

They bound him, and they fired the pile, quick raged the
 flames abroad,
 But, lo, the Heaven-chained element harmed not the Saint
 of God!
 As the three children stood of old,† save, 'mid the circling
 fire,
 It curled about the martyr's feet, and raged, but soared ne-
 higher,
 Till a rude soldier pierced his side with malice-sharpened
 spear,
 Then far and wide the fiery tide rolled in its mad career.

So as the Prophet‡ went of old, in chariots of flame,
 The old man's saintly spirit passed to God from whom
 it came.
 His soul the Angels met, the fire and steel destroyed the
 rest—
 O CHRIST! inspire with warm desire my weak and erring
 breast,
 That I may suffer all for Thee, nor deem the trial sharp,
 With all the free high loyalty of good Saint Polycarp!

ACOLYTIS.

THE LAMP OF THE SANCTUARY.

PART II.—ITS DARKENING.

“May the counsel of the wicked be far from me. How
 often shall the lamp of the wicked be put out, and a deluge
 come upon them, and He shall distribute the sorrows of
 His wrath.”—Job xxi. 17.

Nearly six years had now passed over since the
 vow was spoken; and they had been years all of joy
 and happiness; when a change came over the
 household of Pierrot, which blighted it sadly with
 sorrow and woe.

A little before this time, two strange men came
 with their families to settle in the neighbourhood.
 They were a rough set, and no one knew anything
 about them. They took a piece of land at some
 distance from any other dwelling, and built them-
 selves large huts of timber, much like those of
 others; but while they were working at them, they
 seemed jealous of any one's coming to look at
 them; and when they were finished they never
 invited any one inside. The men did not seem to
 have any particular occupation, and the women
 were idle and slovenly; yet they always seemed to
 be better off than their neighbours, and on Sundays
 made a very dashing appearance. Nobody knew
 what to make of them, but it was clear there was
 some mystery about them.

A few months after they had settled there, a sensi-
 ble alteration in the character of Pierrot was obser-
 vable by his wife and daughter. He went to his
 work with less cheerfulness, and got apparently
 through much less of it, for his earnings clearly fell

off. He was thoughtful and reserved, almost moody,
 and for the first time had evidently a painful secret
 which he concealed from his family. Instead of re-
 turning home as soon as his work was done to en-
 joy their society, they would have to wait some
 hours in silent grief, and when he did come in, he
 was cold and silent, and made some poor excuse for
 his lateness. At length one day when he went to
 work, he said to his wife: ‘Annette, I shall proba-
 bly not return till very late to-night—so don't sit up
 for me. I have important business which may even
 detain me all night.’ He gave no time for any
 remonstrance, but hurried forth. Oh! what a sor-
 rowful day was that for mother and daughter! they
 scarcely spoke all day, and each tried to hide her
 tears from the other; for the child, though only
 eight years of age, had sense enough to know that
 things were going fearfully wrong. Towards even-
 ing, therefore, both guided by the same impulse,
 took the road towards Mont-Marie, to pour forth
 their grief, and seek consolation at the foot of the
 altar. There Marie knelt in her usual place behind
 the lamp; she raised her eyes and her heart, and
 was soon absorbed in meditation. And her medita-
 tion was this:

She thought of the desolate home which awaited
 the blessed Mother of our Lord as she descended
 from Mount Calvary; the joyless board, the cheer-
 less chamber, the restless couch, prepared for her
 after a day of anguish and of blight. There, com-
 paring sorrow with sorrow, how trifling appeared her
 own afflictions beside Her's. There, eyes that fall
 on garments sprinkled from the wine-press, trodden
 that day, of God's justice; there, ears that yet ring
 with the clang of the hammer, forcing nails through
 the quivering flesh; there, a heart pierced through
 with a sword of grief, panting to its core with the
 keenest of maternal sorrows; there, body and soul
 staggering under a weight of anguish that would
 have crushed a frame of iron and a mind of adamant,
 but can be borne up by Her unresisting patience.
 And in the thought of such an ocean of sorrows,
 how small a drop did those appear to that child of
 grace, which the heavenly Father had allotted her!
 And now, after each kind friend that has accompa-
 nied this sovereign Lady to Her humble home has
 departed, she sees her left at last alone in the silence
 of night, with the lamp (fed perhaps from the gar-
 den of Gethsemani), beaming upon Her pale coun-
 tenance, on which that day has written more of woe
 than years had traced before, glittering in tear after
 tear, as it trickles from Her dimmed celestial eye,
 watching alone beside Her, sole thing that cheers
 and sheds a ray of comfort through the dreary
 chamber and the drearier heart. And, in her child-
 ish thought, she blessed that pale and trembling
 light which then gave Mary comfort; and felt as
 though the little flame above her, shining now upon
 her and upon the sacred representation of that Queen
 of sorrows; before her were the faithful descendant
 and representative of that which then lighted up and

* St Polycarp, pupil of the “beloved disciple” and Bishop
 of Smyrna, suffered martyrdom in that city about A. D. 164.—
 for an account thereof, vid Epistle of the Church of Smyrna.

† Daniel iii. 13-26.

‡ 2 Kings ii. 2 et. seq.