

He Knows.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS POEM?

I know not what will befall me; God hinders a mist o'er my eyes. And every step of my onward path He makes new scenes to rise. And every joy He sends me comes as a sweet and glad surprise.

PART THIRD.

VICTORY.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGER FROM THE EAST.

We appear to ourselves to be walking in solitude. One by one, those whose words and actions, and even thoughts, have hitherto accompanied and sustained us, have dropped off, and the prospect around looks very dreary. But is all this unnatural? We have been describing not an ordinary period of peace and every-day life, but one of warfare, strife, and battle. Is it unnatural that the bravest, the most heroic, should have fallen thick around us? We have been reviving the memory of the cruellest persecutions which the Church ever suffered, when it was proposed to erect a column bearing the inscription that the Christian name had been extinguished. Is it strange that the holiest and purest should have been the earliest to be crowned?

FABIOLA:

OR

THE CHURCH OF THE CATACOMBS

BY HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN.

But a merciful Father knows how to blend our joys and sorrows, and sends us the latter when He has best prepared us for them. In that warm embrace which we have mentioned, she for the first time noticed the shortened breath, and heaving chest of her dear sister. She would not dwell upon it in her thoughts, but sent to beg Dionysius to come on the morrow. That evening they all kept their Easter banquet together, and Fabiola felt happy to preside at Miriam's side over a table, at which reclined or sat her own converted slaves, and those of Agnes's household, all of whom she had retained. She never remembered having enjoyed so delightful a supper.

Early next morning, Miriam called Fabiola to her side, and with a fond, caressing manner, which she had never before displayed, said to her: "My dear sister, what will you do, when I have left you?"

"Four Fabiola was overpowered with grief. "Are you then going to leave? I had hoped we should live for ever as sisters together. But if you wish to leave Rome, may I not accompany you, at least to nurse you, to serve you?"

Miriam smiled, but a tear was in her eye, as taking her sister's hand, she pointed up towards heaven. Fabiola understood her, and said: "O, no, no, dear sister. Pray to God, who will refuse you nothing; but what can I do without you? And now too, that I have learnt how much they who reign with Christ can do for us by intercession, I will pray to Agnes and Sebastian, to interpose for me, and avert some great calamity."

"Agne sepulchrum est Romula in domo, Fortis puelle, martiris in lecto. Conspicua in lino candida turrim soras salutum virgo Quirinum; Neuron et idios protectrix supplicis."

"The tomb of Agnes, virgin of Rome. A maiden brave, a martyr great. Visible in linen candida turrim soras salutum virgo Quirinum; Neuron et idios protectrix supplicis."

"Do get well; I am sure there is nothing serious in the matter; the warm weather, and the genial climate of Campania will restore you. We will sit together by the spring, and talk over better things than philosophy."

Miriam shook her head, not mournfully, but cheerfully, as she replied: "Do not flatter yourself, dearest; God has spared me till I should see this happy day. But His hand is on me now for death, as it has been hitherto for life; and I had it with joy. I know too well the number of my days."

"Oh! let it not be so soon!" sobbed out Fabiola. "Not while you have on your white garment, dear sister," answered Miriam. "I know you would wish to mourn for me; but I would not rob you of one hour of your mystic whiteness."

Dionysius came, and saw a great change in his patient, whom he had not visited for some time. It was as he had feared it might be. The insidious point of the dagger had curled round the bone, and injured the plevra; and phthisis had rapidly set in. He confirmed Miriam's most serious anticipations. Fabiola wept; she prayed long and fervently, and with many tears, then returned.

"Sister," she said with firmness, "God's will be done. I am ready to resign even you to Him. Now, tell me, I entreat you, what would you have me do, after you are taken from me?"

Miriam looked up to heaven, and answered, "Lay my body at the feet of Agnes, and remain to watch over us, to pray for me; but for me; until a stranger shall arrive from the East, the bearer of good tidings."

On the Sunday following, "Sunday of the white garments," Dionysius celebrated, by special permission, the sacred mysteries in Miriam's room, and administered to her the most holy Communion, as we know from St. Augustine and others, was not a rare privilege. (St. Ambrose said Mass in the house of a lady beyond the Tiber.) Afterwards, he anointed her with oil, accompanied by prayer, the last Sacrament which the Church bestows.

