Titus, a Comrade of the Cross

A TALE OF THE CHRIST FOR THE CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

> BY FLORENCE M. KINGSLEY. CHAPTER XVII.

"We have very little to day so far," said the child; only a few farthings."

And he rattled the coins in a small brass cup, and cried out to a passer-by: Wilt thou not have pity on a blind man? No, he hath gone by without even look-

"Well, child," said the blind man Thou knowest that there are wearily, "Thou knowest that you many of us beggars in Jerusalem. blind," insisted the

child in a tone of pride. The two were sitting in one of the beautiful porches of the temple; assuredly a pleasant spot, for the pillared portico sheltered them from the sun, and the blew softly in this lofty place, when the heat in the city below was well-nigh unbearable.

Day after day they came there, the

Day after day they came there, the man and the tiny child with his dark curls blowing about his eyes. Early in the morning they waited for the temple gates to open. Once admitted, they sat all day under the shadow of the portico; at noon sharing the scanty meal of bread and olives which the man brought in his wallet, and at night trudging home with the earnings of the

To the blind man the temple was home and he loved it. The child had told him, over and over, of the wonderful great stones of pure, white marble was built; of its courts shining with gold, and of the priests in ing with gold, and of the priests in their gorgeous robes. They could hear the chanting of the almost never-end-ing service from their place on the porch, and catch spicy whiffs of the incense, as it floated out on the warm incense, as it floated Morning and evening, the child air. Morning and evening, the control led him into the court of the temple, where he took part with the congregation in the service of the hour; and now, as he sat leaning back against one of the great pillars, fragments of the prayer of adoration came back to him:

"Blessed be Thou by whose word the world was created: blessed be Thou for ever! Blessed be Thou Who hast made all out of nothing! Blessed be He Who has pity on the earth; blessed be He Who has pity on his creatures; blessed be He Who richly rewards His saints; blessed be He Who lives forever, and is forever the same; blessed be He the Saviour and Redeemer. Blessed be Thy name; blessed be Thou, O Eternal! Our God, King of the universe! All-

merciful God and Father.'
Ah, if He would but have pity on me—a blind, useless clod! Yet am I strong, and shall live—yes, live long, and beg." And the man silently clenched his strong hands.

"Here are more passers-by," said child. "Have mercy, kind masters! the child. Have mercy on one born blind!'

The quick ear of the blind man heard the steps of a number of men coming along the marble pavement. Now as the cry of the child shrilled forth, they Master, who did sin, this man or

his parents, that he was born blind?" e head of the blind beggar sank upon his breast, as he heard these words. The old question!—had he not heard it from his youth? cursed," he thought. "H " I am ac-"He Who hath pity on His creatures, yet punishes the

innocent for the guilty."

But what was it that the rabbi was saying? Assuredly something new and

"Neither hath this man sinned, n his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the

The light of the world!" The man had raised his head now, and was strair-ing his sightless eyes in the direction Thou shalt be dealt w of the voice. Presently he felt the touch of something cool and soft on his length said the high priest. sunken lids.

"Go," said the mysterious rougain, "wash in the pool of Siloam. said the mysterious voice And the sound of the steps died away. "Come!" said the beggar, rising and stretching forth his hand to the child.

"They gave us no money," said the child complainingly, "and He put wet clay on thine eyelids. Why did He do · Hold thy peace, child!" said the

man. "Take me to the pool. I will wash even as He bade me."

Down-down-the marble steps went

the twain.
"I heard them call the man Jesus," said the child softly. Then after a mo-

ment, he cried.
"Stay, master! Here is the pool. Kneel down; I will hold thy robe.

if thou wilt reach out thy hand, thou eanst touch the water."

The man plunged his hand and arm

deep into the gurgling water, and dashed it over his eyes. Then he drew back silently, with so strange a look on his face, that the child cried out: "What is it? What hath happened

The man did not seem to hear him; for without answering, he raised his hands to heaven, and cried in a loud

"We would praise Thee, eternal We would laud and magnity thee with songs of thanksgiving and praise! We do homage to Thy name, our King! our God! The only One, He Who liveth forever! O Lord! Whose name is glorious forever and ever! blessed be Thou, O Eterral! For Thou hast, by the hand of thy servant, saved me out of darkness, and out of the blackness of night. My sin is hidden; and the sin of my parents is covered. Verily, Thou hast in thy covered. mercy remembered one who was cut of cursed. Praised be the Lord.

