

pause, "what a sweet and heavenly recompense ! Can the sufferings I endured and which have led me to the knowledge of the most ineffable prodigy of the divine goodness, have any proportion to the happiness which fills my soul at this hour ? "

"The veil must be lifted still further," said Valeria, looking lovingly at her father. "Faith teaches us the not less august sequel of this ineffable mystery : The priest who stands at the divine table, at the altar, offers on that same altar an unbloody sacrifice, the august Victim being CHRIST Himself. But to penetrate so many secret mysteries, it is necessary that you should first be instructed in other truths and I fear thou art already very tired to-day. "

"Can the body feel its weakness," replied Rufinus, "when the soul rises above the earth ? Do the chains of the condemned weigh heavy when all heaven brightens his prison ? But thy father will obey thee as the lamb does its gentle shepherdess, even if she makes it leave the sweet pastures of celestial transports for the deserts of this world. "

Followed by Irene and Candidus, Valeria led her father back to the entrance of the Catacombs ; the open passage allowed the light of day to penetrate and invited the pilgrims to return to the garden.

Leaning on Valeria, Rufinus painfully mounted the steep steps ; he looked at his daughter with a smile in which tenderness and gratitude were mingled with the sweetest joy.

"When on the steep path which leads from error to truth, charity offers her arm to the traveller," he said, "by the grace of GOD he will arrive at the goal. "

At that time, as it often happens even in these days, a