

ST. FELICITAS AND HER SEVEN SONS, MARTYRS.

By E. DE M., IN THE ANNAL OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART.

The illustrious martyrdom of these saints, which has been justly celebrated by the holy Fathers, took place in 161 by the Roman Emperor was governed by Marcus Aurelius, the adopted son of Antoninus. This prince, who was affected to pose as a philosopher, was, however, very superstitious in his observances towards the gods of paganism, and in spite of a second apology of St. Justin in favor of the innocent Christians, a new era of persecution began against the Church, and amongst the first victims were Felicitas and her children. This heroic woman and her noble mother, so celebrated in the history of the Church, and whom St. Peter Chrysologus and St. Gregory the Great and many others have in their immortal discourses so justly praised, was one of the ornaments of the Church in Rome. She belonged by birth to one of the patrician families of the city, but her personal virtues rendered her more illustrious than her noble descent. She had seven sons, and the saintly mother from their tenderest years instructed them in the mysteries of faith and perfection. Being left a widow, she devoted the remainder of her life to the service of God, devoting all her time to the duties of her household, the education of her children and works of charity. Her good example, her words of wisdom and piety, greatly edified the faithful, and not a few pagans, attracted by her pure and holy life, were brought by her means to a knowledge of the true religion.

The idolatrous priests, furious at the influence which the holy widow exercised over many pagans, complained to the Emperor, and he immediately ordered Felicitas and her children to sacrifice to pagan idols. The hour of combat had arrived for this holy and peaceful woman. Felicitas was therefore summoned to the house of the accusations brought against her, and advised her to swear from herself and her children the chastity which she had vowed, and to sacrifice to the gods of the Empire. He added that the special protection of the Emperor would be the reward of her obedience, and that her submission would pave the way for the highest honors being conferred on her sons. But the noble Christian replied: "Your promises and your threats are equally useless. For you cannot win me by fair speeches. The Spirit of God within me will not suffer me to be overcome by Satan, and will render me victorious over all your assaults."

Disconcerted by this unexpected reply, Publius angrily exclaimed: "Miserable woman! although death seems so desirable to you, at least permit your children to live."

"My children," said Felicitas, "will live eternally with God, if they refuse to sacrifice to idols, but if they are unfaithful to Him they will be doomed to eternal death."

On hearing these words Publius ceased his entreaties, for he understood that persuasion would avail nothing, and he resolved to proceed judicially against her.

The next day the Prefect seated himself at his tribunal in the square of Mars, surrounded by officers of justice, satellites and executioners. The holy widow and her sons were brought before him. Publius, addressing the mother, said: "Have pity on your children, for they are yet in the bloom of youth."

"Your pity is but impiety, and your compassion cruelty," replied the heroic woman. And turning to her sons, she said: "My children, look up to heaven, where Jesus Christ with His saints expect you. Be faithful in His love, and combat courageously for your souls."

"What!" cried Publius, "would you, in my very presence, exhort them to despise the decrees of our master?" and he ordered the noble lady to be cruelly beaten by a soldier, whilst her children remained alone before the tyrant. He then called Januarius, the eldest of the seven brothers, and promised him immense riches if he would consent to sacrifice to the idols, at the same time threatening to scourge him should he refuse. The youth, worthy of his valiant mother, replied: "Your propositions are senseless, but I confide in my Lord Jesus Christ, that He will preserve me from such impiety." Publius then ordered him to be stripped and cruelly beaten, and then cast him bleeding into prison.

Felix, the second brother, was next called, and the Prefect exhorted him to be wiser than his brother, if he wished to escape the same punishment. But the brave youth replied: "There is one only God. To Him we offer the sacrifice of our hearts. We will never forsake the love which we owe to Jesus Christ. We will never be overcome by your torments any more than by your evil counsels."

The judge sent him back to prison and then addressed himself to the third, named Philip. "The Emperor, your master, commands you to adore the gods."

"They are not gods," replied the boy, "they have no power; they are senseless statues which feel nothing. Those who offer sacrifice to them will be punished eternally."

When Sylvanus was taken away, Publius addressed Alexander. "Why, my child, do you wish to die so young? Be obedient. If you will sacrifice to the gods, the Emperor will love you, and will lead you with favor."

