

## Ash Wednesday.

"Remember man that dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

In the prime of the vigor, go, manhood, and kneel,  
Today, at the foot of God's altar, and feel.  
When dread sounds the truth of mortality's doom,  
As thy brow is impressed with the seal of the tomb,  
That the palm of thy strength, which thou bearest with pride,

In a handful of ashes the grave will soon hide.  
In a few fleeting years, as these ashes to thee  
To the world all the pride of the manhood will be.

In the light of thy beauty, fair maidenhood, go,  
To the altar, and bend, in thy lowliness, low;  
Thou wilt learn there is nothing that nature can hold,  
But a handful of ashes, lifeless and cold.  
Dost thou shudder to think all thy brightness and bloom

Will be spiritless dust in the sleep of the tomb?  
O'er its lesson, then, ponder, for what thou dost see,  
In a few fleeting years will thy maidenhood be,  
With thy sorrowless spirit, so, childhood, and how  
To receive the dread sign on the shadowless brow.

In life's golden future thou lovest thy trust,  
As thou wonderest hearest, that "man is but dust."  
For it tells that thy youth, with its goodness and peace,  
Near the grave, in the dust of oblivion will cease.  
O'er its lesson, then, ponder, for what thou dost see,  
In a few fleeting years all thy childhood will be.

The pale brow, where presses the thorn-wreath of care,  
The dark symbol of death without striking can bear;  
That this life to nothing of dust is so near,  
That hath terror to others, will bid thee rejoice.  
For it says that thy woe to the dust will descend,  
And that pain in the dust of the ashes will end.  
In a few fleeting years will thy spirit be free,  
To thy soul all its toils and sorrows will be.

With thy future's grand promise, Oh, Christian soul,  
Go!

At the altar the soon for mortality show,  
On thy fair spirit there falls not a terror of fear.  
That this life to nothing of dust is so near,  
Thou art glad that thy ashes alone will remain.  
Of the hands of the flesh and the world's heavy chain.  
In a few fleeting years will thy spirit be free,  
When a handful of ashes thy body will be.

MARY LOVELL.

## FABIOLA:

OR

## THE CHURCH OF THE CATACOMBS

BY HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN.

"And now," rejoined the patient, smiling, "you have again seized a great principle—that of FAITH. I will therefore be a great principle of what Jesus Christ, who truly died for us, has taught us. You will believe my word only as that of a faithful witness; you will accept His, as that of an unerring God."

Fabiola bowed her head, and listened with reverent mind to her in whom she had long honored a teacher of marvellous wisdom, which she drew from some unknown school, but whom now she almost worshipped as an angel, who could open to her the flood-gates of the eternal ocean, whose waters are unfathomable Wisdom overflowing on earth.

Miriam expounded, in the simple terms of Catholic teaching, the sublime doctrine of the Trinity; then after relating the fall of man, unfolded the mystery of the Incarnation, giving, in the words of St. John, the history of man. Often was she interrupted by the expressions of admiration or assent which her pupil uttered, never by cavil or doubt. Philosophy had given place to religion, captiousness to docility, incredulity to faith.

But now a sadness seemed to have come over Fabiola's heart; Miriam read it in her looks, and asked her its cause.

"I hardly dare tell you," she replied. "But all that you have related to me is so beautiful, so divine, that it seems to me necessarily end here."

The word (that a noble name), that is, the expression of God's love, the extension of His wisdom, the evidence of His power, the very breath of His life-giving life which is Himself, becometh flesh. Who shall furnish it to Him? Shall He take up the cast-off slough of a tainted humanity, or shall a new manhood be created expressly for Him? Shall He take His place in a double genealogy, receiving thus into Himself a twofold tide of corruption; and shall there be any one on earth daring and high enough to call himself His father?

"No," softly whispered Miriam; "but there shall be one holy enough, and humble enough to be worthy to call himself His mother!"

"Almost 800 years before the Son of God came into the world, a prophet spoke, and recorded his words, and deposited the record of them in the hands of the Jews, Christ, when he came, and his words were these:—Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emanuel; (Isaiah vii. 14), which in the Hebrew language signifies 'God with us,' that is with men. This prophecy was of course fulfilled in the conception and birth of God's Son on earth."

"And who was she?" asked Fabiola, with great reverence.

