LUCIUS, OR THE FLIGHT OF CONSTANTINE. (By the Ven. R. I. Wilberforce, A. M.)

CHAPTER V. THE FLIGHT. Why rather, Sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs, Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee, And hushed with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,-Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,

Under the canopies of costly state, And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?

Lucius's first step, when he returned to quarters, was to solicit leave of absence, with a view of making a visit to Nicomedia. His purpose was to resign his command, even though he forfeited the favour of Constantine, lest he should be called upon, in the exercise of his duty, to take part in such scenes as he had just witnessed. After two years of absence, therefore, he was once more walking the streets of Nicomedia. It was towards the conclusion of April. When he had ascertained that Constantine was not in the city, but was expected to arrive there the next day, he walked forth to see what changes had taken place since his last visit to the capital. He passed the house of Anthimus and the site of his church-where the very buildings which he remembered had been succeeded by new edifices -and then proceeded to the square which lay in front of the palace. As he was walking there, he heard his name pronounced, and had the pleasure of greeting his old comrade Gallus. "You find me," said Gallus, "better off in the world than when you went away. I had friends in the palace who more than made up for the loss of my poor master Dorotheus. If you are willing to share my hospitality again, I can make you more comfortable than I

"And without the sight of either fire or torture, I hope," said the other.

"Don't speak of such things," said Gallus; "to those who have witnessed what I have, they are too

painful to remember." Lucius readily accepted the invitation, which his old comrade gave in a very friendly manner; and a few minutes found him again in the palace of the Cæsars. The two companions told one another all that had passed since their last meeting. The circumstances in which they had then been placed had given them great confidence in one another; and Lucius did not hesitate to mention why he had come to the capital, and to detail the fearful scenes he had witnessed .-Gallus had as painful a story to unfold in the dreadful tortures to which Dorotheus and the other Christian officers of the palace had been subjected. The cruelties which he had witnessed had evidently given him the greatest disgust of Galerius, to whose instrumentality he referred them; and he looked upon Constantine as the only hope of better things in the imperial family. The prospect of his succession to the crown, if Dioclesian, who had lately been ill, should resign the sceptre, was discussed between them.

"Dioclesian has always shewn Constantine much favour," said Lucius, "and his father Constantius is the elder of the Cæsars."

"I have but one fear," replied the other; "lest Galerius, who is present, should have such influence with the emperor as to defeat Constantine's claims .-You know how constantly Galerius has sought his destruction. It was, no doubt, with this view that he urged him into that battle with a lion, out of which he got so marvellously.

Lucius now told his friend, what he had never communicated to any one, the part he had himself taken in this transaction, and how it had influenced his for-

"I have a great mind," said Gallus, "to be equally communicative to you. I think I could guess what is going on at this very time in respect to the imperial

Lucius pressed him to communicate what he knew. the persecution of the Christians began; and if you have not forgotten a certain secret passage which ran by the emperor,s apartments, you may know how we came to divine something of their purport. Now similar consultations are a-foot at present; and the emperor's resignation I take to be their design."

"You would greatly further the interests of Constantine," said Lucius, "if you would use the opportunity you possess to give him notice of any plots which may be laid against him."

Gallus's own inclinations were so much on Constantine's side, that he needed little pressing to decide him to take part directly in his favour:

"Why should we not learn at once what is passing?" said Lucius.

"You must work cautiously," said Gallus, "the sword of Damocles is over your head." Thus speak-

ing, he led the way to the very passage through which he had once before guided Lucius, when he left the palace. It was a vacancy behind the wall of the emperor's apartments, originally left with a view of leading to another chamber, but now accessible only through a hole which opened into another room, in which the emperor occasionally slept. This hole had been carefully stopped with a panel by some one who perceived the use which might be made of the passage, and a curtain hanging in front effectually concealed the place from observation. The passage led, at the other end, to the secret door by which Lucius formerly escaped; but as this door opened only from within, the two friends were obliged to enter the passage from the bed-room. Yet as Gallus's office often led him there. they passed unchallenged; and thus they heard part of the conference, which, as it is reported by a contemporary historian, * must ere long have found its way to the public. The Cæsar Galerius was pressing his father-in-law, Dioclesian, to resign the empire, alleging that he was weary of his fifteen years' service in Hlyricum and against the barbarians of the Danube, and thought it time that he should rise to the higher title of Augustus. It was understood that Maximian, who, with Dioclesian, had hitherto borne this higher rank, was ready also to resign. Constantius and Galerius would then succeed their two fathers-in-law in the title of Augustus, and two new Cæsars must be appointed.

