

one in Tipperary, King's and Queen's counties.

WATERFORD.

Most Rev. Dr. Sheehan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, consecrated the new burial ground attached to the Dunbarrow Parish Church.

A grand military tournament has been opened at Waterford by Most Rev. Dr. Sheehan, in aid of the Catholic Cathedral at Waterford, which is in need of repairs.

ULSTER.

ANTRIM.

In the Belfast Custody Court, a servant named Agnes Grant was remanded for a week charged with the larceny of two blank cheques, Nos. B 91,286 and 91,287, the property of Mrs. Minnie Haines, 47 Donegal pass, also with forging Mrs. Haines' name to same for £1 each on the same date, and also with tendering the cheques at the Donegal place branch of the Ulster Bank with intent to defraud.

The North East Agricultural Association's Annual Show opened under the most favorable auspices. The weather was fine, and the number of entries large.

ARMAGH.

The ceremony of opening the new water works at Lurgagh was performed by Mrs. Malcolm. The scheme had been under consideration for some time, and was put into practical operation by the Town Commissioners some three years ago. It was decided to get the supply from Lough Neagh.

DERRY.

The Rev. M. McGowan was the recipient of a handsome illuminated address, accompanied by a testimonial in the form of a purse of sovereigns, recently. These were presented by the Children of Mary and the Sodality of the Temperance Society of Mary Immaculate, Omagh, among whose members Father McGowan labored for over three years, and are intended to mark the occasion of his removal from Omagh to Moville.

DONEGAL.

The marriage of James Murrin, a merchant of Killybegs, and Miss Isabella McCloskey, youngest daughter of the late Francis McCloskey, of Killybegs, was solemnized recently, in St. Mary's Church, that place. The Rev. Michael Martin, V.F., officiated.

DOWN.

A melancholy death has come to light. A man, aged about seventy named John Magill, belonging to the townland of Ballyvally, close to Banbridge town, has been found dead in his bed. It is believed that deceased has been dead for about a month.

MONAGHAN.

Lady Aberdeen, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. J. Talbot Power, the Rt. Hon. Thos. A. Dickson and Miss Edith Dickson, Miss Jane Barrow, Mr. Rolleston and Miss Fitzgerald, visited Inniskillen recently, and was received by Father Maguire and the priests and people of the district. A hearty cheer was given as the party drove to Moyles House, the residence of the parish priest. On the way they passed the Inniskillen National Schools, and the little ones gave the Countess the heartiest of cheers. The road was spanned with arches bearing mottoes conveying the gladness with which the visit was welcomed by the people. Beautiful bouquets were presented to Lady Aberdeen by Miss McNello and Miss Anna McKenna. Having lunched at Moyles House, the party started for Drumslusk. At the Drumslusk National School a large assemblage of workers engaged in the famous Carrickmacross lace industry were met. The schoolhouse was decorated with flowers, and the words in golden letters on the walls 'Welcome to the Noble Lady, Irish Industries Association.' A song of welcome was sung by the pupils as the Countess entered amidst applause. Here an address was presented to Lady Aberdeen from the people of Inniskillen and the surrounding district. It was read by Fr. Campbell.

TYRONE.

The Verner estate, principally situated in county Tyrone, has been sold to the tenants at 17 years' purchase, subject to the rights of turrage.

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, whose twenty years of expatriation expired on January 2, 1892, and who returned to Ireland last month, has announced his intention of standing for election as City Marshal of Dublin.

FABIOLA.

Or, the Church of the Catacombs.

Written by His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman.

[Published by special request.]

CHAPTER IX.

MEETINGS.

