of all things, they neither possess them, nor do they desire to possess them. For when I offered that Presbyter ten gold coins, he refused them, declaring, with profound wisdom, that the church was not benefited but rather injured by gold. We presented him, however, with some pieces of clothing.

Chapter VI.

”After he had kindly accepted our gifts, on the sailors calling us back to the sea, we departed; and after a favorable passage, we arrived at Alexandria on the seventh day. There we found a disgraceful strife raging between the bishops and monks, the cause or occasion of which was that the priests were known when assembled together often to have passed decrees in crowded synods to the effect that no one should read or possess the books of Origen. He was, no doubt, regarded as a most able disputant on the sacred Scriptures. But the bishops maintained that there were certain things in his books of an unsound character; and his supporters, not being bold enough to defend these, rather took the line of declaring that they had been inserted by the heretics. They affirmed, therefore, that the other portions of his writings were not to be condemned on account of those things which justly fell under censure, since the faith of readers could easily make a distinction, so that they should not follow what had been forged, and yet should keep hold of those points which were handled in accordance with the Catholic faith. They remarked that there was nothing wonderful if, in modern and recent writings, heretical guile had been at work; since it had not feared in certain places to attack even Gospel truth.

The bishops, struggling against these positions to the utmost extent of their power, insisted that what was quite correct in the writings of Origen should, along with the author himself, and even his whole works, be condemned, because those books were more than sufficient which the church had received. They also said that the reading was to be avoided of such works as would do more harm to the unwise than they would benefit the wise. For my part, on being led by curiosity to investigate some portions of these writings, I found very many things which pleased me, but some that were to be blamed. I think it is clear that the author himself really entertained these impious opinions, though his defenders maintain that the passages have been forged. I truly Wonder that one and the same man could have been so different from himself as that, in the portion which is approved, he has no equal since the times of the Apostles, while in that which is justly condemned, no one can be shown to have erred more egregiously.

Chapter VII.

For while many things in his books which were extracted from them by the bishops were read to show that they were written in opposition to the Catholic faith, that passage especially excited bad feeling against him, in which we read in his published works that the Lord Jesus, ashe had come in the flesh for the redemption of mankind, and suffering upon the cross for thesalvation of man, had tasted death to procure eternal life for the human race, so he was, by the same course of suffering, even to render the devil a partaker of redemption. He maintained this on the ground that such a thing would be in harmony with his goodness and beneficence, inasmuch as he who had restored fallen and mined man, would thus also set free an angel who had previously fallen. When these and other things of a like nature were brought forward by the bishops, a tumult arose owing to the zeal of the different parties; and when this could not be quelled by the authority of the priests, the governor of the city was called upon to regulate the discipline of the church by a perverse precedent; and through the terror which he inspired, the brethren were dispersed, while the monks took to flight in different directions; so that, on the decrees being published, they were not permitted to find lasting acceptance in any place.

This fact influenced me greatly, that Hieronymus, a man truly Catholic and most skillful in the holy law, was thought at first to have been a follower of Origen, yet now, above most others, went the length of condemning the whole of his writings. Assuredly, I am not inclined to judge rashly in regard to any one; but even the most learned men were said to hold different opinions in this controversy. However, whether that opinion of Origen was simply an error, as I think, or whether it was a heresy, as is generally supposed, it not only could not be suppressed by multitudes of censures on the part of the priests, but it never could have spread itself so far and wide, had it not gathered strength from their contentions. Accordingly, when I came to Alexandria, I found that city in a ferment from disturbances connected with the matter in question. The Bishop, indeed, of that place received me very kindly, and in a better spirit than I expected, and even endeavored to retain me with him. But I was not at all inclined to settle there, where a recent outbreak of ill-will had resulted in a destruction of the brethren. For, although perhaps it may seem that they ought to have obeyed the bishops, yet such a multitude of persons, all living in an open confession of Christ, ought not for that reason to have been persecuted, especially by bishops.

Chapter VIII.

Accordingly, setting out from that place, I made for the town of Bethlehem, which is six miles distant from Jerusalem, but requires sixteen stoppages on the part of one journeying from Alexandria. The presbyter Jerome rules the church of this place; for it is a parish of the bishop who has possession of Jerusalem. Having already in my former journey become acquainted with Hieronymus, he had easily brought it about that I with good reason deemed no one more worthy of my regard and love. For, besides the merit due to him on account of his Faith, and the possession of many virtues, he is a man learned not only in Latin and Greek, but also Hebrew, to such a degree that no one dare venture to compare himself with him in all knowledge. I shall indeed be surprised if he is not well known to you also through means of the works which he has written, since he is, in fact, read the whole world over."

"Well," says the Gaul at this point, "he is, in truth, but too well known to us. For, some five years ago, I read a certain book of his, in which the whole tribe of our monks is most vehemently assaulted and reviled by him. For this reason, our Belgian friend is accustomed to be very angry, because he has said that we are in the habit of cramming ourselveseven to repletion. But I, for my part, pardon the eminent man; and am of opinion that he had made the remark rather about Eastern than Western monks. For the love of eating is gluttony in the case of the Greeks, whereas among the Gauls it is owing to the nature they possess." Then exclaimed I, "You defend your nation, my Gallic friend, by means of rhetoric; but I beg to ask whether that book condemns only this vice in the case of the monks?"

"No indeed," replies he; "the writer passed nothing over, which he did not blame, scourge, and expose: in particular, he inveighed against avarice and no less against arrogance. He discoursed much respecting pride, and not a little about superstition; and I will freely own that he seemed to me to draw a true picture of the vices of multitudes."

Chapter IX.

”Butas to familiarities which take place between virgins and monks, or even clerics, how true and how courageous were his words! And, on account of these, he is said not to stand high in favor with certain people whom I am unwilling to name. For, as our Belgian friend is angry that we were accused of too great fondness for eating, so those people, again, are said to express their rage when they find it written in that little work,-‘The virgin despises her true unmarried brother, and seeks a stranger.’” Upon this I exclaim, ”You are going too far, my Gallic friend: take heed lest some one who perhaps owns to these things, hear what you are saying, and begin to hold you, along with Hieronymus, in no great affection. For, since you are a learned man, not unreasonably will I admonish you in the verse of that comic poet who says,-‘Submission procures friends, while truth gives rise to hatred.’ Let rather, Postumianus, your discourse to us about the East, so well begun, now be resumed.”

”Well,” says he, ”as I had commenced to relate, I stayed with Hieronymus six months, who carried on an unceasing warfare against the wicked, and a perpetual struggle in opposition to the deadly hatred of ungodly men. The heretics hate him, because he never desists from attacking them; the clerics hate him, because he assails their life and crimes. But beyond doubt, all the good admire and love him; for those people are out of their senses, who suppose that he is a heretic. Let me tell the truthon this point, which is that the knowledge ofthe man is Catholic, and that his doctrine issound. He is always occupied in reading, always at his books with his whole heart: he takesno rest day or night; he is perpetually either reading or writing something. In fact, had Inot been resolved in mind, and had promised to God first to visit the desert previously referred to, I should have grudged to depart even for the shortest time from so great a man. Handing over, then, and entrusting to him all my possessions and my whole family, which having followed me against my own inclination, kept me in a state of embarrassment, and thus being in a son of way delivered from a heavy burden, and restored to freedom of action, I returned to Alexandria, and having visited the brethren there I set out from the place for upper Thebais, that is for the farthest off confines of Egypt. For a great multitude of monks were said to inhabit the widely extending solitudes of that wilderness. But here it would be tedious, were I to Seek to narrate all the things which I witnessed: I shall only touch lightly on a few points.

Chapter X.

” Not far from the desert, and dose to the Nile, there are numerous monasteries. For the most part, the monks there dwell together in companies of a hundred; and their highest rule is to live under the orders of their Abbot, to do nothing by their own inclination, but to depend in all things on his will and authority. If it so happens that any of them form in their minds a lofty ideal of virtue, so as to wish to betake themselves to the desert to live a solitary life, they do not venture to act on this desire except with the permission of the Abbot. In fact, this is the first of virtues in their estimation,-to live in obedience to the will of another. To those who betake themselves to the desert, bread or some other kind of food is furnished by the command of that Abbot. Now, it so happened that, in those days during which I had come thither, the Abbot had sent bread to a certain person who had withdrawn to the desert, and had erected a tent for himself not more than six miles from the monastery. This bread was sent by the hands of two boys, the elder of whom was fifteen, and the younger twelve years of age. As these boys were returning home, an asp of remarkable size encountered them, but they were not the least afraid on meeting it;

and moving up to their very feet, as if charmed by some melody, it laid down its dark-green neck before them. The younger of the boys laid hold of it with his hand, and, wrapping it in his dress, went on his way with it. Then, entering the monastery with the air of a conqueror, and meeting with the brethren, while alI looked on, he opened out his dress, and set down the imprisoned beast, not without some appearance of boastfulness. But while the rest of the spectators extolled the faith and virtue of the chil- dren, the Abbot, with deeper insight, and to prevent them at such a tender age from being puffed up with pride, subjected both to punishment. This he did after blaming them much for having publicly revealed what the Lord had wrought through their instrumentality. He declared that that was not to be attributed to their faith, but to the Divine power; and added that they should rather learn to serve God in humility, and not to glory in signs and wonders; for that a sense of their own weakness was better than any vainglorious exhibition of power.

Chapter XI.

”When the monk whom I have mentioned heard of this,-when he learned both that the children had encountered danger through meeting the snake, and that moreover, having got the better of the serpent, they had received a sound beating,-he implored the Abbot that henceforth no bread or food of any kind should be sent to him. And now the eighth day had passed since that man of Christ had exposed himself to the danger of perishing from hunger; his limbs were growing dry with fasting, but his mind fixed upon heaven could not fail; his body was wearing away with abstinence, but his faith remained firm. In the meantime, the Abbot was admonished by the Spirit to visit that disciple. Under the influence of a pious solicitude, he was eager to learn by what means of preserving life that faithful man was supported, since he had declined any human aid in ministering to his necessities. Accordingly, he sets out in person to satisfy himself on the subject. When the recluse saw from a distance the old man coming to him, he ran to meet him: he thanks him for the visit, and conducts him to his cell. As they enter the cell together, they behold a basket of palm branches, full of hot bread, hanging fixed at the door-post. And first the smell of the hot bread is perceived; but on touching it, it appears as if just a little before it had been taken from the oven.

At the same time, they do not recognize the bread as being of the shape common in Egypt. Both are filled with amazement, and acknowledge the gift as being from heaven. On the one side, the recluse declared that this event was due to the arrival of the Abbot;while, on the other side, the Abbot ascribed itrather to the faith and virtue of the recluse; butboth broke the heaven-sent bread with exceeding joy. And when, on his return to the monastery, the old man reported to the brethrenwhat had occurred, such enthusiasm seized theminds of all of them, that they vied with each other in their haste to betake themselves to the desert, and its sacred seclusion; while they declared themselves miserable in having made their abode only too long amid a multitude, where human fellowship had to be carried on and endured.

Chapter XII.

”In this monastery I saw two old men who were said to have already lived there for forty years, and in fact never to have departed from it. I do not think that I should pass by all mention of these men, since, indeed, I heard the following statement made regarding their virtues on the testimony of the Abbot himself, and all the brethren, that in the case of one of them, the sun never beheld him feasting, and in the case of the other, the sun never saw him angry.” Upon this, the Gaul looking at me exclaims: ”Would that a friend of yours-I do not wish to mention his name-were now present; I should greatly like him to hear of that example, since we have had too much experience of his bitter anger in the persons of a great many people. Nevertheless, as I hear, he has lately forgiven his enemies; and, in these circumstances, were he to hear of the conduct of that man, he would be more and more strengthened in his forgiving course by the example thus set before him, and would feel that it is an admirable virtue not to fall under the influence of anger. I will not indeed deny that he had just reasons for his wrath; but where the battle is hard, the crown of victory is all the more glorious. For this reason, I think, if you will allow me to say so, that a certain man was justly to be praised, because when an ungrateful freedman abandoned him he rather pitied than inveighed against the fugitive. And, indeed, he was not even angry with the man by whom he seems to have been carried off.”

Upon this I remarked: ”Unless Postumianus had given us that example of overcoming anger, I would have been very angry on account of the departure of the fugitive; but since it is not lawful to be angry, all remembrance of such things, as it annoys us, ought to be blotted from our minds. Let us rather, Postumianus, listen to what you have got to say.” ”I will do,” says he, ”Sulpitius, what you request, as I see you are all so desirous of hearing me. But remember that I do not address my speech to you without hope of a larger recompense; I shall gladly perform what you require, provided that, when ere long my turn comes, you do not refuse what I ask.” ”We indeed,” said I, ”have nothing by means of which we can return the obligation we shall lie under to you even without a larger return. However, command us as to anything you have thought about, provided you satisfy our desires, as you have already begun to do, for your speech conveys to us true delight.”

”I will stint nothing,” said Postumianus, ”of your desires; and inasmuch as you have recognized the virtue of one recluse, I shall go on to relate to you some few things about more such persons.

Chapter XIII.

