

prophesied that a time would come when the death of One who would be the fruit of the bridge-tree would end for all time the Empire of the Jews.

Solomon, astonished and alarmed by her prediction, ordered the tree to be taken away and buried deep in the earth.

Many years after the death of King Solomon, when the Queen of Sheba and the tree were forgotten, the Jews made, over the ground where the tree was buried, a pond for washing sheep, called afterwards the Probatica, or the Pool of Bethesda. At once, because of the sacred wood, this pool became wonderful. The sick and those suffering from disease bathed in the water, then an Angel breathed upon the pool and, all at once the water began to be troubled, and the first person who entered into it after the Angel had passed over received renewed health because of the blessing of the Angel and Seth's tree buried beneath.

Now the morning before Judas betrayed our Saviour, this tree of Seth rose to the surface of the water and was seen floating in the pool by a man named Simon, a Cyrenian. This Simon lifted up the tree from the pool and sold it to a carpenter who, the next day, was commanded to make crosses on which three malefactors were, that afternoon, to be crucified. And one of the malefactors was Jesus of Nazareth. Now from the tree of Seth he made one of the crosses, and this cross was the one that our Saviour, assisted by Simon the Cyrenian, carried from Pilate's Court to Calvary and on which He was crucified, the First and Only Fruit it ever bore.

THE CROSS OF JESUS.

We now reach a period when the legendary dissolves into the historic and makes tradition. After the crucifixion, and while the body of Christ lay in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and the bodies of the two thieves were thrown into the Gehenna, the common dumping ground, as food for fire or carrion-birds, the three crosses and the instruments of crucifixion—the nails and ropes—were buried in conformity with a long established custom of the Jews.

When Constantine the Great and Maxentius contended for the Imperial Crown, Constantine worn with fatigue entered his tent one afternoon and sought repose. While he slept he dreamt that an Angel came to his cot, and, placing a hand upon his head, told him to look up. Then the silken covering of the tent disappeared and the Emperor saw a great and luminous cross in the heavens and, immediately over it, in large letters of burnished gold was the inscription: "By this sign thou shalt conquer." Late that night he again saw in a dream the luminous cross and then Christ appeared to him and told him to carry a figure of the cross on his banner and standards.

Constantine summoned his captains to a consultation and made known the vision. The pagan Emperor and his pagan generals agreed that the dream was of happy omen, and that the voice of the Angel and the apparition of the mysterious Jew meant the friendship and aid of a strange god. The following day, on the Imperial Banner, the cross was blazoned and to the Imperial Standard was given the name "Labarum—the Gift of God." When Constantine met the troops of Maxentius at the Milvan Bridge he won a great victory. His soldiers, though nearly all pagans, went into battle carrying the monogram of Christ on their shields. This battle which was fought October 28, 312, led to the conversion to Christianity of Constantine and his mother, and to the downfall of Paganism as the national faith of Rome.

After defeating Licinius in a pitched battle on the plains of Italy, Constantine returned to Rome and issued his famous "Edict of Tolerance," proclaiming