

turning to her home, she was met by her faithful Napa, who in a trembling voice informed her that during her absence a dreadful secret had been discovered. The noble Clelia had sent for Ifigenia, and peremptorily ordered her to accept the husband which she had appointed for her, but the slave as usual refused. The poor creature was then cruelly scourged, and in the midst of her pain cried out: "Lord Jesus, help your servant!" Clelia, inflamed with rage, screamed out: "You are then a Christian!" and ordered her to be delivered at once to the *lictors*. The next day would see her tried, and probably condemned. Cornelia tried to conceal her anguish on hearing this dreadful tale, and asked for her father, and also for her stepmother, but she was informed that the former had gone to a banquet with a friend, and the serene Clelia to a dinner at the house of the noble Flavia; and that neither of them were likely to return before midnight.

How long seemed the hours of this night, passed in prayers and tears, her soul pierced with bitter grief, for the danger that threatened one whom she had grown to love as a second mother! In the morning, as soon as she thought her father was risen, she went to implore of him to use his influence for the slave, but he had already left the house. What can she do? Time presses, can she humble herself to ask a favor of her who usurps her mother's place? She tramples on her pride, and presents herself before Clelia, who looks with amazement on her pale cheeks and eyes red with weeping. "Why child, she exclaims, what has happened to you? Have you been up all night assisting at the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*?" "Clelia," replied the girl, trying to control her feelings, "yesterday you gave up Ifigenia to the lictors, and I am come to ask you to recall your sentence and take her back. Do not, I beseech you, let your slave be devoured by the lions of the amphitheatre!" The lady bent a scrutinizing glance on Cornelia, saying: "You love this Ifigenia?" "Yes, she replied, I love her, and wish to save her. I would purchase her from you at any cost." "Did you know that Ifigenia was a Christian?" said Clelia, calculating the effect of her words. Cornelia hesitated an instant, then, animated by