”Wellthen, when I entered upon the nearest parts of the desert, about twelve miles from the Nile, having as my guide one of the brethren who was well acquainted with the localities, we arrived at the residence of a certain old monk who dwelt at the foot of a mountain. In that place there was a well, which is a very rare thing in these regions. The monk had one ox, the whole labor of which consisted in drawing water by moving a machine worked with a wheel. This was the only way of getting at the water, for the well was said to be a thousand or more feet deep. There was also a garden there full of a variety of vegetables. This, too, was contrary to what might have been expected in the desert where, all things being dry and burnt up by the fierce rays of the sun produce not even the slenderest root of any plant. But the labor which in common with his ox, the monk performed, as well as his own special industry, produced such a happy state of things to the holy man; for the frequent irrigation in which he engaged imparted such a fertility to the sand that we saw the vegetables in his garden flourishing and coming to maturity in a wonderful manner. On these, then, the ox lived as well as its master; and from the abundance thus supplied, the holy man provided us also with a dinner.

There I saw what ye Gauls, perchance, may not believe-a pot boiling without fire with the vegetables which were being got ready for our dinner: such is the power of the sun in that place that it is sufficient for any cooks, even for preparing the dainties of the Gauls. Then after dinner, when the evening was coming on, our host invites us to a palm-tree, the fruit of which he was accustomed to use, and which was at a distance of about two miles. For that is the only kind of tree found in the desert, and even these are rare, though they do occur. I am not sure whether this is owing to the wise foresight of former ages, or whether the soil naturally produces them. It may indeed be that God, knowing beforehand that the desert was one day to be inhabited by the saints, prepared these things for his servants. For those who settle within these solitudes live for the most part on the fruit of such trees, since no other kinds of plants thrive in these quarters. Well, when we came up to that tree to which the kindness of our host conducted us, we there met with a lion; and on seeing it, both my guide and myself began to tremble; but the holy man went up to it without delay, while we, though in great terror, followed him.

As if commanded by God, the beast modestly withdrew and stood gazing at us, while our friend, the monk, plucked some fruit hanging within easy reach on the lower branches. And, on his holding out his hand filled with dates, the monster ran up to him and received them as readily as any domestic animal could have done; and having eaten them, it departed. We, beholding these things, and being still under the influence of fear, could not but perceive how great was the power of faith in his case, and how weak it was in ourselves.

Chapter XIV.

”Wefound another equally remarkable man living in a small hut, capable only of containing a single person. Concerning him we were told that a she-wolf was accustomed to stand near him at dinner; and that the beast could by no means be easily deceived so as to fail to be with him at the regular hour when he took refreshment. It was also said that the wolf waited at the door until he offered her the bread which remained over his own humble dinner; that she was accustomed to lick his hand, and then, her duty being, as it were, fulfilled, and her respects paid to him, she took her departure. But it so happened that that holy man, while he escorted a brother who had paid him a visit, on his way home, was a pretty long time away, and only returned under night. In the meanwhile, the beast made its appearance at the usual dinner time. Having entered the vacant cell and perceived that its benefactor was absent, it began to search round the hut with some curiosity to discover, if possible, the inhabitant. Now it so happened that a basket of palm-twigs was hanging close at hand with five loaves of bread in it. Taking one of these, the beast devoured it, and then, having committed this evil deed, went its way. The recluse on his return found the basket in a state of disorder, and the number of loaves less than it should have been.

He is aware of the loss of his household goods, and observes near the threshold some fragments of the loaf which had been stolen. Considering all this, he had little doubt as to the author of the theft. Accordingly, when on the following days the beast did not, in its usual way, make its appearance (undoubtedly hesitating from a consciousness of its audacious deed to come to him on whom it had inflicted injury), the recluse was deeply grieved at being deprived of the happiness he had enjoyed in its society. At last, being brought back through his prayers, it appeared to him as usual at dinner time, after the lapse of seven days. But to make clear to every one the shame it felt, through regret for what had been done, not daring to draw very near, and with its eyes, from profound self-abasement, cast upon the earth, it seemed, as was plain to the intelligence of every one, to beg in a sort of way, for pardon. The recluse, pitying its confusion, bade it come close to him, and then, with a kindly hand, stroked its head; while, by giving it two loaves instead of the usual one, he restored the guilty creature to its former position; and, laying aside its misery on thus having obtained forgiveness, it betook itself anew to its former habits. Behold, I beg of you, even in this case, the power of Christ, to whom all is wise that is irrational, and to whom all is mild that is by nature savage.

A wolf discharges duty; a wolf acknowledges the crime of theft; a wolf is confounded with a sense of shame: when called for, it presents itself; it offers its head to be stroked; and it has a perception of the pardon granted to it, just as if it had a feeling of shame on account of its misconduct,-this is thy power, O Christ-these, O Christ, are thy marvelous works. For in truth, whatever things thy servants do in thy name are thy doings; and in this only we find cause for deepest grief that, while wild beasts acknowledge thy majesty, intelligent beings fail to do thee reverence.

Chapter XV.

”But lest this should perchance seem incredible to any one, I shall mention still greater things. I call Christ to witness that I invent nothing, nor will I relate things published by uncertain authors, but will set forth facts which have been vouched for to me by trustworthymen.

”Numbers of those persons live in the desert without any roofs over their heads, whom people call anchorites. They subsist on the roots of plants; they settle nowhere in any fixed place, lest they should frequently have men visiting them; wherever night compels them they choose their abode. Well, two monks from Nitria directed their steps towards a certain man living in this style, and under these conditions. They did so, although they were from a very different quarter, because they had heard of his virtues, and because he had formerly been their dear and intimate friend, while a member of the same monastery. They sought after him long and much; and at length, in the seventh month, they found him staying in that far-distant wilderness which borders upon Memphis. He was said already to have dwelt in these solitudes for twelve years; but although he shunned intercourse with all men, yet he did not shrink from meeting these friends; on the contrary, he yielded himself to their affection for a period of three days. On the fourth day, when he had gone some distance escorting them in their return journey, they beheld a lioness of remarkable size coming towards them. The animal, although meeting with three persons, showed no uncertainty as to the one she made for, but threw herself down at the feet of the anchorite: and, lying there with a kind of weeping and lamentation, she manifested mingled feelings of sorrow and supplication. The sight affected all, and especially him who perceived that he was sought for:

he therefore sets out, and the others follow him. For the beast stopping from time to time, and, from time to time looking back, clearly wished it to be understood that the anchorite should follow wherever she led. What need is there of many words? We arrived at the den of the animal, where she, the unfortunate mother, was nourishing five whelps already grown up, which, as they had come forth with closed eyes from the womb of their dam, so they had continued in persistent blindness. Bringing them out, one by one, from the hollow of the rock, shell aid them down at the feet ofthe anchorite. Then at length the holy man perceived what the creature desired; and having called upon the name of God,

he touched with his hand the closed eyes of the whelps; and immediately their blindness ceased, while light, so long denied them, streamed upon the open eyes of the animals. Thus, those brethren, having visited the anchorite whom they were desirous of seeing, returned with a very precious reward for their labor, inasmuch as, having been permitted to be eye-witnesses of such power, they had beheld the faith of the saint, and the glory of Christ, to which they will in future bear testimony. But I have still more marvels to tell: the lioness, after five days, returned to the man who had done her so great a kindness, and brought him, as a gift, the skin of an un- common animal. Frequently clad in this, as if it were a cloak.

that holy man did not disdain to receive that gift through the instrumentality of the beast; while, all the time, he rather regarded Another as being the giver.

Chapter XVI.

”There was also an illustrious name of another anchorite in those regions, a man who dwelt in that part of the desert which is about Syene. This man, when first he betook himself to the wilderness, intended to live on the roots of plants which the sand here and there produces, of a very sweet and delicious flavor; but being ignorant of the nature of the herbs, he often gathered those which were of a deadly character. And, indeed, it was not easy to discriminate between the kind of the roots by the mere taste, since all were equally sweet, but many of them, of a less known nature, contained within them a deadly poison. When, therefore, the poison within tormented him on eating these, and all his vitals were tortured with terrific pains, while frequent vomitings, attended by excruciating agonies, were shattering the very citadel of life, his stomach being completely exhausted, he was in utter terror of all that had to be eaten for sustaining existence. Having thus fasted for seven days, he was almost at the point of death when a wild animal called an Ibex came up to him. To this creature standing by him, he offered a bundle of plants which he had collected on the previous day, yet had not ventured to touch; but the beast, casting aside with its mouth those which were poisonous, picked out such as it knew to be harmless.

In this way, that holy man, taught by its conduct what he ought to eat, and what to reject, both escaped the danger of dying of hunger and of being poisoned by the plants. But it would be tedious to relate all the facts which we have either had personal knowledge of, or have heard from others, respecting those who inhabit the desert. I spent a whole year, and nearly seven months more, of set purpose, within these solitudes, being, however, rather an admirer of the virtues of others, than myself making any attempt to manifest the extraordinary endurance which they displayed. For the greater part of the time I lived with the old man whom I have mentioned, who possessed the well and the ox.

Chapter XVII.

” I visited two monasteries of St. Anthony, which are at the present day occupied by his disciples. I also went to that place in which the most blessed Paul, the first of the eremites, had his abode. I saw the Red Sea and the ridges of Mount Sinai, the top of which almost touches heaven, and cannot, by any human effort, be reached. An anchorite was said to live somewhere within its recesses: and I sought long and much to see him, but was unable to do so. He had for nearly fifty years been removed from all human fellowship, and used no clothes, but was covered with bristles growing on his own body, while, by Divine gift, he knew not of his own nakedness. As often as any pious men desired to visit him, making hastily for the pathless wilderness, he shunned all meeting with his kind. To one man only, about five years before my visit, he was said to have granted an interview; and I believe that man obtained the favor through the power of his faith. Amid much talk which the two had together, the recluse is said to have replied to the question why he shunned so assiduously all human beings, that the man who was frequently visited by mortals like himself, could not often be visited by angels. From this, not without reason, the report had spread, and was accepted by multitudes, that that holy man enjoyed angelic fellowship.

Be this as it may, I, for my part, departed from Mount Sinai, and returned to the river Nile, the banks of which, on both sides, I beheld dotted over with numerous monasteries. I saw that, for the most part, as I have already said, the monks resided together in companies of a hundred; but it was well known that so many as two or three thousand sometimes had their abode in the same villages. Nor indeed would one have any reason to think that the virtue of the monks there dwelling together in great numbers, was less than that of those was known to be, who kept themselves apart from human fellowship. The chief and foremost virtue in these places, as I have already said, is obedience. In fact, any one applying for admission is not received by the Abbot of the monastery on any other condition than that he be first tried and proved; it being understood that he will never afterwards decline to submit to any injunction of the Abbot, however arduous and difficult, and though it may seem something unworthy to be endured.

Chapter XVIII.

”I will relate two wonderful examples of almost incredible obedience, and two only, although many present themselves to my recollection; but if, in any case, a few instances do not suffice to rouse readers to an imitation of the like virtues, many would be of no advantage. Well then, when a certain man having laid aside all worldly business, and having entered a monastery of very strict discipline, begged that he might be accepted as a member, the Abbot began to place many considerations before him,-that the toils of that order were severe; that his own requirements were heavy, and such as no one’s endurance could easily comply with; that he should rather enquire after another monastery where life was carried on under easier conditions; and that he should not try to attempt that which he was unable to accomplish. But he was in no degree moved by these terrors; on the contrary, he all the more promised obedience, saying that if the Abbot should order him to walk into the fire, he would not refuse to enter it. The Master then, having accepted that profession of his, did not delay putting it to the test. It so happened that an iron vessel was close at hand, very hot, as it was being got ready by a powerful fire for cooking some loaves of bread: the flames were bursting forth from the oven broken open, and fire raged without restraint within the hollows of that furnace.

The Master, at this stage of affairs, ordered the stranger to enter it, nor did he hesitate to obey the command. Without a moment’s delay he entered into the midst of the flames, which, conquered at once by so bold a display of faith, subsided at his approach, as happened of old to the well-known Hebrew children. Nature was overcome, and the fire gave way; so that he, of whom it was thought that he would be burned to death, had reason to marvel at himself, besprinkled, as it were, with a cooling dew. But what wonder is it, O Christ, that that fire did not touch thy youthful soldier? The result was that, neither did the Abbot regret having issued such harsh commands, nor did the disciple repent having obeyed the orders received. He, indeed, on the very day on which he came, being tried in his weakness, was found perfect; deservedly happy, deservedly glorious, having been tested in obedience, he was glorified through suffering.

Chapter XIX.

”Inthe same monastery, the fact which I am about to narrate was said to have occurred within recent memory. A certain man had come to the same Abbot in like manner with the former, in order to obtain admission. When the first law of obedience was placed before him, and he promised an unfailing patience for the endurance of all things however extreme, it so happened that the Abbot was holding in hishand a twig of storax already withered. This the Abbot fixed in the ground, and imposed this work upon the visitor, that he should continue to water the twig, until (what was against every natural result) that dry piece of wood should grow green in the sandy soil. Well, the stranger, being placed under the authority of unbending law, conveyed water every day on his own shoulders-water which had to be taken from the river Nile, at almost two miles' distance. And now, after a year had run its course, the labor of that workman had not yet ceased, but there could be no hope of the good success of his undertaking. However, the grace of obedience continued to be shown in his labor. The following year also mocked the vain labor of the (by this time) weakened brother. At length, as the third annual circle was gliding by, while the workman ceased not, night or day, his labor in watering, the twig began to show signs of life. I have myself seen a small tree sprung from that little rod, which, standing at the present day with green branches in the court of the monastery, as if for a witness of what has been stated, shows what a reward obedience received, and what a power faith can exert. But the day would fail me before I could fully enumerate the many different miracles which have become known to me in connection with the virtues of the saints.

