

Our Young Folks.

"To the Lions."

A MARTYR STORY OF OLD ROME.

The palace of Aurelian was filled with guests. He entertained the most noble and the most beautiful in Rome. They reclined around a table which was sumptuously spread, and ate daintily of rich viands, served by handsome slaves. Their garments were silk. Their jewels glittered as they moved. They conversed and laughed in silver accents. They quaffed strong wine from golden cups; and through the open windows came the sound of their revelry, the light of their lamps, and the fragrance of the flowers which crowned their heads.

There came a lull, and then, as if watching for the moment, from between the brocaded curtains appeared the dancing girls. They gyrated into the space which had been prepared for them, and with graceful evolutions shook their tambourines. The bells on their armlets and anklets jingled in harmony, their veils creoled like mist about their light figures, and they seemed as if rising out of white clouds when they paused. Poised on the tips of their toes, with their instruments held high above their heads, they heard the applause which approved their skill.

Then the Emperor beckoned the chief dancer to his side. She approached modestly, half concealing her face with her veil, her large dark eyes sparkling, her cheeks glowing with the exercise. Her profession did not make her forward and bold. Her gifts were used simply to support her family; and although she was the most popular dancer in Imperial Rome, commendation passed by her like a breath of wind. She prized it only for the sake of those she loved. It gave her the means of serving them. The Emperor offered her a cup. It was filled with red wine and pieces of gold.

"Drink," said he, "to the gods. They have endowed thee well; and we will join thee in the toast."

He rose as he spoke, and all replenished their cups—all save one, a serious and beautiful woman, who sat on the right side of the imperial seat; but she stood up with the rest, as if she expected the omission to pass unnoticed.

Aurelian turned towards her. "Fair lady," said he, "do you pledge the deities with an empty cup?"

She blushed deeply, and looked at him with a pleading expression in her eyes, which said plainly, "Ask me no questions now."

The Emperor frowned. He had heard rumors of her which had offended him. Would she confirm them by her silence? "Speak!" he exclaimed authoritatively; "will you not drink to the gods?"

"Lower thine ear, I pray thee!" was the murmured reply. And Aurelian did as he was asked. Then whispered the lady in a low sweet voice, "Imperial cousin, I am a Christian; I cannot drink to false gods." And only the dancing girl overheard what she had said.

Uttering an angry oath, the Emperor lot the cup in his hand fall to the ground; and three days later there floated on the Tiber a beautiful woman, with her hands folded on her breast, her face calm in death. The Emperor was determined to exterminate the Christians; and, "Ere I strike others," said he, "it becometh me to reprove my own."

The moonlight tipped with silver every pinnacle and roof. It slanted across the street, gleaming on the statues; it flooded the terraces; it lifted itself to the lattices, and peeped at those within.

Sleep was abroad, but his pinions were never wide enough to overshadow every man, woman, and child; and to-night Lelia, the dancer, was of the number who kept enforced vigil.

She sat at the window, full of thought. That evening she had danced at a nobleman's, where the martyrdom of the Emperor's beautiful relative had been freely discussed. Much was said against her faith and obstinacy; but the heroism with which she had met her fate had been spoken of with wonder and admiration. According to the account, she had gone to death as calmly as she had gone to her last banquet at the palace; and she had breathed her last declaring her murderers know not what they did, praying that they might find the peace which made her departure easy and blessed.

"There must be something in this Christian faith," thought Lelia, "to induce people to suffer excruciating torture and death rather than give it up. I wonder what makes it more desirable than riches, honor, titles, and all the gifts of this world."

Before she slept the dancer had determined to find out the secret. It was rumored that measures against the Christians had been resolved upon by the Emperor, and were soon to be put in force.

Throughout the city there spread a strange silence and gloom. The people seemed to expect some great calamity, and those who were of the faith of Christ seemed conscious of the part they were presently to act. They went about their affairs as usual with a firm step, but the trembling lip occasionally betrayed the tumult within. If they did not fear for themselves, they were alarmed for their wives and their children.

