

forbids waiting. The ship that brought the news of the suffering of our brethren shall take me to Rome. I will sail to-morrow."

He turned to Malluch:

"Get the ship ready, Malluch, and be thou ready to go with me."

"It is well," said Simonides.

"And thou, Esther, what sayest thou?" asked Ben-Hur.

Esther came to his side, and put her hand on his arm and answered,

"So wilt thou best serve the Christ. O my husband, let me not hinder, but go with thee and help."

If any of my readers, visiting Rome, will make the short journey to the Catacomb of San Calixto, which is more ancient than that of San Sebastiano, he will see what became of the fortune of Ben-Hur, and give him thanks. Out of that vast tomb Christianity issued to supersede the Cæsars.

Esther took the paper pleased, and read them to herself. Simonides remained silent. His eyes were upon the ship; but he was thinking. At length he spoke.

"Son of Hur, he said gravely, 'the Lord has been good to you in these later years. You have much to be thankful for. Is it not time to decide finally the meaning of the gift of the great fortune now all in your hand and power?'"

"I decided that long ago. The fortune was meant for the service of the Giver; not a part Simonides, but all of it. The question with me has been, How can I make it most useful in His cause? And of that I tell you."

"The great sins you have fallen to the Giver have in Antioch I am witness to. Now, instantly, what will the gift of the generous Giver's cause the news of the passion of the Giver in Rome. It is the opening of a new field. The light must not go out in the capital."

"Tell me how I can keep it alive."
"I will tell you. The Romans, even this Nero, hold two things sacred—I know of no others they so hold—they are the ashes of the dead and all places of burial. If you cannot build temples for the worship of the Lord above ground, then build them below the ground; and to keep them from profanation, carry to them the bodies of all who die in the faith."

Ben-Hur arose excitedly.
"It is a great idea, he said. I will not wait for you in Rome."