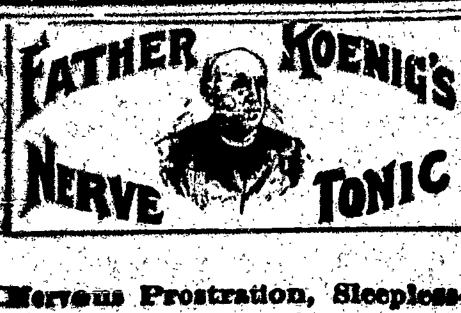

Nervous Prostration, Sleeplessness and Weakness. 6

WEST BROUGHTON, QUEBEC, Oct. 1, '90.
The Pastor Koenig's Nerve Tonic I ordered was for a young lady of my household who was almost useless to herself and others, owing to nervous prostration, sleeplessness, weakness, &c., &c. To-day there is quite a change. The young person is much better, stronger and less nervous. She will continue to use your medicine. I think it is very good. P. SARVIE, Catholic Priest.

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This remedy has been prepared by the Rev. Father Koenig, of Fort Wayne, Ind. since 1876, and is now under his direction by the

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Large Size, $1.75. 6 Bottles for $9.
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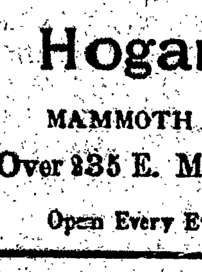

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FABIOLA.

(Continued from 7th page.)

Fabiola and the household who had attended these solemn rites, with tears and prayers, now descended into the crypt, and after the divine offices, returned to Miriam in their darker raiment.

'The hour is come,' said she, taking Fabiola's hand. 'Forgive me, if I have been wanting in duty to you, and in good example.'

'This was more than Fabiola could stand, and she burst into tears. Miriam soothed her, and said: 'Put to my lips the sign of salvation, when I can speak no more, and, good Dionysius, remember me at God's altar when I am departed.'

He prayed at her side, and she replied, till at length her voice failed her. But her lips moved, and she pressed them on the cross presented to her. She looked serene and joyful, till at length, raising her hand to her forehead, then bringing it to her breast, it fell dead there, in making the saving sign. A smile passed over her face, and she expired, as thousands of Christ's children have expired since.

Fabiola mourned much over her, but this time she mourned as they do who have hope.

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRANGER FROM THE EAST.

We appear to ourselves to be walking in solitude. One by one, those whose words and actions, and even thoughts, have hitherto accompanied and sustained us, have dropped off, and the prospect around looks very dreary. But is all this unnatural? We have been describing not an ordinary period of peace and every-day life, but one of warfare, strife and battle. Is it unnatural that the bravest, the most heroic, should have fallen thick around us? We have been reviving the memory of the cruelest persecution which the Church ever suffered, when it was proposed to erect a column bearing the inscription that the Christian name had been extinguished. Is it strange that the holiest and purest should be the earliest to be crowned?

And yet the Church of Christ has still to sustain many years of sharper persecution than we have described. A succession of tyrants and oppressors kept up the fearful war upon her, without intermission, in one part of the world or another for twenty years, even after Constantine had checked it wherever his power reached. Dioclesian, Galerius, Maximinus, and Licinius in the East, Maximian and Maxentius in the West, allowed no rest to the Christians under their several dominions. Like one of those rolling storms which go over half the world, visiting various countries with their ravaging energy, while their gloomy foreboding or sullen wake simultaneously overshadow all, so did this persecution wreak its fury first on one country, then on another, destroying everything Christian, passing from Italy to Africa, from upper Asia to Palestine, Egypt, and then back to Armenia, while it left no place in actual peace, but hung like a blighting storm-cloud over the entire empire.

