

IN BOHEMIA.

I'd rather live in Bohemia than any other land;
For only there are the values true,
And the laurels gathered in all men's view.
The prizes of traffic and state are won
By shrewdness or force, or by deeds undone;
But fame is sweeter without the feud,
And the wise of Bohemia are never shrewd.
Here pilgrims stream with a faith sublime,
From every class and clime and time,
Aspiring only to be enrolled
With the names that are writ in the book of gold;
And each one bears in mind or hand
A palm of the dear Bohemia land.
The scholar first, with his book—a youth
Aflame with the glory of harvested truth;
A girl with a picture, a man with a play,
A boy with a wolf he has modelled in clay;
A smith with a marvellous hilt and sword,
A player, a king, a ploughman, a lord—
And the player is king, when the door is past,
The ploughman is crowned, and the lord is last!
I'd rather fall in Bohemia than win in another land,
There are no titles inherited there,
No hoard or hope for the brainless heir;
No guileless dillard, native born
To stare at his fellow in leaden scorn;
Bohemia has none but adopted sons;
It's limits, where Fancy's bright stream runs,
Its honors not garnered for thrift or trade,
But for beauty and truth men's souls have made.
To the empty heart in a jewelled breast
There is value, maybe, in a purchased crest,
But the thirst of soul soon learn to know
The moistureless froth of the social show,
The vulgar sham of the pompous feast
Where the heaviest purse is the highest priest,
The organized charity, scrimped and led,
In the name of a cautious statistical Christ,
The smile restrained, the respectable cant,
When a friend in need is a friend in want;
Where the only aim is to keep aloof,
And a brother may drown with a cry in his throat.
Oh, long for the glow of a kindly heart,
And the grasp of a friendly hand,
And I'd rather live in Bohemia than in any other land.
—John Boyle O'Reilly.

Mr. Morley Stops a Raid on the Island of Achill.

It seems that on the very day of the disaster which resulted in the drowning of so many of the Achill islanders off Westport, the Westport Guardians had passed a resolution to dismiss their collector of seed rate unless he collected £400 of arrears from the islanders. At a meeting of the guardians this fact was referred to, and it was stated that a requisition had been made for a force of police to protect the collector in making the seizures immediately; and, further, that the Local Government Board had impounded the ordinary rates of the union to meet the deficit, so that the guardians had not sufficient funds to meet the expense of the burial of the victims. One of the guardians mentioned that in some seizures already many sheep had been sold for sixpence each and a cow for two shillings. A resolution was then passed expressing condolence with the relatives of the victims of the disaster, and requesting the collector not to make the seizure for the present. Later an order was issued by telegram from the Irish Office in London suspending all proceedings in the matter of collection of the seed rate till September.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Morley, replying to Mr. W. O'Brien, said it was true that an application had been made for a force of police to protect the rate collector of the Westport Guardians in making seizures on Achill Island for payment of arrears of seed rate, but he considered it his duty under the circumstances to advise that the time for the payment of the arrears should be extended till September, and in any event the application for a police force would not be compiled with.

FABIOLA.

Or, the Church of the Catacombs.

Written by His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman.

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CHAPTER X. OVER MEETINGS.

When the two youths returned to the room by which they had entered the apartment, they found the expected company assembled. A fragrant repast was laid upon the table, principally as a blind to any intruder who might happen unexpectedly to enter. The assembly was large and varied, containing clergy and laity, men and women. The purpose of the meeting was to concert proper measures, in consequence of something which had lately occurred in the palace. This we must briefly explain. Sebastian, enjoying the unbounded confidence of the emperor, employed all his influence propagating the Christian faith within the palace. Numerous conversions had gradually been made; but shortly before this period there had been a wholesale one effected, the particulars of which are recorded in the genuine Acts of this glorious soldier. In virtue of former laws, many Christians were seized and brought to trial, which often ended in death. Two brothers, Marcus and Marcellianus, had been so accused, and were expecting execution; when their friends, admitted to see them, implored them with tears to save their lives by apostasy. They seemed to waver; they promised to deliberate. Sebastian heard of this, and rushed to save them. He was too well known to be refused admittance, and he entered into their gloomy prison like an angel of light. It consisted of a strong room in the house of the magistrate to whose care they had been intrusted. The place of confinement was generally left to that officer; and here Tranquillinus, the father of the two youths, had obtained a respite for them of thirty days to try to shake their constancy; and, to second his efforts, Nicostratus, the magistrate, had placed them in custody in his own house. Sebastian's was a bold and perilous office. Besides the two Christian captives, there were gathered in the place sixteen heathen prisoners; there were the parents of the unfortunate youths weeping over them, and caressing them, to allura them from their threatened fate; there was the gaoler, Claudius, and there was the magistrate, Nicostratus, with his wife Zoe, drawn thither by the compassionate wish of seeing the youths snatched from their fate. Could Sebastian hope, that of this crowd not one would be found, whom a sense of official duty, or a hope of pardon, or hatred of Christianity, might impel to betray him, if he avowed himself a Christian? And did he not know that such an avowal involved his death?