Well," said Dioclesian, "let it be; but, at all events, new Cæsars must be chosen according to the common opinion of us all."

Galerius .- " What is the use of taking opinions, when the two others must needs acquiesce in what we

shall have done?" Maximian's son, Maxentius, was of so ferocious nature, that neither his relations nor the public desired his elevation: of him, therefore, there was no thought: but Dioclesian immediately mentioned Constantine,

as being popular not only with the soldiers and people, but with himself. Galerius, however, cut him short. "He is not worthy. Even as a private man, afterwards leave the palace by the secret exit, with he despised me; what will he do if he comes to be emperor?"

"And yet," said Dioclesian, "he is amiable; and would govern so as to be considered even better and more amiable than his father.'

"The consequence would be," said Galerius, "that he would thwart all my wishes."

Dioclesian .- "Whom would you have, then?" "Severus," said the other.

Dioclesian .- "What! that drunken fool, who makes night into day, and day into night?"

Galerius .- "He is a fit man, and his liberality has gained the soldiers. I have already sent him to Maximian, to be declared his successor. Dioclesian .- "Well, whom would you name for the

second ?" "Daia," said Galerius, -referring to a half-barbarian youth, whom he had lately raised from the situation of a herdsman to be a tribune in the army, and to whom he had given the name of Maximin.

* Lactantius de M. P. § 18.

"Who is he?" said Dioclesian. "He is my relation," replied the other.

nen to undertake the care of the commonwealth." Galerius .- "I have made good proof of them."

whom the care of the government will chiefly fall. I tain before him, he crept through the opening. And have taken pains, as long as I could hold it, for the now he stood up by the bed; for the passage opened safety of the state. If any reverse befalls it, the fault close to it. The light enabled him distinctly to surwill not be mine.'

him the machinations of his enemies. But the prince | lect was not wanting, but where all traces of that good was not to be found till, towards the middle of the next | humour which might have been expected to accompa-The place of meeting was near a lofty column, crowned sleep, from which had proceeded the doom of thouwith a statue of Jupiter, which had been erected as a sands. Nature seemed now to revenge its outraged memorial that in an elevated rostrum in that very place laws; for he was evidently contending in feverish years. All looked to Constantine as his successor .- who made it unhappy. But the lessons which he had

town of Salona, in his native Illyria. hostility, he learnt that his safety could only be se- eternity might be coined out of a single hour. Every this could be effected, he begged Lucius to continue steps which he had taken, it was impossible to go allowed him to remain.

to beg that his son might be sent to him. Still Gale- blessing—the great truths of which he had obscurely

free Galerius from fear of retaliation. fore made for his destruction came to his recollection. emperor vainly courted, seemed to drop upon him its His only hope lay in flight. No one might leave Ni- Lethæan dews. Yet if he moved, all was lost. In comedia without the emperor's permission; and what this painful struggle did he stand for two hours. But chance was there of distancing his pursuers, when at length, O happiness,-the glaring eye, which he "You may remember," said Gallus, "those secret conferences which the emperor had, the winter before he conference with the conference had been also as a superior of the conference with the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as a superior of the conference had been also as confidence. But before any steps could be taken, ment; and not till he replaced the panel which the emperor, fearful lest his colleague should take being disturbed. That sound startled him. He rose from that time was fixed; as some time, it was said, was needful to make preparation for his journey .-The preceding evening arrived: Lucius, who was to attend him, had made every preparation; the emperor's order for his departure was prepared and signed; and all difficulty seemed over. But when Constantine applied next morning for the permission to depart, Galerius had torn it. "You must not go," he said, "to-day;" and assigning some frivolous reason for delay, he would have him wait three days longer .-Then, also, he had some further pretext, till the young prince, in despair, saw that there was a fixed design to detain him till his father's death should render his ourney useless.

