

THE VESTAL VIRGIN

Now forswear also
Custom and superstition sprung from Time,
And Time's long wedlock, unto use and wont
In rites of worship. Thus here stand I, Romans,

Scarred with your service but yet inly free
From Saturn's brood of deities, and the chain
Hardening from silk to most unyielding steel
With which their serpent coils crush out our
life.

For my allegiance, 'tis fore all to Christ, the
unto Nysia,

Last to the Roman people and the State.

*Cries of Down with him! He is a Christian
To the lions! The lictors pass to and fro among the
populace in effort to tranquillize the tumult. When
quiet is restored the Pontiff speaks.*

PONTIFF. He hath pronounced his sentence, and
she hers!

There needs no further witness. Their joint
crime

Stabs at our laws, our customs, and religion
The very heart o' the State; while to be part
Of the promiscuous spawn of that impostor
Whom Pilate slew for tumult raised in Jewry
Is guilt too deep and damnable for speech.
Their penalty is death, to be so executed
As is prescribed! Immurement in the walls
The living burial, whose slow consuming horror
Turns bold presumption pale and quells cold
treason!