

Titus after his return from the conquest of Jerusalem, and he is said to have employed twelve thousand captive Jews in its erection. What a structure it is! So vast, that one can hardly picture it in the imagination, or take in its height and sweep. Its circumference is more than sixteen hundred feet. It is an oval, 620 feet long, 573 in breadth, and 157 feet high. What splendid masonry! Now a mouldering ruin, scarce one-third of it remaining, stripped of its marble, and colored walls, and iron clamps; yet what remains has been computed to be worth over half a million pounds sterling. As I climbed to the highest tiers, and looked over the empty space, the *podium*, containing the places of honour for the Emperor and his family, the senators, and the vestal virgins, once covered with costly marble, the arches glittering with gold and gems, I thought of the dedication festival, when 5,000 wild animals fought with gladiators, and the arena was red with the butchery, the galleries crowded with excited spectators, the Emperor, the senators, the vestal virgins, the knights, and common people; I thought of the after scenes, in the days of persecution, when 100,000 voices roared, "The Christians to the lions!" and brave men and timid women surrendered themselves to the devouring wild beasts. Magnificent abode of pleasure and of wickedness! There it stands, a monument of the cruelty of old Rome, and of the faith of the early martyrs. There it stands, built as if not for time but eternity, in its solitude, its awful beauty, its majesty, the most impressive sight conceivable. Not a day was I in Rome in which I did not visit the Colosseum, and to see it by moonlight is a vision which can never be forgotten.

"Arches on arches" as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Colosseum stands, the moonbeams shine
As 'twere its natural torches, for Divine
Should be the light which streams here to
illumine

The long-explored, but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation, and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies
assume

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of
heaven.

Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Under the things of earth, which Time hath
bent,

A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a
power

And magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its
dower."

—*Child Harold.*

The following extracts from the Editor's story, "Valeria, the Martyr of the Catacombs,"* endeavours to reproduce a scene in this old crumbling, but still majestic Colosseum:

THE EVE OF MARTYRDOM.

In a vaulted chamber beneath the stone seats of the Colosseum, lay the destined Christian martyrs on the eve before the day of their triumph. As an act of grace, some coarse straw, the refuse of a lion's lair, had been given them, and the relief of their fetter-cramped limbs, stiffened with lying on a rough stone floor, was in itself an indescribable delight. But they had a

* Toronto: William Briggs, and Methodist Book Rooms, Montreal and Halifax. Price 75 cents, with special discount to Sunday-schools.

deeper cause of joy. They were found worthy to witness a good confession for Christ before Cæsar, like the beloved Apostle Paul; and even as their Lord Himself before Pontius Pilate. And now the day of their espousals to their Heavenly Bridegroom was at hand.

The silvery-haired Demetrius, a holy calm beaming in his eyes, uttered words of peace and comfort. The coarse black barley-bread and muddy wine which had been given them lest death should cheat the mob of their promised delight on the morrow, the venerable priest had consecrated to the Supper of the Lord—the last viaticum to strengthen their souls on their journey to the spirit world. Sitting at his feet, faint and wan, but with a look of utter content upon her face, was his daughter Callirhoe, a heavenly smile flickering on her lips. With an undaunted courage, a heroic resolve beaming from his eyes, stood Adæuctus, waiting like a valiant soldier at his post the welcome word of the great Captain of his salvation: "Well done! good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Ever and anon the deep-mouthed roar of a hungry lion rent the air, his fierce bound shook the walls of his cage, and his hot breath came through the bars as he keenly sniffed the smell of human flesh. But though it caused at times a tremor of the quivering nerves of the wan and wasted girl, it shook not her unfaltering soul. Listen to the holy words calmly spoken by the venerable Demetrius: "*Non turbetur cor vestrum*—Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.' Yes, daughter. Yes, brave friend; before another sun shall set we shall see the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off. Mine aged eyes shall see, too, the beloved Rachel of my youth, to behold whom they have ached these many years. And thou, child, shalt see the mother after whom thy heart hath yearned."

"If only, dear father, my brother Ezra were with us," whispered Callirhoe, "we soon would be an unbroken family in the city of the great King."

"God's will be done, my child," answered the patriarch. "He doeth all things well. He could bid His angels fly swiftly, and shut the lions' mouths, or, better still, convoy our spirits to the marriage supper of the Lamb—to the repose of Abraham's bosom. Your brother is a child of the covenant, an heir to the promises, the son of many prayers. God will count him also in the day when He maketh up His jewels." Then as if gifted with the spirit of prophecy, he exclaimed: "Not always shall the servants of the Most High be persecuted unto death. But this very structure, now dedicated to slaughter and cruelty, shall hereafter be consecrated to the worship of the true God"—a prediction which, after long centuries, has been literally fulfilled.

Thus in holy converse wore the hours away. And then through the rocky vaults of the Colosseum stole the sweet accents of their last evening hymn before they should sing the song of Moses and the Lamb on high:—

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust.

"He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot."

As this psalm of triumph swelled into louder strain, the gladiators, awed by its strange power, paused amid their ribald jests, and even the lion hushed his hungry roar, and the tiger his angry growl.

