

us, and let us hasten to regain the fresh air and the light of the sun.

The news of Valeria's betrothal to Candidus was received with great joy by the friends of Rufinus and Irene. And numerous were the visitors who crowded on the 21st. of November, into the Lateran basilica which had been decorated as for a feast. The highest personages of the Roman aristocracy met there. The Supreme Pontiff had just celebrated the Holy Mysteries, he approached the betrothed who were kneeling before the altar, and before God and the noble assembly, he solemnly blessed their union.

Constantine had promised to give a dowry to the daughter of his friend, the fiancée of his dear tribune : he did so with royal magnificence. Beautiful wedding gifts poured in from every side, but, although she was very grateful to the Emperor and all those who took so large a share in her happiness, Valeria's heart was lifted above the riches of this earth. In her eyes, the most precious jewel, the richest treasure, was the golden *bullæ* enclosing the blood of the brave Catulus, of him whom she could henceforth call her father.

With most delicate attention, Irene had hung the relic around her beloved daughter's neck on the morning of the marriage.

Rufinus and Valeria had certainly not forgotten Rustica and Mincius. He had but just entered his palace, when the prefect sent for his dear benefactors of the Trans-tevere, on whom he wished to shower benefits. But the *fossore* and the young woman refused every recompense with as much energy as charming grace ; however they also wished to offer their humble present to the young couple, a poor present in truth, but one much appreciated,