"I am the servant of Jesus Christ," replied Alexander. "My mouth attests His divinity, my heart loves Him, and I unceasingly adore Him. Your false divinities will perish with their adorers."

Vitalis was next called in his turn. "You, at least, my child," said the Prefect, "wish to live. You do not wish to suffer."

"And who," questioned the child, "will most truly live; he who merits the protection of God or he who serves the demon?"

"And who is the demon?"

"The demons are your gods and those who serve them," replied the child.

Publius, furious at being baffled, ordered them to be cast into prison.

When our Divine Lord foretold to His disciples the persecutions they would be called upon to suffer for love of Him, He charged them not to trouble themselves by imagining what they would reply to the accusations brought against them, because, He said: "The Holy Spirit will suggest to you what to say." This promise was fulfilled in an extraordinary manner in the case of these holy martyrs, for never had Publius seen a group of children surrounded by implements of torture and death reply with so much calmness, intelligence and intrepidity. There remained now but one, the little Martin, but he proved himself worthy of his mother and brothers. "You will all be put to death," said the judge, and it will be your own fault. Why will you not obey the orders of the Emperor?"

"Oh, if you but knew the pains that are reserved for the adorers of idols!" said the child, with supernatural majesty. "God in His patience has not yet stricken your gods and you with the thunders of His vengeance, but the time will come when all those who refuse to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only true God will burn in eternal flames."

Publius, seeing that both persuasion and threats were useless, left the tribunal and sent an account of his unsuccessful efforts to Marcus Aurelius. The orders of the Emperor were, that the whole family should perish by different deaths. Januarius, the eldest, was scourged to death with whips weighted with plumes of lead. Felix and Philip were beaten with clubs till they expired. Sylvanus was thrown headlong down a steep precipice. The three youngest were beheaded, and there remained but Felicitas, who was martyred seven times by the death of each of her children, but she was not destined to receive her crown that day. Her execution was deferred in the hope that her courage would desert her after witnessing the sufferings of her beloved children. But the young martyrs whom she had sent before her to heaven prayed for their mother that her courage should not fail. The fearful sufferings to which she was subjected in prison could not shake her faith, and she was beheaded four months later, and her happy soul was at length reunited with her children in the heavenly fatherland. The Church has always lovingly preserved the remembrance of this heroic family. She has inscribed the name of Felicitas in the canon of the Mass, with those of Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia and Perpetua, as a recompense worthy of the faith and courage of so great a martyr.

"With what eagerness, and in the midst of what anguish," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "did she not give in a single day to Heaven, those children whom at long intervals she had given to earth! O heroic woman! though the life of thy children caused thee anxiety, how their death reassured thee! What a privilege was thine to send them before thee to heaven, and to know that thou didst lose on earth none of the precious treasures confided to thee. Felicitas was happier in seeing them stretched lifeless before her than she had been during their happy infancy. As often as the eyes of her body beheld their wounds, so often did the eyes of her soul number their crowns. For every torment there was a recompense, and every victim was a conqueror. She would not have been a true mother had she not thus loved her children."

"Shall I call her a martyr?" exclaimed St. Gregory the Great. "She was more than a martyr, since she endured in a manner all that each of her children suffered. She was the eighth in order of combat, but she suffered during the whole time of the cruel scene. Her martyrdom began with that of her eldest son, and was consummated only at her own death. In seeing them suffer, she lost nothing of her constancy. As a mother she acutely felt their pains, but the assured hope of their heavenly reward sustained and comforted her heart. She feared to leave one of her sons behind her on earth, lest she should be deprived of his company for all eternity. We weep without ceasing when God asks of us the children whom He gave us, whereas Felicitas would almost have considered them as lost had she not seen them die for Jesus Christ, and sealing their faith by the effusion of their blood."

It is not often in our day that God asks of a mother the sacrifice of her children by martyrdom, but He often asks that she should give them to Him in the sacerdotal or religious state. O St. Felicitas! loving and generous mother, obtain for Catholic mothers the grace to accomplish their sacrifice with some of your courage, that they may also share in your reward in Heaven.

GOLDEN MEDICINE.