With this feeling he asked Gallus, the next time that Galerius had fixed a day for his going, whether it would not be possible to obtain the license by stealth from the emperor's cabinet, and set off secretly during the night. Galerius, with a view of keeping up appearances, was accustomed to sign the pass which would enable him to leave the city; but he uniformly destroyed it as soon as the day arrived. Gallus pro mised to acquaint himself where the document was kept; and in the meantime Constantine, who had denined to make the attempt, ordered that horses should be in readiness for him and Lucius on the European shore of the Propontis. Everything, however, must depend on the possibility of obtaining the emperor's license, without which an attempt to leave the city would produce an immediate pursuit, which must of course be fatal. Could he but gain twelve hours' start, Constantine thought that he might reach the European shore in safety; and that done, he must trust to the speed of the horses which he had provided, and which would carry him, he expected, into the wilder parts of Thrace; once there, the open country would

enable him to escape observation. And now the day of enterprise arrived. Constantine was to leave the palace early in the morning, and. after waiting at a house in the town, was to meet his party at the western extremity of the palace; while Lucius was to execute a scheme which his friend had devised for obtaining the necessary pass. It was a matter of both difficulty and danger. Gallus had ascertained that the pass had always been kept in a small cabinet, accessible only through the emperor's bedroom; but this bedroom was the very apartment in which terminated the secret passage before described. If Lucius could conceal himself in that passage, he might then enter the emperor's chamber, although its doors were both watched and bolted, and

which he was already acquainted.

The first difficulty was to hide Lucius in the secre1 passage. Gallus, who had access to the emperor's bedroom, concealed his friend in a cupboard which lay near it, and then, watching his opportunity, introduced him while the whole household were at their midday meal. Thus secreted, he must now trust to himself. After watching the whole evening, he was assured, by the increasing silence, for no light reached him,—that the night was coming on. Presently he could hear the emperor's chamberlains approach .-They searched the bedroom, to see that no one was concealed there, and the moveable panel, near which Lucius was sitting, nearly fell out, as one of them ment, superintendence and sale, of all Lands in this Province registered in the name of Jacques Adrian Pierre Barbiers, and the cartain before it with his wand, to make struck the curtain before it with his wand, to make sure that no one was hiding behind it. And now came the emperor. He bade his domestics leave him undisturbed till late in the morning; adding, "If Constantine applies for his license to depart, he must wait my rising." A light was left burning in his room, by which Lucius, who knew exactly where the cabi-

net stood, saw that he should be able to approach it. When he thought, therefore, that the emperor might Dioclesian (with a sigh) .- "You don't give me fit be asleep, he removed the panel. This was done without any noise; for he had already spread a curtain on the floor, lest the sound made by his laying it Dioclesian .- "The loss will be mainly yours, on down should be perceptible. Then removing the curvey the well-known features of the sleeper. There After hearing this singular conference, Lucius was was his vast frame, rendered more gross by habitual oubly auxious to see Constantine, and to explain to intemperance—a countenance in which a rough intelday, Lucius saw him at a public assembly, to which ny his boisterous nature were effaced by habitual selfday, Lucius saw him at a public assembly, to which the soldiery of all the legions in the neighbourhood indulgence. Those eyes were closed which had so indulgence are legions in the neighbourhood indulgence. Those eyes were closed which had so indulgence are legions in the neighbourhood indulgence. Those eyes were closed which had so indulgence are legions in the neighbourhood indulgence. Those eyes were closed which had so indulgence are legions in the neighbourhood indulgence. Those eyes were closed which had so indulgence are legions in the neighbourhood indulgence. Those eyes were closed which had so indulgence are legions in the neighbourhood indulgence are legions. had been summoned. Constantine, who had been often glared with satisfaction on the agonies of his into the country, returned just in time to attend it .- | fellow-creatures. The mouth was open in his heavy Galerius himself had first been presented to the sol- dreams with those pangs of remorse with which, in diery in his imperial dress. The rumour spread that the commission of crimes, he seemed never to be Dioclesian would that day take a step, which he was troubled. Lucius's hand instinctively grasped the known to have been meditating, and resign a sceptre emperor's dagger, which lay beside him, and he felt which was become too burdensome for his declining a strong temptation to free the world of the tyrant The soldiers were expressing their hopes of his eleva- learnt among the Christians recurred to his thoughts. tion, and Lucius was in vain endeavouring to make his Already he had so far adopted their opinions, that he way up to him, when a sudden call to silence announced was resolved to apply on the first opportunity for adthe appearance of the aged emperor. Ascending the mission among the number of catechumens; and he rostrum, he said, with tears, that his broken health re- remembered that the unlawfulness of assassination quired rest; that he must now commit the sceptre to had been among the first points he had heard from firmer hands, and appoint fresh Cæsars. At this point, them. Laying down, therefore the emperor's dagger, every one's expectation was raised to the utmost pitch. he crept on his hands and knees across the chamber, What was the astonishment of all who were present, so that, if the sleeper awoke, he would be concealed with the exception of Lucius, who knew the resolve from his sight. It was well he did so. Galerius, who which had been taken, when he declared that Severus had already started repeatedly from his sleep, seemed and Maximin were Cæsars. Severus was well known; to detect the slight vibration which his movements and Maximin were Cæsars. Severus was well known; to detect the slight vibration which his movements but as for Maximin, men were at a loss to know who communicated to the floor of the apartment, and sat was meant by him. Some supposed that Constantine, up in his bed, but the light, which was near the emulation of England Cloths, Kerseymeres, Rich Vestings, Patent Cashwhose father was Maximian's sou-in law, had received that name. But Constantine, who was on the rostrum, near the emperor, stood mute; while Galerius, departure as he expected; and after a time returned stretching forth his hand, drew Daia from behind him, to the bedroom. But the emperor was still awake.—