Chapter XX.

”Iwill, however, still further give you an account of two extraordinary marvels. The one of these will be a notable warning against the inflation of wretched vanity, and the other will serve as no mean guard against the display of a spurious righteousness.

”A certain saint, then, endowed with almost incredible power in casting out demons from the bodies of those possessed by them, was, day by day, performing unheard-of miracles. For, not only when present, and not merely by his word, but while absent also, he, from time to time, cured possessed bodies, by some threads taken from his garment, or by letters which he sent. He, therefore, was to a wonderful degree visited by people who came to him from every part of the world. I say nothing about those of humbler rank; but prefects, courtiers, and judges of various ranks often lay at his doors. Most holy bishops also, laying aside their priestly dignity, and humbly imploring him to touch and bless them, believed with good reason that they were sanctified, and illumined with a divine gift, as often as they touched his hand and garment. He was reported to abstain always and utterly from every kind of drink, and for food (I will whisper this, Sulpitius, into your ear lest our friend the Gaul hear it), to subsist upon only six dried figs. But in the meantime, just as honor accrued to the holy man from his excellence, so vanity began to steal upon himfrom the honor which was paid him. When first he perceived that this evil was growing upon him, he struggled long and earnestly to shake it off, but it could not be thoroughly got rid of by all his efforts, since he still had a secret consciousness of being under the influence of vanity.

Everywhere did the demons acknowledge his name, while he was not able to exclude from his presence the number of people who flocked to him. The hidden poison was, in the meantime, working in his breast, and he, at whose beck demons were expelled from the bodies of others, was quite unable to cleanse himself from the hidden thoughts of vanity. Betaking himself, therefore, with fervent supplication to God, he is said to have prayed that, power being given to the devil over him for five months, he might become like to those whom he himself had cured. Why should I delay with many words? That most powerful man,-he, renowned for his miracles and virtues through all the East, he, to whose threshold multitudes had gathered, and at whose door the highest dignitaries of that age had prostrated themselves-laid hold of by a demon, was kept fast in chains. It was only after having suffered all those things which the possessed are wont to endure, that at length in the fifth

month he was delivered, not only from the demon, but (what was to him more useful and desirable) from the vanity which had dwelt within him.

Chapter XXI.

”But to me reflecting on these things, there occurs the thought of our own unhappiness and our own infirmity. For who is there of us, whom if one despicable creature of a man has humbly saluted, or one woman has praised with foolish and flattering words, is not at once elated with pride and puffed up with vanity? This will bring it about that even though one does not possess a consciousness of sanctity, yet, because through the flattery, or, it may be, the mistake of fools, he is said to be a holy man, he will, in fact, deem himself most holy! And then, if frequent gifts are sent to him, he will maintain that he is so honored by the munificence of God, inasmuch as all necessary things are bestowed upon him when sleeping and at rest. But further, if some signs of any kind of power fall to him even in a low degree, he will think himself no less than an angel And even if he is not marked out from others either by acts or excellence, but is simply made a cleric, he instantly enlarges the fringes of his dress, delights in salutations, is puffed up by people visiting him, and himself gads about everywhere. Nay, the man who had been previously accustomed to travel on foot, or at most to ride on the back of an ass, must needs now ride proudly on frothing steeds; formerly content to dwell in a small and humble cell, he now builds a lofty fretted ceiling;

he constructs many rooms ; he cuts and carves doors; be paints wardrobes; he rejects the coarser kind of clothing, and demands soft garments; and he gives such orders as the following to dear widows and friendly virgins, that the one class weave for him an embroidered cloak, and the other a flowing robe. But let us leave all these things to be described more pungently by that blessed man Hieronymus; and let us return to the object more immediately in view.”

”Well,” says our Gallic friend upon this, ”I know not indeed what you have left to be said by Hieronymus; you have within such brief compass comprehended all our practices, that I think these few words of yours, if they are taken in good part, and patiently considered, will greatly benefit those in question, so that they will not require in future to be kept in order by the books of Hieronymus. But do thou rather go on with what you had begun, and bring forward an example, as you said you would do, against spurious righteousness; for to tell you the truth, we are subject to no more destructive evil than this within the wide boundaries of Gaul.” ”I will do so,” replied Postumianus, ”nor will I any longer keep you in a state of expectation.

Chapter XXII.

”A certain young man from Asia, exceedingly wealthy, of distinguished family, and having a wife and little son, happening to have been a tribune in Egypt, and in frequent campaigns against the Blembi to have touched on some parts of the desert, and having also seen several tents of the saints, heard the word of salvation from the blessed John. And he did not then delay to show his contempt for an unprofitable military life with its vain honor. Bravely entering into the wilderness, he in a short time became distinguished as being perfect in every kind of virtue. Capable of lengthened fasting, conspicuous for humility, and steadfast in faith, he had easily obtained a reputation in the pur- suit of virtue equal to that of the monks of old.But by and by, the thought (proceeding from the devil) entered his mind that it would be more proper for him to return to his native land and be the means of saving his only son and his family along with his wife; which surely would be more acceptable to God than if he, content with only rescuing himself from the world, should, not without impiety, neglect the salvation of his friends. Overcome by the plausible appearance of that kind of spurious righteousness, the recluse, after a period of nearly four years, forsook his cell and the end to which he had devoted his life.

But on arriving at the nearest monastery, which was inhabited by many brethren, he made known to them, in reply to their questionings, the reason of his departure and the object he had in view. All of them, and especially the Abbot of that place, sought to keep him back; but the intention he had unfortunately formed could not be rooted out of his mind. Accordingly with an unhappy obstinacy he went forth, and, to the grief of all, departed from the brethren. But scarcely had he vanished from their sight, when he was taken possession of by a demon, and vomiting bloody from from his mouth, he began to lacerate himself with his own teeth. Then, having been carried back to the same monastery on the shoulders of the brethren, when the unclean spirit could not be restrained within its walls, he was, from dire necessity, loaded with iron fetters, being bound both in hands and feet-a punishment not undeserved by a fugitive, inasmuch as chains now restrained him whom faith had not restrained. At length, after two years, having been set free from the unclean spirit by the prayers of the saints, he immediately returned to the desert from which he had departed. In this way he was both himself corrected and was rendered a warning to others, that the shadow of a spurious righteousness might neither delude any one, nor a shifting fickleness of character

induce any one, with unprofitable inconstancy, to forsake the course on which he has once entered.

And now let it suffice for you to learn these things respecting the various operations of the Lord which he has carried on in the persons of his servants; with the view either of stimulating others to a like kind of conduct, or of deterring them from particular actions. But since I have by this time fully satisfied your ears-have, in fact, been more lengthy than I ought to have been-do you now (upon this he addressed himself to me)-pay me the recompense you owe, by letting us hear you, after your usual fashion, discoursing about your friend Martin, for my longings after this have already for a long time been strongly excited."

Chapter XXIII.

”What,” replied I, ”is there not enough about my friend Martin in that book of mine which you know that I published respecting his life and virtues?”

”I own it,” said Postumianus, ”and that book of yours is never far from my right hand. For if you recognize it, look here-(and so saying he displayed the book which was concealed in his dress)-here it is. This book,” added he, ”is my companion both by land and sea: it has been my friend and comforter in all my wanderings. But I will relate to you to what places that book has penetrated, and how there is almost no spot upon earth in which the subject of so happy a history is not possessed as a well-known narrative. Paulinus, a man who has the strongest regard for you, was the first to bring it to the city of Rome; and then, as it was greedily laid hold of by the whole city, I saw the booksellers rejoicing over it, inasmuch as nothing was a source of greater gain to them, for nothing commanded a readier sale, or fetched a higher price. This same book, having got a long way before me in the course of my traveling, was already generally read through all Carthage, when I came into Africa. Only that presbyter of Cyrene whom I mentioned did not possess it; but he wrote down its contents from my description. And why should I speak about Alexandria? for there it is almost better known to all than it is to yourself. It has passed through Egypt, Nitria, the Thebaid, and the whole of the regions of Memphis.

I found it being read by a certain old man in the desert; and, after I told him that I was your intimate friend, this commission was given me both by him and many other brethren, that, if I should ever again visit this country, and find you well, I should constrain you to supply those particulars which you stated in your book you had passed over respecting the virtues of the sainted man. Come then, as I do not desire you to repeat to me those things which are already sufficiently known from what you have written, let those other points, at my request and that of many others, be fully set forth, which at the time of your writing you passed over, to prevent, as I believe, any feeling of weariness on the part of your readers.”

Chapter XXIV.

”Indeed, Postumianus,” replied I, ”while I was listening attentively, all this time, to you talking about the excellences of the saints, in my secret thoughts I had my mind turned to my friend Martin, observing on the best of grounds that all those things which different individuals had done separately, were easily and entirely accomplished by that one man alone. For, although you certainly related lofty deeds, I really heard nothing from your lips (may I say it, without offence to these holy men), in which Martin was inferior to any one of them. And while I hold that the excellence of no one of these is ever to be compared with the merits of that man, still this point ought to be attended to, that it is unfair he should be compared, on the same terms, with the recluses of the desert, or even with the anchorites. For they, at freedom from every hindrance, with heaven only and the angels as witnesses, were clearly instructed to perform admirable deeds; he, on the other hand, in the midst of crowds and intercourse with human beings-among quarrelsome clerics, and among furious bishops, while he was harassed with almost daily scandals on all sides, nevertheless stood absolutely firm with unconquerable virtue against all these things, and performed such wonders as not even those accomplished of whom we have heard that they are, or at one time were, in the wilderness.

But even had they done things equal to his, what judge would be so unjust as not, on good grounds, to decide that he was the more powerful? For put the case that he was a soldier who fought on unfavorable ground, and yet turned out a conqueror, and compare them, in like manner, to soldiers, who however, contended on equal terms, or even on favorable terms, with the enemy. What then? Although the victory of all is one and the same the glory of all certainly cannot be equal. And even though you have narrated marvelous things, still you have not stated that a dead man was recalled to life by any one. In this one particular undoubtedly, it must be owned that no one is to be compared with Martin.

Chapter XXV.

”For,if it is worthy of admiration that the flames did not touch that Egyptian of whom you have spoken, Martin also not infrequently proved his power over fire. If you remind us that the savagery of wild beasts was conquered by, and yielded to, the anchorites, Martin, for his part, was accustomed to keep in check both the fury of wild beasts and the poison of serpents. But, if you bring forward for comparison him who cured those possessed of unclean spirits, by the authority of his word, or even through the instrumentality of threads from his dress, there are many proofs that Martin was not, even in this respect, inferior. Nay, should you have recourse to him, who, covered with his own hair instead of a garment, was thought to be visited by angels, with Martin angels were wont to hold daily discourse. Moreover, he bore so unconquerable a spirit against vanity and boastfulness, that no one more determinedly disdained these vices, and that, although he often, while absent, cured those who were filled with unclean spirits, and issued his commands not only to courtiers or prefects, but also to kings themselves. This was indeed a very small thing amid his other virtues, but I should wish you to believe that no one ever contended more earnestly than he did against not only vanity, but also the causes and the occasions of vanity.

I shall also mention what is indeed a small point, but should not be passed over, because it is to the credit of a man who, being possessed of the highest power, manifested such a pious desire to show his regard for the blessed Martin. I remember, then, that Vincentius the prefect, an illustrious man, and one of the most eminent in all Gaul for every kind of virtue, when he had occasion to be in the vicinity of Tours, often begged of Martin that he would allow him to stay with him in the monastery. In making this request, he brought forward the example of Saint Ambrose, the bishop, who was generally spoken of at that time as being in the habit of entertaining both consuls and prefects. But Martin, with deeper judgment, refused so to act, lest by so doing some vanity and inflation of spirit might steal upon him. You, therefore, must acknowledge that there existed in Martin the virtues of all those men whom you have mentioned, but there were not found in all of them the virtues by which Martin was distinguished.”

Chapter XXVI.

”Why do you,” here exclaimed Postumianus, ”speak to me in such a manner? As if I did not hold the same opinion as yourself, and had not always been of the same mind. I, indeed, as long as I live, and retain my senses, will ever celebrate the monks of Egypt: I will praise the anchorites; I will admire the eremites; but I will place Martin in a position of his own: I do not venture to compare to him any one of the monks, far less any of the bishops. Egypt owns this: Syria and Aethiopia have discovered this: India has heard this; Parthia and Persia have known this; not even Armenia is ignorant of it; the remote Bosphorus is aware of it; and in a word, those are acquainted with it who visit the Fortunate Islands or the Arctic Ocean. All the more wretched on this account is this country of ours, which has not been found worthy to be acquainted with so great a man, although he was in its immediate vicinity. However, I will not include the people at large in this censure: only the clerics, only the priests know nothing of him; and not without reason were they, in their ill-will, disinclined to know him, inasmuch as, had they become acquainted with his virtues they must have recognized their own vices. I shudder to state what I have lately heard, that a miserable man (I know him not), has said that you have told many lies in that book of yours.

This is not the voice of a man, but of the devil; and it is not Martin who is, in this way, injured, but faith is taken from the Gospels themselves. For, since the Lord himself testified of works of the kind which Martin accomplished, that they were to be performed by all the faithful, he who does not believe that Martin accomplished such deeds, simply does not believe that Christ uttered such words. But the miserable, the degenerate, the somnolent, are put to shame, that the things which they themselves cannot do, were done by him, and prefer rather to deny his virtues than to confess their own inertness. But let us, as we hasten on to other matters, let go all remembrance of such persons: and do you rather, as I have for a long time desired, proceed to narrate the still untold deeds of Martin.”

