

"Cæsar Morituri te salutant." The vestals give the signal, the combat commences, the spectators have tasted blood. The funeral list is at length exhausted, the arena is strewn with blood, and the "confectores" gather the mangled bodies in the spoliarium. The sand is raked over, the arena is ready for the gladiators. They advance in their chariots and salute the Emperor. The combat commences, the crowd become infuriated. The gentle vestals lead the tumult. The gladiator at length receives a fatal blow, he falls to earth, and now is enacted one of the most heart-rending scenes of pagan Rome. The gladiator has fought for the pleasure of a depraved people. What is his recompense? See the haggard gaze with which he regards that infuriated assembly, his life is in their hands. Will they save him? Alas! their thumbs point to the earth, he is doomed.

He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one
Like the first of a thunder storm; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the
wretch who won.

The excitement subsides; the games are about to cease; but, hark! an imperial courier rushes to the podium; the crowd trembles with excitement. Shall the games cease? Shall the lions go unfed? No! Trajan furnishes the repast. Hear the shout of joy. The saintly Ignatius, the Theophor, is at Ostia. He must figure in the Coliseum before the day comes to a close. What joy! The martyr is in Rome, in the Coliseum: the pretor reads the imperial edict. He commands that Ignatius, who professes to carry the crucified impressed on him, be brought to great Rome in chains, to serve as food for the beasts and sport for the people. The

venerable martyr hears his death sentence with divine serenity. He falls on his knees, and instead of the usual salutation, he addresses himself to the immortal King of Heaven and Earth. He desires to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts in order to become the bread of Jesus Christ. In a few minutes the martyr has passed to his reward. Ferocious Rome has tasted Christian blood, and for two centuries more she will thirst after it. Clap your hands depraved Romans, rend the air with your savage cries. Know that the blood of these martyrs is the impetuous torrent that shall sweep from its sandy foundation thy proud citadel of degradation and shame; the never-failing imperishable cement that shall unite together the living stones of that Christian Coliseum that constitutes the abiding place of the Holy Spirit of sanctity and love. Exult in your fiendish delight oh "dulcis" vestal virgin, the hour-glass of thy career is rapidly emptying itself. In the other arena shall figure the other virgin the sweet, the modest Catholic virgin, the pure, the immaculate follower of the lamb without spot. Like the vestal virgin be ever present at the side of poor suffering humanity. Be with us oh sweet Sister of charity, with thy hands ever raised to heaven in pity and compassion, ever stretched towards earth in charity and love. Years have elapsed since I first saw the Coliseum, time has flown since I saw it last, and still the impression is the same.

Glorious old Coliseum, proud monument of my mother's love, stern teacher of my faith. May thy shadow be ever consecrated by thy Christian associations, and may thy ruins be preserved from decay, as the battlefield where our forefathers fought and died in order to transmit to future generations the heroism and love of the Cross.

FRANCIS J. McARDLE, O.M.I.