The Tailoring department will continue to be conducted on those principles calculated to insure a continuance of the disthe royal purple. People began to ask who he was, light of the lamp, which was burning near him. Luand whence came he. But so sudden was the blow, cius, who was standing behind a curtain near the door that no voice was raised in opposition. Meanwhile of the cabinet, was compelled to wait in perfect still-Dioclesian descended from the rostrum, well satisfied, ness, feeling that the least noise on his part would as it seemed, with his own escape from the cares of consign him to instant torture and death. Several office; and saying that he might now return to his times was he tempted to regret that he had omitted WOOLLEN DRAPER AND TAILOR original name of Diocles, he left the capital for the the opportunity of securing his return, which the dagger of the emperor afforded him. Sometimes he felt But though Lucius's information had not enabled inclined to rush on the monster, and even now to at-Constantine to take any steps for averting the injury tempt his destruction. The minutes which he had to which was thus done him, yet it was not without its wait seemed the longest which in his whole life he hal of the best value. From perceiving the full extent of Galerius's ever known: by such a torture as this, he thought, an cured by his departure from the imperial court. Till second seemed to increase the danger. After the at his quarters in the palace, where Gallus willingly back in the design. Yet Constantine, he feared, would despair of his appearance, and perhaps return fashionable manner and on moderate terms. But Constantine's course was not so easy as might be expected. When he mentioned to Galerius that hopes which he had cherished, and which seemed Barristers' Robes, &c. made on the shortest notice and in he wished to visit his father Constantius, the emperor likely to be cut off, chased one another through his superior style. put him off by various pretexts. Constantius, whose mind; -his distant home-his walks on the free hills health had now begun to fail, wrote to the emperor of his happy country—his mother's kiss—his father's rius refused. And as further accounts indicated that heard, and which he was now ready to believe would Constantins's death might ere long be expected, it so mightily conduce to his happiness. His mind became manifest that he was kept in order that he wearied with such thoughts began at length to recoi might be deprived of any share of his inheritance, and upon the overtasked powers of his body. He had be put to death as soon as his father's decease might been watching painfully ever since noon—his very excitement had fatigued him: the hot atmosphere of the selected stock of And now all the attempts which Galerius had be- room increased his lassitude. That sleep, which the West of England Broad Cloths, Cassimeres, Doeskins, stantine had many conferences with Lucius, and with ally descended. Ga lerius slept. With tenfold cau-Gallus, who had now been introduced to the prince's tion the young Briton crept again across the apartmore pressing letters arrived from Canstantius; and concealed his passage, did the sleeper give signs of some strong steps upon his refusal, gave his consent to and called out. But Lucius was now in safety. As allow the young prince to depart. The seventh day nothing was to be seen, the alarm subsided. After waiting a few minutes, to prevent its recurrence, he trod safely, yet gently, along the secret passage; and

> A hasty recognition assured them that all The danger was now over. Long before the emperor rose on the following day, they were out of the reach of pursuit. What afterwards happened,-their speedy passage across Thrace,—their safe arrival in Gaul,—the joy with which Constantius received his son at Boulogne,-his subsequent elevation to the imperial throne at York, is matter of public history. Such was the last flight of Constantine.

> the hidden door once more let him forth into the

streets of Nicomedia. A few paces from the place of

meeting he found Constantine, almost as anxious as

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