A ROMAN HOLIDAY.

Early next morning the army of slaves who had charge of the Colosseum, under the direction of Fulvus, the freedman, were hard at work. Some at the very summit of the building, with much shouting and pulling of ropes, were stretching the great *velarium* or awning, as a protection from the rays of the sun. Others were sweeping the sand of the arena to a smooth and even surface. Many cart-loads of fresh sand were heaped around the base of the *podium*, for the ghastly purpose of being spread upon the blood-stained surface after each act of the sanguinary drama of the day. Others were decorating with garlands of flowers, and with gold and purple bannerets, the seats of the Emperors Diocletian and Galerius, and those of the senators and other persons of distinction. The great structure seemed even more striking in its vastness, as a few score figures crawled like flies over its empty seats, than when filled with its tumultuous throng of spectators. It was an immense oval six hundred and fifteen feet in its longer diameter, and five hundred and ten feet in the shorter. The circling seats rose tier on tier to the giddy height of one hundred and fifty feet.

As the present writer climbed those cliff-like walls, now crumbling into ruin, he tried to re-people those long-deserted seats with the eager and excited throngs which had often filled them to overflowing, when twice eighty thousand cruel eyes were wont to gloat upon the dying martyr's pang, "butchered to make a Roman holiday." Then he wandered through the vast vaulted corridors and stairways, eighty in number, and bearing still the old Roman numerals by which access was gained to the different galleries. These were so capacious that the whole multitude could in a few minutes disperse, and were thence called *vomitoria*. He then explored the dens and caves for the wild beasts, and the rocky chambers in which the gladiators and martyr victims awaited the signal that called them to their doom. The row of seats just above the *podium* was reserved for the equestrian order; those higher still, for the *populus*, or common people; and the highest of all, for persons of the lowest rank. Early in the day, multitudes of spectators began to arrive, mostly arrayed in gala dress, and many wearing the colours of their favourite gladiatorial champion. With a loud flourish of trumpets the great gates of the imperial entrance opened, and the chariots of the Emperors and their respective *suites* entered and took their places in the grand tribune reserved for these

* On this very arena perished the venerable Ignatius, linked by tradition with the Saviour Himself as one of the children whom He took in His arms and blessed. "Suffer me to be the food of wild beasts," he exclaimed, "by whom I shall attain unto God. For I am the wheat of God, and I shall be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may become the pure bread of Christ."

angust occupants. It was noted with dissatisfaction by the multitude that neither of the Emperesses Prisca or Valeria were present. But the withered old crow Fausta, mother of the Emperor Galerius, seemed to gloat like a foul harpy on the anticipated spectacle of blood, and near by was her sinister shadow, the black-browed priest of Cybele.

Burdo, the butcher, was rubicund with joy at the approaching conflict, for which, he said, he long had hungered. "But why," he asked, "are not their majesties, the Emperesses, in the state tribune. 'Tis a contempt of a festival sacred to the gods."

"Our dainty Emperess," jeered Samos, the "Flatnose," "has small stomach to see her friends, the Christians, given to the lions, and I suspect the old one is tarred with the same stick."

"If I thought that I'd denounce her myself," growled Bruto, the gladiator; "Empress or slave, the crime of being a Christian levels all ranks."

"And lose your head for your pains," chimed in Piso the barber. "Don't you know that she winds the Emperor round her finger like a silken thread."

"Does she favour the accursed Nazarenes?" croaked Ephraim the Jew.

"May the same fate overtake her." "I thought they were friends of yours," said our old friend Max, who was one of the soldiers on guard. "They say this Christ whom they worship was a Jew."

We dare not repeat the wicked imprecation which burst from the lips of the exasperated Israelite. But it is notorious that the Jews were far more malignant persecutors of the Christians than even the Pagans themselves—as is apparent from the Acts of the Apostles and other records of the early Church.

The time for beginning the games having come, the priest of Neptune poured a libation to the god, and heaped incense on his altar, placed near the imperial tribune. In this act of worship—for these old gods were worshipped with the blood of men slain as a holiday pageant—he was followed by the Emperors and their chief officers.

Then with another peal of trumpets a procession of gladiators in burnished armour entered the arena and marched around its vast circuit. Pausing before the tribune of the Emperors they chanted with a loud voice: "*Cæsares Augusti, morituri salutamus vos*—Great Cæsar, we who are about to die salute you."

First there was a sort of sham battle—*prælusio*, as it was called, in which the gladiators fought with wooden swords. But the multitude were speedily impatient of that, and demanded the combat *a loutance*—to the death.

"We came not here to witness such child's play as that," said Burdo, the butcher. "I want to see the blood flow as it does in my own shambles;" a brutal sentiment which met with much favour from his neighbours.

Soon their desires were gratified. First there was a combat of *Andabata*, that is, men who wore helmets without any aperture for the eyes, so that they were obliged to fight blindfolded, and thus excited the mirth of the spectators. Although they inflicted some ugly wounds upon each other, none of these were mortal, and the mob called loudly for the *Hoplomachi*, who were next on the play-bill. These were men who