"One whose very name is blessed by every one that truly loves her Son. Mary is the name by which you will know her: Miriam, its original in her own tongue, is the name by which I honor her. Well, you may suppose, was she prepared for such high destiny by holiness and virtue, not as a cleansed, but as ever clean; not as purified, but as always pure; not freed, but exempted, from sin. The tide of which you spoke, flowed before her the dam of an eternal decree, which could not break that the holiness of God should mingle with what it could only redeem, by keeping extraneous to itself. Bright as the blood of Adam, when the breath of God sent it sparkling through his veins, pure as the flesh of Eve, while standing yet in the mould of the Almighty hands, as they drew it from the side of the slumbering man, were the blood and the flesh, which the Spirit of God formed into the glorious humanity, that Mary gave to Jesus."

"And after this glorious privilege granted to our sex, are you surprised that Mary, like Agnes, should have chosen this peerless Virgin as the pattern of their lives; should find in her, whom God so elected, the model of every virtue; and should in preference to allowing themselves to be yoked, even by the tenderest of ties, to the chariot-wheels of this world, seek to fly upwards on wings of undivided love like hers?"

After a pause and some reflection, Miriam proceeded briefly to detail the history of our Saviour's birth, His laborious youth, His active but suffering public life, and then His ignominious Passion. Often was the narrative interrupted by the tears and sobs of the willing listener and ready learner. At last the time for rest had come, when Fabiola humbly asked:

"Are you too fatigued to answer one question more?"

"No," was the cheerful reply.

"What hope," said Fabiola, "can there be for one who cannot say she was ignorant, for she pretended to know every thing; nor that she neglected to learn, for she affected eagerness after every sort of knowledge; but blasphemed its Giver; who has scoffed at the very torments which proved the love, sneered at the death which was the ransom of Him whom she has mocked at, as the Crucified?"

A flood of tears stopped her speech.

Miriam waited till their relieving flow had subsided into that gentler dew which softens the heart; then in soothing tones addressed her as follows:—

"In the days of our Lord there lived a woman who bore the same name as His Spotted Mother; but she had sinned publicly, degradingly, as you, Fabiola, would abhor to sin. She became acquainted, we know not how, with her Redeemer; in the secrecy of her own heart, she contemplated earnest-

ly, till she came to love intensely. His gracious and condescending familiarity with sinners, and His singular indulgence and forgiveness to the fallen. She loved and loved still more; and, forgetting herself, she only thought how she might manifest her love, so that it might bring honor, however slight, to Him, and shame, however great on herself.

"She went into the house of a rich man, where the usual courtesies of hospitality had been withheld from his Divine guest, into the house of a haughty man who spurned, in the presumption of his heart, public sinners; she supplied the attentions which had been neglected to Him whom she loved; and she was scorned, as she expected, for her obtrusive sorrow."

"How did she do this, Miriam?"

"She was defended by Jesus against the carping gibes of His host; she was told that she was forgiven on account of her love, and was dismissed with the kindest comfort."

"And what became of her?"

"When on Calvary He was crucified, two women were privileged to stand close to Him; Mary the sinless, and Mary the penitent, to show how unsullied and repentant love may walk hand in hand beside Him who said, that He had come to call not the just, but the sinners to repentance."

No more was said that night. Miriam, fatigued with her exertion, sank into a placid slumber. Fabiola sat by her side, filled to her heart's brim with this tale of love. She pondered over it again; and she now saw how every part of this wonderful system was consistent. For if Miriam had been ready to die for her, in imitation of her Saviour's love, so had she been ready to forgive her. Every Christian, she now felt, ought to be a copy, a representative of his Master; but the one that slumbered so tranquilly beside her was surely true to her model, and might well represent Him to her.

When, after some time, Miriam awoke, she found her mistress for her patient. A secret, sharp pang of jealousy lay at her feet, over which she had sobbed herself to sleep. She understood at once the full meaning and merit of this humiliation; she did not stir, but thanked God with a full heart that her sacrifice had been accepted.

Fabiola, on waking, crept back to her own couch, as she thought, unobserved. A secret, sharp pang of jealousy lay at her feet, over which she had sobbed herself to sleep. She understood at once the full meaning and merit of this humiliation; she did not stir, but thanked God with a full heart that her sacrifice had been accepted.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## MIRIAM'S HISTORY.

The next morning, when Dionysius came, he found both patient and nurse so radiant and so happy, that he congratulated them both on the good night's rest. Both laughed at the idea; but concurred in saying that it had been the happiest night of their lives. Dionysius was surprised, till Miriam, taking the hand of Fabiola, said:

"Venerable priest of God, I confide to your fatherly care this catechumen, who desires to be fully instructed in the mysteries of our holy faith, and to be regenerated by the waters of eternal salvation."

