

vice, her angel stood beside her. Procopius followed and attempted to enter the room in which they had placed her, but the angel laid him dead at the door !

The news of the sudden death of the Prefect's son quickly spread throughout the city ; the brutalized populace proclaiming that Agnes was a sorceress, and had killed him by her arts, the angel being invisible to them.

The Prefect hastened to the prison, and poured forth a torrent of the most violent and insulting epithets on the innocent captive, who did not seem even to hear him, her soul being rapt in a celestial vision. When he saw that his abusive language had no effect, he fell on his knees, and besought the saint to restore his son to life.

The gentle saint pitied the father's sorrow, and bade him leave her while she prayed for his son to her divine spouse ; and behold, while she prayed, the young man arose, and going forth into the streets declared openly that the God of Agnes was the only true God.

On seeing the miraculous restoration of his son the Prefect thought to save the life of Agnes, but the fanatic mob clamored for her death, and the wicked man, like Pontius Pilate in the case of Our Lord, desiring to keep the good will of the people, permitted them to work their will on her. They built an enormous fire in the Forum, and bound the young delicate virgin to a stake in the midst. She remained there like the young Hebrews in the fiery furnace, untouched by the flames, which burned with such violence that many standing around were consumed.

When the unjust judge saw that fire could not burn the virginal flesh of the saint, he commanded the lictor to strike with the sword, and at one blow the lovely head was severed from the body. Some Christians who were waiting to see the end, threw a rich mantle over the sacred remains and carried them away. Later they were buried in the catacombs with all the ceremonies of the church.

There is a beautiful book, entitled *Fabiola*, which I would advise every boy and girl to read ; it is a story of the times in which St. Agnes lived, and the characters of many saints and heroes are depicted therein.