

Soldier and Martyr.

A TALE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

—A TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION IN ROME.

It was the morning of the 18th of September, 286, after the birth of Our Saviour. All Rome was in motion to witness the parade with which Diocletian would celebrate his triumph. He had recently returned from Egypt, where he had subdued Aobillio and his cohorts, who had denied the supremacy of the metropolis. This triumphal procession was the greatest of military honors and consisted of a solemn cortege which accompanied the general, who later became Emperor, across the city to the Capitol, which was considered the center of the Roman world.

The people of Rome were always eager for a spectacle, differing very little in this respect from modern Europe, but a triumphal procession especially pleased them, quickened their curiosity, and inflamed them with a keen desire for it. They knew, too, that Diocletian was a favorite of fortune. He was the son of a very obscure family, but was gifted with an uncommonly good mind. He had, by extraordinary energy, risen step by step to the consulate, and was then suddenly proclaimed Emperor by the soldiers. He was not only a very capable ruler, but also a very ambitious one. As he was very ambitious, he did not believe that such work alone could repay his endeavor. He deemed it unwise to his vocation. Remembering always that the Roman empire had reached the zenith of its glory under Augustus, but was now in rapid decline, he resolved to omit no effort which might tend to make him famous as having restored to the Queen of the world her ancient splendor.

But the more he thought of such a vast and onerous project, the more he was impressed by the difficulty of its execution. The power of Rome was waning. The Emperor, who exempted himself in his own person, reigned not only as absolute master of the State and of religion, but was also adored as a god. In the meantime had come from the depth of Galilee another power which was spreading rapidly throughout the whole empire, although it was armed with spiritual weapons only; it had openly declared war against idolatry of every kind, and, in the name of God, had proclaimed the human conscience free for ever from the iniquitous and unspookily shameful slavery under which it had groined through long centuries.

This very important event was not, and could not be, ignored by Diocletian, whether because he had already disturbed the peace of his predecessors, who had tried to suffocate the growing Church in a sea of blood, or because it was manifestly the greatest obstacle which could arise against the execution of his own project. Consequently, after having hesitated for some time to resort to violent measures for the suppression of the Christians, he began to subject the faithful to that horrible persecution which was the lot of the events which this tale will relate were witnessed in that most lamentable time, which, while it lasted, peopled heaven with the elect souls of thousands and thousands of martyrs, and during which pagans, reveling in corruption and cruelty, were assiduously hastening the day when it would exhale its last breath.

The evening before the celebration of the imperial troops, as was customary, were stationed near the northern wall of the city, by the Gate of Triumph, at the head of a very broad avenue, called Triumph Avenue. The cortege would pass through this avenue, which led directly to the Capitol. Here, in the early part of the evening in question, the whole Senate had appeared to give the first salutation to the divine Diocletian.

On the following morning, as already told, even as the sun began to break, the people hastened in throngs towards the streets and squares which would be passed by the parade as it went through the avenue. The vast colonnades and the porticoes of the temple of the sheeters, the imperial tombs, of the public monuments, were occupied by the crowd in the wildest haste; human swarms hung over and around the gates and the arches; on terraces and roofs there was not room for another person on either side of the avenue proper the concourse was dense and enormous. And all this multitude was thoroughly restless, shouting in heedless enthusiasm, sometimes for very gladness, and then with tremendous impetuosity; it burst into uproarious applause as often as, from the distance, came the cry of the heroes of the day, "O triumph!" "O triumph!" as often as the echo of the high places repeated the cry.

At last the expected cortege appeared, enveloped in a cloud of dust, through which the arms of the warriors, the gold and silver of the uniforms and of the trophies flashed like flames. Twelve files of musketeers, followed immediately by several squadrons of cavalry, led the column. Then came a large detachment of infantry carrying ornate standards, and certain enormous standards, on which were inscribed the names of the conquered provinces and cities; not the least prominent among them was that of Alexandria, which the grim victor had abandoned to pillage and slaughter, strewn and the scene of the principal battles. Following the infantry came the prisoners of war, loaded with manacles and chains. Among these unfortunate could be seen high functionaries, priests still wearing their tunics and precious mantles, on their heads the intifa (a twisted white woollen band), generals and captains, with the marks of their grade. Besides these walked the pensioners, a kind of crown