"What!" asked Fabiola, amazed, "are you more than a physician?"

"I am, my child," the old man replied; "unworthily I hold likewise a higher office of a priest in God's Church."

Fabiola unhesitatingly knelt before him and kissed his hand. The priest placed his right hand upon her head, and said to her, "You are not the first of your house, whom God has brought into His holy Church. It is now many years since I was brought here under guise of a physician, by a former servant, now no more; but in reality it was to baptize a few hours before death, the wife of Fabius."

"My mother?" exclaimed Fabiola. "She died immediately after giving me birth. And did she die a Christian?"

"Yes; and I doubt not that her spirit has been hovering about you through life by the side of the angel who guards you, guiding you unseen to this blessed hour. And, before the throne of God, she has been pleading in her supplications to Him in your behalf."

Joy tenfold filled the breasts of the friends; and after arrangements had been made with Dionysius for the necessary instructions and preparations for Fabiola's admission to baptism, she went up to the side of Miriam, and taking her hand, said to her in a low voice:

"Miriam, may I henceforth call you sister?" A pressure of the hand was the only reply which she could give.

With their mistress, the old nurse, Euprosyne, and the Greek slave, placed themselves, as we now say, under instructions, to receive baptism on Easter day.

Not must we forget to mention, that Miriam, enrolled in the list of catechumens, and whom Fabiola had taken home with her and kept Emerentiana, the foster-sister of Agnes. It was her delight to make herself useful by being the ready messenger between the sick-room and the rest of the house.

During her illness, as her strength improved, Miriam imparted many particulars of her previous life to Fabiola; and as they will throw some light on our preceding narrative, we will give her history in a continuous form.

Some years before our story commenced, there lived in Antioch a man who, though not of ancient family, was rich and moved in the highest circles of that most luxurious city. To keep his position, he was obliged to indulge in great expense; and from want of strict economy, he had gradually become oppressed with debt. He was married to a lady of great virtue, who became a Christian, at first secretly, and afterwards continued so with her husband's reluctant consent. In the meantime, their two children, a son and daughter had received their domestic education under her care; who was always so-called from the favorite stream that watered the city, was fifteen when his father first discovered his wife's religion. He had learnt much from his mother of the doctrines of Christianity, and had been with her attendant of Christian worship; and hence he possessed a dangerous knowledge of which he afterwards made a fatal use.

But he had not the least inclination to embrace the doctrines, or adopt the practices of Christianity; nor would he hear of preparing for baptism. He was wilful and artful, with no love for any restraint upon his passions, or any strict morality. He looked forward to distinction in the world, and to his share in its enjoyments. He had been, and continued to be, highly educated; and beside the Greek language, then generally spoken at Antioch he was acquainted with Latin, which he spoke readily and gracefully, as we have seen through with a slight foreign accent. In the family, the vernacular idiom was used with servants, and often in familiar conversation. Onontius was not sorry when his father remitted him from his mother's control, and insisted that he should continue to follow the dominant and favored religion of the state.

As to the daughter, who was three years younger, he did not so much care. He deemed it foolish and unmanly to make much trouble about religion; to change it especially, or abandon that of the empire, was, he thought, a sign of weakness. But women being more imaginative, and more under the sway of the feelings, might be indulged in any fancies of this sort. Accordingly he permitted his daughter Miriam, whose name was Syrian, as the mother had belonged to a rich family from Edessa, to continue in the free exercise of her new faith. She became, in addition to her high mental cultivation, a model of virtue, simple and unpretending. It was a period,

we may observe, in which the city of Antioch was renowned for the learning of its philosophers, some of whom were eminent as Christians. A few years later, when the son had reached manhood, and had abundantly unfolded his character, the mother died. Before her end, she had seen symptoms of her husband's impending ruin; and, determined that her daughter should not be dependent upon his careless administration, nor on her son's enormous selfishness and ambition, she secured effectually from the covetous grasp of both, her own large fortune, which was settled on her daughter.

She resisted every influence, and every art, employed to induce her to release this property or allow it to merge in the family resources, and be made available towards relieving her embarrassments. And on her death bed, among other parental injunctions, she laid this on her daughter's lips, duty, that she never would allow, after coming of age, any alteration in this arrangement.

Matters grew worse and worse; creditors pressed; property had been injudiciously disposed of; when a mysterious person named Eutrotas, made his appearance in the family. No one but his head seemed to know him; and he evidently looked upon him as a being of high rank and authority, the bearer both of salvation and of ruin.