”Well,” said I, ”I think that your request would more properly be directed to our friend the Gaul, since he is acquainted with more of Martin’s doings than I am-for a disciple could not be ignorant of the deeds of his master-and who certainly owes a return of kindness, not only to Martin, but to both of us, inasmuch as I have already published my book, and you have, so far, related to us the doings of our brethren in the East. Let then, our friend the Gaul commence that detailed account which is due from him: because, as I have said, he

both owes us a return in the way of speaking, and will, I believe, do this much for his friend Martin-that he shall, not unwillingly, give a narrative of his deeds."

Chapter XXVII.

”Well,” said the Gaul, ”I, for my part, though I am unequal to so great a task, feel constrained by those examples of obedience which have been related above by Postumianus, not to refuse that duty which you impose upon me. But when I reflect that I, a man of Gaul, am about to speak in the presence of natives of Aquitania, I fear lest my somewhat rude form of speech should offend your too delicate ears. However, you will listen to me as a foolish sort of man, who says nothing in an affected or stilted fashion. For if you have conceded to me that I was a disciple of Martin, grant me this also that I be allowed, under the shelter of his example, to despise the vain trappings of speech and ornaments of words.”

”Certainly,” replied Postumianus, ”speak either in Celtic, or in Gaulish, if you prefer it, provided only you speak of Martin. But for my part, I believe, that, even though you were dumb, words would not be wanting to you, in which you might speak of Martin with eloquent lips, just as the tongue of Zacharias was loosed at the naming of John. But as you are, in fact, an orator, you craftily, like an orator, begin by begging us to excuse your unskillfulness, because you really excel in eloquence. But it is not fitting either that a monk should show such cunning, or that a Gaul should be so artful. But to work rather, and set forth what you have still got to say, for we have wasted too much time already in dealing with other matters; and the lengthening shadow of the declining sun warns us that no long portion of day remains till night be upon us. Then, after we had all kept silence for a little, the Gaul thus begins-” I think I must take care in the first place not to repeat those particulars about the virtues of Martin, which our friend Sulpitius there has related in his book. For this reason, I shall pass over his early achievements, when he was a soldier; nor will I touch on those things which he did as a layman and a monk. At the same time, I shall relate nothing which I simply heard from others, but only events of which I myself was an eye-witness.”

Chapter I.

” Well then, when first, having left the schools, I attached myself to the blessed man, a few days after doing so, we followed him on his way to the church. In the way, a poor man, half-naked in these winter-months, met him, and begged that some clothing might be given him. Then Martin, calling for the chief-deacon, gave orders that the shivering creature should be clothed without delay. After that, entering a private apartment, and sitting down by himself, as his custom was-for he secured for himself this retirement even in the church, liberty being granted to the clerics, since indeed the presbyters were seated in another apartment, either spending their time in mutual courtesies, or occupied in listening to affairs of business. But Martin kept himself in his own seclusion up to the hour at which custom required that the sacred rites should be dispensed to the people. AndI will not pass by this point that; when sitting in his retirement, he never used a chair; and, as to the church, no one ever saw him sitting there, as I recently saw a certain man (God is my witness), not without a feeling of shame at the spectacle, seated on a lofty throne, yea, in its elevation, a kind of royal tribunal; but Martin might be seen sitting on a rude little stool, such as those in use by the lowest of servants, which we Gallic country-people call tripets, and which you men of learning, or those at least who are from Greece, call tripods.

Well, that poor man who had been chanced upon, as the chief-deacon delayed to give him the garment, rushed into this private apartment of the blessed man, complaining that he had not been attended to by the cleric, and bitterly mourning over the cold he suffered. No delay took place: the holy man, while the other did not observe, secretly drew off his tunic which was below his outer garment, and clothing the poor man with this, told him to go on his way. Then, a little after, the chief-deacon coming in informs him, according to custom, that the people were waiting in the church, and that it was incumbent on him to proceed to the performance of the sacred rites. Martin said to him in reply that it was necessary that the poor man-referring to himself-should be clothed, and that he could not possibly proceed to the church, unless the poor man received a garment. But the deacon, not understanding the true state of the case-that Martin, while outwardly clad with a cloak, was not seen by him to be naked underneath, at last begins to complain that the poor man does not make his appearance. ‘Let the garment which has been got ready,’ said Martin, ‘be brought to me;

there will not be wanting the poor man requiring to be clothed.' Then, at length, the cleric, constrained by necessity, and now in not the sweetest temper, hurriedly procures a rough garment out of the nearest shop, short and shaggy, and costing only five pieces of silver, and lays it, in wrath at the feet of Martin. 'See,' cries he, 'there is the garment, but the poor man is not here.' Martin, nothing moved, bids him go to the door for a little, thus obtaining secrecy, while, in his nakedness, he clothes himself with the garment, striving with all his might to keep secret what he had done. But when do such things remain concealed in the case of the saints desiring that they should be so? Whether they will or not, all are brought to light.

Chapter II.

”Martin, then, clothed in this garment, proceeds to offer the sacrifice to God. And then on that very day-I am about to narrate something wonderful-when he was engaged in blessing the altar, as is usual, we beheld a globe of fire dart from his head, so that, as it rose onhigh, the flame produced a hair of extraordinary length. And, although we saw this take place on a very famous day in the midst of a great multitude of people, only one of the virgins, one of the presbyters, and only three of the monks, witnessed the sight: but why the others did not behold it is a matter not to be decided by our judgment.

”About the same time, when my uncle Evanthius, a highly Christian man, although occupied in the affairs of this world, had begun to be afflicted with a very serious illness, to the extreme danger of his life, he sent for Martin. And, without any delay, Martin hastened towards him ; but, before the blessed man had completed the half of the distance between them, the sick man experienced the power of him that was coming; and, being immediately restored to health, he himself met us as we were approaching. With many entreaties, he detainedMartin, who wished to return home on the following day; for, in the meantime, a serpent had struck with a deadly blow a boy belonging to my uncle’s family; and Evanthius himself, on his own shoulders, carried him all but lifeless through the force of the poison, and laid him at the feet of the holy man, believing that nothing was impossible to him. By this time, the serpent had diffused its poison through all the members of the boy: one could see his skin swollen in all his veins, and his vitals strung up like a leather-bottle. Martin stretched forth his hand, felt all the limbs of the boy, and placed his finger close to the little wound, at which the animal had instilled the poison. Then in truth-I am going to tell things wonderful-we saw the whole poison, drawn from every part of the body, gather quickly together to Martin’s finger; and next, we beheld the poison mixed with blood press through the small puncture of the wound, just as a long line of abundant milk is wont to flow forth from the teats of goats or sheep, when these are squeezed by the hand of shepherds. The boy rose up quite well. We were amazed by so striking a miracle; and we acknowledged-as, indeed, truth compelled us to do-that there was no one under heaven who could equal the deeds of Martin.

Chapter III.

”In the same way, some time afterwards, we made a journey with him while he visited the various parishes in his diocese. He had gone forward a little by himself, some necessity or other, I know not what, compelling us to keep behind. In the meantime, a state-conveyance, full of military men, was coming along the public highway. But when the animals near the side beheld Martin in his shaggy garment, with a long black cloak over it, being alarmed, they swerved a little in the opposite direction. Then, the reins getting entangled, they threw into confusion those extended lines in which, as you have often seen, those wretched creatures are held together; and as they were with difficulty rearranged, delay, of course, was caused to those people hastening forward. Enraged by this injury, the soldiers, with hasty leaps, made for the ground. And then they began to belabor Martin with whips and staves; and as he, in silence and with incredible patience, submitted his back to them smiting him, this roused the greater fury in these wretches, for they became all the more violent from the fact, that he, as if he did not feel the blows showered upon him, seemed to despise them. He fell almost lifeless to the earth; and we, ere long, found him covered with blood, and wounded in every part of his body. Lifting him up without delay, and placing him upon his own ass, while we execrated the place of that cruel bloodshed, we hastened, off as speedily as possible.

In the meantime,the soldiers having returned to their conveyance,after their fury was satisfied, urge the beasts to proceed in the direction in which they had been going. But they all remained fixed to the spot, as stiff as if they had been brazen statues, and although their masters shouted at them, and the sound of their whips echoed on every side, still the animals never moved. These men next all fall to with lashes; in fact, while punishing the mules, they waste all the Gallic whips they had. The whole of the neighboring wood is laid hold of, and the beasts are beaten with enormous cudgels; but these cruel hands still effected nothing: the animals continued to stand in one and the same place like fixed effigies. The wretched men knew not what to do, and they could no longer conceal from themselves that, in some way or other, there was a higher power at work in the bosoms of these brutes, so that they were, in fact, restrained by the interposition of a deity. At length, therefore, returning to themselves, they began to enquire who he was whom but a little before they had scourged at the same place; and when, on pursuing the investigation, they ascertained from those on the way that it was Martin who had been so cruelly beaten by them, then,

indeed, the cause of their misfortune appeared manifest to all; and they could no longer doubt that they were kept back on account of the injury done to that man.

Accordingly, they all rush after us at full speed, and, conscious of what they had done and deserved, overwhelmed with shame, weeping, and having their heads and faces smeared with the dust with which they themselves had besprinkled their bodies, they cast themselves at Martin's feet, imploring his pardon, and begging that he would allow them to proceed. They added that they had been sufficiently punished by their conscience alone, and that they deeply felt that the earth might swallow them alive in that very spot, or that rather, they, losing all sense, might justly be stiffened into immovable rocks, just as they had seen their beasts of burden fixed to the places in which they stood; but they begged and entreated him to extend to them pardon for their crime, and to allow them to go on their way. The blessed man had been aware, before they came up to us, that they were in a state of detention, and had already informed us of the fact; however, he kindly granted them forgiveness; and, restoring-their animals, permitted them to pursue their journey.

Chapter IV.

”I have often noticed this, Sulpitius, that Martin was accustomed to say to you, that such an abundance of power was by no means granted him while he was a bishop, as he remembered to have possessed before he obtained that office. Now, if this be true, or rather since it is true, we may imagine how great those things were which, while still a monk, he accomplished, and which, without any witness, he effected apart by himself; since we have seen that, while a bishop, he performed so great wonders before the eyes of all. Many, no doubt, of his former achievements were known to the world, and could not be hid, but those are said to have been innumerable which, while he avoided boastfulness, he kept concealed and did not allow to come to the knowledge of mankind; for, inasmuch as he transcended the capa- bilities of mere man, in a consciousness of his own eminence, and trampling upon worldly glory, he was content simply to have heaven as a witness of his deeds. That this is true we can judge even from these things which are well known to us, and could not be hid; since e.g. before he became a bishop he restored two dead men to life, facts of which your book has treated pretty fully, but, while he was bishop, he raised up only one, a point which I am surprised you have not noticed. I myself am a witness to this latter occurrence;

but, probably, you have no doubts about the matter being duly testified. At any rate, I will set before you the affair as it happened. For some reason, I know not what, we were on our way to the town of the Carnutes. In the meantime, as we pass by a certain village most populous in inhabitants, an enormous crowd went forth to meet us, consisting entirely of heathen; for no one in that village was acquainted with a Christian. Nevertheless, owing to the report of the approach of so great a man, a multitude of those streaming to one point had filled all the widely spreading plains. Martin felt that some work was to be performed; and as the spirit within him was thus moving him, he was deeply excited. He at once began to preach to the heathen the word of God, so utterly different from that of man, often groaning that so great a crowd should be ignorant of the Lord the Saviour. In the meantime, while an incredible multitude had surrounded us, a certain woman, whose son had recently died, began to present, with outstretched hands, the lifeless body to the blessed man, saying, ”We know that you are a friend of God: restore me my son, who is my only one. The rest of the multitude joined her, and added their entreaties to those of the mother.

Martin perceiving, as he afterwards told us, that he could manifest power, in order to the salvation of those waiting for its display, received the body of the deceased into his own hands; and when, in the sight of all, he had fallen on his knees, and then arose, after his prayer was finished, he restored to its mother the child brought back to life. Then, truly, the whole multitude, raising a shout to heaven, acknowledged Christ as God, and finally began to rush in crowds to the knees of the blessed man, sincerely imploring that he would make them Christians. Nor did he delay to do so. As they were in the middle of the plain, he made them all catechumens, by placing his hand upon the whole of them; while, at the same time, turning to us, he said that, not without reason, were these made catechumens in that plain where the martyrs were wont to be consecrated."

Chapter V.

”You have conquered, O Gaul,” said Postumianus, ”you have conquered, although certainly not me, who am, on the contrary, an upholder of Martin, and who have always known and believed all these things about that man ; but you have conquered all the eremites and anchorites. For no one of them, like young friend, or rather our friend, Martin, ruled over deaths of all kinds. And Sulpitius there justly compared him to the apostles and prophets, in as much as the power of his faith, and the works accomplished by his power, bear witness that he was, in all points, like them. But go on, I beg of you, although we can hear nothing more striking than we have heard-still, go on, O Gaul, to set forth what still remains of what you have to say concerning Martin. For the mind is eager to know even the least and commonest of his doings, since there is no doubt that the least of his actions surpass the greatest deeds of others.”