The child regarded him with awe, for he saw that the closed and sunken eyes were open, and that they were full and even as his own. "His name sus!" he repeated, not knowing what he said ; for his childish brain was dazed with wonder.

The man now turned and regarded him steadfastly,

he said at length.
"I am he who hath led thee forth at morning and at evening," answered the child, trembling.
"Thou shalt lead me forth no more.

Thanks be to the Eternal One! From henceforth I shall care for thee."
"Wilt thou come with us before the
Pharisees, and confess this thing, even as thou hast told it to us?'

Assuredly," answered the beggar 'I will gladly make known my ance. Would that I knew my Del verer, that I might kiss the hem of His gar-

"I believe him not!" said one of the group of neighbors who were gathered around him. "Tis one who resembleth the blind man, and that marvelously." "But why should he lie to us in the matter?" questioned another. "What matter?" questioned another.

said the man earnestly. "Nay, ot; I am he that was born blind, and my eyes were opened, even as I declared unto you.

" Most worthy and revered members of the council," said a Pharisee, whose pious mien, broad phylactery, and flow-ing robes, marked him a zealous religion-"I have brought before thee, for examination, a man who reports a miracle wrought in his behalf. In that this miracle was unlawfully wrought upon the Sabbath day, it merits thy nsideration."

Thou has done wisely, good sir," said Caiphas, with a stately inclina tion of the head. Then turning to the beggar, He continued: "Speak, fellow, and make known the case for our judg-

'I have little to tell," said the man simply. "One who is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me,

"Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. went and washed, and I received This statement was received with

ominous frowns and solemn shakings of the head by the august assembly. Fin-This man, Jesus, is not of God, be-

cause He keepeth not the Sabbath day. He hath repeated this offense many times already, as is known to all of us." "But how," said Nicodemus, "can a man that is a sinner do such a miracle?

What sayest thou who wert healed of 'I think that He is a prophet," re

plied the man.
"Let me advise," said another member of the council, "that an officer be sent to fetch the parents of this man, that we may question them of the mat-

This being approved and acted upon the members of the council engaged in whispered consultation one with another, while the beggar stood apart and watched the scene with his quick, bright eyes.
Presently the officer returned, accom-

panied by an old man, and a woman heavily veiled. As they entered the room, they cast a furtive glance at their

room, they cast a turtive gladee at their son, then made humble obeisance to the assembled dignitaries.

Caiphas regarded them in silence for a moment, then demanded with a frown:

"Is this man in our presence thy son, who ye say was born blind? How is it that he doth now see ?" that he doth now see?'

The old man again made obeisance and spreading abroad his hands, and litting his shoulders apologetically, an-" Most noble lord, we know that this is our son; and that he was born blind. But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age, therefore ask him; he shall speak for "Stand forth!" said Caiphas imperi

ously to the beggar.

The man came forward and stood beside his parents. The high priest him threateningly, but the

"Thou shalt be dealt with after thy deserts, if thou hast not a care," at length said the high priest. "Confess truth concerning this matter, and God the glory for thy cure—if such it be: for we know that the man Jesus is a sinner.'

The beggar straightened himself. A clear light blazed from his eyes; and in a tone which rang through the eil chamber like a trumpet, he made

I know not: but one thing I know, that hereas I was blind, now I see!'

For a moment there was silence in the place: then an old man who had hitherto not spoken, craned his neck forward and said patronizingly: "What was it that He did to thee? How opened

He thine eyes?"