And yet the Church increased, prospered, and defied the world of sin. Pontiff stepped after Pontiff at once upon the footstool of the papal throne and upon the scaffold; councils were held in the dark halls of the catacombs; bishops came to Rome, at risk of their lives, to consult the successor of St. Peter; letters were exchanged between Churches far distant and the supreme Ruler of Christendom, and between different Churches, full of sympathy, encouragement and affection; bishop succeeded bishop in his see, and ordained priests and other ministers to take the place of the fallen, and be a mark set upon the bulwarks of the city for the enemy's aim; and the work of Christ's imperishable kingdom went on without interruption, and without fear of extinction.

Indeed it was in the midst of all these alarms and conflicts, that the foundations were being laid of a mighty system, destined to produce stupendous effects in after ages. The persecution drove many from the cities, into the deserts of Egypt where the monastic state grew up, so as to make 'the wilderness rejoice and flourish like the lily, bud forth and blossom, and rejoice with joy and praise.' And so, when Dioclesian had been degraded from the purple, and had died a peevish destitute old man, and Galerius had been eaten up alive by ulcers and worms, and had [illegible] by public edict, the [illegible] an Herculeus had strangled himself, and Maxentius had perished in the Tiber, and Maximinus had expired amidst tortures inflicted by Divine justice equal to any he had inflicted on Christians, his very eyes having started from their sockets, and Licinius had been put to death by Constantine, the spouse of Christ, whom they had all conspired to destroy, stood young and blooming as ever, about to enter into her great career of universal diffusion and rule.

It was in the year 313 that Constantine, having defeated Maxentius, gave full liberty to the Church. Even if ancient writers had not described it, we may imagine the joy and gratitude of the poor Christians on this great change. It was like the coming forth, and tearful through happy greeting, of the inhabitants of a city decimated by plague, when proclamation has gone forth that the infection has ceased. For here, after ten years of separation and concealment, when families could scarcely meet in the cemeteries nearest to them, many did not know who among friends or kinsfolk had fallen victims, or who might yet survive. Timid at first, and then more courageous, they ventured forth, soon the places of old assembly, which children born in the last ten years had not seen, were cleansed, or repaired, refitted and reconciled, and opened to public, and now fearless, worship.

Constantine also ordered all property, public or private, belonging to Christians and confiscated, to be restored, but with the wise provision that the actual holders should be indemnified by the imperial treasury. The Church was soon in motion to bring out all the resources of her beautiful forms and institutions, and either the existing basilicas were converted to her uses, or new ones were built on the most cherished spots of Rome.

Let not the reader fear that we are going to lead him forward into a long history. This will belong to some one better qualified, for the task of unfolding the grandeur and charms of free unfettered Christianity. We have only to show the land of promise from above, spread like an inviting paradise before our feet, we are not the Josue that must lead the others in. The little that we have to add in this brief third part of our humble book, is barely what is necessary for its completion.

We will then suppose ourselves arrived at the year 318, fifteen years after our last scene of death. Time and permanent laws have given security to the Christian religion, and the Church is likewise more fully establishing her organization. Many who on the return of peace had hung down their heads, having by some act of weak condescension escaped death, had by this time expiated their fault by penance, and now and then an aged stranger would be saluted reverently by the passer-by, when they saw his right eye had been burnt out, or his hand mutilated, or when his halting gait showed that the tendons of the knee had been severed, in the late persecution for Christ's sake.

If at this period our friendly reader will follow us out of the Nomenan gate, to the valley with which he is already acquainted, he will find sad havoc among the beautiful trees and flower beds of Fabiola's villa. Scaffold-poles are standing up in place of the first, bricks, marbles, and columns lie upon the latter. Constantia, the daughter of Constantine, had prayed at St. Agnes' tomb, when not yet a Christian, to beg the cure of a virulent ulcer, had been refreshed by a vision, and completely cured. Being now baptized, she was repaying her debt of gratitude, by building over her tomb her beautiful basilica. Still the faithful had access to the crypt in which she was buried; and great was the concourse of pilgrims, that came from all parts of the world.