”I will do so,” replies the Gaul, ”but I did not myself witness what I am about to relate, for it took place before I became an associate of Martin’s; still, the fact is well known, having been spread through the world by the accounts given by faithful brethren, who were present on the occasion. Well, just about the time when he first became a bishop, a necessity arose for his visiting the imperial court. Valentinian, the eider, then was at the head of affairs. When he came to know that Martin was asking for things which he did not incline to grant, he ordered him to be kept from entering the doors of the palace. Besides his own unkind and haughty temper, his wife Arriana had urged him to this course, and had wholly alienated him from the holy man, so that he should not show him the regard which was due to him. Martin, accordingly, when he had once and again endeavored to procure an interview with the haughty prince, had recourse to his well-known weapons-he clothes himself in sackcloth, scatters ashes upon his person, abstains from food and drink, and gives himself, night and day, to continuous prayer. On the seventh day, an angel appeared to him, and tells him to go with confidence to the palace, for that the royal doors, although closed against him, would open of their own accord, and that the haughty spirit of the emperor would be softened.

Martin, therefore, being encouraged by the address of the angel who thus appeared to him, and trusting to his assistance, went to the palace. The doors stood open, and no one opposed his entrance; so that, going in, he came at last into the presence of the king, without any one seeking to hinder him. The king, however, seeing him at a distance as he approached,

and gnashing his teeth that he had been admitted, did not, by any means, condescend to rise up as Martin advanced, until fire covered the royal seat, and until the flames seized on a part of the royal person. In this way the haughty monarch is driven from his throne, and, much against his will, rises up to receive Martin. He even gave many embraces to the man whom he had formerly determined to despise, and, coming to a better frame of mind, he confessed that he perceived the exercise of Divine power; without waiting even to listen to the requests of Martin, he granted all he desired before being asked. Afterwards the king often invited the holy man both to conferences and entertainments; and, in the end, when he was about to depart, offered him many presents, which, however, the blessed man, jealously maintaining his own poverty, totally refused, as he did on all similar occasions.

Chapter VI.

” And as we have, once for all, entered the palace, I shall string together events which there took place, although they happened at different times. And, indeed, it does not seem to me right that I should pass unmentioned the example of admiration for Martin which was shown by a faithful queen. Maximus then ruled the state, a man worthy of being extolled in his whole life, if only he had been permitted to reject a crown thrust upon him by the soldiery in an illegal tumult, or had been able to keep out of civil war. But the fact is, that a great empire can neither be refused without danger, nor can be preserved without war. He frequently sent for Martin, received him into the palace, and treated him with honor; his whole speech with him was concerning things present, things to come, the glory of the faithful, and the immortality of the saints; while, in the meantime, the queen hung upon the lips of Martin, and not inferior to her mentioned in the Gospel, washed the feet of the holy man with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Martin, though no woman had hitherto touched him, could not escape her assiduity, or rather her servile attentions. She did not think of the wealth of the kingdom, the dignity of the empire, the crown, or the purple; only stretched upon the ground, she could not be torn away from the feet of Martin.

At last she begs of her husband (saying that both of them should constrain Martin to agree) that all other attendants should be removed from the holy man, and that she alone should wait upon him at meals. Nor could the blessed man refuse too obstinately. His modest entertainment is got up by the hands of the queen; she herself arranges his seat for him; places his table; furnishes him with water for his hands; and serves up the food which she had herself cooked. While he was eating, she, with her eyes fixed on the ground, stood motionless at a distance, after the fashion of servants, displaying in all points the modesty and humility of a ministering servant. She herself mixed for him his drink and presented it. When the meal was over, she collected the fragments and crumbs of the bread that had been used, preferring with true faithfulness these remains to imperial banquets. Blessed woman! worthy, by the display of so great piety, of being compared to her who came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon, if we merely regard the plain letter of the history. But the faith of the two queens is to be compared (and let it be granted me to say this, setting aside the majesty of the secret truth implied): the one obtained her desire to hear a wise man; the other was thought worthy not only to hear a wise man, but to wait upon him.”

Chapter VII.

To these sayings Postumianus replies: ”While listening to you, O Gaul, I have for a long time been admiring the faith of the queen; but to what does that statement of yours lead, that no woman was ever said to have stood more close to Martin? For let us consider that that queen not only stood near him, but even ministered unto him. I really fear lest those persons who freely mingle among women should to some extent defend themselves by that example.”

Then said the Gaul: ”Why do you not notice, as grammarians are wont to teach us, the place, the time, and the person? For only set before your eyes the picture of one kept in the palace of the emperor importuned by prayers, constrained by the faith of the queen, and bound by the necessities of the time, to do his utmost that he might set free those shut up in prison, might restore those who had been sent into exile, and might recover goods that had been taken away,-of how much importance do you think that these things should have appeared to a bishop, so as to lead him, in order to the accomplishment of them all, to abate not a little of the rigor of his general scheme of life? However, as you think that some will make a bad use of the example thus furnished them, I shall only say that those will be truly happy if they do not fall short of the excellence of the example in question. For let them consider that the facts of the case are these: once in his life only, and that when in his seventieth year, was Martin served and waited upon at his meals, not by a free sort of widow, nor by a wanton virgin, but by a queen, who lived under the authority of a husband, and who was supported in her conduct by the entreaties of her husband, that she might be allowed so to act.

It is further to be observed that she did not recline with Martin at the entertainment, nor did she venture even to partake in the feast, but simply gave her services in waiting upon him. Learn, therefore, the proper course; let a matron serve thee, and not rule thee; and let her serve, but not recline along with thee; just as Martha, of whom we read, waited upon the Lord without being called to partake in the feast: nay, she who chose rather simply to hear the word was preferred to her that served. But in the case of Martin, the queen spoken of fulfilled both parts: she both served like Martha and listened like Mary. If any one, then, desires to make use of this example, let him keep to it in all particulars; let the cause be the

same, the person the same, the service the same, and the entertainment the same,-and let the thing occur once only in one's whole life."

Chapter VIII.

”Admirably,” exclaimed Postumianus, ”does your speech bind those friends of ours from going beyond the example of Martin; but I own to you my belief that these remarks of yours will fall upon deaf ears. For if we were to follow the ways of Martin, we should never need to defend ourselves in the case of kissing, and we should be free from all the reproaches of sinister opinion. But as you are wont to say, when you are accused of being too fond of eating, ’We are Gauls,’ so we, for our part, who dwell in this district, will never be reformed either by the example of Martin, or by your dissertations. But while we have been discussing these points at so great length, why do you, Sulpitius, preserve such an obstinate silence?” ”Well, for my part,” replied I, ”I not only keep silence, but for a long time past I have determined to be silent upon such points. For, because I rebuked a certain spruce gadding-about widow, who dressed expensively, and lived in a somewhat loose manner, and also a virgin, who was following somewhat indecently a certain young man who was dear to me,-although, to be sure, I had often heard her blaming others who acted in such a manner,-I raised up against me such a degree of hatred on the part of all the women and all the monks, that both bands entered upon sworn war against me. Wherefore, be quiet, I beg of you, lest even what we are saying should tend to increase their animosity towards me. Let us entirely blot out these people from our memory, and let us rather return to Martin. Do thou, friend Gaul, as you have begun, carry out the work you have taken in hand.”

Then says he: ”I have really related already so many things to you, that my speech ought to have satisfied your desires; but, because I am not at liberty to refuse compliance with your wishes, I shall continue to speak as long as the day lasts. For, in truth, when I glance at that straw, which is being prepared for our beds, there comes into my mind a recollection respecting the straw on which Martin had lain, that a miracle was wrought in connection with it. The affair took place as follows. Claudiomagus is a village on the confines of the Bituriges and the Turoni. The church there is celebrated for the piety of the saints, and is not lessillustrious for the multitude of the holy virgins. Well, Martin, being in the habit of passing that way, had an apartment in the private part of the church. After he left, all the virgins used to rush into that retirement: they kiss every place where the blessed man had either sat or stood, and distribute among themselves the very straw on which he had lain. One of them, a few days afterwards, took a part of the straw which she had collected for a blessing to herself, and hung it from the neck of a possessed person, whom a spirit of error

was troubling. There was no delay; but sooner than one could speak the demon was cast out, and the person was cured.

Chapter IX.

”About the same time, a cow which a demon harassed met Martin as he was returning from Treves. That cow, leaving its proper herd, was accustomed to attack human beings, and had already seriously gored many with its horns. Now, when she was coming near us, those who followed her from a distance began to warn us, with a loud voice, to beware of her. But after she had in great fury come pretty near to us, with rage in her eyes, Martin, lifting up his hand, ordered the animal to halt, and she immediately stood stock-still at his word. Upon this, Martin perceived a demon sitting upon her back, and reproving it, he exclaimed, ’Begone, thou deadly being; leave the innocent beast, and cease any longer to torment it.’ The evil spirit obeyed and departed. And the heifer had sense, enough to understand that she was set free; for, peace being restored to her, she fell at the feet of the holy man; and on Martin directing her, she made for her own herd, and, quieter than any sheep, she joined the rest of the band. This also was the time at which he had no sensation of being burnt, although placed in the midst of the flames; but I do not think it necessary for me to give an account of this, because Sulpitius there, though passing over it in his book, has nevertheless pretty fully narrated it in the epistle which he sent to Eusebius, who was then a presbyter, and is now a bishop. I believe, Postumianus, you have either read this letter, or, if it is still unknown to you, you may easily obtain it, when you please, from the bookcase. I shall simply narrate particulars which he has omitted.

”Well, on a certain occasion, when he was going round the various parishes, we came upon a band of huntsmen. The dogs were pursuing a hare, and the little animal was already much exhausted by the long run it had bad. When it perceived no means of escape in the plains spreading far on every side, and was several times just on the point of being captured, it tried to delay the threatened death by frequent doublings. Now the blessed man pitied the danger of the creature with pious feelings, and commanded the dogs to give up following it, and to permit it to get safe away. Instantly, at the first command they heard, they stood quite still: one might have thought them bound, or rather arrested, so as to stand immovable in their own footprints. In this way, through her pursuers being stopped as if tied together, the hare got safe away.

Chapter X.

”Moreover, it will be worth while to relate also some of his familiar sayings, since they were all salted with spiritual instruction. He happened to see a sheep that had recently been sheared; and, ‘See,’ says he, ‘she has fulfilled the precept of the Gospel: she had two coats, and one of them she has given to him who had none: thus, therefore, ye ought also to do.’ Also, when he perceived a swineherd in a garment of skin, cold and, in fact, all but naked, he exclaimed: ‘Look at Adam, cast out of Paradise, how he feeds his swine in a garment of skin; but let us, laying aside that old Adam, who still remains in that man, rather put on the new Adam.’ Oxen had, in one part, eaten up the grass of the meadows; pigs also had dug up some portions of them with their snouts; while the remaining portion, which continued uninjured, flourished, as if painted with variously tinted flowers. ‘That part,’ said he, ‘which has been eaten down by cattle, although it has not altogether lost the beauty of grass, yet retains no grandeur of flowers, conveys to us a representation of marriage; that part, again, which the pigs, unclean animals, had dug up, presents a loathsome picture of fornication; while the remaining portion, which had sustained no injury, sets forth the glory of virginity;-it flourishes with abundance of grass; the fruits of the field abound in it;

and, decked with flowers to the very extreme of beauty, it shines as if adorned with glittering gems. Blessed is such beauty and worthy of God; for nothing is to be compared with virginity. Thus, then, those who set marriage side by side with fornication grievously err; and those who think that marriage is to be placed on an equal footing with virginity are utterly wretched and foolish. But this distinction must be maintained by wise people, that marriage belongs to those things which may be excused, while virginity points to glory, and fornication must incur punishment unless its guilt is purged away through atonement.’

Chapter XI.

”A certain soldier had renounced the military life in the Church, having professed himself a monk, and had erected a cell for himself at a distance in the desert, as if with the purpose of leading the life of an eremite. But in course of time the crafty adversary harassed his unspiritual nature with various thoughts, to the effect that, changing his mind, he should express a desire that his wife, whom Martin had ordered to have a place in the nunnery of the young women, should rather dwell along with him. The courageous eremite, therefore, visits Martin, and makes known to him what he had in his mind. But Martin denied very strongly that a woman could, in inconsistent fashion, be joined again to a man who was now a monk, and not a husband. At last, when the soldier was insisting on the point in question; asserting that no evil would follow from carrying out his purpose; that he simply desired to possess the solace of his wife’s company; and that there was no fear of his again returning to his own pursuits; adding that he was a soldier of Christ, and that she also had taken the oath of allegiance in the same service;

and that the bishop therefore should allow to serve as soldiers together people who were saints, and who, in virtue of their faith, totally ignored the question of sex,-then Martin (I am going to repeat his very words to you) exclaimed: ’ Tell me if you have ever been in war, and if you have ever stood in the line of battle?’ In answer he said, ’ Frequently; I have often stood in line of battle, and been present in war.’ On this Martin replies: ’Well, then, tell me, did you ever in a line which was prepared with arms for battle, or, having already advanced near, was fighting against a hostile army with drawn sword-did you ever see any woman standing there, or fighting?’ Then at length the soldier became confused and blushed, while he gave thanks that he had not been permitted to follow his own evil counsel, and at the same time had not been put right by the use of any harsh language, but by a true and rational analogy, connected with the person ofa soldier. Martin, for his part, turning to us (for a great crowd of brethren had surrounded him), said: ’ Let not a woman enter the camp of men, but let the line of soldiers remain separate, and let the females, dwelling in their own tent, be remote from that of men. For this renders an army ridiculous, if a female crowd is mixed with the regiments of men.