And again the beggar made answer "I have told you already, and he did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be His disciples "We are disciples of Moses," said Caiphas, his eyes flashing with anger. "Tis such low-born beggars 28 thou, who are disciples of this man. We know that Gol spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we knew not from whence

He is."
"Why, herein is a marvelous thing!" said the beggar sneeringly, "that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes! Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but Now we if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth His will, Him He heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one born If this man were not of God, he

could do nothing."
"Vile wretch of a beggar!" said Caiphas, rising in his wrath, "thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? Get thee hence from this sacred place, and dare not again enter it on pain of thy life!"

And the man went forth, sad at heart; for he longed with a great longing to see the glories of the temple.

Now as he walked, continually lifting his eyes to the shining walls from which he was henceforth to be shut out, he heard a voice speaking to him; and turning, he saw One who looked at him with a grave and yet sweet look, so

knew the voice-it was that of Him who had bidden him wash in the pool of Dost thou believe on the Son of

God ? And the beggar, trembling, made an swer: "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" And Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast

both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with Thee.' Then the beggar fell down at His feet and kissed the hem of His garment, cry ing out, "Lord, I believe!"

How it happened that some of the Pharisees who had cast Him out of the emple were standing near, and heard it. And Jesus, seeing their angry looks, and reading the thoughts of their hearts, turned and said unto them : "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.'

Then the Pharisees answered him Jesus said unto them: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin re-

CHAPTER XVIII.

Toward the close of an early spring day two travellers were toiling up the steep, rocky path which led to the little mountain village of Nazareth. The way was rough and difficult, and the woman sighed painfully, as she moved slowly onward; the boy turned and looked anxiously at her face, which cleamed white in the waning light.

"Thou art weary, mother; we should have stopped for the night in the vil-lage below. Sit here, and rest awhile." With a sigh of relief, the woman sank down on the rough stone which the boy had covered with his sheep-skin coat she said at length, with an-Yes."

other long-drawn breath, which was almost a groan. "I am very tired; my strength faileth me for toiling up almost a groan. "Thou wilt feel better presently

when thou hast had time to rest," said the boy tenderly. "We have wan-dered too widely of late; it may be that we can bide in yonder village till thou art stronger. Is it not beautiful here! See the hills, how green they are; and the flowers—let me gather some for thee while thou art resting."

The woman smiled patiently. "Dost thou not need to rest, my We have yet a hard climb, to reach the "I am never tired now, mother,

said the boy, gayly, springing up as he spoke. The mother's eyes followed him fondly, as he climbed a steep bank for some bright-hued blossoms. "The dear one!" she murmured to herself. "He is almost a man now, but he hath the heart of a loving child still."

"Look, mother!" said the lad as he laid a great sheaf of blossoms in her lap. "Here are roses—pink, white lap. "Here are roses—pink, and yellow; are they not sweet? And cyclamen and mignonette too, and the tiny yellow flowers, like little stars. From the high rock where I gathered these pink roses, I could see the scarlet blossoms of the pomegranate, and orange trees as white as snow. Wouldst thou not like it to live in such a spot? I can work hard now, and surely I could earn enough to for the two of us.' After a " Nazareth pause, he added dreamily: "Nazareth is where He lived; we shall see His

"I think, my Stephen," said his nother presently, "that we must hastmother presently, "that we must hast en on our way; for the sun hath gone down an hour since, and the night will soon be upon us."

"Thou art right, mother," answered the boy, springing up. "Let me help

Half an hour more of hard climbing brought the travellers to the edge of the village. There, where the water from a spring in the hillside gushed forth with a musical tinkle into a stone trough

short.
"I can go no further," she said faintly, sinking down on the grass. am ill

"Oh, mother," cried Stephen, "w are almost there now! Let me give thee some of this water; it will revive thee.

But the woman made no reply. Her head had fallen back against the grassy bank behind her; and the boy, as he ent over her, saw with terror that she

was unconscious.
"What shall I do!" he cried aloud,

wringing his hands helplessly.
"Mother, oh mother!"
"She hath fainted," said a voice ear him. "Let me give her water."
He looked up, and saw standing at ear him. his side a woman, bearing on her shoulder a waterpot. This she hastily dipped into the fountain, then stoop ing over the prostrate form, sprinkled the white face with the fresh, cool

water.