Then the edicts were published, ordering all who preached and acknowledged Christ, to recant, under penalty of death. They were posted all over Rome, and, in the midst of the excitement they caused, a rash, daring Christian added fuel to the fire. When the parchment was attached to one of the columns of the Capitol, he mounted the steps and defiantly proclaimed the forbidden gospel. The crowd of gazers were restless and threatening, but he was not abashed. He stood calm and unmoved, and spoke in a clear, sonorous tone, which rang above the din raised to drown his voice. Pointing to the edict he cried, "Let the Emperor persecute us, our light will shine forth; we cannot be exterminated. As soon as the work of death is done, that of life will begin, and the growth will increase by reason of the blood spilled

around. Those who profess the new religion are few compared with those who believe but do not profess. Hearts will worship, though tongues may not utter one word of belief. The mute multitude will be ever ready to supply the ranks of those who fall. They shrink from sight now; they are silent with horror when they see their brethren put to torture, but soon as the martyrs are entered into heaven, they will come forth as birds after the rain, and fill again the forsaken churches. They live for their Church, and they will die for it as bravely as those who went before them. We will preach Christ in Rome. He tells us to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature. We will preach Him despite the edict of the Roman Emperor. We love God too well, and Christ too well, and you too well, O Romans, to heed the insolent Imperial command."

A few moments of intense silence succeeded this bold speech. The people seemed to be paralyzed, and before they recovered themselves the Christian had gone. His doom, however, was sealed. A diligent search for him began immediately.

Close by the place where he had stood, was one who could have told his name and where he lived, but she was silent. Wrapped in her cloak, she watched the heaving multitude divide and fill all the adjoining streets. When any one approached her she raised her veil, and she was left unmolested. She was Lelia, the dancing girl.

"Who can show us where the house of the Christian is?" cried the infuriated throng, and maddened with frenzy, they rushed like wild beasts, hither and thither, until they found what they sought. But it was evening before they were successful, and then it was not so easy to snatch their prey. The house was strongly barricaded by a thick, high wall built of stone.

The crowd began to beat against the wall, and shout for those within to come forth. They had almost wearied themselves out, and were inclined to think that their victims had escaped, when, upon a sort of level roof above, a woman suddenly appeared. She advanced to the edge—not far above, and yet beyond the reach of the mob below—and beckoned to them with her hands as if she would speak.

The people immediately ceased their tumultuous cries, and prepared to hear what she had to say. Some, indeed, throw stones, but they were checked by others, who insisted that the woman should have full liberty to address them. Then she drew aside her veil, and with deep blushes overspreading her face and bosom, stood waiting the pleasure of the heaving multitude below.

"It is the dancer, Lelia," cried the crowd, in surprise.

"What do you want?" asked the dancer in a loud voice, which sounded above the din. "Good citizens and friends, those whom you seek are poor and humble. They never injured you. Leave them in safety, and, if you require it, they will abandon their dwellings—yours, and their Rome. They are all native Romans."

"That will not serve us," cried a harsh voice, in a brutal tone. "We want their lives."

"And we will have them," shouted a chorus, battering against the wall with renewed strength. A huge plank was brought from an adjoining yard. It was plied by a hundred hands, with noisy uproar, and the masonry began to give way. Lelia retreated with a stifled cry.

She found the Christian in a room at the back of the house, with his weeping wife and family. He was cheering them as well as he could, and there was no evidence of fear in his noble face.

"Be not afraid, dear love," he said. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. We are in His hands."

"Is he able to deliver you from death?" asked Lelia who stood a little apart, with a white face.

"Yes," replied the Christian; "He takes the sting from death, and the victory from the grave. Those who are able to kill the body are not able to kill the soul."

"Will they kill us, thank you?" murmured the wife.

The Christian smiled. "What if they do, beloved?" he said. "I have seen thee face danger so often. I know thou wilt have courage to meet the last enemy." Then he added, clasping his hands, "But what is death? It is only a passing through the gate into life, and if the passage be rough, the journey is soon over—the rest quickly found."