Of all the Roman hills, the most distinctly traceable on every side is undoubtedly the Palatine. Augustus having chosen it for his residence, successive emperors followed his example, but gradually transformed his modest residence into a palace, which covered the entire hill. Nero, not satisfied with its dimensions, destroyed the neighborhood by fire, and then extended the imperial residence to the neighboring Esquiline, taking in the whole space now occupied between the two hills by the Coliseum. Vespasian threw down that golden house, of which the magnificent vaults remain, covered with beautiful paintings, and built the amphitheatre just mentioned, and other edifices, with its materials. The entrance to the palace was made, so on after this period, from the Via Sacra, or Sacred Way, close to the arch of Titus. After passing through a vestibule, the visitor found himself in a magnificent court, the plan of which can be distinctly traced. Turning from this, on the left side, he entered into an immense square space, arranged and consecrated to Adonis by Domitian, and planted with trees, shrubs, and flowers.

Still keeping to the left, you would enter into sets of chambers, constructed by Alexander Severus in honor of his mother Mammaea, whose name they bore. They looked out, opposite to the Colian hill, just at the angle of it, which abuts upon the later triumphal arch of Constantine, and the fountain called the Meta Sudana. Here was the apartment occupied by Sebastian as a tribune, or superior officer, of the imperial guard. It consisted of a few rooms, most modestly furnished, as became a soldier and a Christian. His household was limited to a couple of freedmen, and a venerable matron, who had been his nurse, and loved him as a child. They were Christians, as were all the men in his cohort, partly by conversion, but chiefly by care in recruiting new soldiers.

It was a few evenings after the scenes described in the last chapter, that Sebastian, a couple hours after dark, ascended the steps of the vestibule just described, in company with another youth, of whom we have already spoken. Paneratius admired and loved Sebastian with the sort of affection that an ardent young officer may be supposed to bear towards an older and gallant soldier, who receives him into his friendship. But it was not as to a soldier of Caesar, but as to a champion of Christ, that the civilian boy looked up to the young tribune, whose generosity, noble-mindedness, and valor, were enshrined in such a gentle, simple bearing, and were accompanied by such prudence and consideration, as gave confidence and encouragement to all that dealt with him. And Sebastian loved Paneratius no less, on account of his single-hearted ardour, and the innocence of his mind. But he well saw the dangers to which his youthful warmth and impetuosity might lead him; and he encouraged him to keep close to himself, that he might guide, and perhaps sometimes restrain him.

As they were entering the palace, that part of which Sebastian's cohort guarded, he said to his companion: 'Every time I enter here, it strikes me how kind an act of Divine Providence it was, to plant almost at the very gate of Caesar's palace, the arch of which commemorates at once the downfall of the first great system that was antagonistic to Christianity, and the completion of the greatest prophecy of the Gospel,—the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman power. I cannot but believe that another arch will one day arise to commemorate no less a victory, over the second enemy of our religion, the heathen Roman empire itself.'

'What! do you contemplate the overthrow of this vast empire, as the means of establishing Christianity?'

'God forbid! I would shed the last drop of my blood as I shed my first, to maintain it. And depend upon it, when the empire is converted, it will not be by such gradual growth as we now witness, but by some means, so unhuman, so divine, as we shall never, in our most sanguine longings,

forecast; but all will exclaim: 'This is the change of the right hand of the Most High!'

'No doubt; but your idea of a Christian triumphal arch supposes an earthly instrument; where do you imagine this to lie?'

'Why, Paneratius, my thoughts, I own, turn towards the family of one of the Augusti, as showing a slight germ of better thoughts: I mean, Constantius Chlorus.'

'But, Sebastian, how many of even our learned and good men will say, nay, do say, if you speak thus to them, that similar hopes were entertained in the reigns of Alexander, Gordian, or Aurelian; yet ended in disappointment. Why, they ask, should we not expect the same results now?'

'I know it too well, my dear Paneratius; and bitterly have I often deplored those dark views, which damp our energies; that lurking thought, that vengeance is perpetual, and mercy temporary, that martyr's blood, and virgin's prayer have no power even to shorten times of visitation, and hasten hours of grace.'

