

I come not only to present to thee the mercies of the Mother Church, but its terrors—the rack, the screw, the falling water, or the Virgin's deadly clasp, await thee, unless thou wilt submit to return to her bosom, a penitent child. If thou wilt promise never to repeat thy heresies, to forswear the studies which have led to thy ruin, to destroy the instruments which the evil one has put it into thy heart to make, in order to blaspheme the wisdom of the Most High, then shall thy life be redeemed, and with the blessing of the Church, thou shalt go forth from this gloomy abode—honours shall be showered upon thee, and thou shalt be happy."

The prisoner listened as though he heard not, and as the Judge ceased to speak, he looked down, but made no reply; the fearful vision of the torments which had been called up before him, daunted his soul; his physical strength was but little, and he shrank from the suffering thus presented; but how could he give up those beautiful speculations which had become part of his very being? How could he leave unravelled the mysteries of the starry firmament?

After a long pause the Inquisitor said—"Prisoner, I await your answer. Are you prepared to abjure your false theories? Will you swear before this holy symbol, to believe and maintain the truth of the Word of God? to use your talents to convince your disciples that the sun stood still in the heavens, through the power of God, at the request of the son of Nun, but that its usual course is round and round the earth? Will you do this, or must I leave you to the justice of the Holy Inquisition, which, when it cannot convince by reasoning, is bound to resort to punishment, rather than give up to eternal damnation its refractory children."

"Father," said the prisoner, "if it be consistent with your powers, will you grant me, in your clemency, a little time to think upon these things, to strive and convince myself that I am and have been wrong? I will remember all you have said, review your reasoning, and, if possible, bring my mind to see the heavens with the eye of Mother Church?"

"We will give thee, my son, till tomorrow night at this hour; then I will come to receive thy submission, or to put thy strength to the test. The blessing of the Virgin be upon thee, and may she enlighten thee in thy darkness, and lead thee to see the error of thy ways."

The Inquisitor rose, placed his hand for one moment on the prisoner's head, and signed him with the cross; his attendants arranged themselves as at their entrance; one by one, they passed out of the door, and left the prisoner to his solitude and darkness. As soon as they had departed, he threw himself upon his knees, and poured forth an agony of supplication and prayer; he prayed for strength and guidance; then, rising, he once more drew the table to the little grating and resumed the observations, which

the entrance of the Inquisitor had interrupted. But he could not return to the same even flow of feeling; he looked upon the same tranquil moon and sparkling stars, but it was not now with the eye of the Astronomer—but the prisoner. Could he consent to linger out his life in that gloomy dungeon, away from the sweet comforts of home? Should he consent never to look upon the face of his wife and children, merely for the sake of a theory, Ought he not to give it up, think no more of it, turn his attention to other branches of science; to those less obnoxious to the bigoted Church? And yet, how could he? It was the truth, the glorious truth, written upon his heart and brain, in burning letters; could he abjure it from the fear of man? He wearied himself with useless argument; the glory of the heavens, as they appeared to him, the intense interest of the study, the progress he had already made, the successful calculations which had rewarded his nights of toil and watching—could he relinquish all? And yet he could not pursue these studies while shut up in the dungeons of the Inquisition; either course he took they must be abandoned; and were it not better to secure what happiness might be left to him, and leave to coming generations the task of completing the great work he had commenced?

He watched at his grating till the grey dawn appeared; then, throwing himself on his straw, he sought that repose he so much needed, but it refused to come; he tossed restless upon his hard couch, dreading the passing of the time, which brought the hour of decision close at hand. The loaf of bread and cruise of water, brought by the gloomy looking official, were untasted, and when night came, he was frenzied with excitement. Just at midnight the same tread of heavy feet echoed through the long galleries; again the key turned in the door, the flood of night burst in, and the myrmidons of the Inquisition ranged themselves about the cell; but this time with more of the fearful paraphernalia of their office, for two of them carried an iron chair in which to fasten the prisoner, and two others thumb screws, those little instruments of torture, which have torn the secret from many an aching heart. This time the prisoner was unable to raise himself, and, at a signal from the Inquisitor, he was raised and placed in the iron chair.

"Prisoner—I have come for your decision. Are you prepared?"

The prisoner bent his head, and murmured an inaudible reply.

"Will you swear to give up these wild and idle speculations, to cease from turning men's heads from the truth? Will you abjure your false philosophy, abandon your heresy, and once more be received into the bosom of the Church?"

The negative struggled to utter itself from the pale lips of the prisoner; but ere he could really