

—I fear, forever! Yet I had rather die in this dayless damp, this lightless gloom and know that I have walked in thy holy footsteps of sacrifice and self-devotion, than roam forever in some paradise of cloudless clime and starry skies and have in the haunted chambers of my memory such ever-criying spirits as the bitter remorse and clinging guilt of a brother's blood. Yet, wrong is bitter, too, and stinging! Why should I be the victim of such injustice?"

Just then the clanking of chains was heard on the stones of the silent corridors above her tomb and Zerola recognized the footfalls of the sullen slave whose duty it was to bring her food and lower it through the aperture in the ceiling of her dungeon—a slave whom she had of course never seen, yet near whom she seemed to feel a presence not unknown.

As the guard walked away he heard, just outside the prison-window, a man speaking rather sternly to several others: "The third interruption is the signal. Gladiators, remember, to-night in the Forum!" This was evidently the conclusion of his speech, but it was enough to make known to the guard at least the vocation of the conspirators. Well might it have been if he had known the conspiracy, and told it. However, of what was about to happen at the close of this eventful day he little thought as the gladiators drew their daggers and took the solemn oath, saying: "We swear, we swear. To-night in the Forum!"

How natural is optimism! Pleasant thoughts, imaginings, often made her forget the discomforts of the prison; for, girl-like, she used to picture her lover travelling through strange lands in search of her. And she was not wrong, for on that morning in Jerusalem her arrest had drawn the attention of the mob from their victim to herself. This gave two Nazarenes who were in the crowd the opportunity of carrying Thæon away. And in their home, after an illness of two or three months, he had recovered. Then, on being told the story of his rescue and hearing that Zerola had been sent away from Palestine, Thæon—who by all but his two friends was supposed to be dead—started to find his betrothed: for his was that love which sometimes conquers calmer judgment, that love which so often has made a man a hero.

And on this very night he was leaving Egypt to go to Italy. Will he ever find her? Who can tell?

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(To be Continued.)