



# The Time Witness

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**GO IN PEACE.**  
"Go in peace," oh blessed words,  
More sweet than songs of summer birds,  
More glad to heart than sounds of love,  
More healing than the light above,  
My soul was dark, they made it bright—  
Heavy with grief, they made it light—  
Aimless and weak, they made it "go"  
And strive for peace in pain below,  
And, with the strength of risen hope,  
Again with demon-wiles to cope,  
"Go in peace"—Can words like these,  
So simple, cure such foul disease?  
Bind up the bleeding, tortured soul,  
And make the ulcerated part all whole?  
Oh yes—thank God! whose mercy gave  
This plank upon the storm-tossed wave,  
To bear us on Contrition's tide  
And place us safe by Jesus' side.  
"Go in peace"—Can it be true  
That on my soul the heavenly dew  
Has fallen with its sacred spell,  
And made the dying spirit well?  
And can it be, that I may stand,  
Thro' these blest words, on His right hand,  
And hear, perhaps, those words divine—  
"Heaven and all its joys be thine!"  
"No, no," it seems too wild, too sweet!  
I bow in trembling at thy feet,  
Thou Priest of God! and ask thee still  
Those words that all my being thrill,  
To say again, and o'er, and o'er;  
"Go then in peace and sin no more!"

**THE LAST DAYS OF  
CARTHAGE;**  
OR  
A SISTER OF FABIOLA.

AFTER THE MANNER OF THE FRENCH.

**CHAPTER XV.—HILARION AND ANGELA.**  
Firmilian had fallen into disrepute from the want of energy which he had betrayed throughout his whole tenure of office, and especially since the late edict had been given out by the Emperor against the Christians. He was not thought a fit person to represent, in the metropolis of Africa, the dignity of the Roman court. Accordingly a colleague was appointed to act in concert with him, and aid him in the administration of affairs. Hilarion possessed firmness of character, but ambition seemed to be his great fault. No sacrifice was deemed too great, no display of servility too dishonorable when there was a question of some important place to be occupied, or some dignity to be conferred. These were the kind of men that the Emperor wanted. Treason and assassination had been the means of raising them to the throne, and they accordingly required partisans without principle and without independence, to retain them in their elevated position. Hilarion, though still young, had seen life in the camp. His manners were rough and uncultivated, and his language and disposition were framed according to the irreligious spirit of the warriors of his time.  
Some time previous to the events related above it happened that Angela, accompanied by her parents, was going to assist at the celebration of the Holy Mysteries in the assembly of the Christians, who met Hilarion who was considerably struck with the beauty of her person. "Who was she?" he thought, "was she free or a slave?" The simple attire in which she appeared led him to suppose that she belonged to the plebeian class. He was far from suspecting that she was of one of the most opulent families of Carthage. His astonishment was great when he heard that they had controlled the commerce of the city, that their vessels had floated over the seas that wash the coasts of Greece and Italy. He learnt too that she was a Christian, and that, therefore, her virtues were proof against seduction. He did not participate in the popular prejudices against the Christians, nor did he believe