A poor woman, understanding that the poet Goldsmith had studied physic, and bearing of his great humanity, solicited him in a letter to send her something for her husband, who had lost his appetite, and was reduced to a most melancholy state. The good natured poet, who was struck by the pathos of her story, wrote on her instantly, and, after some discourse with his patient, found him

sinking into sickness and poverty. Goldsmith told them they should hear from him in an hour, when he would send them some pills, which he believed would prove efficacious. He immediately went home and put ten guineas into a pill box, with the following directions:—"These must be used as necessities require. Be patient and of good heart." He sent his servant with the prescription to the comfortless mourner, and his "golden pills" no doubt cheered the drooping and despondent patient, and brought hope and gladness to a heart bowed down.

ATKINS SELLS HIS WATCH.

SOMETIMES HER MAJESTY'S SOLDIERS MAKE A GOOD THING OUT OF IT.

(Weekly Telegraph.) There are many little eccentricities peculiar to Tommy Atkins, not the least remarkable of which is the method he adopts for disposing of his watch.

Almost every man when he enlists possesses a watch of some kind, but in a few weeks' time he discovers that this useful article is not an absolute necessity in the ranks.

Consequently he decides to turn it into a little current coin of the realm, which, under the existing circumstances, would be of more service to him.

But he is a soldier now, and it would seem as though he took delight in openly defying the stereotyped methods of civilians, for he has invented a little method of his own for selling watches.

The watch "for sale" is hung upon the mess room door and the owner's comrades stand some ten or twelve yards away and shy sixpences at it. The first one that strikes the watch takes it, and it becomes his absolute property. The seller pockets all the sixpences which have gone wide of the mark until the fatal one is thrown.

To throw sixpences twelve yards with any degree of accuracy is not such an easy matter as it perhaps appears, and it not infrequently happens that the seller of the watch obtains more than its value for it before it is struck. The chagrin of Tommy when his watch is struck at the first or second throw can better be imagined than described.

This method of doing business provides a little excitement, and Tommy Atkins dearly loves a break in the monotony of life.

SOME WOMEN SUFFRAGE DATES.

(Boston Transcript.)

In 1838 Kentucky gave suffrage to widows, and in 1845 the law was changed, making widows and spinners having taxable property eligible to vote for school trustees, except in cities governed by charters, says the New York Tribune.

In 1861 Kansas gave school suffrage to all women. In 1869 England gave municipal suffrage to single women and widows, and Wyoming gave full suffrage to all women. School suffrage was granted in 1875 by Michigan and Minnesota; in 1876 by Colorado, in 1878 by New Hampshire and Oregon, in 1870 by Massachusetts, in 1880 by New York and Vermont. In 1881 municipal suffrage was extended to the single women and widows of Scotland. Nebraska gave women school suffrage in 1883, and Wisconsin in 1885. In 1886 New Brunswick and Ontario gave municipal suffrage to single women and widows, and Washington gave school suffrage to all women. In 1887 municipal suffrage was extended to all women in Kansas, and school suffrage in North and South Dakota, Montana, Arizona and New Jersey. In 1893 municipal suffrage was extended to single women and widows in the Province of Quebec. In 1893 school suffrage was granted in Connecticut, and full suffrage in Colorado and New Zealand. In 1894 school suffrage was granted in Ohio, a limited municipal suffrage in Iowa, and parish and district suffrage in England to women, both married and single. In 1895 full suffrage was granted in South Australia to women, both married and single. In 1896 full suffrage was granted to women in Utah and Idaho. The question is now pending in South Dakota, Washington and several of the British provinces.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The report of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, New York, for the week ending July 26, shows, out of an estimated population of 1,994,226 920 deaths. There was one death from smallpox, 22 from diphtheria, 38 from heart disease, 51 from pneumonia, 39 by violence, and 334 from all other causes. Of the deaths, 516 were of children under five years of age and 81 were of persons over sixty-five years.

Mother—Now, Johnnie, pray for grandma's safety. Johnnie—Has grandma got a bicycle? —Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.

Scott's Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil with Hypophosphites brings back the ruddy glow of life to pale cheeks, the lips become red, the ears lose their transparency, the step is quick and elastic, work is no longer a burden, exercise is not followed by exhaustion; and it does this because it furnishes the body with a needed food and changes diseased action to healthy. With a better circulation and improved nutrition, the rest follow.