He knew it well; but what cared he? If three martyrs would thus be offered to God instead of two, so much the better; all that he dreaded was, that there should be none. The room was a banquet-hall, but seldom opened in the day, and consequently requiring very little light; what it had, entered only as in the Pantheon, by an opening in the roof; and Sebastian, anxious to be seen by all, stood in the ray which now darted through it, strong and brilliant where it beat, but leaving the rest of the apartment almost dark. It broke against the gold and jewels of his rich tribune's armour, and, as he moved, scattered itself in sparks of brilliant hues into the darkest recesses of that gloom; while it beamed with serene steadiness upon his uncovered head, and displayed his noble features, softened by an emotion of tender grief, as he looked upon the two vacillating confessors. It was some moments before he could give vent in words to the violence of his grief, till at length it broke forth in impassioned tones.

'Holy and venerable brothers,' he exclaimed, 'who have borne witness to Christ, who are imprisoned for Him, whose limbs are marked by chains worn for His sake; who have tasted torments with Him,—I ought to fall at your feet and do you homage, and ask your prayers; instead of standing before you as your exhorter, still less as your reprover. Can this be true which I have heard, that while angels were putting the last flower to your crowns, you have bid them pause, and even thought of telling them to unweave them, and scatter their blossoms to the winds? Can I believe that you who have al-

ready your feet on the threshold of paradise, are thinking of drawing them back, to tread once more the valley of exile and of tears?'

The two youths hung down their heads and wept in humble confession of their weakness. Sebastian proceeded:

'You cannot meet the eye of a poor soldier like me, of the least of Christ's servants: how then will you stand the angry glance of the Lord whom you are about to deny before men (but cannot in your hearts deny), on that terrible day, when He, in return, will deny you before His angels? When, instead of standing manfully before Him, like good and faithful servants, as to-morrow ye might have done, you shall have to come in to His presence after having crawled through a few more years of infamy, disowned by the Church, despised by its enemies, and, what is worse, gnawed by an undying worm, and victims of a sleepless remorse!'

'Cease; oh, in pity cease, young man, whoever thou art,' exclaimed Tranquillinus, the father of the youths. 'Speak not thus severely to my sons. It was, I assure you, to their mother's tears and to my entreaties that they had begun to yield, and not to the tortures which they have endured, with such fortitude. Why should they leave their wretched parents to misery and sorrow? does your religion command this, and do you call it holy?'

'Wait in patience, my good old man,' said Sebastian, with the kindest look and accent, 'and let me speak first with thy sons. They know what I mean, which thou canst not yet; but with God's grace thou too shalt soon. Your father, indeed, is right in saying, that for his sake and your mother's you have been deliberating whether you should not prefer them to Him who told you, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." You cannot hope to purchase for these your aged parents eternal life by your own loss of it. Will you make Christians of them by abandoning Christianity? will you make them soldiers of the Cross by deserting its standard? will you teach them that its doctrines are more precious than life, by preferring life to them? Do you want to gain for them, not the mortal life of the perishable body, but the eternal life of the soul? then hasten yourselves to its acquisition; throw down at the feet of your Saviour the crowns you will receive, and entreat for your parents' salvation.'

'Enough, enough, Sebastian, we are resolved,' cried out together both the brothers.

'Claudius,' said one, 'put on me again the chains you have taken off.' 'Nicostratus,' added the other, 'give orders for the sentence to be carried out.'

Yet neither Claudius nor Nicostratus moved.

Farewell, dear father; adieu, dearest mother, they in turn said, embracing their parents.

'No,' replied the father, 'we part no more. Nicostratus, go tell Chromatius that I am from this moment a Christian with my sons; I will die with them for a religion which can make heroes thus of boys.' And I, continued the mother, 'will not be separated from my husband and children.'

The scene which followed baffles description. All were moved; all wept; the prisoners joined in the tumult of these new affections; and Sebastian saw himself surrounded by a group of men and women smitten by grace, softened by its influences, and subdued by its power; yet all was lost if one remained behind. He saw the danger, not to himself, but to the Church, if a sudden discovery were made, and to those souls flustering upon the confines of life. Some hung upon his arm; some clasped his knees; some kissed his feet, as though he had been a spirit of peace, such as visited Peter in his dungeon at Jerusalem.

Two alone had expressed no thought. Nicostratus was indeed moved, but by no means conquered. His feelings were agitated, but his convictions unshaken. His wife, Zoe, knelt before Sebastian with a beseeching look and outstretched arms, but she spoke not a word.

'Come Sebastian,' said the keeper of the records, for such was Nicostratus's office; 'it is time for thee to depart. I cannot but admire the sincerity of belief, and the generosity of heart, which can make thee act as thou hast done, and impel these young men to death; but my duty is imperative, and must outweigh my private feelings.'

'And dost thou not believe with the rest?'

'No, Sebastian, I yield not so easily; I must have stronger evidence than even thy virtue.'

