

was awarded. God called also weak women and even helpless children.

At Lyons the brightest feature of the persecution was the devotion of a poor slave-girl.

Blandina (for such was her name) belonged to a Christian mistress. Often had she attended her to the little place of worship in which the faithful were wont to meet; often had she listened to the bishop's words of holy wisdom. She had joined in the Christian songs of praise; she had learnt to adore the crucified Saviour; she knew not that she was soon to die for Him, but so had God ordained. The trial of persecution approached, and the Church of Lyons braced herself to meet it.

Pothinus, the bishop, now upwards of ninety years of age, and enfeebled with sickness, gathered around him his little flock. He besought them—in what words we know not—to stand fast in the Lord. Had he not at all times taught them to live as those who were watching for His coming, with their lamps well trimmed? Had he not warned them that that day would come upon them unawares—that it would be even like the breaking in of a thief in the night? At any rate the seed he had sown had sunk deep into the hearts of this little Christian community, and not least into that of Blandina. The day of the Lord broke suddenly, fiercely. But it found them at their posts firm and unflinching. They were watching as men waiting for their Lord.

Oh! happy servant he
In such a posture found;
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
And be with honour crowned.

The first to suffer was the bishop himself. The shepherd, like his Master, gave his life for the sheep. He was taken, dragged before the heathen tribunal, beaten, and pelted by the crowd—was carried back to prison to die from his injuries within two days. The sad tale sent a thrill of horror through the little band of the faithful. Whose turn would it be next? A search through the city was to be made, and woe

betide the Christian who fell into the hands of the persecutor!

And now it is rumoured that Attalus has been seized—Attalus whose rank and influence, men thought, should have saved him though a Christian. But he is not spared. Even an honourable death is denied him. He is condemned to be placed in a heated chair for his obstinacy in refusing to sacrifice to the gods. Fainting from the pain, he is thrown, all unconscious as he is, to the wild beasts. O Attalus, you have made a good exchange! Your earthly honours, your rank, and your wealth have been taken from you; but you have gained a kingdom and a crown which fadeth not away.

And so the persecution proceeded. And those of the Church who still remained met day by day to bless God for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear—especially for His martyrs Pothinus and Attalus, whom He had so recently taken to Himself. And then how fervently would they pray for grace to follow their good examples. It was all they could hope for, all they could expect. And then it came to Blandina's turn—Blandina the poor slave girl. For her, humble though her station was, God had reserved the crown with the brightest lustre. Every kind of torture was tried upon her to no purpose. Her endurance outlasted even the malice of her tormentors. Her mistress stood by trembling, fearing every moment lest her constancy should fail. To the taunts of her enemies she had but one reply: 'I am a Christian, and among us no evil is done.' Faithful, indeed, unto death, she obtained the crown of life.

A young boy of scarce fifteen, Ponticus by name, was brought each day to witness her sufferings. The sight nerved him to undergo a like trial. He died speedily, overcome by the pain. Ah! among the white-robed army of martyrs that gather round the throne (think of it, toiling women! think of it, ye in lowly station!) are most assuredly the slave-girl Blandina and the boy Ponticus.

On the seventh of March (so says our