

are asked of Barachiël, Wathiël, and other princes of the heavenly court. The litany ended by saying to Michaël: "Prince of mercy, pray for Israël, that it may be greatly exalted."

The tombs of the martyrs were very early venerated by the Christians of Asia; the first to which pilgrimage was made was most probably that of St. John the Baptist, which, after the Holy Sepulchre and the tomb of the Blessed Virgin, is the most respected by Orientals of all creeds. The body of the precursor of the man-God was at Samaria, where it was visited by St. Paula in the fourth century, and his head, carefully embalmed by his disciples, was at Hems, whence it was transported to Damascus in the reign of Theodosius. It was placed in a superb church bearing the title of St. Zachary, which took, thenceforward, that of St. John. The caliph Abdelmelek took forcible possession of this church, and now the venerated tomb of him who was *a prophet and more than a prophet*, is enclosed within a Turkish mosque; but it is neither solitary nor without honour; the Mussulmans come there from all parts on pilgrimage, and the celebrated Saadi himself relates, in his Gulistan, that, going to pray there, he met with princes from Arabia. At the close of the first century, the faithful of Asia Minor were wont to repair in great numbers to Ephesus to visit the tomb of St. John the Evangelist, the dust of which, carefully gathered, was said to effect marvellous cures.\*

St. Stephen, the first martyr, whose relics wrought so many miracles, as attested by St. Augustine, and who died before the Blessed Virgin, was likewise very early invoked by the primitive Christians, who also venerated the blessed remains of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp.† St. Aster of Amasia has preserved to us, in a

\* St. Augustine speaks of the miraculous cures wrought by dust from the tomb of St. John the Evangelist. There is now seen amongst the ruins of Ephesus, the church of St. John, of which the Turks had made a mosque.

† The history of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, written in the form of a letter, in the name of the church of Smyrna, by those who had themselves witnessed it, and addressed to the church of Philomel, contains these words: "We took from the fire his bones, more precious than gold or jewels, and we put them in a suitable place, where we hope to assemble every year to celebrate the festival of the Lord's martyr, to the end that those who come after us may be encouraged to prepare for similar