Fabiola and the household who had attended these solemn rites, with tears and prayers, now descended into the crypt, and after the divine offices returned to Miriam in their darker retirement.

"The hour is come," said she, taking Fabiola's hand. "Forgive me, if I have been wanting in duty to you, and in good example."

This was more than Fabiola could stand, and she burst into tears. Miriam soothed her, and said, "Put to my lips the sign of salvation when I can speak no more; and, good Dionysius, remember me at God's altar when I am departed."

He prayed at her side, and she replied, till at length her voice failed her. But her lips moved, and she pressed them on the cross presented to her. She looked serene and joyful, till at length raising her hand to her forehead, then bringing it to her breast, it fell dead there, in making the saving sign. A smile passed over her face, and she expired, as thousands of Christ's children have expired since.

Fabiola mourned much over her; but with this time she mourned as she do who have hope.

(Paulinus, in his life, tom. ii. Oper. ed. Bened.) St. Augustine mentions a priest's saying Mass in a house supposed to be infested with evil spirits. De Civ. D. lib. xxii. c. 8.

words of Miriam, eagerly asked, "Where is he?"

"He is gone again," was the reply.

The lady's countenance fell. "But how," she asked again, "do you know it was he?" The excavator replied:

"In the course of the morning I noticed, among the crowd, a man not yet fifty, but worn by mortification and sorrow, to premature old age. His hair was grey, and he wore the cloak which the monks from that country usually do. When he came before the tomb of Agnes, he flung himself upon the pavement with such a passion of tears, such groans, such sobs, as moved all around to compassion. Many approached him, and whispered, 'Brother, thou art in great distress; weep not so, the saint is merciful.' Others said to him, 'We will all pray for thee, fear not.' (This scene is described from reality.) But he seemed to be beyond comfort. I thought to myself, surely in the presence of so gentle and kind a saint, none ought to be thus disconsolate or heart-broken, except only one man."

"Go on, go on," broke in Fabiola; "what did he next?"

"After a long time," continued the fossor, "he arose, and drawing from his bosom a most beautiful and sparkling ring, he laid it on her tomb. I thought I had seen it before, many years ago."

"And then?"

"Turning round he saw me, and recognised my dress. He approached me, and I could feel him trembling, as without looking in my face, he timidly asked me, 'Brother, knowest thou if there lie buried any where about a maiden from Syria, called Miriam?' I pointed silently to the tomb. After a pause of great pain to himself, so agitated now that his voice faltered, he asked me again, 'Knowest thou, brother, of what she died?' Of consumption, I replied. 'Thank God!' he ejaculated, with the sigh of relieved anguish, and fell prostrate on the ground. Here too he moaned and cried for more than an hour, then approaching the tomb, affectionately kissed its cover, and retired."

"It is he, Torquatus, it is he!" warmly exclaimed Fabiola; "why did you not detain him?"

"I durst not, lady; after I had once seen his face, I had not courage to meet his eye! But I am sure he will return again; for he went towards the city."

"He must be found," concluded Fabiola. "Dear Miriam, thou hadst, then, this consoling foresight in death!"

CHAPTER II.

THE STRANGER IN ROME.

Early next morning, the pilgrim was passing through the Forum, when he saw a group of persons gathered round one whom they were evidently teasing. He would have paid but little attention to such a scene in a public thoroughfare, had not his ear been habitually inattentive. He therefore drew nigh. In the centre was a man, younger than himself; but if he looked older than he was, from being wan and attenuated, the other did so much more from being the very contrary. He was bald and bloated, with a face swelled, and red, and covered with blotches and boils. A drunken cunning swam in his eye, and his gait and tone were those of a man habitually intoxicated. His clothes were dirty, and his whole person neglected.

"Ay, ay, Corvius," one youth was saying to him, "won't you get your deserts now? Have you not heard that Constantine is coming this year to Rome, and don't you think the Christians will have their turn about, now?"