Some of the wild populace now rushed in, athirst for blood. Lelia stood in the way. They thrust her aside, and laid violent hands on the Christian.

"Take me also," cried the dancer; "I will go with them to hear more of Christ Jesus—I am almost persuaded to be a Christian."

All in a hurry in the streets of Rome; all was joyous expectation. Aurelian was to give his subjects a grand entertainment in the amphitheatre, and the chief part of it was to be a great massacre of the Christians. It was a beautiful morning, the sun seemed to shine upon the anticipated enjoyment, and every seat was speedily filled. Around the vast arena thousands and tens of thousands of spectators were soon gathered together. They eagerly gazed down upon the preparation, and awaited with impatience the entrance of the Emperor, who was to give the signal for the first combat. When he came a great shout was raised, but he scarcely acknowledged it. He was pale, silent, and stern. He took his seat quietly, and remained almost immovable, until the roar of a lion advancing upon the first victim was heard. Then he bent forward with a keen expression of interest upon his face, and seemed to examine the combatant with the keenest scrutiny. It was the Christian who had publicly declared against his edict.

Tall and erect stood a man, divested of all save a light linen garment around his loins. His face was pale, but his eyes were full of unflinching resolution, while his carriage was free and noble. He smiled at the savage animal, irritated by fame, came prowling around the arena toward him. "Romans and countrymen!" he cried, pointing toward the lion, now but a few paces from him, "savages death is upon me, but I do not fear him. Not I! If we

Christians suffer for the cause of truth and God, we are cheered by the thought that by our sufferings our children and children's children shall be made heirs of the inheritance that is incorruptible, and shall never pass away. Princes the Lord I foresee that His little heaven will, in time, leave the whole lump, and my heart is strong with the hope that even many of you now present, shall be gathered into the heaven whither I go."

The lion sprang upon him as he uttered the last words, and the next moment he was prostrate. He died without resistance, and before the mangled body was dragged into the den of the captor, the trembling wife and children of the victim, with several other women, were standing in the centre of the arena. Lelia, the dancing girl, was of the number, and she seemed to be encouraging her companions.

The Emperor made a sign that he would speak before other lions were let loose. He had recognized the dancer with surprise, and was anxious to save her for her youth and skill.

"Woman, he cried, "I would willingly save thee and thy companions, but there is only one way in which it can be done."

"Let us know it, then, O mighty Emperor!" said Lelia, stepping to the side.

"Renounce Christ," said the Emperor; "and sacrifice to the gods. Then life shall be thine, with all the gifts which make it pleasant."

The dancer looked around at her companions. They hid their faces, but shook their heads.

Then turning to Aurelian, with eyes which seemed to glow, Lelia cried: "Renounce Christ, whom I have just found! How little, O mighty Emperor, dost thou know what a Christian is. Not though I might sit on thy seat would I deny my Saviour. We are women, but we fear naught except the loss of God's favor."

"You will not be induced to recant?" asked the Emperor, with a flush of passion.

"No," replied Lelia, "you can give us nothing as priceless as that which we have found. Come death! I come glory!"

"To the lions, then!" shouted Aurelian, and immediately the dens reopened, and the lions crept cautiously forth, with bloodshot eyes and gaping jaws. They rushed toward the group of mute victims, standing in the centre. Lelia laid her hand on the side of the arena, just over one of the dens, and looked up at Aurelian. "Mighty Emperor," she cried, in a clear, ringing voice, which was heard over all the vast assembly, "do you remember when you bade me drink to the gods? The refusal of thy Imperial cousin to join in the toast, first made me think about the Christians, and her heroism, in suffering death, made me inquire into their faith. Now, blessed be God, I hope to die as bravely as she did; and as her blood sowed the seeds of salvation in my heart, so may my blood sow it in the hearts of others, and become a seed of the Church."

