

(Calendar) we shall be called to commemorate the life and death of another noble martyr—Perpetua. She was a lady of high rank and influence, and, though young in years, was already a widow. When in the year 202 the Emperor Severus issued an edict against the Christians, Perpetua was living at Carthage, on the coast of North Africa. The persecution was carried on with great severity both in Egypt and at Carthage, and among the first to be thrown into prison were Perpetua and her companions.

Deeply touching is the description she has left behind her of her sufferings. She had an infant a few months old; and while her mother was a Christian, her father, whom she dearly loved, still remained a heathen. Again and again did he visit her, entreating her to renounce her faith, and purchase her liberty by worshipping the false gods. On one occasion, pointing to a vessel which stood near, she inquired of him whether it could be called by any other than its proper name. On his replying that it could not, 'Neither,' said she, 'can I call myself other than what I am—a Christian.' After this she was removed into a dark and dreary dungeon, in the vain hope that this might so tell upon her spirits that she would yield to her persecutors. Accustomed to the refinements and comforts of her own home, 'I was tempted,' she confesses, 'for I had never been in such darkness before. Oh! what a dreadful day.' It was soon after this that her infant child was brought to her through the interest of friends, when she exclaimed in her joy, 'The prison all at once has become like a palace to me, and I would rather be here than anywhere else.'

But yet again a painful scene awaited her. It was the last, the most heart-breaking visit from her father. With no angry or reproachful words, but with bitter tears, he besought, he implored her to live for the sake of her child—for the sake of all who loved her. He threw himself at her feet. He conjured her to have compassion upon his grey hairs. Alas! he did not understand the nature of Christianity. He knew not that it was written, 'There is no man that hath left house or parents or brethren or wife or children for the kingdom of God's sake who shall not receive in the world to come life everlasting.' It was for Perpetua a choice between these and her Lord, and though with a breaking heart, she could not but remain constant in her allegiance to Him.

Her father and her mother forsook her, but the Lord took her up. Joyfully she passed with her comrades to her martyrdom. And as the people pressed round, one of the sufferers rebuked them sternly, saying, 'Mark our faces well that you may know us again at the day of judgment.' But Perpetua was silent, save during the last few moments, in which she was heard singing psalms. It is needless to describe her last sufferings. Indeed she appeared not to suffer. A heavenly calm had already taken possession of her, and her earthly trials were soon at an end. Long was she revered in the Church of Africa, and for us she remains as an example of how lightly earthly honours, and comforts, and (if need be) affection should sit upon the Christian soul.

I. H. M.

'Home-Chiming.'

(A TRUE STORY.)

I AM so happy. My happiness surpasses all earthly happiness! I wonder what made Tom so happy?

Let me tell you a little more about him.

I will tell you where Tom was at the time when he said the words, 'I am so happy.'

To begin with, Tom was in a tiny room, lying on a bed from which he knew he could never rise again.