

LUCIUS, OR THE FLIGHT OF CONSTANTINE.

(By the Ven. R. I. Wilderforce, A. M.)

CHAPTER V.

THE FLIGHT.

Why rather, Sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs, Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee.

Lucius's first step, when he returned to quarters, was to solicit leave of absence, with a view of making a visit to Nicomedia.

"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 Caesars.

"I have but one fear," replied the other; "lest Gallus, who is present, should have such influence with the emperor as to defeat Constantine's claims."

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

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

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

After hearing this singular conference, Lucius was doubly anxious to see Constantine, and to explain to him the machinations of his enemies.

But Constantine's course was not so easy as might be expected. When he mentioned to Gallus that he wished to visit his father Constantius, the emperor put him off by various pretexts.

And now all the attempts which Gallus had before made for his destruction came to his recollection. His only hope lay in flight.

With this feeling he asked Gallus, the next time that Gallus 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.

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.

"I have already sent him to Maximian, to be declared his successor."

not stood, saw that he should be able to approach it. When he thought, therefore, that the emperor might be asleep, he removed the panel.

Lucius was sitting, nearly fell out, as one of them struck the curtain before it with his hand, to make sure that no one was hiding behind it.

THE danger was now over. Long before the emperor rose on the following day, they were out of the reach of pursuit.

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