A white rose fell at her feet, dropped by an invisible hand. It was to her a sweet promise. She picked it up, pressed it to her heart, and calmly resigned herself to her fate.

A Railroad Lesson.

It is a crowded railroad car at midnight. Only two passengers are awake, the rest are asleep. The conductor enters, bearing a bright lamp on his arm, and then all were aroused. The two who were watching were instantly ready with their tickets; some had to be almost rudely awakened; but not one escaped the eye of him who had come to determine whether they could travel on in peace, or whether they should be thrust into outer darkness. He did not inquire into their age, their previous character, or their condition in society, but he looked keenly at their tickets. Some were old, and others were young; some were well dressed, and others were shabbily clad; some perhaps were highly educated, and others were illiterate; some probably were good in the estimation of the world, and others were bad; but such differences and distinctions seemed to be entirely unnoticed by the conductor, who carefully and searchingly examined their tickets. If these were found to be genuine, signed with the right name, and stamped with the right seal, he passed on; for they entitled the holders to all the privileges of the road under his care, and they were not afraid to face him and his bright lamp.

Dear reader, Christ will be here soon to determine who shall be admitted into the many mansions of His Father's house; "for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. x. 37). The only title to entrance there that will be recognized must have upon it the name of Jesus, and be written in His blood, and stamped with the seal of the Holy Ghost.—The Truth.

Wise and Simple.

"Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents and harmless as doves."—Matt. x. 16.

Wickliffe, following the Vulgate, had "simple as doves." "Simple," our translators have dismissed to the margin; they ought to have kept it in the text, as rightly they ought to have at Rom. xvi. 19. The rendering of *akeratos* by "harmless" here and at Phil. ii. 15, grows out of wrong etymology, as though it were from *a* and *keras*, one having no horn with which to push or otherwise hurt. But this "without horn" would be *akeratos*, while the true derivation of *akeratos*, it need hardly be said, is from *a* and *keranum*, unmingled, sincere, and thus single, guileless, simple, without all folds.

How much finer the antithesis in this way becomes! Be ye, therefore, wise ("prudent" would be better) as serpents, and simple as doves," having care, that is, that this prudence of yours does not degenerate into artifice and guile; letting the columbine simplicity go hand in hand with the serpentine prudence. The exact parallel will then be 1 Cor. xiv. 20.—Archbishop Trench.

WILMOT, the infidel, when dying laid his trembling, emaciated hand upon the sacred volume, and exclaimed solemnly and with unwonted energy, "The only objection against this Book is a bad life!"

Reason and Faith.

We believe that there is no little danger in the indiscriminate adoption of "rationalism," which is often expressed or implied in evangelical defenses of the faith. The idea is conveyed to many minds that reason and faith are opposed to each other; that there are two distinct provinces—the one where reason holds sway and faith does not enter, and the other where faith holds sway and reason does not enter. This we repudiate. We hold that there is no antagonism between reason and faith, as faculties of the soul, and that there is no distinction of their respective provinces such as to be mutually exclusive. We maintain that believing is the function of reason just as much as comparing or perceiving. We hold that reason is the basis of right believing just as it is of right judging or comparing. Knowledge is a function of reason; none will deny that, and yet nine tenths of what we say we know we only believe, and by far the most of what we believe (though we are pleased to call it knowledge) is based on authority alone, not on evidence which has come under our own personal cognizance. Do we know the facts of history which we have in our memories, or do we simply believe them, and is it not on authority that we believe them? History, then, is in the province of faith if anything is. Is it, therefore, out of the province of reason? If it is not an exercise of reason to accept anything on authority, why do so many people who pride themselves on their reason, accept such innumerable facts in natural history on the authority of Charles Darwin? Why is it? Because he is good authority on the subject. Precisely so; and if we can find as good an authority on historical facts, says the Evangelist Matthew, for instance, it will be just as reasonable to accept facts on his authority; and if we can find as good authority on the higher truths of morality and religion, say the Lord Jesus Christ, for instance, it will be just as reasonable to believe on His authority. Faith has been compared to a telescope, and reason to the eye that looks through it. The telescope can discover much that would necessarily escape the unaided eye; but without the eye the telescope can discover nothing. It would be as absurd to tell a man who had looked at all he could see in the heavens with his naked eye, to shut it now and use the telescope, as it would be to tell a man that he must leave his reason behind him, or even abridge its natural and proper functions, when he enters the province of faith.