See! She is reviving. She will the newcomer. "Fill thy cup and give her to drink."

Stephen obeyed, and to his great joy his mother sat up and looked about her; but almost immediately she sank back again, moaning faintly.

" Hast thou friends in the village ?" asked the woman. "Nay," said Stephen. "We were going to the inn. Is it far from here?"

he added anxiously. "'Tis in the upper street; too far for her to walk to-night," was the an-"But my house is near," swer. pointing, as she spoke, to where a faint light twinkled through the dark foliage. "If thou wilt help me to get her on to her feet, a few steps will bring us to the door. Thou shalt bide with me for the night.'

Thou are good," said Stephen, "and I thank thee.

Between they they helped the ex-hausted Prisca to her feet, and supported her faltering steps till they reached the cottage, which was, as the woman had said, close at hand.
"She sleeps, and will be better by morning," said their hostess as she

came from the little bedchamber, where that his heart was mightly stirred within him, though he knew not why. And the man spake to him, and he Stephen was waiting. of her guest, into the room where

He had had time to look about him; and saw that, while the appointments of this home were very humble, it was as daintily pure and neat as a flower. And now he looked more closely at the woman horself. She was tell and of woman herself. She was tall and of noble proportions; and though past middle age, her face was beautiful, its clear, hazel eyes, firm yet tender mouth, and waving reddish-brown hair,

slightly tinged with gray.
"Thou too art weary," she continued, with a smile which irradiated her face like sunshine. "Thou must eat, then thou shalt sleep also. So saying, she set before the boy a wooden bowl containing milk, and some cakes of barley-bread. "Tell me," she said, when the boy had finished, "how is it that ye are traveling alone, and so far from home? For thy mother tells me that ye dwell in Capernaum."

Thus encouraged, the boy poured forth the whole story, telling drous tale of his healing by the Naza-"We had to go away from Capernaum,

as thou seest," he said. "And we came to Nazareth, because I wanted to see His home. I thought perhaps we should find Him here. Dost thou know this Jesus ?' The woman's eyes filled with tears. yet again a smile transfigured her face,

kindling it to a beauty almost divine. 'He is my Son," she said simply. " And this is His home."

CHAPTER XIX.

"Thou hast won favor in the sight of thy master, young man; I will tell thee that. As for myself, thou hast been faithful in thy duties above most that have come under my authority, and I am disposed to befriend thee. I am waxing old now, and the labors of mine office weigh heavily upon me. If thou dost continue to do well, and art discreet and wise, I see no reason why in time thou shouldst not become steward in my place. For I have been prudent with my wages: and have bought a vineyard of mine own, whither I can etire when old age shall overtake me.' The speaker was Benoni; he was sitting at ease on a bench in the garden, Titus stood before him respect

fully. The lad flushed with pleasure at these words, but he made no reply, for he saw

that the old man had more to say. "I have an important commission for ee," continued Benoni, "and I en thee.' trust it to thee by special request from the most noble Jairus himself—for I do not deny that I should have selected another to perform it. Not that I do not trust thee, but that thou lackest not trust thee, but that thou lackest wisdom, by reason of thy youth. The commission is this: that thou shouldst visit the vineyard which lieth a little eyond Tiberias, carrying with thee moneys which shall be paid to the man Caleb, whom thou wilt find in charge of the vineyard. He will dispose of them according to the directions which I have written herein, and which thou shalt deliver to him together with this bag. In the bag are the moneys of which spoke; thou must secure it to thy person, and go heavily armed. I shall place at thy disposal a fleet-footed mule, and the journey can be made between now and moonrise, if thou gettest speed

ily on thy way."
"I shall be ready within half ar hour," said Titus briefly. "Thou wilt give me plain directions how to find the place?" he added. "I will do more," said the old man, looking thoughtful. "I will give thee

Asa for company; he knoweth the way, for he hath been there many times on

the like errand.' "And when he on errands of the like went he alone, or did another go with

"He went alone," replied the old man unguardedly. Then, seeing the angry flush on the cheek of Titus, he added soothingly: "Thou knowest that the country is infested with robbers;

