

anxious enquiry, as she gazes earnestly into her boy's face and smoothes back the damp curls from his brow.

"Mother, Severus would give me nothing; he says the followers of Christ are a lot of impostors, who have but recently burned the city of Rome, and the Emperor has already ordered the whole sect to be destroyed. He said my father"—the mother's face grows paler—"Yes, mother, I know that my father gave up his life rather than take up arms which was against Christ's command, and I trust his son will be as true a Christian; they know I am a follower of Jesus Christ, for I would not deny it when they asked me, and Severus said in scorn, I was a worthy son of my father. I was proud to hear it said, mother, but I must not run on thus. A terrible persecution is about to fall upon the Christians. I have learned it all; my time has not been wasted; but they have not yet discovered our hiding place in the catacombs. But as suspicion has fallen upon me, I must go out and come in no more. There is our friend Cornelius, even now on his way from Judea. I must meet and warn him, and there are others I can help. Hold me not, mother! I must not stay idly here if in any way I can serve my Master elsewhere. I will be back or send a message in two days, if possible; if not, do not mourn for me, mother, for what is this life compared to that which is to come, even eternity to be spent with our God and all the dear ones who have died trusting in His Son."

We draw a veil over the last hours the mother and son spend together, they draw to a close as do all earthly things, and the Christians assemble in their underground place of worship, and bid, as it were, a last farewell to the young brother who, with bowed head, receives the blessing of the aged minister, a man who has "been with Jesus" when he walked upon the earth, and who has since been with him no less in the light of spiritual communion.

One week has passed. We see Giovanni in a loathsome dungeon, his only company a brutal jailor. His only company? From when e then comes the look of joy and hope on the now pale face? He who has promised to be ever with us has not forsaken his trusting child. Through all the days of torture and the nights of pain a mightier one than man has stood beside the heroic soul, and the brutes in human form stood abashed in the presence of the frail lad from whom they can draw no word regarding his friends or their hiding place.

At an early hour people are hastening toward the Coliseum. Every one is anxious to obtain a good view, for to-day will be added to the other sports of the Arena the death of a Christian boy. The gladiatorial combats are over. It would seem that the spectators must have had their fill of bloodshed, but no! their savage thirst is still unquenched, and they bend eagerly forward as a young boy enters the arena. His upturned face is very pale, but on it is no shade of fear; he seems not to know when the cage is opened and the lion enters. A low growl attracts his attention, he glances at the huge animal, then clasping his hands and raising his eyes to the heaven he is so soon to enter, he prays:

"O Father in heaven, I ask not thy vengeance on my persecutors; the day is coming when they will know against whom they have fought, and I pity them. O Father, thou hast kept thy promise; thou hast been with me to the end and thou art with me now. Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

There is a hush in the air! The lion springs upon his prey. A moment—all is over! The pure spirit of the youthful martyr has joined the redeemed of all nations where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

LYDIA J. MOSHER.