"Not they," answered the man who had described, "they have not the pluck for it. I remember what he said, when Constantine published his first edict, after the death of Maximian, about liberty for the Christians, but next year he put us out of fear, by declaring all religions to be equally permitted." (Eusebius, ubi sup.)

"That is all very well," interposed another, determined further to plague him, "as a general rule; but is it not supposed that he is going to look up those who took an active part in the late persecution, and have the *lex talionis* (The Law of retaliation, such as was prescribed, also in the Mosaic law, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," &c.) executed on them; stripe for stripe, burning for burning, and wild beast for wild beast?"

"Who says so?" asked Corvius, turning pale.

"Why, it would surely be very natural," said one.

"And very just," added another.

"Oh, never mind," said Corvius, "they will always let one off for turning Christian. And, I am sure, I would turn any thing, rather than stand—"

"Where Pancretius stood," interposed a third, more malicious.

"Hold your tongue," broke out the drunkard, with a tone of positive rage. "Mention his name again, if you dare!" And he raised his fist, and looked furiously at the speaker.

"Ay, because he told you how you were to die," shouted the youngster, running away. "Heigh! Heigh! a panther here for Corvius!"

All ran away before the human beast, now lashed into fury, more than they would have been if they had seen the wild one. He cursed them, and threw stones after them.

The pilgrim, from a short distance, watched the close of the scene, then went on. Corvius moved slower along the same road, that which led towards the Lateran basilica, now the Cathedral of Rome. Suddenly a sharp growl was heard, and with it a piercing shriek. As they were passing by the Calistum, near the dens of the wild beasts, which were prepared for combats among themselves, on occasion of the emperor's visit, Corvius, impelled by the morbid curiosity natural to persons who consider themselves victims of some fatality, connected with a particular object, approached the cage in which a splendid panther was kept. He went close to the bars, and provoked the animal, by gestures and words, saying: "Very likely, indeed, that you are to be the death of me!"

"You are a Christian? I am now a Christian." The stranger sent him out to procure a surgeon, who was long in coming; and in the meantime, did his best to staunch the blood.

While he was so occupied, Corvius fixed his eyes upon him with a look of one-delinquency, or demerit.

"Do you know me?" asked the pilgrim, soothingly.

"Know you? No—yes. Let me see—Ha! the fox's my fox! Do you remember our hunting together those happy days? Where have you been all the time? How many of them have you caught?" And he laughed outrageously.

"Peace, peace, Corvius," replied the other. "You must be very quiet, or there is no hope for you. Besides, I do not wish you to allude to those times; for I am myself now a Christian."

"You a Christian? I broke out Corvius savagely. 'You who had shed more of their best blood than any man! Have you been forgiven for all this? Oh! have you slept quietly upon it? Have no furies lashed you at night? No phantoms haunted you? No viper sucked your heart? If so, tell me how you have got rid of them all, that I may do the same. If not, they will come, they will come! Vengeance, as much as me!'"

"Silence, Corvius; I have suffered as you have. But I have found the remedy, and will make it

known to you, as soon as the physician has seen you, for he is approaching."

The doctor saw him, dressed the wound, but gave little hope of recovery, especially in a patient whose very blood was tainted by intemperance.

The stranger now resumed his seat beside him, and spoke of the mercy of God, and His readiness to forgive the worst of sinners; whereof he himself was a living proof. The unhappy man seemed to be in a sort of stupor; if he listened, not comprehending what was said. At length his kind instructor, having expounded to him the fundamental mysteries of Christianity in hope, rather than certainty, of being attended to, went on to say:

"And now, Corvius, you will ask me, how is forgiveness to be applied to one who believes all that is by Baptism, by being born again of water and the Holy Ghost?"

"What?" exclaimed the sick man languishingly.

"By being washed in the laver of regenerating water."

He was interrupted by a convulsive growl rather than a moan. "Water! water! no water for me! Take it away." And a strong spasm seized the patient's throat.

His attendant was alarmed, but sought to calm him. "Think not," he said, "that you are to be taken here in your present fever, and to be plunged into water" (the sick man shuddered and moaned); "in clinical baptism, (Clinical baptism, or that of persons confined to their beds, was administered here by pouring or sprinkling the water on the head. See Bingham, book xi. c. 11.) a few drops suffice, not more than in a small vessel." And he showed him the water in this pith.