in petticoats, whose offices it was to insult the captives. The populace looked at all this with great curiosity, and promptly and indignantly rebuffed the clown as often as he flouted them. Next came files of carts containing the spoils. These consisted of pillars and statues of rare alabaster, idols, vases and ornaments of every kind, of precious metal taken from the temples, slaves of both sexes, fruits and animals native in Egypt. This section of the cortege was followed by the lictors, or deputies of the consuls, carrying the fasces crowned with laurel. Behind these went a long file of dancers, satyrs, and censebearers, scattering rare perfumes, and after this medley came the victor in a gilded chariot drawn by eight horses. He was surrounded by senators and magistrates, and was escorted by governors and other superiors; wearing an ample purple mantle embroidered in gold, he carried the sceptre in his right hand, and on his head was a crown of laurel, he stood erect in the chariot, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and his face shined with carnine, as was the custom with the statue of Jove, indicated no sentiment of any kind. Closing the procession came a crowd of people that grew steadily as the great column receded. At a certain moment, when the great parade was passing from the interior district to ancient Capitoline Hill, one of the crowd, looking at the escorting general, shouted, "Where is Carinus?" A hundred others in chorus, pointing to a mounted warrior riding in the midst of the military escort surrounding the imperial chariot and suddenly in response to the cry, "Carinus, Carinus!" there was an ovation of shouts and acclamations.

Who was he? A young centurion, who had risen to fame through intelligence and bravery, of which he had given splendid proof during the campaign in Egypt, his exploits in the walls of Ment. On that memorable day the Roman army, which was scattered over a vast plain, happened to be in imminent peril. The attack by the enemy, which had concentrated all its forces at a single point, had been formidable, and the Emperor, who had thrown himself into the midst of the onslaught made on him, was manifestly in danger of being taken prisoner and killed. At this juncture the young centurion, Carinus, stepped forward, and with prodigious bravery sustained and repulsed all further attacks by the rebels, saved Diocletian's life, and once more assured victory to the Roman army. The valiant centurion was promoted to the rank of tribune, and his most sincere enthusiasm and, later, on the evening before the triumphal procession, promoted him to the chief captaincy of the palace-guard. This position, by the way, had always been one of the most coveted, for the very next degree of promotion was the commandery of the Pretorian Guard.

II.—AN INVITATION.

A few months after the celebration of Diocletian's triumph Carinus was invited to supper, at the private dinner of the Emperor, then called. The invitation came from Junius Basso, a senator, who was distinguished for his integrity, his broad culture, and the fact that he enjoyed the esteem of the Emperor, and was the friend and military comrade of Carinus, and it was only natural that the senator should wish to become acquainted with the latter. Carinus accepted the invitation with unhesitating and able pleasure. It not only gives him an opportunity for social intercourse with a very honorable family, but also promised him a refuge from the vulgar and vicious society with which he was inevitably confronted in the barracks in Rome, especially when Sextus was absent. The young centurion had come to Rome for the first time to participate in the triumphal procession, but life in the city garrison had undeceived him and was unbearable to him. The supper was ended and most of the guests had gone, when Senator Basso requested that the few who remained, among them Carinus, should leave the supper-room and go with him to his house in the suburbs, there to converse in the pleasant conversation, and to enjoy the candied fruits and the fine wines which would be served to them. The request was received with pleasure, and the host and his guests immediately entered the house.

"My dear friends," said the senator as soon as all were seated, "you know that the supper which has just been rejected our hearts was given in honor of the brave young officer who is sitting beside me. I trust, therefore, without offending any other member of this company, address myself to him first. Tell me, Carinus, what do you think of Rome?"

"It is the most wonderful city I have ever seen," was the young centurion's response. "I must regret, however, that my service at the imperial palace does not permit me to visit its monuments as I should like to, and condemn me to remain so long among persons whose conversation is neither decent nor pleasant. It is my good fortune that Sextus comes so often to relieve me; I learn so many things from him that, after all, the impression he makes on me largely compensates for the disgust I feel among the others when he is absent."

"My young friend," replied the senator, "what you say merely strengthens the truth of what I have already said. I desire that your modesty is equalled only by your bravery. A faithful friend is a precious gift from the gods, and I hope that my son may be such for you; but I am sure that he has his share. Still, shall not insist upon that particularly—it may displease you. On the other hand, I confess that I should be very grateful to you if you would tell me something about your distinguished still more, and about your native country. Sextus, who is not only your friend, but your admirer, has told us often that you can tell a very interesting story."