One afternoon, when Fabiola returned from the city to her villa, after spending the day in attending to the sick, in a hospital established in her own house, the fossor, who had charge of the cemetery, met her with an air of great interest, and no small excitement, and said:

'Madam, I sincerely believe that the stranger from the East, whom you have so long expected, is arrived.'

Fabiola, who had ever treasured up the dying words of Miriam, eagerly asked, 'Where is he?'

'He is gone again', was the reply.

The lady's countenance fell. 'But how', she asked again, 'do you know it was he?' The excavator replied:

'In the course of the morning I noticed, among the crowd, a man not yet fifty, but worn by mortification and sorrow, to premature old age. His hair was nearly grey, as was his long beard. His dress was eastern, and he wore the cloak which the monks from that country usually do. When he came before the tomb of Agnes, he flung himself upon the pavement with such a passion of tears, such groans, such sobs, as moved all around to compassion. Many approached him, and whispered, 'Brother, thou art in great distress, weep not so, the saint is merciful.' Others said to him, 'We will all pray for thee, fear not.' But he seemed to be beyond comfort. I thought to myself, surely in the presence of so gentle and kind a saint, none ought to be thus disconsolate or heart broken, except only one man.'

'Go on, go on', broke in Fabiola; 'what did he next?'

'After a long time', continued the fossor, 'he arose, and drawing from his bosom a most beautiful and sparkling ring, he laid it on her tomb. I thought I had seen it before, many years ago.'

'And then?'

'Turning round he saw me, and recognized my dress. He approached me, and I could feel him trembling, as, without looking in my face, he timidly asked me, 'Brother, knowest thou if there lie buried any where here about a maiden from Syria, called Miriam?' I pointed silently to the tomb. After a pause of great pain to himself, so agitated now that his voice faltered, he asked me again, 'Knowest thou, brother, of what she died?' 'Of consumption,' I replied 'Thank God' he ejaculated, with the sigh of relieved anguish, and fell postrate on the ground. Here too he moaned and cried for more than an hour, then approaching the tomb, affectionately kissed its cover, and retired.'

'It is he, Torquatus, it is he!' warmly exclaimed Fabiola, 'why did you not detain him?'

'I durst not, lady, after I had once seen his face, I had not courage to meet his eye. But I am sure he will return again, for he went towards the city.'

'He must be found,' concluded Fabiola. 'Dear Miriam, thou hadst, then, this consoling foresight in death!'

CHAPTER II.

THE STRANGER IN ROME.

Early next morning, the pilgrim was passing through the Forum, when he saw a group of persons gathered round one whom they were evidently teazing. He would have paid no attention to such a scene in a public thoroughfare, had not his ear caught a name familiar to it. He therefore drew nigh. In the centre was a man, younger than himself, but if he looked older than he was, from being wan and attenuated, the other did so much more from being the very contrary. He was bald and bloated, with a face swelled, and red, and covered with blotches and boils. A drunken cunning swam in his eye, and his gait and tone were those of a man habitually intoxicated. His clothes were dirty, and his whole person neglected.

'Ay, ay, Corvinus,' one youth was saying to him, 'won't you get your deserts, now? Have you not heard that Constantine is coming this year to Rome, and don't you think the Christians will have their turn about, now?'

'Not they,' answered the man we have described, 'they have not the pluck for it. I remember we feared it, when Constantine published his first edict, after the death of Maxentius, about liberty for the Christians, but next year he put us out of fear, by declaring all religions to be equally permitted.'

'That is all very well,' interposed another, determined further to plague him, 'as a general rule; but is it not to be supposed that he is going to look up those who took an active part in the late persecution, and have the lex talionis executed on them; stripe for stripe, burning for burning and wild beast for wild beast?'

'Who says so?' asked Corvinus, turning pale.

'Why, it would be but natural,' said one.

'And very just,' added another.

'Oh, never mind,' said Corvinus, 'they will always let one off for turning Christian. And, I am sure, I woul turn anything, rather than stand—'

'Where Pancratius stood,' interposed a third, more malicious.