At the sight of it, the patient writhed and foamed at the mouth, and was shaken by a violent convulsion. The sounds that proceeded from him, resembled a howl from a wild beast, more than any utterance of human lips. This passed the dreary day, and the patient lay him down at times. Occasionally he broke out into frightful paroxysms of blasphemous violence against God and man. And then, when this subsided, he would go on moaning thus:

"Water they want to give me! water! water! none for me! It is fire! fire! that I have, and that is my portion. I am already on fire, within, without! Look how it comes creeping up, all round me, it advances every moment nearer and nearer!" And he beat off the fancied flame with his hands on either side of his bed, and he blew at it round his head. Then turning towards his sorrowful attendants, he would say, "Why don't you put it out? You see it is already burning me!"

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singing the Divine praises, contemplation, and the labor of his hands. Severe penance for our past transgressions, fasting, mourning, and prayer form the great duty of our penitential state. Have you heard of such men here?"

"The fame of holy Paul and Anthony is as great in the West as in the East," replied the lady.

"It is with the greatest disciple of the latter that I have lived, supported by his great example, and the consolation he has given me. But one thought troubled me, and prevented my feelings complete assurance of safety, even after years of expiation. Before I left Rome I had contracted a heavy debt, which must have been accumulating at a frightful rate of interest, till it had reached an overwhelming amount. Yet it was an obligation deliberately contracted, and not to be justly evaded. I was a poor cenobite, (the religious who lived in community, or common life, were so called), barely living on the produce of the few palm-leaf mats that I could weave, and the scanty herbs that would grow in the sand. How could I discharge my obligations?"

"Only one means remained. I could give myself up to my creditor as a slave, to labor for him and endure his blows and scornful reproaches in patience, or to be sold by him for my value, for I am yet strong. In either case, I should have had my Saviour's example to cheer and support me. At any rate, I should have given up all that I had—myself."

"I went this morning to the Forum, found my creditor's son, examined his accounts, and found that you had discharged my debt in full. I am, therefore, your bondsman, Lady Fabiola, instead of the Jew's." And he knelt humbly at her feet.

"Rise, rise," said Fabiola, turning away her weeping eyes. "You are no bondsman of mine, but a dear brother in our common Lord."

Then sitting down with him, she said: "Orontius, I have a great favour to ask from you. Give me some account of how you were brought to that life, which you have so generously embraced."

"I will obey you as briefly as possible. I fled, as you know, one sorrowful night from Rome, accompanied by a man—his voice choked him."

"I know, I know whom you mean,—Eurotas," interrupted Fabiola.

"The same, the course of our house, the author of all mine, and my dear sister's, sufferings. We had to charter a vessel at great expense from Brundisium, whence we sailed for Cyprus. We attempted commerce and various speculations, but all failed. There was manifestly a curse on all that we undertook. Our means melted away, and we were obliged to seek some other country. We crossed over to Palestine, and settled for a while at Gaza. Very soon we were reduced to distress; everybody shunned us, we knew not why; but my conscience told me that the mark of Cain was on my brow."

Orontius paused and wept for a time, then went on:

"At length, when all was exhausted, and nothing remained but a few jewels, of considerable price indeed, but with which I knew not why, Eurotas would not part, he urged me to take up the odious office of denouncing Christians; for a furious persecution was breaking out. For the first time in my life I rebelled against his commands, and refused to obey. One day he took me to walk out of the gates; we wandered far, till we came to a delightful spot in the midst of the desert. It was a narrow dell, covered with verdure, and shaded by palm-trees; a little clear stream ran down, issuing from a spring in a rock at the head of the valley. In this rock we saw grottoes and caverns; but the place seemed uninhabited. Not a sound could be heard but the bubbling of the water."

"We sat down to rest, when Eurotas addressed me in a fearful speech. The time was come, he told me, when we must both fall; but he would survive the ruin of our family. Here we must both die; the wild beasts would consume our bodies, and no one would know the end of our last representatives."