that under the guise of a mortified exterior they concealed the most profound corruption. He was determined to have her in marriage. Difficulties, however, were in the way. He was to succeed to Firmilian, as Governor of the Province, and it would be a violation of public sentiment as well as of the written law, to unite himself to a Christian. But then could she not return to the ancient faith? "Scarcely possible," he thought. Not even the prospect of sharing with him the highest position in Carthage could induce her to renounce the worship of Christ. When they suffer the tortures of death rather than yield to the exactions of the Emperor on this point, it is folly to expect that I could persuade her to abandon her faith by the promise of an elevated rank among the citizens of Carthage. But something must be done, for I have formed the project and will see it carried into execution, no matter what means I am forced to employ. If mild, peaceable words will not do, perhaps I may succeed better with threats and violence though I must say it is doubtful." Thus he reflected. He did not even yet know the Christians.  
On the day that the sacrilege was committed several soldiers presented themselves at the house of Angela and summoned her to appear before Hilarion. They found the young virgin praying. She had heard of the terrible provocation which had been given to the pagans and knowing that the Christians were sure to be accused, she endeavored to prepare herself for the ordeal through which she and her brethren were destined to pass. She had meditated upon the passion of the Redeemer almost all the night long, and from time to time she felt herself transported into his presence in ecstasies of love. The scenes of martyrdom with all its horrible details, the scoffs of the multitude and the tortures of the arena were clearly pictured to her mind, but instead of experiencing a sentiment of fear she sighed after such an honor, ardently desiring that her blood might be mingled with the great sacrifice of the cross. She was absorbed in deep reflection upon this great mystery when she was interrupted by the sudden entrance of her mother.  
"Angela, the Governor of the Province desires you to appear before his tribunal," she said in a voice trembling with emotion.  
"O Eternal love! when shall I come before thy face? Rejoice, darling mother, rejoice with me for my hour is come."  
Her father now entered the room and assured her that no harm should be done her, for that he would accompany her and protect her against any injustice. They soon arrived at the house of Hilarion. He was clothed in all the insignia of his office and surrounded with soldiers and lictors.  
"Angela," he said in a mild tone, as soon as she had approached in front of where he sat, "do not be afraid, I speak to you, not as a judge so much as an indulgent friend."  
"My Lord, I fear nothing," replied the young virgin, unhesitatingly, and raising her eyes so as to look at him full in the face. "He that is with me is all powerful and will not abandon me in the hour of trial."  
"Whom do you mean?" inquired Hilarion, looking around. "You do not allude to this old man who, I suppose, is your father? Who is your all powerful protector?"  
"He that is looking down upon me now, and who is refreshing my soul with the smile of his approval," and a bright effulgence seemed to surround the figure of the faithful servant of Christ. She joined her hands in the attitude of prayer, and murmured sweet words which her persecutors could not understand.  
"Angela, we must not lose our time in vain discussions. Show that you can appreciate the interest I take in your youth and answer my questions without disguise or equivocation. Are you a Christian?"  
"Yes, I serve Christ and will serve him to my latest breath," replied the young virgin, confessor, with a degree of emotion and courage which could only have been inspired from on high.  
"You have abandoned then the ancient worship of your fathers?"  
"No, my Lord, the religion I profess is as old as the world. It ascends back through a chain of prophets and patriarchs, to the beginning when God created man. But your impious doctrines is the work of the demon and your Gods are not gods at all."  
"Foolish girl! you blaspheme and you know not that I can punish you, but you are young. Listen, Angela," he continued, in a more subdued tone, "you are carried away by a blind passion for an imaginary idea, and you follow a religion which prescribes every species of pleasure. You degrade yourself by frequenting those wicked night assemblies when you ought to take your place in a society where you would receive the homage due to your rank and beauty."  
"Pleasures," re-echoed the young girl, "what pleasure is more delicious than in serving Christ who is my happiness, my very life!"  
"Angela, your answers are a mystery to me. All that I have got to say now, is that your religion is proscribed by the Emperor who decess that the gods should be honored in every part of his empire."  
"I cannot adore your gods," still persisted Angela, in a firm and unyielding tone of voice.  
"Angela, listen. You are young, as I have said, and I am willing to spare you, but let me exhort you to renounce this vile superstition. You will then receive the respect which is your due, and perhaps a noble alliance will soon be the reward of your wisdom."  
Thus spoke Hilarion. He was more than ever smitten with the influence of her personal charms. He was resolved to make her his own, but he found that she was obstinate, and he had a disagreeable presentiment that his efforts would be in vain. When he spoke these last words, his heart beat with intense suspense as he gazed, watching the effect which they had in the outward movements of her countenance.  
"Alliance, my Lord! what alliance could be more noble than which I have already contracted with my beloved spouse?"  
Hilarion rose to his feet. His suspense was at an end. He knew he was defeated. His eyes flashed with the fire of indignation as he raised his hand to give the signal to bear her away to prison. But he stopped short. He was for the moment over-

