

ferent this world of yours is from the world which our Nero rules. Comment on the peace of God were useless; Pomponia in her answer explains the secret of this heaven-born repose. "Not Nero, but God rules the world." This reply brings another question to the lips of Petronius; "But believest thou in the gods then Pomponia?" "I believe in God, who is one, just and all-powerful," answered the wife of Aulus Plautius. We need not be surprised at the rottenness and tottering state of the entire Roman social structure; woman the cornerstone of the edifice was degraded and enslaved.

A vivid contrast is drawn between Paganism and Christianity; there is no direct parallel, the actions of the adherents of each "speak louder than words." The gods were a dead letter or as Petronius, the pagan, says "The gods have become for some time mere figures of rhetoric; even the yet-pagan Vinicius bears witness that the Christian is a vivifying faith, directing every thought, word and action of a follower of Christ. "But these Christians live in poverty, forgive their enemies, preach submission, virtue and mercy." The upper ten, the silver-spoon stratum of Roman society, exemplified by Petronius "had a twofold contempt for the crowd—as an aristocrat and an æsthetic person. Men with the odor of roast beans, which they carried in their bosoms, and who besides were eternally hoarse and sweating from playing *mora* on the street corners and peristyle, did not in his eye deserve the term *human*;" all Christians, whether they be of patrician or plebian blood, must love one another for Christ was the reputed son of a carpenter. The Pagan doctrine read, kill him who displeases you, injures

you, even though he should be your fosterfather; St. Peter lays down the Christian teaching to Ursus—"The Saviour said this to us; "if thy brother has sinned against thee, and has turned to thee seven times, saying, Have mercy on me! Forgive him." The Christians practiced what they preached; Ursus accepts the rebuke and says to his foe: "May the Saviour be merciful as I forgive thee." In the hour of danger, trial and affliction, the Pagan admonition was, "kill thyself." Let us hearken to the words of St. Peter who speaks as the head of the Christian Church. "I am dust before God, but before you I am His apostle and vice-regent. I speak to you in the name of Christ." To the desolate woman who complains "I am a widow, I had a son who supported me. Give him back, O Lord!" St. Peter says, "O widow, thy son will not die; he will be born into glory, into eternal life, and thou will rejoin him" St. Peter thus comforts all the afflicted—"To you, mothers, whom they are tearing away from your orphans; to you who lose fathers; to you who complain; to you who will see the death of loved ones; to you the careworn, the unfortunate, the timid; to you who must die, in the name of Christ I declare that you will awake as if from sleep to a happy waking—as if from night to the light of God." Such was the power the brutal Nero attempted to crush. Nero, the high-priest of paganism, against St. Peter, the Apostle and vice-regent of Christ. Sienkiewicz gives a touching description of the casual meeting of these two powers: "For a while these two men looked at each other. It occurred to none in that brilliant retinue, and to no one in that immense throng, that at that moment two powers of the earth