At this moment Sabine, the senator's daughter, and an old female slave, who had been her nurse, entered the colonnade together. One of the loveliest girls, Sabine had hardly reached her eighteenth year, she had rare grace, and not the least of her attractions was her suave reserve.

"Carinus," said the senator, "here is my Sabine; she has just come in time to listen to you."

The young soldier rose and bowed to her. The other guests repeated his courtesy. Then, at a sign from the senator, the company seated itself in graceful semicircle around the amphitryon, and Carinus began. "I will tell you as simply as possible the little I know about my family. My grandfather, whose name was Calus, was born in Alba Fucens, a town which he young he fought under Septimius Severus in the British Isles, and when the Emperor died there it was my grandfather who was charged with the conduct to Rome of half of the troops that had been sent to the north. He was embarked on twenty vessels and sailed away towards the coast of Gaul, but most of the vessels perished in a terrible storm that overwhelmed them as they were passing through the Channel. The ship in which my grandfather was was driven towards the Belgian coast, and when only a short distance from shore sank to the bottom of the sea, carrying with it many of the crew. Many officers saved themselves by swimming among them. But the poor young man was so overcome that while he and his companions were on the way to Rome he was obliged to leave them at Treves, believing that he must die soon. His good luck, however, to meet in this town an old ensign who, many years previously, had been in the ranks with him in the same cohort in the war in the East. The old man pitied my grandfather, and made every effort to cure him, but he died as he were one of his own family; and later, with his consent, my grandfather married his daughter Emergande. To this couple was born a son, Titus, my father, in a village on the banks of the Moselle, which his parents had gone to cultivate a vineyard they had bought. Then, after a long time, the army of Alexander Severus, while on the march, passed through this village, and my father insisted on joining it at any risk, refusing to yield to the entreaties of his parents that he remain at home with them. Twenty long years passed away before he returned home, grandfather having died in the meantime. Grandmother, however, had left the army and married a young woman of her neighborhood. I was not quite seven years old when grandfather died, but I always have before my eyes her dear face as it was when she embraced me, and when she died, a short time, my father said he would go to Treves, declaring that a farmer's life disgusted him, and that he would enter the army again. My dear mother wept, and I went with her, but in the most of our lives, my father sold everything, and with him we soon left our former home behind us. We were ten days on the road before we reached Treves, and there we joined the army that was crossing Gaul and moving towards Italy. Weeks and weeks we travelled, and reached the other side of the Alps. On reaching the camp at Aoste father was obliged to put up his tent and live in it, while mother and I pitched in a poor little house in the vicinity. Poor mother, weary by the long and a dreary to return home, and attacked by a slow and implacable disease, soon died, like a flame that lacks its aliment. Oh, Junius, Sextus, all of you, my friends, have pity on a soldier who cannot resist his tears!"

(To be Continued.)

A MEXICAN CATHOLIC PRELATE.

Frederick H. Guernsey, the Mexico correspondent of the "Boston Herald," who is not a Catholic, but is always liberal and fair in his writings, gives an interesting picture of a Catholic Bishop in his last letter. After contrasting the Catholic with the Anglican and their Protestant sisters, showing how the latter adorn themselves, while the former adorn their character, he continues:—"And when there happens to be a Catholic Bishop in one of these excruciating parties is something for the psychologist to study. The men, who are mainly Protestants, as are their wives and daughters, do show a certain reverence for the prelate, who is calm, dignified and serene. The women, not in his purple and gold chain, begin to think on this, and then, when he is present, they are, and when better acquainted, pity him with questions which the good Bishop finds quite uninteresting. He answers and spreads knowledge, and yet does not wish to appear in a travelling gown as one who would proselyte. He is too well bred for that."