"If thou canst not trust me to go alone, I will not go at all; let old Asa take the bag, and go as heretofore. "Nay, nay, lad! Now art thou in an

unseemingly temper; thou must bridle thy tongue and thy temper if thou wouldst do well. Did I not tell thee that I trust thee? Nay, more-I love thee, lad, as if thou wert mine own son; but something tells me that thou shouldst

not go forth alone to-day."
"But am I not strong?—fit to meet robbers if there be any?" demanded Titus, drawing himse'f up to his full neight, and throwing back his broad shoulders. "I know the way of robbers shoulders. "I know the way of results shoulders. "I know the way of results and their haunts better than thou thinkest, my good Benoni," he added to be a support the way. himself; then aloud, "The excellent Asa would actually be in the way, should we be unfortunate enough to fall among thieves. I can imagine him in the grasp such as one as Dumachus."
"What sayest thou?" asked Benoni

abstractedly Titus bit his lip. "'Tis time for me
be off, good Benoni," he said.
And if it please thee, I would not be

burdened with the company of the worthy Asa.' Well, thou shalt have the way in

the matter; and may Jehovah protect thee. 'Tis a pious wish, assuredly: and

I will back it up with my stout staff and a brace of knives," said Titus, laughing.
But old Benoni shook his head. "'Tis a pity that thou art a Gentile, lad; thy words savor of heathendom."

Half an hour later, the young man, ounted on a strong and a speedy mule, was clattering out of the great courtyard; the money-bag securely bound about his waist under his tunic, his wallet well stocked with lunch, and a couple of formidable-looking knives thurst into his belt. "I shall be back ong before moonrise. Fare thee well!' And he waved his hand at Benoni, with a gay laugh at sight of his anxious face.

The old man shook his head as he went back into the house, and muttered said Dumachus sullenly, pulling his to himself: "My heart misgiveth me knife from the trunk of the tree, and in the matter; someone should have gone with the lad." In the meantime Titus had reached this fellow, let him try to escape me,

the gate of the city, and was climbing and I will kill him with my hands!" Greece. Af the stony bridle path which led to the

hill road. It was a blithe spring morn ing; the sunshine lay warm and bright on field and vineyard, green with that vivid emerald tint seen only in spring. The roadsides were gay with blossoms, pink, yellow and blue, over which floated great butterflies—living blossoms. Birds, busy with nest-building, flitted hither and thither in hedge an hicket, while over-head the lark flooded a thousand acres of sky with thicket, Titus drew in long breaths of the

fragrant air, then throwing back his curly head, he too began to sing lust-Assuredly 'twere a good thing to e alive and young, on such a morning. Towards noon, he began to leave behind the region of vineyards and cultivated fields alive with busy peasants, and entered upon a comparatively un phabited and desolate tract of country. Here the narrow read, or bridle track
—for it was little more—wound among rugged hills, amidst dense thickets of bleander, tamarisk and wild olive trees. Titus knew the place well. He was silent now and alert. Presently he stopped, and fastening the mule, crept cautiously through the underbush to a little open space, which was perfectly concealed from the roadway. Here a tiny spring, clear as crystal and ice-cold, gushed out of the side of the hill, trickled into a rocky basin beneath. then overflowing, lost itself among the flowers and grasses, which grew and rank in this favored spot.

Titus laid his ear to the ground and listened; then he climbed a tall oak and looked out over the forest. From his lofty perch he could see the road by which he had come, winding like a narrow ribbon along the hillside; the fresh green leaves dancing in the sunshine; glimpses of blue water hundreds of feet below him; while out and away, eyond the hills flecked with shadows, lay Hermon like a snowy cloud on the clear horizon. He slid down the tree well satisfied; and pushing through the branches, seized the bridle of the mule. "Thou shalt have water, and that

cried cheerily, slapping the sleek neck of the animal; then having attended to the wants of the beast, he dropped down on the soft turf and began to refresh himself with the contents of his wallet. spot was deliciously cool and sweep the silence broken only by the distant twitter of birds, the trickling of the water, and the steady munching of the mule, intent upon his noonday

the best thou hast ever tasted!" he

meal. Titus felt a soft dr stealing over him; he glanced soft drowsines at his beast, and seeing that he had dis-posed of only about half of his proven-der, he stretched himself out comfortably, and pillowing his head on his arm, fell fast asleep.