'Hold your tougue,' broke out the drunkard, with a tone of positive rage. 'Mention his name again, if you dare!' And he raised his fist, and looked furiously at the speaker.

'Ay, because he told you how you were to die,' shouted the youngster running away. 'Heigh! heigh! a panther here for Corvinus!'

All ran away before the human beast, now lashed into fury, more than they would have done from the wild one of the desert. He cursed them, and threw stones after them.

The pilgrim, from a short distance, watched the close of the scene, then went on Corvinus moved slower along the same road, that which led towards the Lateran basilica, now the Cathedral of Rome. Suddenly a sharp growl was heard, and with it a piercing shriek. As they were passing by the Coliseum, near the dens of the wild beasts, which were prepared for combats among themselves, on occasion of the emperor's visit. Corvinus, impellled by the morbid curiosity natural to persons who consider themselves victims of some fatality, connected with a particular object, approached the cage in which a splendid panther was kept. He went close to the bars, and provoked the animal, by gestures and words; saying: 'Very likely, indeed, that you are to be the death of me! You are very safe in your den.' In that instant, the enraged animal made a spring at him, and through the wide bars of the den, caught his neck and throat in its fangs, and inflicted a frightful lacerated wound.

The wretched man was picked up, and carried to his lodgings, not far off. The stranger followed him, and found them mean, dirty, and uncomfortable in the extreme, with only an old and decrepit slave, apparently as sottish as his master, to attend him. The stranger sent him out to procure a surgeon, who was long in coming, and, in the meantime, did his best to stanch the blood.

While he was so occupied, Corvinus fixed his eyes upon him with a look of one delirious or demented.

'Do you know me?' asked the pilgrim, soothingly.

'Know you? No—yes. Let me see —Ha! the fox! my fox! Do you remember our hunting together those hateful Christians? Where have you been all this time? How many of them have you caught?' And he laughed outrageously.

'Peace, peace, Corvinus,' replied the other. 'You must be very quiet, or there is no hope for you. Besides, I do not wish you to allude to those times, for I am myself now a Christian.'

'You a Christian?' broke out Corvinus savagely. 'You who have shed more of their best blood than any man? Have you been forgiven for all this? Or have you slept quietly upon it? Have no furies lashed you at night? no phantoms haunted you? no viper sucked your heart? If so, tell me how you have got rid of them all, that I may do the same. If not, they will come, they will come! Vengeance and fury! why should they not have tormented you as much as me?'

'Silence, Corvinus; I have suffered as you have. But I have found the remedy, and will make it known to you, as soon as the physician has seen you, for he is approaching.'

The doctor saw him, dressed the wound, but gave little hope of recovery, especially in a patient whose very blood was tainted by intemperance.

The stranger now resumed his seat beside him, and spoke of the mercy of God, and His readiness to forgive the worst of sinners; whereof he himself was a living proof. The unhappy man seemed to be in a sort of stupor; if he listened, not comprehending what was said. At length his kind instructor, having expounded to him the fundamental mysteries of Christianity, in hope, rather than certainty, of being attended to, went on to say:

'And now, Corvinus, you will ask me, how is forgiveness to be applied to one who believes all this? It is by baptism, by being born again of wathr and the Holy Ghost.'

'What?' exclaimed the sick man, loathingly.

'By being washed in the laver of regenerating water.'

He was interrupted by a convulsive growl rather than a moan. 'Water! water! no water for me! Take it away,' And a strong spasm seized the patient's throat.

His attendant was alarmed, but sought to calm him. 'Think not,' he said, 'that you are to be taken hence in your present fever, and to be plunged into water,' (the sick man shuddered and moaned); 'in clinical baptism, a few drops suffice, not more than is in this pitcher,' And he showed him the water in a small vessel. At the sight of it, the patient writhed and foamed at the mouth, and was shaken by a violent convulsion. The sounds that proceeded from him, resembled a howl

(To be continued.)

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