Let the soldier occupy the line, let the soldier fight in the plain, but let the woman keep herself within the protection of the walls. She, too, certainly has her own glory, if, when her

husband is absent, she maintains her chastity; and the first excellence, as well as completed victory of that, is, that she should not be seen.'

Chapter XII.

”Ibelieve, my dear Sulpitius, that you remember with what emphasis he extolled to us (when you too were present) that virgin who had so completely withdrawn herself from the eyes of all men, that she did not admit to her presence Martin himself, when he wished to visit her in the discharge of duty. For when he was passing by the little property, within which for several years she had chastely confined herself, having heard of her faith and excellence, he turned out of his way that, as a bishop, he might honor, with pious respect, a gift of such eminent merit. We who journeyed with him thought that that virgin would rejoice, inasmuch as she was to obtain such a testimony to her virtue, while a priest of so great reputation, departing from his usual rigor of conduct, paid her a visit. But she did not relax those bonds of a most severe method of life, which she had imposed upon herself, even by allowing herself to see Martin. And thus the blessed man, having received, through another woman, her praiseworthy apology, joyfully departed from the doors of her who had not permitted herself to be seen or saluted. O glorious virgin, who did not allow herself to be looked upon even by Martin! O blessed Martin, who did not regard that repulse as being any insult to himself, but, extolling with exultant heart her excellence, rejoiced in an example only too rare in that locality!

Well, when approaching night had compelled us to stay at no great distance from her humble dwelling, that same virgin sent a present to the blessed man; and Martin did what he had never done before (for he accepted a present or gift from nobody), he refused none of those things which the estimable virgin had sent him, declaring that her blessing was by no means to be rejected by a priest, since she was indeed to be placed before many priests. Let, I beg, virgins listen to that example, so that they shall, if they desire to close their doors to the wicked, even shut them against the good ; and that the ill-disposed may have no free access to them, they shall not fear even to exclude priests from their society. Let the whole world listen attentively to this: a virgin did not permit herself to be looked upon by Martin. And it was no common priest whom she repulsed, but the girl refused to come under the eyes of a man whom it was the salvation of onlookers to behold. But what priest, besides Martin, would not have regarded this as doing an injury to him? What irritation and fury would he have conceived in his mind against that virgin? He would have deemed her a heretic; and would have resolved that she should be laid under an anathema.

And howsurely would such a man have preferred to that blessed soul those virgins who are always throwing themselves in the way of the priest, who get up sumptuous entertainments, and who recline at table with the rest! But whither is my speech carrying me? That somewhat too free manner of speaking must be checked, lest perchance it may give offense to some; for words of reproach will not profit the unfaithful, while the example quoted will be enough for the faithful. At the same time, I wish so to extol the virtue of this virgin, as nevertheless to think that no deduction is to be made from the excellence of those others, who often came from remote regions for the purpose of seeing Martin, since indeed, with the same object in view, even angels ofttimes visited the blessed man.

Chapter XIII.

”Butin what I am now about to narrate, I possess you, Sulpitius” (here he looked at me). ”as a fellow-witness. One day, I and Sulpitius there were watching before Martin’s door, and had already sat in silence for several hours. We did so with deep reverence and awe, as if we were carrying out a watch prescribed to us before the tent of an angel; while, all the time, the door of his cell being closed, he did not know that we were there. Meanwhile, we heard the sound of people conversing, and by and by we were filled with a kind of awe and amazement, for we could not help perceiving that something divine was going on. After nearly two hours, Martin comes out to us; and then our friend Sulpitius (for no one was accustomed to speak to him more familiarly) began to entreat him to make known to us, piously enquiring on the subject, what meant that sort of Divine awe which we confessed we had birth felt, and with whom he had been conversing in his cell. We added that, as we stood before the door, we had undoubtedly heard a feeble sound of peopletalking, but had scarcely understood it. Thenhe after a long delay (but there was really nothing which Sulpitius could not extort from him even against his will:

I am about to relate things somewhat difficult of belief, but, as Christ is my witness, I lie not, unless any one is so impious as to think that Martin himself lied) said: ’ I will tell you, but I beg you will not speak of it to any one else. Agnes, Thecla, and Mary were there with me.’ He proceeded to describe to us the face and general aspect of each. And he acknowledged that, not merely on that day, but frequently, he received visits from them. Nor did he deny that Peter also and Paul, the Apostles, were pretty frequently seen by him. Moreover, he was in the habit of rebuking the demons by their special names, according as they severally came to him. He found Mercury a cause of special annoyance, while he said that Jupiter was stupid and doltish. I am aware that these things seemed incredible even to many who dwelt in the same monastery; andfar less can I expect that all who simply hear of them will believe them. For unless Martin had lived such an inestimable life, and displayed such excellence, he would by no means be regarded among us as having been endowed with so great glory. And yet it is not at all wonderful that human infirmity doubted concerning the works of Martin, when we see that many at the present day do not even believe the Gospels. But we have ourselves had personal knowledge and experience, that angels often appeared and spoke familiarly with Martin.

As bearing upon this, I am to narrate a matter, of small importance indeed, but still I will state it. A synod, composed of bishops, was held at Nemausus, and while he had refused to attend it, he was nevertheless desirous of knowing what was done at it. It so happened that our friend Sulpitius was then on board ship with him, but, as was his custom, he kept his place at a distance from the rest, in a retired part of the vessel. There an angel announced to him what had taken place in the synod. And when, afterwards, we carefully enquired into the time at which the council was held, we found, beyond all doubt, that that was the very day of the council, and that those things were there decreed by the bishops which the angel had announced to Martin.

Chapter XIV.

”Butwhen we questioned him concerning the end of the world, he said to us that Nero and Antichrist have first to come ; that Nero will rule in the Western portion of the world, after having subdued ten kings; and that a persecution will be carried on by him, with the view of compelling men to worship the idols of the Gentiles. He also said that Antichrist, on the other hand, would first seize upon the empire of the East, having his seat and the capital of his kingdom at Jerusalem; while both the city and the temple would be restored by him. He added that his persecution would have for its object to compel men to deny Christ as God, while he maintained rather that he himself was Christ, and ordered all men to be circumcised, according to the law. He further said that Nero was to be destroyed by Antichrist, and that the whole world, and all nations, were to be reduced under the power of Antichrist, until that impious one should be overthrown by the coming of Christ. He told us, too, that there was no doubt but that Antichrist, having been conceived by an evil spirit, was already born, and had, by this time, reached the years of boyhood, while he would assume power as soon as he reached the proper age. Now, this is the eighth year since we heard these words from his lips: you may conjecture, then, how nearly about to happen are those things which are feared in the future.”

As our friend the Gaul was emphatically speaking thus, and had not yet finished what he intended to relate, a boy of the family entered with the announcement that the presbyter Refrigerius was standing at the door. We began to doubt whether it would be better to hear the Gaul further, or to go and welcome that man whom we so greatly loved, and who had come to pay his respects to us, when our friend the Gaul remarked: ”Even although this most holy priest had not arrived, this talk of ours would have had to be cut short, for the approach of night was itself urging us to finish the discourse which has been so far continued. But inasmuch as all things beating upon the excellences of Martin have by no means yet been mentioned, let what you have heard suffice for to-day: to-morrow we shall proceed to what remains.” This promise of our Gallic friend being equally acceptable to us all, we rose up.

Chapter I.

”It is daylight, our Gallic friend, and you must get up. For, as you see, both Postumianus is urgent, and this presbyter, who was yesterday admitted to hear what was going on, expects that what you put off narrating with regard to our beloved Martin till to-day, you should now, in fulfillment of your promise, proceed to tell. He is not, indeed, ignorant of all the things which are to be related, but knowledge is sweet and pleasant even to one who goes over again things already known to him; since, indeed, it has been so arranged by nature that one rejoices with a better conscience in his knowledge of things which he is sure, through the testimony borne to them by many, are not in any degree uncertain. For this man, too, having been a follower of Martin from his early youth, has indeed been acquainted with all his doings; but he gladly hears over again things already known. And I will confess to thee, O Gaul, that the virtues of Martin have often been heard of by me, since, in fact, I have committed to writing many things regarding him; but through the admiration I feel for his deeds, those things are always new to me which, although I have already heard them, are, over and over again, repeated concerning him. Wherefore, we congratulate you that Refrigerius has been added to us as a hearer, all the more earnestly that Postumianus is manifesting such eagerness, because he hastens, as it were, to convey a knowledge of these things to the East, and is now to hear the truth from you confirmed, so to speak, by witnesses.”

As I was saying these words, and as the Gaul was now ready to resume his narrative, there rushes in upon us a crowd of monks, Evagrius the presbyter, Aper, Sabbatius, Agricola; and, a little after, there enters the presbyter Aetherius, with Calupio the deacon, and Amator the sub deacon; lastly, Aurelius the presbyter, a very dear friend of mine, who came from a longer distance, rushes up out of breath. ”Why,” I enquire, ”do you so suddenly and unexpectedly run together to us from so many different quarters, and at so early an hour in the morning?” ”We,” they reply, ”heard yesterday that your friend the Gaul spent the whole day in narrating the virtues of Martin, and, as night overtook him, put off the rest until to-day: wherefore, we have made haste to furnish him with a crowded audience, as he speaks about such interesting matters.” In the meantime, we are informed that a multitude of lay people are standing at the door, not venturing to enter, but begging, nevertheless, that they might be admitted. Then Aper declares, ”Itis by no means proper that these people should be mixed up with us, for they have come to hear, rather from curiosity than piety.” I was

grieved for the sake of those who ought not, as he thought, to be admitted, but all that I could obtain, and with difficulty, was that they should admit Eucherius from among the lieutenants, and Celsus, a man of consular rank, while the rest were kept back. We then place the Gaul in the middle seat; and he, after long keeping silence, in harmony with his well-known modesty, at length began as follows.

Chapter II.

”You have assembled, my pious and eloquent friends, to hear me; but, as I presume, you have brought to the task religious rather than learned ears; for you are to listen to me simply as a witness to the faith, and not as speaking with the fluency of an orator. Now, I shall not repeat the things which were spoken yesterday: those who did not hear them can become acquainted with them by means of the written records. Postumianus expects something new, intending to make known what he hears to the East, that it may not, when Martin is brought into comparison, esteem itself above the West. And first, my mind inclines to set forth an incident respecting which Refrigerius has just whispered in my ear: the affair took place in the city of Carnutes. A certain father of a family ventured to bring to Martin his daughter of twelve years old, who had been dumb from her birth, begging that the blessed man would loose, by his pious merits, her tongue, which was thus tied. He, giving way to the bishops Valentinus and Victricius, who then happened to be by his side, declared that he was unequal to so great an undertaking, but that nothing was impossible to them, as if holier than himself. But they, adding their pious entreaties, with suppliant voices, to those of the father, begged Martin to accomplish what was hoped for.

He made no further delay,-being admirable in both respects, in the display, first of all, of humility, and then in not putting off a pious duty,-but orders the crowd of people standing round to be removed; and while the bishops only, and the father of the girl, were present, he prostrates himself in prayer, after his usual fashion. He then blesses a little oil, while he utters the formula of exorcism; and holding the tongue of the girl with his fingers, he thus pours the consecrated liquid into her mouth. Nor did the result of the power thus exerted disappoint the holy man. He asks her the name of her father, and she instantly replied. The father cries out, embracing the knees of Martin, with a mixture of joy and tears; and while all around are amazed, he confesses that then for the first time he listened to the voice of his daughter. And that this may not appear incredible to any one, let Evagrius, who is here, furnish you with a testimony of its truth; for the thing took place in his very presence.

Chapter III.

”The following is a small matter which I learned lately from the narration of Arpagius the presbyter, but I do not think it ought to bepassed over. The wife of the courtier Avitianus had sent some oil to Martin, that he might bless it (such is the custom) so as to be ready when needful to meet different causes of disease. It was contained in a glass jar of a shape which, round throughout, gradually bulges out towards the middle, with a long neck; but the hollow of the extended neck was not filled, because it is the custom to fill vessels of the kind in such a, way that the top may be left free for the knobs which stop up the jar. The presbyter testified that he saw the oil increase under the blessing of Martin, so much that, the abundance of it overflowing the jar, it ran down from the top in every direction. He added that it bubbled up with the same effect, while the vessel was being carried back to the mistress of the household; for the oil so steadily flowed over in the hands of the boy carrying it, that the abundance of the liquid, thus pouring down, covered all his garment.

He said, moreover, that the lady received the vessel so full even to the brim, that (as the same presbyter tells us at the present day) there was no room in that jar for inserting the stopper by which people are accustomed to close those vessels, the contents of which are to be preserved with special care. That, too, was a remarkable thing that happened to this man,” Here he looked at me. ”He had set down a glass vessel containing oil blessed by Martin in a pretty high window; and a boy of the family, not knowing that a jar was there, drew towards him the cloth covering it, with rather much violence. The vessel, in consequence, fell down on the marble pavement. Upon this, all were filled with dread lest the blessing of God, bestowed on the vessel by Martin, had been lost; but the jar was found as safe as ever, just as if it had fallen on the softest feathers. Now, this result should be ascribed, not so much to chance, as to the power of Martin, whose blessing could not possibly perish.