come with that air of sweet modesty which marked her exterior, and not a little cowed by the tone of firmness with which she replied to all his questions.  
"Let me speak once more," he said resuming his seat and endeavoring to retain his composure. "Angela, my duty is to apply the laws, and the laws are severe towards your sect. What has taken place last night is attributed to the evil influence of your doctrines, and to the workings of these night assemblies. It is my duty to be strict, but still I wish to save you and I desire that you profit by my clemency. From the first moment that I beheld you, I felt myself drawn towards you by some mysterious agency, and I vowed to the gods that I would elevate you to the dignity of being my consort, but you know the companion of a governor must profess the same religion as he himself."  
Angela cast down her eyes, a crimson flush suffused itself over her face and for a few minutes remained silent.  
Hilarion interpreted this silence in his favor and he began to hope that probably he would succeed. He rose to his feet and approached her with a view to kiss her hand, but Angela started back and with her usual calmness and dignity of manner she replied:  
"My Lord, if your laws condemn me to die because I am a Christian, I am ready."  
He had mistaken her meaning. Her silence was not a tacit consent but an interval which she employed in prayer to obtain that strength which is necessary to pass through what might be called the preliminary tortures of martyrdom.  
When Hilarion saw himself rejected before his soldiers, he felt his pride wounded and he was determined to have revenge for this humiliation to which he had been subjected by one of his subjects. He saw it was useless to question her further, for her determination was fixed and all his arts of persuasion could never bend a will upheld by what he would term the blindness of fanaticism. He accordingly retreated back to his seat under mingled feelings of shame and anger.  
"You despise me then?" he said while his lips trembled with convulsive agitation.  
"No, I do not despise you, but I love another. I love my Redeemer and to him I have pledged my undivided affection; ask me no further questions. Do with me what you will, for I shall never be your spouse—nor sacrifice to the gods. Do what you will I am ready."  
"You are the cause of this, old man!" cried Hilarion, addressing her father. "Be gone from my presence!"  
"I go at your bidding," replied the old man, with a profound exclamation. Then turning to Angela, he said, "My child remain firm, remember the crown."  
"I will father, for the Lord is with me."  
"Insolence! Here guards, lead that fanatic to the door," exclaimed Hilarion, stamping his foot with rage.  
"Listen, Angela," he said, when her father had left the room. "I hear that you Christians make a virtue of poverty. Suppose that I seize upon the property of your family and confiscate it to the state. How would your tender heart suffer to see your dear parents in penury and want? Think well upon what you are doing."  
"I cannot consent," still replied the intrepid young saint.  
"Then hear your sentence. To-morrow at this hour you must give me a definite answer. If you refuse my offer and still persist in denying to the gods the homage which is their due, then you will be thrown into irons and conveyed to the amphitheatre. Guards lead her back to her father's house."  
In those primitive times of the Church it often occurred that the father or mother followed their children to the tribunal and encouraged them in their refusal to obey the impious laws of the Emperor on the subject of the Christian religion. They visited them in prison and reverently kissed the chains with which they were bound, as also the wounds which covered their bodies from the infliction of the different instruments of torture. When they were led to the place of punishment, they often accompanied them, reminding them the while of the inestimable reward which was reserved for those who persevered to the end. The father would stifle the bitterness of his grief in order to smile upon his child who was about to suffer death for the faith, and the mother making an effort to rise above the instincts of nature, would check her tears, and tender words of comfort and encouragement. Some were even brave enough to follow them to the arena for the purpose of witnessing the glory of their final triumph, and when their spirit had departed and their bodies lay cold, torn and lacerated where they had been mangled by the ravenous animals, they dipped a sponge or veil into their blood and carefully pouring it into vials, carried it as a precious relic to the family vault.  
Such were the sentiments of the father and mother of Angela. It cost them a pang, but still they were ready to make the sacrifice after the manner of Abraham who would have slain his son but for the voice of the Lord, arrested his uplifted arm. Besides, Angela was so good and so pure, and they thought it would be agreeable in the eyes of God to offer to him this precious and immaculate host.  
Angela now spent her time exclusively in prayer. She knelt before her crucifix and her long hair fell loosely over her brow as she bent to the ground and like the saviour in the garden of Gethsemane she refused not to taste of the bitter chalice, if such was the will of her heavenly Father. The pious Bishop visited her and refreshed her soul, with the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. She received her Saviour then under the species of bread and wine, who knows but on the morrow she may be able to contemplate him face to face.