How long he slept he did not know, but I awaked with a dim sense that something was wrong. Moving uneasily, he opened his eyes; then the full extent of his folly burst upon him. He was bound securely hand and foot. Against a tree trunk near by, lounged Dumachus, regarding him with a hideous leer of triumph, while the rest of

length on the ground, around him. His awakening was the signal for a burst of loud laughter and mocking jeers.
"Art thou refreshed, my pretty

the band stood, or sprawled at full

Youth?" said one.

And another: "In truth we did not think to find thee here; but 'tis an old tryst, and well known to thee.

Thou wert awaiting us, no doubt.' Titus made an ineffectual struggle to free himself from his bonds, glaring fiercely at his captors as he did so.

"With thy mule and thy money-bag thou are quite a pretty prize," quoth Dumachus, shaking the bag which he held in his hand, till the coins within

clinked musically. "And all the more welcome, since we have had nothing but bad luck of

late," growled another.

"We must push on to Jerusalem without further delay; if all goes well there we shall soon see an end to it," said Dumachus. "This,"—giving the bag another shake—" will serve us for the present. present. "Shall I loose the lad?" asked

Gaius, with whom Titus had always

been a prime favorite.

"Loose him? No!" roared Dumachus. "I have a score to settle with him first. Some time ago," he added, planting himself in tront of Titus, and gazing at him ferociously. "I had occasion to scourge my son Stephen for disobedience; whilst I was so scourging him, someone stunned me with a blow, then bound me hand and foot while I was helpless.'

"Aye, 'twas handsomely done too,' broke in Gaius with a huge laugh. ' He lay there shricking like a demon iac, till I myself happened along and loosed him. By my faith! he was so securely bound, that he might have lain there yet, had the dogs spared

"'Twas the fate that thou didst intend for Stephen," said Titus, boiling with indignation at the remembrance.
"So thou wert the one who did it! I knew it, thou dog of a Jew!" hissed

Dumachus.
Then, quite beside himself with rage, he hurled his long, two-edged knife at the helpless boy. It barely missed his head, striking with a duil thud the bole tree just behind him, where it of the stuck fast, quivering with the force of the blow

"What dost thou mean, man!"-cried Gaius, starting forward. "Wouldst thou murder the lad for a trifle like that? Thou own son, too-as thou hast always declared.

"I tell thee he is not my son. He is an accursed Jew and I hate him! shrieked Dumachus.
"'Tis no news to any of us,"

Gaius, with a short laugh. 'But thou shalt not murder him, for all that. What sayest thou?-Shall I loose him and let him go? Or shall we take him with us to Jerusalem?" "We will take him to Jerusalem,"

cutting the cords which bound the lad's feet. "I shall ride the mule; as for

way, two of the men going ahead as scouts, Titus walking with bound hands between two of the others, while the remainder of the band, with Dumachus riding comfortably on the mule in their , brought up the rear.

Titus was too much wrapped up in his own unhappy thoughts to pay any head to his companions. "Fool that I was," he thought, "to sleep in that place of all others! But I made so sure that they were nowhere about. Why did I not take the other road? What will night?-when he finds that I neve reached the vineyard with the money? If they had only taken me after I had paid it!" And he groaned aloud.
"Do the cords hurt thy wrists?"

asked one of the men kindly enough. "No," said Titus shortly; then, with a gleam of hope, "Thou wert always m friend, Gaius—wilt thou not help me t "Thou wert always my

escape? Thou talkest like a fool, boy! Why dost thou wish to escape from us? We are thy friends; thou hast passed many a merry day in our company ere now Use thy wits to placate our worth chief yonder, and all will yet be well with thee."

Nay; that I cannot do," said Titus sullenly. "He hates me; and for my part, I hate him. I wish I had killed him the day he beat Stephen." "The world might have spared him,"

said the man, chuckling. "And doubt not, 'twould have been better for him in the end."