”There is this, too, which was effected by a certain person, whose name, because he is present, and has forbidden it to be mentioned, shall be suppressed: Saturninus too, who is now with us, was present on the occasion referred to. A dog was barking at us in a somewhat disagreeable manner. ’ I command thee,’ said the person in question, ’ in the name of Martin, to be quiet.’ The dog-his barking seemed to stick in his throat, and one might have thought that his tongue had been cut out-was silent. Thus it is really a small matter that

Martin himself performed miracles: believe me that other people also have accomplished many things in his name.

Chapter IV.

”You knew the too barbarous and, beyond measure, bloody ferocity of Avitianus, a former courtier. He enters the city of the Turones with a furious spirit, while rows of people, laden with chains, followed him with melancholy looks, orders various kinds of punishments to be got ready for slaying them; and to the grave amazement of the city, he arranges them for the sad work on the following day. When this became known to Martin, he set out all alone, a little before midnight, for the palace of that beast. But when, in the silence of the depths of the night, and as all were at rest, no entrance was possible through the bolted doors, he lays himself down before that cruel threshold. In the meantime, Avitianus, buried in deep sleep, is smitten by an assailing angel, who says to him, ’ Does the servant of God lie at your threshold, and do you continue sleeping?’ He, on listening to these words, rises, in much disturbance, from his bed; and calling his servants, he ex- claims in terror, ’Martin is at the door: go immediately, and undo the bolts, that the servant of God may suffer no harm.’ But they, in accordance with the tendency of all servants, having scarcely stepped beyond the first threshold, and laughing at their master as having been mocked by a dream, affirm that there was no one at the door.

This they did as simply inferring from their own disposition, that no one could be keeping watch through the night, while fat less did they believe that a priest was lying at the thresh- old of another man during the horror of that night. Well, they easily persuaded Avitianus of the truth of their story. He again sinks into sleep; but, being ere long struck with greater violence than before, he exclaimed that Martin was standing at the door, and that, therefore, no rest either of mind or body was allowed him. As the servants delayed, he himself went forward to the outer threshold; and there he found Martin, as he had thought he would. The wretched man, struck by the display of so great excellence, exclaimed, ‘Why, sir, have you done this to me? There is no need for you to speak: I know what you wish: I see what you require: depart as quickly as possible, lest the anger of heaven consume me on account of the injury done you: I have already suffered sufficient punishment. Believe me, that I have firmly determined in my own mind how I should now proceed.’ So then, after the departure of the holy man, he calls for his officials and orders all the prisoners to be set free, while presently he himself went his way.Thus Avitianus being put to flight, the city rejoiced, and felt at liberty.

Chapter V.

”Wrote these are certain facts, since Avitianus related them to many persons, they are further confirmed on this ground that Refrigerius the presbyter, whom you see here present, lately had them narrated to him, under an appeal to the Divine majesty, by Dagridus, a faithful man among the tribunes, who swore that the account was given him by Avitianus himself. But I do not wish you to wonder that I do to-day what I did not do yesterday; viz. that I subjoin to the mention of every individual wonder the names of witnesses, and mention persons to whom, if any one is inclined to disbelieve, he may have recourse, because they are still in the body. The unbelief of very many has compelled that; for they are said to hesitate about some things which were related yesterday. Let these people, then, accept as witnesses persons who are still alive and well, and let them give more credit to such, inasmuch as they doubt our good faith. But really, if they are so unbelieving, I give it as my opinion that they will not believe even the witnesses named. And yet I am surprised that any one, who has even the least sense of religion, can venture on such wickedness as to think that any one could tell lies concerning Martin. Be that far from every one who lives in obedience to God; for, indeed, Martin does not require to be defended by falsehoods.

But, O Christ, we lay the truth of our whole discourse before thee, to the effect that we neither have said, nor will say, anything else than what either we ourselves have witnessed, or have learned from undoubted authorities, and, indeed, very frequently from Martin himself. But although we have adopted the form of a dialogue, in order that the style might be varied to prevent weariness, still we affirm that we are really setting forth a true history in a dutiful spirit. The unbelief of some has compelled me, to my great regret, to insert in my narrative these remarks which are apart from the subject in hand. But let the discourse now return to our assembly; in which since I saw that I was listened to so eagerly, I found it necessary to acknowledge that Aper acted properly in keeping back the unbelieving, under the conviction he had that those only ought to be allowed to hear who were of a believing spirit.

Chapter VI.

”I am enraged in heart, believe me, and, through vexation, I seem to lose my senses: do Christian men not believe in the miraculous powers of Martin, which the demons acknowledged?

”The monastery of the blessed man was at two miles’ distance from the city; but if, as often as he was to come to the church, he only had set his foot outside the threshold of his cell, one could perceive the possessed roaring through the whole church, and the bands of guilty ones trembling as if their judge were coming, so that the groanings of the demons announced the approach of the bishop to the clerics, who were not previously aware that he was coming. I saw a certain man snatched up into the air on the approach of Martin, and suspended there with his hands stretched upwards, so that he could in no way touch the ground with his feet. But if at any time Martin undertook the duty of exorcising the demons, he touched no one with his hands, and reproached no one in words, as a multitude of expressions is generally rolled forth by the clerics; but the possessed, being brought up to him, he ordered all others to depart, and the doors being bolted, clothed in sackcloth and sprinkled with ashes, he stretched himself on the ground in the midst of the church, and turned to prayer. Then truly might one behold the wretched beings tortured with various results-some hanging, as it were, from a cloud, with their feet turned upwards, and yet their garments did not fall down over their faces, lest the part of their body which was exposed should give rise to shame;

while in another part of the church one could see them tortured without any question being addressed to them, and confessing their crimes. They revealed their names, too, of their own accord; one acknowledged that he was Jupiter, and another that he was Mercury. Finally, one could see all the servants of the devil suffering agony, along with their master, so that we could not help acknowledging that in Martin there was fulfilled that which is written that ‘the saints shall judge angels.’

Chapter VII.

”There was a certain village in the country of the Senones which was every year annoyed with hail. The inhabitants, constrained by an extreme of suffering, sought help from Martin. A highly respectable embassy was sent to him by Auspicius, a man of the rank of prefect, whose fields the storm had been wont to smite more severely than it did those of others. But Martin, having there offered up prayer, so completely freed the whole district from the prevailing plague, that for twenty years, in which he afterwards remained in the body, no one in those places suffered from hail. And that this may not be thought to be accidental, but rather effected by Martin, the tempest, returning afresh, once more fell upon the district in the year in which he died. The world thus felt the departure of a believing man to such a degree, that, as it justly rejoiced in his life, so it also bewailed his death. But if any hearer, weak in faith, demands also witnesses to prove those things which we have said, I will bring forward, not one man, but many thousands, and will even summon the whole region of the Senones to bear witness to the power which was experienced. But not to speak of this, you, presbyter Refrigerius, remember, I believe, that we lately had a conversation, concerning the matter referred to, with Romulus, the son of that Auspicius I mentioned, an honored and religious man. He related the points in question to us, as if they had not been previously known; and as he was afraid of constant losses in future harvests, he did, as you yourself beheld, regret, with much lamentation, that Martin was not preserved up to this time.

Chapter VIII.

”But to return to Avitianus: while at every other place, and in all other cities, he displayed marks of horrible cruelty, at Tours alone he did no harm. Yes, that beast, which was nourished by human blood, and by the slaughter of unfortunate creatures, showed himself meek and peaceable in the presence of the blessed man. I remember that Martin one day came to him, and having entered his private apartment, he saw a demon of marvelous size sitting behind his back. Blowing upon him from a distance (if I may, as a matter of necessity, make use of a word which is hardly Latin , Avitianus thought that he was blowing at him, and exclaimed, ’Why, thou holy man, dost thou treat me thus?’ But then Martin said, ’ It is not at you, but at him who, in all his terribleness, leans over your neck.’ The devil gave way, and left his familiar seat; and it is well known that, ever after that day, Avitianus was milder, whether because he now understood that he had always been doing the will of the devil sitting by him, or because the unclean spirit, driven from his seat by Martin, was deprived of the power of attacking him ; while the servant was ashamed of his master, and the master did not force on his servant.

”In a village of the Ambatienses, that is in an old stronghold, which is now largely inhabited by brethren, you know there is a great idol-temple built up with labor. The building had been constructed of the most polished stones and furnished with turrets; and, rising on high in the form of a cone, it preserved the superstition of the place by the majesty of the work. The blessed man had often enjoined its destruction on Marcellus, who was there settled as presbyter. Returning after the lapse of some time, he reproved the presbyter, became the edifice of the idol-temple was still standing. He pleaded in excuse that such an immense structure could with difficulty be thrown down by a band of soldiers, or by the strength of a large body of the public, and far less should Martin think it easy for that to be effected by means of weak clerics or helpless monks. Then Martin, having recourse to his well-known auxiliaries, spent the whole night in watching and prayer-with the result that, in the morning, a storm arose. and cast down even to its foundations the idol-temple. Now let this narrative rest on the testimony of Marcellus.

Chapter IX.

”Iwill make use of another not dissimilar marvel in a like kind of work, having the concurrence of Refrigerius in doing so. Martin was prepared to throw down a pillar of immense size, on the top of which an idol stood, but there was no means by which effect could be given to his design. Well, according to his usual practice, he betakes himself to prayer. It is undoubted that then a column, to a certain degree like the other, rushed down from heaven, and falling upon the idol, it crushed to powder the whole of the seemingly indestructible mass this would have been a small matter, had he only in an invisible way made use of the powers of heaven, but these very powers were beheld by human eyes serving Martin in a visible manner. ”Again, the same Refrigerius is my witness that a woman, suffering from an issue of blood, when she had touched the garment of Martin, after the example of the woman mentioned in the Gospel, was cured in a moment of time.

”Aserpent, cutting its way through a river, was swimming towards the bank on which we had taken our stand. ’ In the name of the Lord,’ said Martin, ’ I command thee to return.’ Instantly, at the word of the holy man, the venomous beast turned round, and while we looked on, swam across to the farther bank. As we all perceived that this had not happened without a miracle; he groaned deeply, and exclaimed, ’Serpents hear me, but men will not hear. ’

Chapter X.

”Being accustomed to eat fish at the time of Easter, he enquired a little before the hour for refreshment, whether it was in readiness. Then Cato, the deacon, to whom the outward management of the monastery belonged, and who was himself a skillful fisher, tells him that no capture had fallen to his lot the whole day, and that other fishers, who used to sell what they caught, had also been able to do nothing. ’Go,’ said he, ’ let down your line, and a capture will follow.’ As Sulpitius there has already described, we had our dwelling close to the river. We all went, then, as these were holidays, to see our friend fishing, with the hopes of all on the stretch, that the efforts would not be in vain by which, under the advice of Martin himself, it was sought to obtain fish for his use. At the first throw the deacon drew out, in a very small net, an enormous pike, and ran joyfully back to the monastery, with the feeling undoubtedly to which some poet gave utterance (for we use a learned verse, inasmuch as we are conversing with learned people)-‘ And brought his captive boar to wondering Argos.’

”Truly that disciple of Christ, imitating the miracles performed by the Saviour, and which he, by way of example, set before the view of his saints, showed Christ also working in him, who, glorifying his own holy follower everywhere, conferred upon that one man the gifts of various graces. Arborius, of the imperial bodyguard, testifies that he saw the hand of Martin as he was offering sacrifice, clothed, as it seemed, with the noblest gems, while it glittered with a purple light; and that, when his right hand was moved, he heard the clash of the gems, as they struck together.

Chapter XI.

”Iwill now come to an event which he always concealed, owing to the character of the times, but which he could not conceal from us. In the matter referred to, there is this of a miraculous nature, that an angel conversed, face to face, with him. The Emperor Maximus, while in other respects doubtless a good man, was led astray by the advices of some priests after Priscillian had been put to death. He, therefore, protected by his royal power Ithacius the bishop, who had been the accuser of Priscillian, and others of his confederates, whom it is not necessary to name. The emperor thus prevented every one from bringing it as a charge against Ithacius, that, by his instrumentality, a man of any sort had been condemned to death. Now Martin, constrained to go to the court by many serious causes of people involved in suffering, incurred the whole force of the storm which was there raging. The bishops who had assembled at Treves were retained in that city, and daily communicating with Ithacius, they had made common cause with him. When it was announced to them expecting no such information, that Martin was coming, completely losing courage, they began to mutter and tremble among themselves. And it so happened that already, under their influence, the emperor had determined to send some tribunes armed with absolute power into the two Spains, to search out heretics, and, when found, to deprive them of their life or goods.

Now there was no doubt that that tempest would also make havoc of multitudes of the real saints, little distinction being made between the various classes of in- dividuals. For in such circumstances, a judgment was formed simply by appearances, so that one was deemed a heretic rather on his turning pale from fear, or wearing a particular garment, than by the faith which he professed. And the bishops were well aware that such proceedings would by no means please Martin; but, conscious of evil as they were, this was a subject of deep anxiety to them, lest when he came, he should keep from communion with them; knowing well as they did, that others would not be wanting who, with his example to guide them, would follow the bold course adopted by so great a man. They therefore form a plan with the emperor, to this effect, that, officials of the court being sent on to meet him, Martin should be forbidden to come any nearer to that city, unless he should declare that he would maintain peace with the bishops who were living there. But he skillfully frustrated their object, by declaring that he would come among them with the peace of Christ. And at last, having entered during the night, he went to the church, simply for the purpose of prayer. On

the following day he betakes himself to the palace. Besides many other petitions which he had to present, and which it would be tedious to describe, the following were the principal:

entreaties in behalf of the courtier Nurses, and the president Leucadius, both of whom had belonged to the party of Gratianus, and that, with more than ordinary zeal, upon which this is not the time to dilate, and who had thus incurred the anger of the conqueror; but his chief request was, that tribunes, with the power of life and death, should not be sent into the Spains. For Martin felt a pious solicitude not only to save from danger the true Christians in these regions, who were to be persecuted in connection with that expedition, but to protect even heretics themselves. But on the first and second day the wily emperor kept the holy man in suspense, whether that he might impress on him the importance of the affair, or because, being obnoxious to the bishops, he could not be reconciled to them, or because, as most people thought at the time, the emperor opposed his wishes from avarice, having cast a longing eye on the property of the persons in question. For we are told that he was really a man distinguished by many excellent actions, but that he was not successful in contending against avarice. This may, however, have been due to the necessities of the empire at the time, for the treasury of the state had been exhausted by former rulers; and he, being almost constantly in the expectation of civil wars, or in a state of preparation for them, may easily be excused for having, by all sorts of expedients, sought resources for.

the defense of the empire.

