seniority. In the time of the Maccabees, the Sanhedrin was the supreme court of justice and the final court of appeal in Israel ; but its power was limited by the Romans. Twenty-three members formed a quorum, and while a bare majority might acquit, a majority of two was required to condemn, unless when all the members were present, and then a majority of one might condemn. The Pharisees and Sadducees in the Council often quarreled, and this lessened its influence. It could meet any day except the Sabbath, but as sentence of death could be pronounced only on the day after the trial, such trials were not held on a Saturday, nor on the day before a festival. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin moved from place to place, became only a school of interpretation, and finally sat for the last time at Tiberias in A.D. 425.

APPLICATION

Filled with jealousy (Rev. Ver.), v. 17. An old writer has it : " Of all the passions, jealousy is that which exacts the hardest service, and pays the bitterest wages. Its service is—to watch the success of our enemy : its wages—to be sure of that success." Let there be no place in your mind for jealousy. It fills the heart with the hot and dusty ashes of wrong desires. It gives you pain upon all the occasions which should give you pleasure. The ancients represented jealousy as a man with the head of a hawk ; in his left hand he held a stick, and in his right a whip with three thongs. With these he punished his slaves.

The Green-eyed Monster

" O, beware..of jealousy

> It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock
>
> The meat it feeds on."

But the angel..brought them forth, v. 19. God's angels still help defenceless ones who seek Him. Not long ago, a south-bound ship was wrecked the first day after it had come into the tropical waters. The crew took to the boats. A high sea was running, and it was only with the greatest care they kept the boats from swamping. As the dark night approached, most of the men were filled with fear. But one of them was a Christian, and he had the assurance that somehow God would bring them through the night in safety. He prayed earnestly for the protecting presence of God's angels. As soon as the sun dropped below the horizon, the ocean was full of a wonderful light. It was a phosphorescent sea they were in, and the night was as the day about the frightened boatmen.

" The Night Shall be Light About Me "

Opened the prison doors, v. 19. There is a fable of a man in prison. He disliked his confinement. The misery of the place tortured him. He longed to get out. One day a shining Person came to his cell and said, " Come forth ! " But the man crouched down where he sat, and cried aloud, " No ! No ! I am not ready to go yet. After all, the prison is warm and dry. Outside it is strange and the wind is cold. Besides, if my fellow prisoners are not virtuous, they are friendly." And he turned to his fellow prisoners and screamed, " Save me ! Save me from the Man in white, and from the open door ! " How many refuse the freedom from sin that Christ offers !

Refusing Freedom

All the words of this life, v. 20. A legend tells how a secret disciple of Christ found the three crosses lying in a heap on Calvary, some days after the crucifixion, and not knowing which was the Saviour's, she had a dead body brought and laid upon each of the crosses in turn. When it touched the third cross, the body was restored to life. This old story has no foundation in fact, but it pictures the power of Jesus to give the new life of purity and love.

A Legend of the Cross

We must obey God rather than men (Rev. Ver.), v. 29. These are the words the martyrs uttered, when the hand of persecution tried to turn them from Christ. John Bunyan was sentenced to three months in jail for preaching the gospel. When he was being taken out of the court, the judge said to him, " Unless you abstain from the course you have been pursuing, we shall have to banish you from the country ". To this Bunyan replied, " I am at a point with you

The Martyrs' Motto