After a pause, Titus turned to his companion abruptly: "Canst thou tell me who I am? Thou didst hear him twice call me a Jew."

"Now thou askest me something I

fain would know myself," replied the man thoughtfully. "For I doubt not that a handsome sum would be paid for thy return. I opine that thou wert stolen from Jerusalem; for when I first Dumachus, he fell in with the worthy had recently come from Judea, and was a stranger in these parts. then about three years of ago; once i my presence thou didst strike Dumachu in a fit of puny rage, because he called himself thy father.

Titus made no reply. "I am glad I am not the son of yonder brute," he thought gloomily. "But whose son am I? He hath taught me to hate the Jews. I am a Jew. Stephen is not my brother; and mother—is not mother. She must hate me, too, for she hath known this thing, and kept it from me all these long, unhappy years.

It was night now; and lifting eyes, he saw the moon rising, large ellow, behind the dark masses of the ills. The hot tears rose to his eyes.
'Tis meonrise. Benoni is expecting me now. I shall not come. They will think me-a thief!

CHAPTER XX.

The band of robbers, with Titus always closely guarded, pushed on as rapidly as possible toward Jerusalem, travelling chiefly at night by the light of the moon, which was now at its full.

Daytimes they skulked in thickets or ravines, lying in wait for their prey-Several unlucky travellers thus into their clutches during the journey these were promptly stripped of their possessions, their subsequent fate depending upon their behavior during tre stripping process. If they submitted quietly, they were allowed to go, albeit half naked. But woe to the man who dared to resist, or make any outery! A dozen ready knives quickly quieted him, the wicked old saying, "Dead men tell no tales," being a favorite maxim

with Dumachus. At dawn of the fourth day, they reached the hills lying to the west of Jerusalem, and encamped in one of the narrow valleys for a few hours of rest and refreshment.

"I shall go into the city alone." said Dumachus, after he had eaten. rest of you will await me here. Let there be no disturbance amongst you, lest we be foiled in our purpose ere it be undertaken." Then he drew Gaius aside, and talked

with him in a low tone for a few moments. Titus felt sure that the conversation referred to him, but he made no sign; he hoped in the excitement which would shortly follow, to be able to make his escape. His brain was already teeming with vague, impossible plans for seeking out his parents-if indeed they were to be found in Jeru salem—and for making himself known to them. How he was to do this he did not know; but he was full of unreasoning hope.

After some hours Dumachus returned.
"All is well," he announced shortly, but with an air of triumph. Then after draining a cup of wine, he threw himself down in the shade and slept heav The men conversed in low tones,

snatches of their conversation at times reaching the ears of Titus. There be already above five hun-

dred men in the plot; 'tis sure to succeed. "Will the attempt be made to night "Before the moon rises-when 'tis

dark."
"We shall force the temple gates with ease. Tis the plan of Barabbas to tear down the golden eagle from the inner gate. Herod hath set it up: 'tis an abomination in the eyes of the

"What care we for the golden eagle, or for the Jews! 'Tis plunder want! "Hist! Once inside the gates, man,

'twill go hard with us if secure some of the golden vessels with which the temple is crammed. Then there is the other.' Here they lowered their voices, so that Titus lost what followed. Then

one spoke a little louder. "Tis there still?" "Yes. Pilate hath not yet dared to put his hands upon it; though the aqueduct must be finished, and he hath

not the means to do it.' "'Tis a goodly sum?" "A goodly sum! 'Tis a great tree, man! 'Twill make us all rich for ure, man! life. Our plan is to get away with it in the confusion of the fight and make for the sea; once there, we can escape into Greece. After that—a long life, and a "Tis a plan worthy of our chief; hath Jesus Barabbas any knowledge of

Not He! He is a devout Jew, the on Not He: He is a devout Jew, the Son of a rabbi, and thinketh only to rid the temple of the golden eagle, which, in His notion, desecrateth it. He is a turbulent fellow though, and hath an

unsavory reputation with the authori-All the more reason why He should have no share in our plunder. We be reasonably unknown in these parts, and can therefore hope to get away. Let them take Him and crucify Him if they

like; 'twill be the better for us.'
"May Jove help us!' said Gestas devoutly, "I vow a golden chain at devoutly, every shrine in Greece, if we be sac-

"I also!" shouted another.