The reader is in possession of Eutrotas's own revelation; it is sufficient to add, that being the elder brother, but conscious that his rough, bores, and sinister character did not fit him for sustaining the position of head of the family, and administering its affairs, he had retired to a quiet life, and having a haughty ambition to raise his house into a nobler rank, and increase even its riches, he took but a moderate sum of money as capital, vanished for years, embarked in the desperate traffic of interior Asia, penetrated into China and India, and came back home with a large fortune, a collection of rare gems, which he valued more than his brief career, but misguiding him to ruin in Rome.

Eutrotas, instead of a rich family, into which to pour his superfluous wealth, found only a bankrupt house to save from ruin. But his family pride prevailed; and after many reproaches and bitter quarrels with his brother, but conceding from all else, he paid off the debt, by the extinction of his own capital, and thus virtually became master of his brother's property, and of the entire family.

After a few years of weary life, the father sickened and died. On his death-bed he told Onontius that he had nothing to leave him, that all he had lived for some years, the very house over his head, belonged to his brother Eutrotas, whose relationship he did not further claim, whom he must look up to entirely for support and guidance. The youth thus found himself, while full of pride, ambition, and voluptuousness, in the hands of a cold-hearted, remorseless, and no less ambitious man, who soon prescribed as a basis of mutual confidence, absolute submission to him in all that he should say or do. Eutrotas, inferior to the understood principle, that nothing was too great or too little, nothing too good or too wicked to be done, to restore family position and wealth.

To stay at Antioch was impossible after the ruin which had overtaken the house. With a good capital in hand, having money to spare, Eutrotas, in the hands of all left would scarcely cover the liabilities discovered after the father's death. There was still untouched the sister's fortune; and both agreed that this must be got from her. Every artifice was tried, every persuasion employed, but she simply and firmly resisted, both in obedience to her mother's dying bequest, and because she had in her mother's will, a house of consecrated virgin, in which she intended to pass her days. She now was just of legal age to dispose of her own property. She offered them every advantage that she could give them; proposed that for a time they should all live together upon her means. But this did not answer their purpose; and when every other expedient failed, Eutrotas began to hint, that one who stood so much in their way should be got out of it at any cost.

Onontius shuddered at the first proposal of the thought. Eutrotas familiarized him gradually with it, till—drinking yet from the actual commission of fratricide—he thought he had almost done something of the kind. Eutrotas, however, Joseph imagined they had been adopting a slower and less sanguinary method of dealing with an obnoxious brother. Strategem and unseemly violence, of which no law could take cognisance, and which no one would dare to reveal, offered him the best chance of success.

Among the privileges of Christians in the first ages, they had already mentioned that of reserving the Blessed Eucharist at home for domestic communion. We have described the way in which it was enfolded in an *ornarium*, or linen cloth, again often preserved in a richer cover. This precious gift was kept in a chest with a lid as St. Cyprian has informed us. Onontius well knew this; and he was moreover aware that the Christians were more prized than gold or silver; that, as the Father's tell us to drop negligently a crumb of the consecrated bread was considered a crime; and that the name of "pearl" which was given to the smallest fragment, showed that it was so precious in a Christian's eye, that he would part with all he possessed to rescue it from sacrilegious profanation.

Onontius had already embroidered with pearls, which has more than once affected our narrative, was the outer covering in which Miriam's mother had preserved this treasure; and her daughter valued it both as a dear inheritance, and as a consecrated object, for she continued its use.

One day, early in the morning, she knelt before the altar, having first fastened upon her prayer, proceeded to open it. To her dismay she found that it was already unlocked, and her treasure gone! Like Mary Magdalen at the sepulchre, she wept bitterly, because they had taken her Lord, and she knew not where to find Him (St. John xxi. 13).

Like her too, as she was weeping she saw, and looked on the face of a man, who, which in the confusion of the first glance she had overlooked.

It informed her that what she sought was safe in her brother's hands, and might be reasoned. She ran at once to him, where he was closeted with the dark man, in whose presence she always trembled; threw herself on her knees before him, and entreated him to restore to her the treasure more than all her tears and supplications, when Eutrotas fixed his stern eye upon him, overcame him, then himself addressed her, saying:—

"Miriam, we take you at your word. We wish to put the earnestness and reality of your faith to a sufficient test. Are you truly sincere in what you offer?"

"I will surrender anything, all I have, to rescue from profanation the Holy of Holies."

"Then sign that paper," said Eutrotas, with a sneer.