But one thing always results from the close mingling of intelligent and well-bred Catholics and Protestants; they end by mutual respect and become good friends. So we see that religious prejudice is removed when prominently comes the religious of the past served a purpose; the intensity of the theological passion burned itself out. "Take our everyday business men thrown into association with a great Catholic dignitary; they find a new type of man, a gentleman, who has a great gift, a profound thinker, a capable administrator who respects their re-

gard by his exacting achievements in building schools, asylums, hospitals and churches. He is no mere dry theologian, nor is he an ascetic. He meets men as a man meets men, on a footing of human equality, yet there is something about him that commands reverence. He speaks, in his quiet way, as a man having authority, and the American man of affairs, the manufacturer or large merchant, as the case may be, soon begins to have an idea of the value of the man who can share in his ideas on everyday matters. Probably the good Bishop likes a cigar, and so he seems more human, and men find pleasure in seeing him no price refuser of the good things of life. And they note wholly forgetful of that other life which good men lead in this world."

PARIS MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

On Sunday, the 6th inst., the Paris municipal elections took place, and, according to a correspondent who came to the scene, the bill-sticker was for the moment master of the French capital, the candidates literally covering the place with their posters. The people of countries outside of France will be amazed to hear that "no city in all probability is ever submerged in such a deluge of paper as is Paris on these occasions." The dire feature of the situation, the writer says, "is that the bill-stickers are almost licensed law-breakers during the electoral period. It is bad enough that the public buildings should be their legitimate prey, that they should carry their absolute right to ply their brush as they list on the walls of marries, schools, museums, and every description of national edifices; not content with this privilege, they do as they please with the walls of private houses. They do not spare even the statues, but, pasting their bills wherever there is space, compel the artists to the most illustrative and to serve as a means of electoral advertisement. So dreaded is the nuisance that the conservators of some of the public monuments and buildings have had to erect walls to a considerable height, and thus preserve them from defacement at the expense of a temporary boarding. There was talk this year of keeping the operations of the bill-stickers out by prohibiting the most outrageous of their pranks, but nothing has come of these projects, and the plague of posters is raging as usual as before." This is certainly a surprising state of affairs in such a beautiful city as Paris, the capital of an artistic nation.

THE POET'S GRIEVANCE.

The editor was sitting in his office one day when a man whose brow was clothed with thunder entered. Fiercely seizing a chair, he slammed it down on the table, hurled his umbrella on the floor and sat down, says Collier's Weekly. "Are you the editor?" he asked. "Yes." "Can you read writing?" "Of course." "Read that, then," he said, thrusting at the editor an envelope with an inscription on it. "B—" said the editor, trying to spell it. "That's not a B—it's an S," said the man. "Oh, yes, I see. Well, it looks like 'Salt for Dinner' or 'Souls of Sinners.'" "No, sir," replied the man, "nothing of the kind. That's my name—Samuel H. Brunner. I know you couldn't read. Call on me about that poem of mine you printed the other day on the 'Success of Sorrow.'" "Don't remember it." "Of course you don't, because it went into the paper underneath the infamous title of 'Smeacose to-morrow.'" The editor fled.

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WIT AND HUMOR. The London Graphic says that Lord Roberts, notwithstanding statements to the contrary, is not at all likely to be created a duke. Only two men, Marlborough and Wellington—have either been created dukes for achievements purely military. Queen Wilhelmina of Holland is not only sympathetic, but practical. Taking her usual afternoon drive with one of her military officers recently, she young Queen sat in the wood at the Hague two children, one eight, the other ten years old, seated on a bench overlooking Her Majesty asked what was the matter. One of the children, still excepting, told the Queen they had lost their mother, and there was no one to look after them. "Well," said Wilhelmina, "we must go and look after your father." The children, with much hesitation, explained that they had been sent out by their father to keep the Queen, after considering a moment, ordered the coachman to take them to an asylum and walked back to the palace with the officer. SIGNALS OF DANGER.—Have you lost your appetite? Have you a coated tongue? Have you an unpleasant taste in the mouth? Does your head ache and have you dizziness? If so, your stomach is out of order and you need medicine. But you do not like medicine. Do you prefer sickness to medicine. He that prefers sickness to medicine must suffer, but under the auspices of the wise man would procure a box of Farnese's Vegetable Pills and speedily get himself in health, and active to keep so. There are so many cough medicines in the market, that it is sometimes difficult to tell which to buy, but if we had a cough, a cold or any affliction of the throat or lungs, we would try Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup. Those who have used it think it is far ahead of all other preparations recommended for such ailments. The Bickel's Syrup is made in a pleasant and agreeable way.