"So saying, he drew forth two small flasks of unequal sizes, handed me the larger one, and swallowed the contents of the smaller one."

"I refused to take it, and even reproached him for the difference of our doses; but he replied that he was old, and I young; and that they were proportioned to our respective strengths. I still refused, having no wish to die. But a sort of demonical fury seemed to come over him; he seized me with a giant's grasp, as I sat on the ground, threw me on my back, and exclaiming, 'We must both perish together,' forcibly poured the contents of the phial, without sparing me a drop, down my throat."

"In an instant, I was unconscious; and remained so, till I awoke in a cavern, and faintly called for drink. A venerable old man, with a white beard, put a wooden bowl of water to my lips. 'Where is Eurotas?' I asked. 'Is that your companion?' inquired the old monk. 'Yes,' I answered. 'He is dead,' was the reply. 'I know not with what fatality this had happened; but I bless God with all my heart, for having spared me.'

"That old man was Hilarion, a native of Gaza, who, having spent many years with the holy Anthony in Egypt, had that year (A. D. 303), returned to establish the cenobitic and eremitical life in his own country, and had already collected several disciples. They lived in the caves hard by, and took their refreshment under the shade of those palm-trees, and soiled their dry feet in the water of that fountain."

"Their kindness to me, their cheerful piety, their holy lives, won on me as I recovered. I saw the religion which I had persecuted in a sublime form; and rapidly recalled to mind the instructions of my dear mother, and the example of my sister; so that yielding to grace, I bowled my sins at the feet of God's minister, (confession of sins in private was made before baptism. See Bingham, *Antiquities*, b. xi. ch. viii. § 14), and received baptism on Easter-evening."

"Then we are doubly brethren, my twin children of the Church; for I was born to eternal life, also on that day. But what do you intend to do now?"

"Set out this evening on my return. I have accomplished the two objects of my journey. The first was to cancel my debt; my second was to lay myself at the feet of the saint of saints. You will remember," he added, smiling, "that your good father unintentionally deceived me into the idea, that she coveted the jewels I displayed. Fool that I was! But I resolved, after my conversion, that she should possess the best that remained; so I brought it to her."

"But have you means for your journey?" asked the lady, timidly.

"Abundantly," he replied, "in the charity of the faithful. I have letters from the Bishop of Gaza, which procure me everywhere sustenance and lodging; but I will accept from you a cup of water and a morsel of bread, in the name of a disciple."

They rose, and were advancing towards the house, when a woman rushed madly through the shrubs, and fell at their feet, exclaiming, "Oh, save me! dear mistress, save me! He is pursuing me, to kill me!"

Fabiola recognised, in the poor creature, her former slave Dulaba; but her hair was grizzled and dishevelled, and her whole aspect bespoke abject misery. She asked whom she meant.

"My husband," she replied; "long has he been harsh and cruel, but to-day he is more brutal than usual. Oh, save me from him!"

"There is no danger here," replied the lady; "but I fear, Fabiola, you are far from happy. I have not seen you for a long, long time."

"To be continued"

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.—The 30th March will be the 50th anniversary of Catholic Emancipation.

HOUS

FISH CHOWDER into squares, and Then take your a good-sized cheese squares, than the pork to cover next a layer of and salt. Above peat the order all exhausted; let ers. Pour on cover the kettle minutes before and pour on the genuine Ry

CODFISH B codfish, put this to a boil, Turn into the season with but spoonful of flo let it boil for a on a platter.

CODFISH B codfish; let it si whole; then bo and mix well with pepper, and d beaten, and dr the napkin on to absorb the p

OYSTERS, F bread, and bu put on the li and pepper, and let them bo

STEWED OY ters; put the o pan, add half pepper, a tes on the stove, in a bowl; the oysters, say to watch careful out your oys

SAVORY B quarter, saw and boil it in bones; chop and season i sage, to you meat was b in slices and

SCRAMBLED very fine; when hot, stirring to a bowl; see

CHICKEN fine; then milk is boil flour, mak is well cov the size of str all w hands, and crackers r low, half a

BAKED with salt, little wat often, tw over. W gravy with Chickens manner r

Vegeta and salt, fire; pot of boiling dinner.