'Oh, speak to him then, thou' said Sebastian to Zoe; 'speak, faithful wife; speak to thy husband's heart; for I am mistaken indeed, if those looks of thine tell me not that thou at least believest.'

Zoe covered her face with her hands, and burst into a passion of tears.

'Thou hast touched her to the quick, Sebastian,' said her husband; 'knowest thou not that she is dumb?'

'I knew it not, noble Nicostratus; for when last I saw her in Asia she could speak.'

'For six years,' replied the other, with a faltering voice, 'her once eloquent tongue has been paralyzed, and she has not uttered a single word.'

Sebastian was silent for a moment; then suddenly he threw out his arms, and stretched them forth, as the Christians always did in prayer, and raised his eyes to heaven; then burst forth in these words:

'O God! Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the beginning of this work is Thine; let its accomplishment be Thine alone. Put forth Thy power, for it is needed; intrust it for once to the weakest and poorest of instruments. Let me, though most unworthy, so wield the sword of Thy victorious Cross, as that the spirits of darkness may fly before it, and Thy salvation may embrace us all, Zoe, look up once more to me.'

All were hushed in silence, when Sebastian, after a moment's silent prayer, with his right hand made over her mouth the sign of the cross, saying: 'Zoe, speak; dost thou believe?'

'I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' she replied, in a clear and firm voice, and fell upon Sebastian's feet.

It was almost a shriek that Nicostratus uttered, as he threw himself on his knees, and bathed Sebastian's right hand with tears.

The victory was complete. Every one was gained; and immediate steps were taken to prevent discovery. The person responsible for the prisoners could take them where he wished; and Nicostratus transferred them all, with Tranquillinus and his wife to the full liberty of his house. Sebastian lost no time in getting them under the care of the holy priest Polycarp, of the title of St. Pastor. It was a case so popular, and requiring such concealment, that the times were so thronged, and all new irritations had so much to be avoided, that the instruction was hurried, and continued night and day; so that baptism was speedily administered.

The new Christian flock was encouraged and consoled by a fresh wonder. Tranquillinus, who was suffering severely from the gout, was restored to instant and complete health by baptism. Chromatius was the prefect of the city, to whom Nicostratus was liable for his prisoners; and this officer could not long conceal from him what had happened. It was indeed a matter of life and death to them all; but, strengthened now by faith, they were prepared for either. Chromatius was a man of upright character, and not fond of persecution; and listened with interest to the account of what had occurred. But when he heard of Tranquillinus's cure, he was greatly struck. He was himself a victim of the same disease, and suffered agonies of pain. 'If,' he said, 'what you relate be true, and if I can have personal experience of this healing power, I certainly will not resist the evidence.'

Sebastian was sent for. To have administered baptism without faith preceding, as an experiment of its healing virtue, would have been superstition. Sebastian took another course, which will be later described, and Chromatius completely recovered. He received baptism soon after, with his son Tibertius.

It was clearly impossible for him to continue in his office, and he had accordingly resigned it to the emperor. Tertullus, the father of the hopeful Corvinus, and prefect of the Pretorium, had been named his successor; so the reader will perceive that the events, just related from the Acts of St. Sebastian, had occurred a little before our narrative begins; for in an early chapter, we spoke of Corvinus's father as already prefect of the city.

Let us now come down again to the evening, in which Sebastian and Pancratius met most of the persons above enumerated in the officer's chamber. Many of them resided in, or about, the palace; and besides them were present Castulus, who held a high situation at court, and

several other persons of rank and influence. Sebastian had obtained permission from the emperor for Chromatius to retire to a country-house in Campania; and it had been arranged that a considerable number of the neophytes should join him there, and, forming one household, should go on with religious instruction, and unite in common offices of piety. The emperor was come when every body retired to the country, and the emperor himself was going to the coast of Euphrates, and thence would take a journey in southern Italy. It was therefore a favorable moment for carrying out the preconcerted plan. Indeed, the Pope was at the time on the journey, and the emperor's departure was a favorable moment for carrying out the preconcerted plan. Indeed, the Pope was at the time on the journey, and the emperor's departure was a favorable moment for carrying out the preconcerted plan.

At this meeting all details were arranged; different parties were to start, in the course of the following days, by various roads—some direct by the Appian, some along the coast, others round by Tibur and a mountain road, through Ardea; but all eyes to meet at the villa, not far from Capua. Through the kindness of these generous-hearted arrangements, Chromatius was given former prisoners, converted by Sebastian's visit, showed himself a most devoted and zealous coadjutor.

Only one more person remained to be secured, and that was the emperor's physician, a man of high rank and influence, who had been cured of a long and painful illness by Sebastian's visit.

Sebastian, after making the necessary arrangements, retired to his chamber, and spent the night in prayer. He was very anxious to see the emperor, and to tell him of the success of his mission. He was also anxious to see the Pope, and to tell him of the success of his mission.

The next day, Sebastian went to the emperor's chamber, and told him of the success of his mission. The emperor was very pleased, and gave Sebastian a high situation at court, and a large sum of money.

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