By this time they had reached Sebastian's apartment, the principal room of which was lighted, and evidently prepared for some assembly. But opposite the door was a window open to the ground, and leading to a terrace that ran along that side of the building. The night looked so bright through it, that both instinctively walked across the room, and stood upon the terrace. A lovely and splendid view presented itself to them. The moon was high in the heavens, swimming in them, as an Italian moon does; a round, full globe, not a flat surface, bathed all round in its own refulgent atmosphere. It dimmed, indeed, the stars near itself; but they seemed to have retired, in thicker and more brilliant clusters, into the distant corners of the azure sky. It was just such an evening as, years after, Monica and Augusta enjoyed from a window at Ostia, and discoursed of heavenly things.

It is true that, below and around, all was beautiful and grand. The Coliseum, or Flavian amphitheatre, rose at one side, in all its completeness; and the gentle murmur of the fountain, while its waters glistened in a silvery column, like the reluctant sea-wave gliding down a slanting rock, came soothingly on the ear. On the other side, the lofty building called the Septizonium of Severus, in front, towering above the Colian, the sumptuous baths of Caracalla, reflected from their marble walls and stately pillars the radiance of the autumn moon. But all these massive monuments of earthly glory rose unheeded before the two Christian youths, as they stood silent, the elder with his right arm round his youthful companion's neck, and resting on his shoulder. After a long pause he took up the thread of his last discourse, and said, in a softer tone, 'I was going to show you, when we stepped out here, the very spot just below our feet, where I have often fancied the triumphal arch, to which I have alluded, would stand. But who can think of such paltry things below, with the splendid vault above us, lighted up so brilliantly, as if on purpose to draw upwards our eyes and hearts?'

'True, Sebastian; and I have sometimes thought, that if the underside of that firmament up to which the eye of man, however wreathed and sinful, may look, be so beautiful and bright, what must that upperside be, down on which the eye of boundless Glory deigns to glance! I imagine it to be like a richly embroidered veil, through the texture of which a few points of golden thread may be allowed to pass; and these only reach us. How transcendently royal must be that upper surface, on which tread the lightest feet of angels, and of the just made perfect!'

'A graceful thought, Paneratius, and no less true. It makes the veil, between us laboring here and the triumphal church above, thin and easily to be passed.'

'And pardon me, Sebastian,' said the youth, with the same look up to his friend, as a few evenings before had met his mother's inspired gaze, 'pardon me if, while you wisely speculate upon a future arch to record the triumph of Christianity, I see already before me, built and open, the arch through which we, feeble as we are, may lead the Church speedily to the triumph of glory, and ourselves to that of bliss.'

'Where, my dear boy, where do you mean?'

Paneratius pointed steadily with his hand towards the left, and said: 'There, my noble Sebastian; any of those open arches of the Flavian am-

phitheatre, which lead to its arena; over which, not denser than the outstretched canvas which shades our spectators, is that veil of which you spoke just now. But hark!'

'That was a lion's roar from beneath the Colian!' exclaimed Sebastian, surprised. 'Wild beasts must have arrived at the vivarium of this amphitheatre; for I know there were none there yesterday.'

'Yes, hark!' continued Paneratius, not noticing the interruption. 'These are the trumpet-notes that summon us; that is the music that must accompany us to our triumph!'

Both paused for a time, when Paneratius again broke the silence, saying, 'This puts me in mind of a matter on which I want to take your advice, my faithful counsellor; will your company soon be arriving?'

'Not immediately; and they drop in one by one; till they assemble, come into my chamber, where none will interrupt us.'

They walked along the terrace, and entered the last room of the suite. It was at the corner of the hill, exactly opposite the fountain; and was lighted only by the rays of the moon, streaming through the open window on that side. The soldier stood near this, while Paneratius sat upon his small military couch.

'What is this great affair, Paneratius,' said the officer, smiling, 'upon which you wish to have my sage opinion?'

'Quite a trifle, I dare say,' replied the youth, bashfully, 'for a bold and generous man like you; but an important one to an unskilful and weak boy like me.'

'A good and virtuous one, I doubt not; do let me hear it; and I promise you every assistance.'

