

## ENGLAND'S PROTO-MARTYR.—JUNE 17.

“Valiant soldier, Proto-martyr,  
 First of Britain's sons to die,  
 Pagan ire and cries withstanding  
 By the grace of God Most High,  
 By the strength of Him, Protector,  
 Who, in strength and power, was nigh.”

*Appendix to the Hymnal Noted.*

**I**O all English Church-people, the life and death of their proto-martyr St. Alban must be of deep interest. Alban (a Roman name) was a person of note, and a native of Verulam, now St. Alban's, in the county of Hertford, in Anglo-Saxon, *Wattlinga Ceaster*. The river Werlame runs on the east, and the great Roman highway, Watling-Street, lies on the west side of the town. Alban went to Rome in youth for study and education, (as Leland declares, giving his authorities for the statement,) but in due course returned, and settled at Verulam, living in some state and dignity. Though a Pagan, he was remarkable for certain virtues, being compassionate, kind, and charitable. When the Edicts of the Roman Emperors were promulgated, and put into force against the Christian Britons, a certain priest named Amphibalus fled from persecution, and was kindly received and protected by Alban. This priest did all in his power to set forth Christian truth, both by word and deed; and Alban was deeply impressed by his faith and piety, his assiduity at prayer, and his remarkable recollectedness at all times. Alban listened respectfully to instruction, and by the Spirit's grace his heart was opened to receive the blessed revelation of God's incarnate Son. He embraced the Christian religion with ardent fervour, regarding the treasure found by him as the “pearl of great price.” This change was soon noised abroad, and caused great sensation. Soldiers were sent to seek and secure Amphibalus, but he had fled. Our blessed Saviour declared that he who receives a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward. So was it with Alban. Having entertained and protected a confessor of Christ, he received not only the blessed grace of faith, but the glorious and beautiful crown of martyrdom. Alban changed clothes with Amphibalus, assuming the long flowing garment which the latter wore; and in this he met the soldiers sent to secure the Christian priest. He was at once bound in cords, and led to the judge, who was standing at the pagan altar, sacrificing to false gods. Then the choice was given him of repudiating Christ and joining in the heathen orgies there being carried on upon the one hand, or of immediate martyrdom on the other. Confessing himself a Christian, he absolutely refused to sacrifice to devils, or to take any part in the pagan worship. The judge, terribly enraged both at Alban's fortitude and boldness, commanded him to be severely scourged, and then ordered him to be taken away and beheaded. A great multitude went forth with him to the place of execution. On his way thither