

known to the whole Prætorium, and elsewhere ; and that the brethren in consequence of this, grew daily bolder in preaching the word.

A circumstance took place about this time in which perhaps the wide spread of the Christian doctrine in Rome was not without its influence, and which possibly might also have some share in causing the shortly subsequent persecution. About A.D. 61, Pedanius Secundus, the præfect of the city, was murdered by one of his slaves, to whom, it seems he had refused his freedom after having fixed the price of it : and whose rival in love he appears also to have been.* The law of Rome decreed that when a master was killed by one of his domestics, all the other slaves should be put to death also, without further enquiry ; on the presumption that they must have connived at the murder. In this instance the number of these unfortunate persons, including women and children, amounted to four hundred ; and the populace, struck with horror at a wholesale execution like this, where so many of them must necessarily have been innocent, rose in tumult to prevent the enforcing so barbarous a law. The senate met to deliberate, and after a hot debate, on the motion of Caius Cassius, voted that the law should be acted upon. The tumult grew :—the emperor called out his troops to repress it, and through lines of soldiers, who drove back the people, and kept the way open, these miserable victims of an inhuman law were led to execution, amid the groans, threats, and imprecations of the incensed multitude. Even Nero was almost ashamed of this severity, and when in addition to this, the banishment of the freed-

* Tacit. Ann. l. xiv. c. 42.