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A GOOD MARKET

Opened Up For Ranch Cattle.

Dr. McEachran's Views—The Cattle Are Doing Well, and the North-West Is Booming—Everybody Talks of the Klondike Finds.

The demand for beef cattle for the mining districts of British Columbia, we are informed by Dr. McEachran, Dominion veterinary surgeon, has opened up the best market that has yet existed in that country since ranching commenced. Nearly all the saleable cattle have been disposed of to contractors for supplying the mining camp, and consequently the number of cattle from the ranching districts for exportation to Europe this summer will be very much decreased.

Dr. McEachran has recently returned from an extended trip through the Canadian West, his visit reaching as far as Fort McLeod. He was accompanied by Mr. Jarvis, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, and together they held examinations for veterinary surgeons to qualify them for appointments to test cattle for exportation to the United States. The examinations were held at Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary. The doctor then paid a visit to the ranches in the neighborhood of Fort McLeod and was much impressed with the favorable aspect of things there.

Owing to the severity of the earlier part of the winter the ranchers had been building on the prospects of losing considerable numbers of their cattle. Fortunately, however, the weather turned out more favorable during the mid winter months, and the losses, which at one time threatened to be serious, were comparatively slight.

Grass on the ranches, the doctor said, was abundant, and the stock looked well all over the ranching country. The swollen condition of the rivers, owing to continuous rains, had interfered somewhat with the round up work in gathering the cattle together and branding the calves.

Men were pouring into Fort McLeod, the doctor said, laden with outfit, etc., anticipating employment in the Crow's Nest Pass Railway, now in course of construction. A great deal of activity was being displayed in prosecuting the work, which promised direct communication with the rich mining districts of Fort Steele, Kamland, Nelson and other points in British Columbia.

"Did you notice any symptoms of the Klondike fever along the line, Doctor?"

"Oh, yes. Of course, all the papers were full of reports from the Yukon, and at different points along the road I met with parties who had received letters from friends confirming the news in the reports." Dr. McEachran said he understood that arrangements were being made for the shipment of beef and mutton in large quantities to the Yukon, in view of the anticipated rush for the gold fields, and the scarcity of food products. It is to be hoped, though, that care will be taken to have food supplies shipped, as the people go there, to guard, in so far as possible, against future distress. The doctor said he had been told that beefsteak had been selling at the gold fields as high as one dollar a pound.

For sixteen years Dr. McEachran has been making annual visits to the Northwest, and he said that he never before saw such evidences of prosperity and promise as on his recent journey.

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QUESTION, DOES FARMING PAY?

NEBRASKA FARMERS QUESTIONED BY CIRCULARS—RETURN VARIOUS ANSWERS.

The commissioner of labor of Nebraska has started in to secure some interesting statistics relating to agriculture in Nebraska. A month ago he sent blanks to ten leading farmers in every county in the state, asking that they be filled out, answering the questions, "does farming pay?" and "what legislation do you think necessary to relieve the condition of the farmer?" The names were secured from the members of the legislature from each county, who were asked to give the names of four populists, three democrats and three republicans who were not tenant farmers and who might be considered as representative farmers. Thus far he has received 100 replies. Republicans have answered more promptly than any others.

The tabulation of the commissioner shows that seventy-one are of the opinion that farming does not pay, twenty-one say that it does, four that it pays as well as anything else, while the remaining four are unable to say whether it does or not.

Several of those who answered "yes" qualify by saying that exclusive grain farming does not pay, but that a side line of stock does. On the question of what legislation would be beneficial the answers are many and varying. A number are of the opinion that the enforcement of anti trust laws, destined to do away with the holding up of prices of necessities for the farmer, would be very beneficial; the restoration of bimetalism and the coinage of silver at 16 to 1 is considered by the majority to be one of the things necessary; about 50 per cent are of the opinion that lower freight rates are an absolute necessity and that legislation on these lines must be pushed; about 40 per cent favor government ownership of railroads; several favor an income tax, while the remainder think an import duty of farm products the thing.

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"Every man has a streak of the feminine in his make-up."

"Yes; I know a big, two-fisted fellow, with a voice like a foghorn." "And he is tender to little children?" "I dunno whether he is or not. But I was going to tell you. His taste in neckties is something horrible."—Indianapolis Journal.