

of St. Chrysostom, in his election to the see of Constantinople; but had afterwards taken part against him. The Saint's intrepidity of character, the apostolic zeal with which he labored for the correction of abuses, as well public as private, and the fearlessness with which he exposed and reproved them in every station, could not fail to bring him into collision with the favorite, whose animosity was not confined to the archbishop alone, but extended to the whole church, whose immunities he attacked. The law passed in 398, against the privilege of asylums in churches, was his work. In carrying this point, he deprived the church of an immunity altogether in unison with the character of that religion which, like its divine Founder, is the refuge of the oppressed. In 399, this minion of power had reached the zenith of his greatness, and ruled with a tyranny that knew no bounds.

At length the day of retribution came. The gross manner in which he had abused the emperor's favor, and the scandal which his conduct excited, inflamed the people and the army against him.—Gainas, the popular general, presented himself boldly before Arcadius, and demanded the dismissal of his favorite. This demand was enforced by the eloquence of Eudoxia, the emperor's wife, who, with tears in her eyes, presented her infant children to their father, imploring his justice for some insult received from his presumptuous minister. Thus urged, the weak Arcadius was not long to yield, and signed his favorite's condemnation. The magic spell was at once dissolved:

Eripitur persona, manet res.—LUCRETIVS.

Down falls the mask, and the reality
Stands in its native hideousness before us.

Men wondered at the charm that had held them in thralldom. The acclamations that so lately hailed the merit and the fortune of the favorite, were changed into clamors, reproaching him with his crime, and pressing his immediate execution. In the hour of distress and despair, his only refuge was that same church which he had persecuted, and the asylum of whose altars he had been instrumental in abolishing. St. Chrysostom received him with the charity of a Christian and the tenderness of a parent. On the following day, when the news of his refuge had been published throughout the city, crowds of the common people mingled with the infuriated soldiery, rushed to the cathedral of St. Sophia, that they might exult over the distress of their once dreaded tyrant, and drag him forth to punishment. The moment was critical: St. Chrysostom, insensible to danger when the voice of charity demanded his presence, made his way through the infuriated crowd to the spot where lay crouching the victim of the public indignation, his features pale as death, trembling

like an abject slave, and clinging to the altar for protection. There was no leisure for meditation. The orator ascended the pulpit, and in a burst of extemporaneous eloquence, addressed his excited hearers to this effect:

"If ever there was a season in our lives in which we might exclaim, *Vanity of vanities and all is vanity!* it surely is the moment before us. Where is now the pomp of the consulship, where its honors and costly insignia? Where the blaze of torches that preceded the triumphal march?—Where those maddening shouts of applause?—Where the crowded hall, the sumptuous banquet, and the midnight revelry? Where is the tumult with which the city resounded? Where the noisy acclamations, the fulsome of flattery so shyly poured forth by the thousands that thronged the theatre? All have vanished! a tempestuous gale has stripped the proud tree of its foliage; it has exposed to our eyes the naked trunk, it has shaken it to its very roots, and threatens to scatter it in fragments to the winds of heaven. What has become of those summer friends, of the sumptuous banquet, and the swarm of parasites, of the goblets of exhaustless wine, of the arts that administered to luxury, of the worshippers of the imperial purple, of those cringing slaves of interest, whose words were as servile as their deeds? They were the vision of a night, the illusion of a morning dream, that has melted before the beams of day; they were spring flowers that withered with the fleeting spring; they were a shadow, and it passed away, a brilliant vapor, that shone for a moment, and has vanished into air. O! how true then is that saying, and how incessantly should we repeat those words of the Holy Spirit—*Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity!* These words should be inscribed in letters of light upon the walls of our houses, over the doors of our apartments, in the places of public resort; nay, on our very garments should they be written; but far more should they be engraven upon each man's conscience, and be made the theme of salutary meditation.—By continually repeating these warning words, we should learn what value to set upon the illusions of fortune and the friendship of men.

"With enmity still rankling in your hearts, will you have the hardihood to approach the holy mysteries, and with the same lips that exhale imprecations, to repeat that prayer in which we are commanded to say, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us?* It is possible that this man may have been guilty of great crimes, that he has indulged in violent excesses against you. I admit the charge. But this is a season of mercy, not of rigor; of remission, not of accusation; of indulgence, not of scrutiny.