Reason and faith go hand in hand all through our mental and spiritual history. Faith is present at the first dawning of reason. Reason is present no less in the high meridian of faith. There is no antagonism between them. God hath joined them together and though men have tried to sunder them, they have totally failed. When reason is divorced from faith it becomes irrational and thereby ceases to be reason, becoming unreason. When faith is divorced from reason, it becomes blind, and thereby ceases to be faith, becoming credulity. Look at the steps of Christian faith and see if they are not the steps of right reason too. We began by the recognition of sin, and the perverting and debasing effect it has upon the faculties and dispositions of the soul. Is not the recognition of this an act of reason? We next proceed to enquire whether there is any way by which we can be raised from this evil and degradation? This enquiry is an exercise of reason. We find one claiming to show us the way, and according to Him the only way in which it can be accomplished. This person is Jesus of Nazareth, with whom we become acquainted as a matter of history—history which in the exercise of our reason we believe. We examine the claims of this person. This examination is an exercise of reason. From the examination we come to the conclusion that he is a safe guide—again a conclusion of reason. We begin to take his advice and try how it works. Still using our reason we would in testing anything, we find it works well, the more we know of Him, the more we test His prescriptions, the more we have confidence in Him, which confidence is every whit as rational as that which a student of natural history learns to place in Darwin as an observer and recorder of the facts which he offers to the faith of his disciples. Our instructor tells us things which we cannot comprehend, but what instructor does not? Who can comprehend the working of this great principle of evolution, in which many believe so firmly? We can understand the terms of it, just as we can understand the terms of the declaration, "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth," but the thing itself, granting that it is a thing at all and not a mere notion, is as utterly incomprehensible as is the being of God, or His working in what these scientific men are pleased to call the miracle of creation—as if evolution involved any less of miracle. But while many of the things which our spiritual guide tells are incomprehensible by reason, we find none of them discordant with reason. They are to a great extent out of the reach of reason, but wherever we can touch them with our reason, we find the most beautiful harmony, and as we get more and more free from the disturbing influence of sin, we see the correspondence more and more clearly. The more we bring reason to bear on them, the more evident do they become, and the more thoroughly satisfactory and so instead of warning reason off, we feel inclined to invite it, to enter it, to come and see. We are not afraid of it at all; we are not afraid even of its perversion, because its perversion can be detected and exposed. Let it come, let it bring all the light it can, it will only bring out the truth in clearer outlines, and show it more evidently to be what it claims to be, the very truth of God. We claim not only that He in whom we believe is good authority on the subjects of which we trust Him, but that all he tells us commends itself to an enlightened reason, and is therefore capable of being commended to every man's conscience in the sight of God. We are free to admit that from the nature of the case there is a wider scope for reason in the field of what is called natural religion, than there is in the more elevated regions of Christian truth. It is a great deal easier, for example, to satisfy the reason in regard to the existence of God, than in regard to the Incarnation of God. When

we remember the testimony of Laplace, (surely an unprejudiced witness on such a theme), that in applying the doctrine of chances to the planetary motions he had found the chances against these motions being the result of chance, to be two hundred thousand milliards to one, we see the overwhelming nature of the cumulative evidence for the existence and operations of a designing mind. Now we admit that it would be impossible to put in a manner so overwhelmingly convincing, the rational probability of a revelation of God in human nature such as that we are assured in Scripture is afforded in the person of Jesus Christ, but that such a revelation is rationally probable, and therefore the doctrine of it, thoroughly consonant to right reason can be satisfactorily shown.—Rev. J. M. Gibson, M.A., in the *Inter-r.*

Some Curious Things in Housekeeping.