Well, then, Sebastian—now don't think me foolish,' proceeded Paneratius, hesitating and blushing at every word. 'You are aware I have a quantity of useless plate at home—mere lumber, you know, in our plain way of living; and my dear mother, for any thing I can say, won't wear the lots of old-fashioned trinkets, which are lying locked up, and of no use to any body. I have no one, to whom all this should descend. I am, and shall be, the last of my race. You have often told me, who in that case are the Christian's natural heirs,—the widow and the fatherless, the helpless and the indigent. Why should these wait my death, to have what by reversion is theirs? And if a persecution is coming, why run the risk of confiscation seizing them, whenever our lives are wanted, to the utter loss of our rightful heirs?'

'Paneratius,' said Sebastian, 'I have listened without offering a remark to your noble suggestion. I wished you to have all the merit of uttering it yourself. Now, just tell me, what makes you doubt or hesitate about what I know you wish to do?'

'Why, to tell the truth, I feared it might be highly presumptuous and impertinent in one of my age to offer to do what people would be sure to imagine was something grand or generous; while I assure you, dear Sebastian, it is no such thing. For I shall not miss these things a bit; they are of no value to me whatever. But they will be to the poor, especially in the hard times coming.'

'Of course Lucius consents?'

'Oh, no fear about that! I would not touch a grain of gold-dust without her even wishing it. But why I require your assistance is principally this. I should never be able to stand its being known that I presumed to do any thing considered out of the way, especially in a boy. You understand me? So I want you, and beg of you, to get the distribution made at some other house; and as from a say from one who needs much the prayers of the faithful, especially the poor, and desires to remain unknown.'

'I will serve you with delight, my good and truly noble boy! Hush! did you not hear the Lady Fabiola's name just mentioned? There, again, and with an epithet expressive of no good will.'

Paneratius approached the window; two voices were conversing together so close under them that the cornices between prevented their seeing the speakers, evidently a woman and a man. After a few minutes they walked out into the moonlight, almost as bright as day.

'I know that Moorish woman,' said Sebastian; 'it is Fabiola's black slave, Afras.'

'And the man,' added Paneratius, 'is my late school-fellow Corvinus.' They considered it their duty to catch, if possible, the thread of what seemed to be a plot; but, as the speakers walked up and down, they

could only make out a sentence here and there. 'We will not, however, confine ourselves to these parts, but give the entire dialogue. Only, a word first about the interlocutors.'

Of the slave we know enough for the present. Corvinus was son, as we have said, to Tertullus, originally perfect of the Praetorium. This office, unknown in the republic, and of imperial creation, had, from the reign of Tiberius, gradually absorbed almost all civil as well as military power; and he who held it often discharged the duties of chief criminal judge in Rome. It required no little strength of nerve to occupy this post to the satisfaction of despotic and unprincipled masters. To sit all day in a tribunal, surrounded with hideous implements of torture, unmoved by the moans or shrieks of old men, youths, or women, on whom they were tried; to direct a cool interrogatory to one stretched upon the rack, and quivering in agony on one side, while the last sentences of beating to death with bullet-laden nooses was being executed on the other; to sleep calmly after such scenes, and rise with an appetite for their repetition, was not an occupation to which every member of the bar could be supposed to aspire. Tertullus had been brought from Sicily to fill the office, not because he was a cruel, but because he was a cold-blooded man, not susceptible of pity, or partiality. His tribunal, however, was Corvinus's early school; he could sit, while quite a boy, for hours at his father's feet, thoroughly enjoying the cruel spectacles before him, and angry when any one got off. He grew up sordid, coarse, and brutal; and not yet arrived at man's estate, his bloated and freckled countenance and bleary eyes, one of which was half closed, announced him to be already a dissolute and dissipated character. Without taste for any thing refined, or ability for any learning, he united in himself a certain amount of animal courage and strength, and a considerable measure of low cunning. He had never experienced in himself a generous feeling, and he had never curbed an evil passion. No one had ever offended him, whom he did not hate, and pursue with vengeance. I've, above all, he had sworn never to forgive—the schoolmaster who had often chastised him for his sly tricks, and the schoolfellow who had blessed him for his brutal custom. Justice and mercy, good and evil done to him, were equally odious to him.