She took the pen in her hand, and after running her eye over the document, signed it. It was then handed to Eutrotas, who, after having looked at it, was furious when he saw himself overreached, by the man to whom he had suggested the snare for his sister. But it was too late; he was only the faster in his unsparring gripe. A more formal renunciation of her rights was exacted from Miriam, with the formalities required by the Roman law.

For a short time she was treated suitably; then hints began to be given to her of the necessity of moving as Onontius and his friend intended to proceed to Nicomedia, the imperial residence. She asked to be sent to Jerusalem, where she would obtain admission into some community of holy women. She was accordingly embarked on board a vessel, the captain of which bore a suspicious character, and was very sparingly supplied with means. But she bore around her neck what she had given

proof of loving more than any wealth. For, as St. Ambrose relates of his brother Satyrus, yet a catechumen, Christians carried on their breasts the Holy Eucharist when embarking for a voyage. We need not say that Miriam bore it securely folded in the only thing of price she cared to take from her father's house.

When the vessel was out at sea, instead of coasting towards Daphe or any port on the coast, the captain steered straight out, as if making for some distant shore. What his purpose was it was difficult to conjecture; but his few passengers became alarmed, and a serious altercation ensued. This was cut short by a sudden storm; the vessel was carried forward at the mercy of the winds for some days, and then dashed to pieces on a rocky island near Cyprus. Like Satyrus, Miriam attributed her reaching the shore in safety to the precious burden which she bore. She was almost the only survivor; at least she saw no other person saved. Those, therefore, that did live besides, on returning to Antioch, reported her death, together with that of the remaining passengers and crew.

She was picked up on the shore by men who lived on such spoil. Destitute and friendless, she was sold to a trader in slaves, taken to Tarsus, on the mainland, and again to a person of high rank who treated her with kindness.

After a short time, Fabius instructed one of his agents to procure a slave of polished manner and virtuous character, if possible, at any price to attend on his daughter, Miriam, under the name of Syria, came to bring salvation to the house of Fabiola.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## BRIGHT DEATH.

It was a few days after the occurrences related in our last chapter but one, that an old man in great anguish, real or pretended, desired to speak with her. On going down to him and asking him his name and business, he replied:—

"My name, noble lady, is Ephraim; and I have a large debt, secured on the property of the late Lady Agnes, which I understand has now passed into your hands, and I am come, therefore to claim it from you, for otherwise I am a ruined man!"

"How is that possible?" asked Fabiola in amazement. "I cannot believe that my cousin ever contracted debts."

"No not she," rejoined the usurer, a little abashed; "but a gentleman named Fulvius, to whom the debt was really owed, and who confessed, as I advanced him large sums upon it."

Her first impulse was to turn him out of the house; but the thought of the sister came to her mind, and she civilly said to him:—

"Whatever debts Fulvius has contracted I will discharge; but with legal interest, and without regard to the usury which he has done elsewhere."

"But think of the risks I run, madam. I have been most moderate in my rates, I assure you."

"Well," she answered, "call on my steward, and he shall settle all. You are running no risks now at least."

She gave instructions, accordingly, to the freedman who managed her affairs, to pay this sum on those conditions, which reduced it to one half the demand. But she soon engaged him in a more laborious task, that of going through the whole of her late father's accounts, and ascertaining every injury or oppression, that restitution might be made. And further, having ascertained that Cornelius, the really old man, who had been the guardian through his father, by which her own lawful property was saved from confiscation, though she refused ever to see him, she bestowed upon him such a remuneration as would ensure him comfort through life.

These temporal matters being soon disposed of, she divided her attention between the care of the patient and preparation for her Christian initiation. To promote Miriam's recovery, she removed her, with a small portion of her household, to a spot dear to both the Nomentan villa. The spring had set in, and Miriam could have her couch brought to the window, or, in the warmest part of the day, could even be carried down into the garden before the house, where Fabiola on one side, and Emerentiana on the other, and poor Molossus, who had lost all his spirit, at her feet they would talk of friends lost, and especially of her with whom every object around was associated in their memories.

And no sooner was the name of Agnes mentioned, than her reality flashed upon her mind, and she remembered the house, where Fabiola on one side, and Emerentiana on the other, and poor Molossus, who had lost all his spirit, at her feet they would talk of friends lost, and especially of her with whom every object around was associated in their memories.

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at hand, and threw down a volley of them at something below. They laughed very heartily as they went away; and Miriam supposed that they had seen some serpent or other noxious animal below, and had amused themselves with pelting it.

