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Three ancient men in Bethlehem's cave
With awful wonder stand;
A voice had call'd them from their grave
In some far eastern land.

They lived, they trod the former earth,
When the old waters swell'd;
The ark, that womb of second birth,
Their house and lineage held.

Pale Japhet bows the knee with gold,
Bright Sem sweet incense brings,
And Cham, the myrrh his fingers hold:
Lo! the three Orient Kings!

Types of the total earth, they hail'd
The signal's starry frame;
Shuddering with second life, they quail'd
At the child Jesus' name.

Then slow the patriarchs turn'd and trod,
And this their parting sigh,—
"Our eyes have seen the living God,
And now once more to die."

NECTAN.

ANOTHER LIE NAILED.

VII.

LET it be borne in mind that in thus proving the perfect equality of slave and freeman in the primitive Church, as contradistinguished from the abominable state of abjection in which the slave was held in Pagan society, we are at the same time proving the action of the Church *against* slavery, and are thereby nailing by the ear to the pillory post of educated scorn *the lie* that the Church has never opposed slavery.

If perfect equality, such as we have seen, was vindicated by the Church for the Roman slave whilst *living*, it was not withheld him when *dead*.

If we descend into one of those numerous *columbaria* wherein the Pagan Roman Patrician deposited the ashes of his household dead, we shall find each niche, each urn labelled with the name, condition and employment, when in the flesh, of him, whose *cremated* ashes rest therein. This urn contains the ashes of my lady's tire-woman (perhaps done to death with my lady's bodkin, because my lady's curls are rostrive, or because

my lady is jealous of the Poet Ovid's attentions;) this niche contains all the mortal remains (after cremation) of my master's slave doctor, or slave door-keeper, or slave baker (as the case may be) duly labelled. A whole Roman household is represented here, by ticket only and a handful of ashes truly, but still represented. And as a Roman household sometimes amounted, as we know, to 4,000 slaves our *columbarium* is in truth a right populous city—of ashes. One only inhabitant of the upper villa is absent; one only funeral urn is wanting. The *Pagan* master will not sit side by side even in his ashes, even in an urn with his ancient slaves. A sumptuous mausoleum must be erected *elsewhere* to contain and keep from the winds the few pinches of dust—all of mortal that remains of this proud Pagan patrician.

Not so in the Christian catacombs; *not so*. Of the thousands of slaves known to have been interred therein scarcely a single urn bears the record of servitude. All ranks and conditions are here, and all repose indiscriminately. Here a noble Christian matron, there a tire-woman; here a virgin, there a widow; here a priest, there a farm laborer; everywhere pious expressions, sacred symbols, acts of faith, *nowhere* the record of *servitude*. This fact which cannot be controverted is valuable as shewing how fully in the Christian mind, long before it had any foundation in fact, the idea of perfect equality and fraternity had been realised. Either slavery as far as Christian society was concerned had ceased to exist, or any inequality as attached to it had ceased to be thought of. Either was an open protest and a strong withal *against slavery*.

When Lactantius boasted with no empty braggardising indeed, that "amongst us (Christians) there is no distinction of persons, of rich or poor, slaves or free," he was only asserting in so many words the broad sentiment of universal fraternity which bound together in death as in life every member of the primitive Church, and was only predicating with the human voice, what the silent tongues of thousands of slave urns repeated beneath his feet.

After thirty years of research amongst the catacombs Maraugoni, a celebrated