Dumachus roused up at the sound, and rebuking them savagely for their folly, called for wine and food.

As he ate and drank, he now and then east a fierce look in the direction of cast a herce look in the direction of Titus. The boy paled, and clenched his hands tightly, for he guessed his thoughts, or fancied that he did.

"What shall we do with the lad here ?" asked one of the men presently

observing these glances.
"'Tis in my mind—"began Dumachus fixing his red eyes upon Titus with an evil smile.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PURPLE.

You'll be having them next in the-in the soup tureens." Biddy's voic was chocked with indignation. Father Flavin laid down his spoon an spoke reprovingly, though there was twinkle in his eye. "Tureen, Bridget, he corrected." There is only one in the

believe." "God bless the innocence of him, muttered Biddy to herself; but alou she still expressed her disapprova
"And so them sparrows is to litter to the postbox with their messey eggs ar things; and what's to become of the How could I disturb them, and the

place suiting them so well? Why, if the minutes they've grown out of a knowing in it; they were wrens ju now, Bridget." But Biddy had le the roam in disgust.

There was no getting a sensible a swer out of his Reverence when bir were in the question, and, indeed, was more for the honor of the postbo

than from any ill-will towards its uni vited inhabitants that the house-keep onstrated. His dinner over, Father Father F vin stepped into the shrubbery th grew close up to the walls of his litt nouse, and that was a paradise to is smaller feathered parishioners. was, perhaps, the loneliest parish Ireland; the houses were scattered, t inhabitants were few and poor; wild stretches of bog and mount were treeless and bare; but in t priest's garden there was refuge und turbed for as many birds as could f nesting place in the close-grow shrubs and small trees that the man cared for so tenderly during

The objects of Biddy's reproac were a pair of wrens who had arrilate in the season to find all the spots in the garden already occup by larger, stronger inmates, and newcomers were obliged to retire consolately to the very end of the p tation, where it was bounded by the called high-road, a lonely thorogare which led eventually to civi ion, and here they discovered a per nursery for their young—a wooden with a slit in it, only wide enoug allow such tiny bodies as their ow pass in and out. Here Jenny could or a fortnight in peace, with her for a fortnight in peace, with her tucked warmly under her; here young brood could grow to mature from danger, and straw still he round the letter-hole and four breyes peeped and twinkled apprehively as the old priest drew near. their fears were soon allayed. T gentle, shrunken fingers would n harm even the smallest of God's tures; that kindly heart had symp in it even for the anxieties of moverner; soon the little builders res

their operations, and before its ow eyes the letter-box was turned in comfortable a home as baby-bird wish for. One thing, however, troubled old man; if letters came and thurst in by careless hands, the tiny creatures have courage to such threatened danger ? Yet wa post-boy born who, when warned a bird's nest lay within his could pass it day by day and n spoil it? Father Flavin could no such a temptation before Patsey F

some other plan of safely must

vised, and Patsey must remain in ance of the little birds' retreat. The newspaper was dropped day at the gate by the driver of long car, and the old priest's pondents could be counted of fingers of one hand. His sister, old homestead by the sea; a curate who once, during a time ness, had done duty for the ol and had learned to love and rev im with his humble simplicity a companion who fifty years a stood beside him at the foot of the and had received with him the ment of Consecration to the ser the Divine Master.
The anniversary of that d

coming round again, and from three friends Father Flavin mig pect letters, which, though b leasure to him, might mean d of down tha ten morsels daily nearing in likeness to a ful Turning thoughtfully homew slowly retraced his steps to the

and, opening his seldom-used and, opening his seldom-used case, he penned a message to his three friends, begging then off sending him their yearly guntil they heard from him again This done, his mind was at he was all unconscious of a that had taken place some day forty miles away, at the resid

A parish had fallen vacant