Chapter XII.

”Inthe meantime, those bishops with whom Martin would not hold communion went in terror to the king, complaining that they had been condemned beforehand; that it was all over with them as respected the status of every one of them, if the authority of Martin was now to uphold the pertinacity of Theognitus, who alone had as yet condemned them by a sentence publicly pronounced; that the man ought not to have been received within the walls; that he was now not merely the defender of heretics, but their vindicator; and that nothing had really been accomplished by the death of Priscillian, if Martin were to act the part of his avenger. Finally, prostrating themselves with weeping and lamentation, they implored the emperor to put forth his power against this one man. And the emperor was not far from being compelled to assign to Martin, too, the doom of heretics. But after all, although he was disposed to look upon the bishops with too great favor, he was not ignorant that Martin excelled all other mortals in faith, sanctity, and excellence: he therefore tries another way of getting the better of the holy man. And first he sends for him privately, and addresses him in the kindest fashion, assuring him that the heretics were condemned in the regular course of public trials, rather than by the persecutions of the priests; and that there was no reason why he should think that communion with Ithacius and the rest of that party was a thing to be condemned.

He added that Theognitus had created disunion, rather by personal hatred, than by the cause he supported; and that, in fact, he was the only person who, in the meantime, had separated himself from communion: while no innovation had been made by the rest. He remarked further that a synod, held a few days previously, had decreed that Ithacius was not chargeable with any fault. When Martin was but little impressed by these statements, the king then became inflamed with anger, and hurried out of his presence; while, without delay, executioners are appointed for those in whose behalf Martin had made supplication.

Chapter XIII.

”When this became known to Martin, he rushed to the palace, though it was now night. He pledges himself that, if these people were spared, he would communicate; only let the tribunes, who had already been sent to the Spains for the destruction of the churches, be recalled. There is no delay: Maximus grants all his requests. On the following day, the ordination of Felix as bishop was being arranged, a man undoubtedly of great sanctity, and truly worthy of being made a priest in happier times. Martin took part in the communion of that day, judging it better to yield for the moment, than to disregard the safety of those over whose heads a sword was hanging. Nevertheless, although the bishops strove to the uttermost to get him to confirm the fact of his communicating by signing his name, he could not be induced to do so. On the following day, hurrying away from that place, as he was on the way returning, he was filled with mourning and lamentation that he had even for an hour been mixed up with the evil communion, and, not far, from a village named Andethanna, where remote woods stretch far and wide with profound solitude, he sat down while his companions went on a little before him. There he became involved in deep thought, alternately accusing and defending the cause of his grief and conduct. Suddenly, an angel stood by him and said, ‘Justly, O Martin, do you feel compunction, but you could not otherwise get out of your difficulty.

Renew your virtue, resume your courage, lest you not only now expose your fame, but your very salvation, to danger.’ Therefore, from that time forward, he carefully guarded against being mixed up in communion with the party of Ithacius. But when it happened that he cured some of the possessed more slowly and with less grace than usual, he at once confessed to us with tears that he felt a diminution of his power on account of the evil of that communion in which he had taken part for a moment through necessity, and not with a cordial spirit. He lived sixteen years after this, but never again did he attend a synod, and kept carefully aloof from all assemblies of bishops.

Chapter XIV.

”But clearly, as we experienced, he repaired, with manifold interest, his grace, which had been diminished for a time. I saw afterwards a possessed person brought to him at the gate of the monastery; and that, before the man touched the threshold, he was cured. ”I lately heard one testifying that, when he was sailing on the Tuscan Sea, following that course which leads to Rome, whirlwinds having suddenly arisen, all on board were in extreme peril of their lives. In these circumstances, a certain Egyptian merchant, who was not yet a Christian, cried out, ’ Save us, O God of Martin,’ upon which the tempest was immediately stilled, and they held their desired course, while the pacified ocean continued in perfect tranquillity.

”Lycontius, a believing man belonging to the lieutenants, when a violent disease was afflicting his family, and sick bodies were lying all through his house in sad proof of unheard-of calamity, implored the help of Martin by a letter. At this time the blessed man declared that the thing asked was difficult to be obtained, for he knew in his spirit that that house was then being scourged by Divine appointment. Yet he did not give up an unbroken course of prayer and fasting for seven whole days and as many nights, so that he at last obtained that which he aimed at in his supplications. Speedily, Lycontius, having experienced the Divine kindness, flew to him, at once reporting the fact and giving thanks, that his house had been delivered from all danger. He also offered a hundred pounds of silver, which the blessed man neither rejected nor accepted; but before the amount of money touched the threshold of the monastery, he had, without hesitation, destined it for the redemption of captives. And when it was suggested to him by the brethren, that some portion of it should be reserved for the expenses of the monastery, since it was difficult for all of them to obtain necessary food, while many of them were sorely in need of clothing, he replied, ’ Let the church both feed and clothe us, as long as we do not appear to have provided, in any way, for our own wants.’

”Thereoccur to my mind at this point many miracles of that illustrious man, which it is more easy for us to admire than to narrate. You all doubtless recognize the truth of what I say: there are many doings of his which cannot be set forth in words. For instance, there is the following, which I rather think cannot be related by us just as it took place. A certain one of the brethren (you are not ignorant of his name, but his person must be concealed,

lest we should cause shame to a godly man),-a certain one, I say, having found abundance of coals for his stove, drew a stool to himself, and was sitting, with outspread legs and exposed person, beside that fire, when Martin at once perceived that an improper thing was done under the sacred roof, and cried out with a loud voice, 'Who, by exposing his person, is dishonoring our habitation?' When our brother heard this, and felt from his own conscience, that it was he who was rebuked, he immediately ran to us almost in a fainting condition, and acknowledged his shame; which was done, how- ever, only through the forth-putting of the power of Martin.

Chapter XV.

”Again, on a certain day, after he had sat down on that wooden seat of his (which you all know), placed in the small open court which surrounded his abode, he perceived two demons sitting on the lofty rock which overhangs the monastery. He then heard them, in eager and gladsome tones, utter the following invitation, ’Come hither, Brictio, come hither, Brictio.’ I believe they perceived the miser: able man approaching from a distance, being conscious how great frenzy of spirit they had excited within him. Nor is there any delay: Brictio rushes in in absolute fury; and there, full of madness, he vomits forth a thousand reproaches against Martin. For he had been reproved by him on the previous day, because he who had possessed nothing before he entered the clerical office, having, in fact, been brought up in the monastery by Martin himself, was now keeping horses and purchasing slaves. For at that time, he was accused by many of not only having bought boys belonging to barbarous nations, but girls also of a comely appearance. The miserable man, moved with bitter rage on account of these things, and, as I believe, chiefly instigated by the impulse received from those demons, made such an onset upon Martin as scarcely to refrain from laying hands upon him. The holy man, on his part, with a placid countenance and a tranquil mind, endeavored by gentle words to restrain the madness of the unhappy wretch.

But the spirit of wickedness so prevailed within him, that not even his ownmind, at best a very vain one, was under his control. With trembling lips, and a changing countenance, pale with rage, he rolled forth the words of sin, asserting that he was a holier man than Martin who had brought him up, inasmuch as from his earliest years he had grown up in the monastery amid the sacred institutions of the Church, while Martin had at first, as he could not deny, been tarnished with the life of a soldier, and had now entirely sunk into dotage by means of his baseless superstitions, and ridiculous fancies about visions. After he had uttered many things like these, and others of a still mort bitter nature, which it is better not to mention going out, at length, when his rage was satisfied he seemed to feel as if he had completely vindicated his conduct. But with rapid steps he rushed back by the way he had .gone out, the demons having, I believe, been, in the meantime, driven from his heart by the prayers of Martin, and he was now brought back to repentance. Speedily, then, he returns, and throws himself at the feet of Martin, begging for pardon and confessing his error, while, at length restored to a better mind, he acknowledges that he hadbeen under the influence of a demon. It was no difficult business for Martin to forgive the suppliant.

And then the holy man explained both to him and to us all, how he had seen him driven on by demons, and declared that he was not moved by the reproaches which had been heaped upon him; for they had, in fact, rather injured the man who uttered them. And subsequently, when this same Brictio was often accused before him of many and great crimes, Martin could not be induced to remove him from the presbyterate, lest he should be suspected of revenging the injury done to himself, while he often repeated this saying: ' If Christ bore with Judas, why should not I bear with Brictio?'"

Chapter XVI.

Upon this, Postumianus exclaims, ”Let that well-known man in our immediate neighborhood, listen to that example, who, when he is wise, takes no notice either of things present or future, but if he has been offended, falls into utter fury, having no control over himself. He then rages against the clerics, and makes bitter attacks upon the laity, while he stirs up the whole world for his own revenge. He will continue in this state of contention for three years without intermission, and refuse to be mollified either by time or reason. The condition of the man is to be lamented and pitied, even if this were the only incurable evil by which he is afflicted. But you ought, my Gallic friend, to have frequently recalled to his mind such examples of patience and tranquillity, that he might know both how to be angry and how to forgive. And if he happens to hear of this speech of mine which has bean briefly interpolated into our discourse, and. directed against himself, let him know that I spoke, not more with the lips of an enemy than the mind of a friend; because I should wish, if the thing were possible, that he should be spoken of rather as being like the bishop Martin, than the tyrant Phalaris. But let us pass away from him, since the mention of him is far from pleasant, and let us return, O Gaul, to our friend Martin.”

Chapter XVII.

Then said I, since I perceived by the setting sun that evening was at hand: "The day is gone, Postumianus; we must rise up; and at the same time some refreshment is due to these so zealous listeners. And as to Martin, youought not to expect that there is any limit to one talking about him: he extends too far to be comprised fully in any conversation. In the meantime, you will convey to the East the things you have now heard about that famous man; and as you retrace your steps to your former haunts, and pass along by various coasts, places, harbors, islands, and seas, see that you spread among the peoples the name and glory of Martin. Especially remember that you do not omit Campania; and although your route will take you far off the beaten track, still any expenditure from delay will not be to you of so much importance as to keep you from visiting in that quarter Paulinus, a man renowned and praised throughout the whole world. I beg you first to unroll to him the volume of discourse which we either completed yesterday, or have said to-day. You will relate all to him; you will repeat all to him; that in due time, by his means, Rome may learn the sacred merits of this man, just as he spread that first little book of ours not only through Italy, but even through the whole of Illyria.

He, not jealous of the glories of Martin, and being a most pious admirer of his saintly excellences in Christ, will not refuse to compare our leading man with his own friend Felix. Next, if you happen to cross over to Africa, you will relate what you have heard to Carthage; and, although, as you yourself have said, it already knows the man, yet now pre-eminently it will learn more respecting him, that it may not admire its own martyr Cyprian alone, although consecrated by his sacred blood. And then, if carried down a little to the left, you enter the gulf of Achaia, let Corinth know, and let Athens know, that Plato in the academy was not wiser, and that Socrates in the prison was not braver, than Martin. You will say to them that Greece was indeed happy which was thought worthy to listen to an apostle pleading, but that Christ has by no means forsaken Gaul, since he has granted it to possess such a man as Martin. But when you have come as far as Egypt, although it is justly proud of the numbers and virtues of its own saints, yet let it not disdain to hear how Europe will not yield to it, or to all Asia, in having only Martin.

Chapter XVIII.

”But when you have again set sail from that place with the view of making for Jerusalem, I enjoin upon you a duty connected with our grief, that, if you ever come to the shore of renowned Ptolemais, you enquire most carefully where Pomponius, that friend of ours, is buried, and that you do not refuse to visit his remains on that foreign soil. There shed many tears, as much from the working of your own feelings, as from our tender affection; and although it is but a worthless gift, scatter the ground there with purple flowers and sweet-smelling grass. And you will say to him, but not roughly, and not harshly,-with the address of one who sympathizes, and not with the tone of one who reproaches,-that if he had only been willing to listen to you at one time, or to me constantly, and if he had invited Martin rather than that man whom I am unwilling to name, he would never have been so cruelly separated from me, or covered by a heap of unknown dust, having suffered death in the midst of the sea with the lot of a ship-wrecked pirate, and with difficulty securing burial on a far-distant shore. Let those behold this as their own work, who, in seeking to revenge him, have wished to injure me, let them behold their own glory, and being avenged,let them henceforth cease to make any attacks upon me.”

Having uttered these sad words in a very mournful voice, and while the tears of all the others were drawn forth by our laments, we at length departed, certainly with a profound admiration for Martin, but with no less sorrow from our own lamentations.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator’s own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.