

burns in her honour, with the vestal virgins, the glory of the city of Rome ! ”

“ Prefect,”—nobly answered the young Roman maiden, “ if I refused your son, a living man capable of thinking, feeling, walking, speaking and enjoying like myself the light of the sun,—if for the love of Christ, I would not even look at him, it was not in order to bow my head, afterwards, before soulless and lifeless idols, before cold and impassive stones.”

The Prefect could not understand how one could prefer the promises of faith to the most seductive realities, and as he felt that life was nothing for Agnes, he did not even threaten her with death ; but to this noble child, radiant with beauty and innocence, he was cowardly enough to say :

“ If you do not sacrifice to our gods I will have you taken to places of infamy, and there, to the dishonour of your ancestors and to your own, you will be abandoned to every outrage. Have pity, then, on yourself, sacrifice to Vesta, or.”

“ Do not excite yourself unnecessarily,” O Prefect, Agnes quietly answered. “ I will not sacrifice to your gods, I am in your hands, but I trust in Christ to whom I am consecrated. You know not His power, but He will know how to defend me, and I shall not be defiled ! ”

The Prefect's only answer was to order her to be stripped.

Executors of this order were found ! But—wonderful to relate—no sooner had their sinful hands torn off the young girl's clothing, than her hair, in thick, magnificent ringlets, spread itself around her, and, better than any garment, hid her beautiful form from view.

Conducted to a house of illrepute, she found an angel waiting there to protect her, and when she entered the room prepared as a tomb for her innocence, the saintly child vanished in a dazzling light. A white garment was brought her from heaven, and, peacefully, as if she were in a sacred temple, she knelt in prayer.

The Prefect's son, for daring to approach her, was struck stone dead, by the angel ; but touched by his father's great grief, the saint restored him to life. —Then, the young man went forth from the house and proclaimed,