Tertullus had no fortune to give him, and he seemed to have little genius to make one. To become possessed of one, however, was all-important to his mind; for wealth, as the means of gratifying his desires, was synonymous with him to suppress felicity. A rich heiress, or rather her dowry, seemed the simplest object at which to aim. Too awkward, shy, and stupid to make himself a way in society, he sought other means, more kindred to his mind, for the attainment of his ambitious or avaricious desires. What these means were, his conversation with the black slave will yet explain.

I have come to meet you at the Meta Sudana—again, for the fourth time, at this inconvenient hour. What news have you for me?'

'None, except that after to-morrow my mistress starts for her villa at Capota, and of course I go with her. I shall want more money to carry on operations in your favor.'

'More still? You have had all I have received from my father for months?'

'Why, do you know what Fabiola is?'

'Yes, to be sure, the richest match in Rome.'

'The haughty and cold-hearted Fabiola is not so easily to be won.' But yet you promised me that your charms and potent would secure me her acceptance, or at any rate her fortune. What expense did these things cost?'

'Very great indeed. The most precious ingredients are requisite, and must be paid for. And do you think I will go out at such an hour as this amidst the tombs of the Aryan way, to gather my simples, without being properly rewarded? But how do you mean to second my efforts? I have told you this would hasten their success.'

'And how can I? You know, I am not cut out by nature, or fitted by accomplishments, to make much impression on any one's affections. I would rather trust to the power of your black art.'

'Then let me give you one piece of advice; if you have no grace or strength by which you can gain Fabiola's heart—'

'Fortune, you mean.'

'They say, there is a great deal of money lying about, and it may bring with it a great deal of trouble.'

'What is that?'

'Gold.'

'And where am I to get it? Is it that I seek?'

'The black slave is called malitiosa, and said:'

'Why cannot you get it as Fulvius does?'

'How does he get it?'

'By blood!'

'How do you know it?'

'I have made acquaintance with an old attendant that he has, who if not as dark as I am in skin, fully makes up for it in his heart. His language and mine are sufficiently allied for us to be able to converse. He has asked me many questions about getting my liberty, and take me home to his wife; but I have something better than that in prospect, I trust. However, I got all that I wanted out from him.'

'And what was that?'

'Why, that Fulvius had discovered a great conspiracy against Diocletian; and from the wink of the old man's awful eye, I understood he had hatched it first; and he has been sent with strong recommendations to Rome to be employed in the same line.'

'But I have no ability either to make or discover conspiracies, though I may have to punish them.'

'One way, however, is easy.'

'What is that?'

'In my country there are large birds, which you may attempt in vain to run down with the fleetest hares; but which, if you look about for them, quietly, are the first to betray themselves, for they only hide their heads.'

'What do you wish to represent by this?'

'The Christians. Is there not going to be a persecution of them soon?'

'Yes, and a most fierce one; such as has never been before.'

'Then follow my advice. Do not tire yourself with hunting them down, and catching them all—'

'I will, however, keep your eyes open; and look about for one or two good specimens, half trying to convert them, and half trying to catch them; and when you have got a few, I will send them to you, and you may sell them for a good price.'

'Thank you, thank you, I will stand you. You are not fond of the Christians, then?'

'Fond of them? I hate them with all my heart. The spirit which I see in them is the devil's own work. And he gives them a ghostly smile as the persecutors suspect one of his followers.'

'Oh, how I detest him!'

'What makes you think so?'

'In the first place, they will tell a lie for any thing, and will turn all into dreadful accusations, by their own truthfulness.'

'Good! what next?'

'Then they will kill you, and will give you a good death.'

'Better?'

'And moreover the Lord's word died in the same manner, as you replied:'

'Well, indeed, I should be glad to see the Lord's word die in the same manner as you replied:'

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