**CHAPTER XVI.—TERTULLIAN BEFORE THE SENATE.**  
While the judges and the High Priest were exciting the minds of the people against the Christians by their furious declamations, Sylvain, great zealously, sat in the dead hour of the night and with the aid of a few slaves decorated the statue of Juno and set fire to the temple. The senate assembly convened in the morning and amid the "uproar" attendant upon the excitement they came unanimously to the decision that the edict of Severus should be rigorously applied. Previous to this they had shown great moderation in regard to the Christians, but now that they were guilty of such crimes, they resolved to act in accordance with justice, and adopt a most stringent policy for the purpose of destroying the very existence of the sect. The majesty of the gods had been outraged and some reparation must be made in order that their vengeance might not fall upon the city. What reparation was to be made? Nothing less than the blood of the sacrilegious wretches who had thus offended them. This was the language used in the Senate and when their opinions and suggestions took a definite form it passed into a resolution. They made their curial chairs tremble, and the walls of the Senate house rang with shouts of "Long live the gods!" "Death to the Christians!"  
When the tumult had somewhat subsided a voice was heard, "Who condemns the Christians?" What is their crime?" It was Tertullian. He cast back his cloak and cast a look of defiance at the robed dignitaries sitting in judgment. His eye was piercing and the pride of his genius was more than ever marked upon his noble features. For those who knew him, it was easy to see that feelings of the most profound indignation had arisen in his breast and that they were now to find expression in all the vehemence and force of his eloquence.  
"Death to the Christians!" he repeated without giving any one time to answer. "I heard that savage cry and came here. I fancied myself near to the great amphitheatre in Rome, where the people drunk with fury and thirsting for blood, wait with impatience for the massacre of old men or young virgins condemned to death, because they adore Christ the son of the living God. But I find that I am before the Senate, not of Rome but of Carthage, and behold assembled around me, wise and noble patricians, the glory and pride of our city, and it is from this august and dignified body, that I have heard these barbarous cries! What say you of a religion that could inspire you with such ideas of honor and of justice?"  
"Death to the Christians! What crimes have they committed that you should punish them with death? What have they done that you should inflict upon them tortures from which even the slave can escape? The disciples of Plato and Pythagoras have gone abroad and openly spread their doctrines. They are received or rejected according to their intrinsic worth, but the religion of Christ is proscribed from hatred and prejudice as well as from its being contrary to the worship of the gods. All who are Christians must die, whether your law applies to the feeble woman, the tender young girl, the man in the prime of his manhood, or the decrepit gray-haired cripple, it must be enforced, and all must die. Folly! Wickedness! Injustice! You deny the name of Christ, O Senators! but you reflect not that even Tiberius admired his supernatural virtue; and, while he forbade under the severest penalties any form whatever of persecution, he desired to raise to him altars in order that he might receive the adoration suitable to a god. Nero was the enemy of all that was great and noble, and it was he who drew the sword against us. But a man of such infamous reputation could do us no harm in regard to the purity of our name, for in condemning us he became our justification while his hatred became our glory and the signal proof of our innocence before the world. Those princes whose lives were marked with wisdom and virtue, have never showed themselves hostile to our faith, and Marcus Aurelius went so far as to render solemn homage to the God of the Christians who had deigned to preserve his legions from the exterminating fury of the Germans."  
"But, what have we done to merit such treatment from the hands of justice? We live amongst you; our hands are open to public gaze, for we fear nothing. They do not resound with the noise of festal orgies; and if sometimes music is heard, it is the sweet murmurings of prayer, or the chant of hymns in honor of that God who created the universe. We are averse to intemperance, for between all the passions there is a connecting link, and when we yield to one it is more than probable we shall yield to all. We have no banquet or sumptuous feasts by which the vice of sensuality is nourished, and the patrimony of the orphan, or of the poor, is wantonly consumed. We observe, on the contrary, the greatest moderation in our food as well as in our attire, and the poor are never sent from our door if we have anything to give. And what has been the result? Look into the archives, O noble Magistrates! descend into those dark dungeons where lie in chains those who have outraged the majesty of the laws—those who have destroyed the honor of families, or committed theft, or those who have steeped their hands in human blood—amongst all those criminals whom society has discarded, you will not find one who is a Christian."  
"Are we not submissive to the laws? Is it in our midst that the spirit of revolt meditates its sanguinary projects, or receives that support which is necessary to carry them into execution? Has any Christian ever been found the associate of a party which aimed at the dismemberment of the provinces or the ruin of the Empire? We are loyal, and give the proof of our fidelity by the regular payment of the public imposts. We are friends of peace, and we regard it as the gift of God, but we do not refuse to bear arms when the interests of our country demand our assistance. Have not our soldiers shed their blood in defence of their native land? Have they not fought side by side with you, and contributed by the valor of their swords to the glory of those victories which surround this venerable city as an aureole of light? And if crimes have been committed in the excitement of success, then, indeed, and only then, have our Christian soldiers held back and refused to associate with the pagan legions."  
"As for our morals, noble Senators! we can defy the severest scrutiny. You have heard of our midnight assemblies; in which we have been supposed to eat the flesh of strangled infants. Calumnies! O Magistrates! and invented by him who has been called the father of lies."  
"We do not frequent your temples, and this because we do not recognize your gods. We shrink with horror from the impure abominations which are committed before their shrines, and though your ceremonies were without stain, still we would refuse to perform them, because we know that the gods in whose honor they are performed, are nothing but the