When others were stirring she mentioned the occurrence, that the stones might be removed. Fabiola went down herself with a few servants, for she was jealous of the custody of Agnes's tomb. What was her distress at finding poor Emerentiana gone down to pray at her foster-sister's tomb, lying weltering in her own blood, and perfectly dead. It was discovered that, the evening before, passing by some Pagan orgies near the river, and being invited to join in them, she had not only refused, but had reproached them with their wickedness, and with their cruelties to Christians. They assailed her with stones, and grievously wounded her; but she escaped from their fury into the villa. Feeling herself faint and wounded, she crept unnoticed to the tomb of Agnes, there to pray. She had been unable to move away when some of her former assailants discovered her. Those brutal Pagans had anticipated the Ministry of the Church, and had conferred upon her the baptism of blood. She was buried near Agnes, and the modest peasant child received the honor of annual commemoration among the Saints.

Fabiola and her companions went through the usual course of preparation, though abridged on account of the persecution. By living at the very entrance into a cemetery, and one furnished with such large churches, they were enabled to pass through the three stages of catechumenhip. First they were hearers, admitted to be present, while the lessons were read to the kneelers, who assisted at a part of the liturgical prayers; and lastly *electi*, or petitioners for baptism.

Once in this last class they had to attend frequently in church, but more particularly on the three Wednesdays following the first, the fourth, and the last Sundays in Lent, on which days the Roman Missal yet retains a second collect and lesson, derived from this custom. Any one perceiving the present rite of baptism in the Catholic Church, especially that of adults, will see condensed into one office what used to be anciently distributed through a variety of functions. On one day the renunciation of Satan was made, previous to its repetition just before baptism; on another the touching of ears and nostrils, or the *Epiphany*, as it was called. Then were repeated exorcisms, and genuflections, the signs of crosses on the forehead and body (these will be found particularly in the baptisms of adults joined with repetitions of the Our Father), breathings upon the candidate, and other Mysteries. More solemn still was the unction which was not confined to the head, but extended to the whole body.

The Creed was also faithfully learnt, and committed to memory. But the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist was not imparted till after baptism. In these multiplied preparatory exercises the penitential time of Lent passed quickly and solemnly, till at last Easter-day arrived.

It does not fall to our lot to describe the ceremonial of the Church in administration of the Sacraments. The liturgical system received its great developments after peace had been gained; and much that belongs to outward forms and splendour was incompatible with the bitter persecutions which the Church was undergoing.

It is enough for us to have shown, how not only doctrine and great sacred rites, but how even ceremonies and accessories were the same in the three first centuries as now. If our example is thought worth following someone will perhaps illustrate a brighter period than the one we have chosen.

The baptism of Fabiola and her household had nothing cheerful in it but purely spiritual joy. The titles in the city were closed, and among them that of St. Pastor with its papal habitation.

Early, therefore, on the morning of the auspicious day, the party crept round the walls to the opposite side of the city, and following the Via Portuensis, or road that led to the mouth of the Tiber, turned into a vineyard near Caesar's gardens, and descended into the cemetery of Pontianus, and ascended as the resting place of the Persian martyrs, SS. Abdon and Sennen.

The morning was spent in prayer and preparation when towards evening the solemn office, which was to be protracted through the night, commenced.

When the time for the administration of baptism arrived, it was indeed but a dreary scene, as it introduced. Deep in the bowels of the earth the waters of a subterranean stream had been gathered into a square well or cistern, from four to five feet deep. They were clear, indeed but cold and bleak, if we may use the expression, in their subterranean bath formed out of the tufa, or volcanic rock. A long flight of steps led down to the cistern, and a small ledge at the side sufficed for the minister and the candidate, who was three immersed in the purifying waters.

The whole remains to this day, just as it was then except that over the water is now to be seen a painting of St. John baptising our Lord, added probably a century or two later.

Immediately after Baptism followed Confirmation, and then the neophyte, or new born child of the Church, after due instruction, was admitted for the first time to the table of his Lord, and nourished with the Bread of angels.

It was not till late on Easter-day that Fabiola returned to her villa; and a hazy and silent embolus was her first greeting of a dreary solitude, where so happy, so blissful, so fully repaid for all that they had been to each other for months, that no words could express their feelings. Fabiola's grand idea and absorbing pride that day was, that now she had risen to the level of her former slave; not in virtue, not in beauty of character, not in merit before God; oh no! in all this she felt herself infinitely inferior. But as a child of God, as heiress to an eternal kingdom