Every branch of science has its marvels; but expecting to meet in nature with wonders that baffled knowledge, we are not so much astonished at these as at the startling facts that are forced upon us from day to day in social life. Some of the most surprising of these confront us in the developments of the science of housekeeping. They are entirely beyond explanation, and would be beyond belief if they rested on mere assertion; but as all of us, unfortunately, have tested them by our own senses, we accept them with wonder, and with some show of resignation.

Take an important branch of housekeeping—cooking. How inexplicable are some of the results of culinary study. A woman with whom we once lived for a time had kept house for thirty-five years, had never had a servant, and had, during that time, as she informed us, "baked twice a week regular." Consequently, to go into the statistics of the matter, bread had been baked in that establishment 3,640 times. Denoting 240 for occasional sickness or absence of the mistress (a large allowance, for she was healthy, and seldom went from home), and so have "400 times that this woman had made and baked bread.

She used good flour, and yet her bread was invariably damp, sticky, and unfit for a savage to eat, and no Christian stomach could possibly digest it with comfort. Now surely this was a wonderful thing! By what methods, unfathomable to ordinary reason, could she have avoided, in thirty-five years' practice, learning how to make good yeast, how much to work the dough, how long it should stand to get light, what temperature the oven should be, and the proper length of time to bake it? How could she help doing it right the three thousand four hundredth time? It would seem that a vast amount of labor would be necessary to do it badly? She was a woman of average good sense, and, no doubt, conscientious. She had no aspirations, and no "mission," and read nothing but a newspaper. Her whole mind was in her housekeeping, and there was the result!

Another woman, now over fifty years of age, has cooked more or less, generally more, since she was twelve. She has a special liking for lamb chops, and has cooked them very many times. And to this day she serves up liver colored chops, fried, and swimming in a greasy liquid! Merely looking at them will give a right-minded person dyspepsia. This woman has eaten lamb chops elsewhere, cooked according to the best civilized methods, and has praised them; but each time she returns sorely to her frying-pan and grease. Now upon what hypothesis can this be explained? Can it be possible that there are human beings so constituted that their bodies and minds act independently, so that the sensation of taste has no mental effect whatever? For in these instances the results were not the effect of carelessness or indifference—they both thought their horrid abominations were feasts for the gods.

And not the least curious thing in these cases is that these poor cooks have sharp eyes for the faults of the butcher and the baker. The butcher knows better than to offer a stale or tough chop to No. 2; and if the baker were to serve No. 1 with such bread as she makes herself, she would refuse to pay for it, entirely unconscious of the collection she would thus cast upon herself.

Why do some housekeepers continue, week after week, month after month, and year after year, to use raw flour for "thickening?" Would it not be reasonable to suppose that after a number of years—say ten—the raw flour, and the stickiness of the compound, would suggest to them the possibility of altering their manner of preparing it?

We have suggested but a few things that happened to occur to us, and those relating to only one branch of housekeeping; but if we were to pursue our inquiries into other departments we should be met at every turn with phenomena similar to the above. They indicate the existence in the midst of our home life of marvels that science has so far failed to explain, and for which reason can find no law.—*Scribner for March.*

Woman's Influence.

As a rule, the whole tone of a home depends upon the woman at the head of it; the average home—not the poverty-stricken home, nor the wealthy home. In this average home, whether the parlour shall be used and enjoyed, whether the table shall be invitingly spread, whether bright lights and bright fires shall give warmth and cheer on winter nights—whether, in brief, the home shall be an agreeable or disagreeable place, is usually what the woman determines. Men are powerless in the matter. Some find solace for a dismal home in study; some, occupation in business; some submit with what patience they can; others are attracted by the cheer of the public house; and I especially young men who are apt in consequence to drift into bad company and bad habits.

Miss BONAR, daughter of the Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, of Glasgow, presided at the organ in Mr. Savkey's absence, and previous to his arrival at the meetings.