inventions of the passions or of a capricious imagination.  
"As for us, we adore only one true and living God. We raise our eyes to heaven with outstretched hands because they are pure; our heads are uncovered because we have nothing to make us blush. And thus we pray that God may grant to the Caesars many years, a tranquil reign, and strength and victory to his armies; wisdom and loyalty to the Senate, virtue to the people, and universal peace throughout the empire. Are we then the enemies of the Emperor? Ah! if he had no other but us the sceptre would not tremble in his hand, nor the crown on his head. Secret conspiracies, or sanguinary insurrections would not exist to interfere with the peace and tranquility of the land."  
"We do not fear persecution, but we would ask you to deal with us justly and abstain from condemning a religion before you know its maxims, its principles, and its spirit. But let me repeat, we fear not persecution, for we know that here below we shall have enemies and encounter opposition from the spirit of evil. Our religion came from heaven and thither it will lead us. It is there where it has its throne, and where it will eventually recover its glory and repose. We do not care for war, but like the valiant soldier, when it comes it will find us fearless and intrepid. Death is a triumph and the conquest of that eternal life after which our hearts yearn like the deer after the fountain of waters. Senators! I have done! I have exposed to you the calumnies invented against us, and I have made known to you that God whom we adore. Judge now if the Christians are worthy of death?"  
And Tertullian casting about him his large heavy cloak withdrew from the assembly leaving them to reflect upon the force and eloquence of his noble defence.  
**CHAPTER XVII.—LAST MOMENTS OF ANGELA.**  
The words of Tertullian were not without their effect. The Senate resumed its work but the ideas with which they were now inspired restrained them from all excess, and induced them to adopt a more conciliatory plan of action. Some had fallen completely under the influence of the Christian Priest and were now convinced that they had been hitherto actuated by the blindness of fanatical fury and that they had not shown justice to the Christians in thus condemning them before they knew who they were and what they had done. They were now enabled to see the sanctity of that religion which taught dogmas the purity of which was indicative of its heavenly origin. The words proscription and death were no longer in their mouths and they energetically opposed any attempt of either the Senate or the people to bring the Christians to punishment before they had been proved guilty of a violation of the laws.  
There were others, however, more timid than these. They were apprehensive of a popular tumult and to appease the people they proposed that a few Christians should be imprisoned. But the majority rejected with disdain such a proposal. If the disciples of Christ are guilty, they answered, let them be condemned according to the edict of the Emperor. If they cannot be reproached with any crime, the Senate out of regard for its own dignity and the interests of Justice, should defend them against their enemies. Hilarion moved in accordance with this resolution. He wanted to gain a few days for he still cherished the hope that Angela would retract what she had said and become his spouse.  
But the fears of those timid Senators were very nearly realized, for the excitement of the multitude against what they called the apathy of the Senate had reached its highest point, and there was every indication of a general outbreak. But fortunately it was just at this moment that the mortal remains of Jarbas were to be borne into the city, and the crowd began to move in the direction of the gate through which the escort were to pass.  
The urn was borne on the shoulders of four soldiers while the remainder followed waving the mark of mourning. The solemn procession had scarcely entered the limits of the town when it was met by a hideous crowd of slaves. Their cries and infuriated looks indicated that they were under the influence of the most fearful excitement. As they approached the soldiers they gathered round them with a view to impede their march, at the same time yelling and shouting like the war whoop of the Indians.  
"Vengeance!" cried out one of them; "my friends, let us have vengeance, now that the time has arrived! I shall we allow the cursed remains of a Christian to be honored with such pomp? Long live Sylvain!" roared simultaneously a thousand voices.  
Before the least resistance could be made by the soldiers, the exasperated villains had rushed upon the urn and demonic fury had scattered the venerable ashes to the winds amid curses and imprecations.  
The news of the attack spread with wonderful rapidity through the city and naturally came to the ears of Vivia who still remained retired out of grief for Jarbas. She wept tears of the most poignant sorrow. How could she help it? He who had loved her so dearly was insulted even in the grave! But she soon recollected herself and dried her tears. She thought of heaven and thither she directed all her thoughts and aspirations. She would soon meet him there.  
But where is Angela, that pure and amiable virgin? Let us leave the agitations of the crowd and their desecration of the ashes of the warrior and return to the young Christian whom Hilarion had condemned to death in case of a refusal to comply with his irreligious demands.  
It was late when Vivia had heard of the position in which Angela was placed, but nevertheless she hurried to embrace her and tender her comfort in the hour of trial. They loved each other. Their minds were of a similar cast, and their dispositions accorded with the most perfect harmony. They had been trained alike, and had both the same ardor and willingness to shed their blood for Christ, their beloved spouse. Accordingly they sought each others company and spent hours together talking of the future and of the glories of eternal life.  
The path of duty—through the Custom House