

FABIOLA, Or The Church of the Catacombs By His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman

(Published by Special Request.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEATHEN HOUSEHOLD.

We find, then, Fabiola reclining on her couch, biding in her left hand a silver mirror with a handle, and in the other a strange instrument for so fair a hand. It is a sharp-pointed stileto, with a delicately carved ivory handle, and a gold ring to hold it by. This was the favourite weapon with which Roman ladies punished their slaves, or vented their passion on them, upon suffering the least annoyance, or when irritated by pettish anger. Three female slaves are now engaged about their mistress. They belong to different races, and have been purchased at high prices, not merely on account of their appearance, but for some rare accomplishment they are supposed to possess. One is a black, not of the degraded negro stock, but from one of those races, such as the Abyssinians and Numidians, in whom the features are as regular as in the Asiatic people. She is supposed to have great skill in herbs, and their cosmetic and healing properties, perhaps also in more dangerous uses—in compounding philtres, charms and possibly poisons. She is merely known by her national designation as *Afra*. A Greek comes next selected for her taste in dress, and for the elegance and purity of her accent; she is therefore called *Grai*. The name which the third bears, *Syra*, tells us that she comes from Asia; and she is distinguished for her exquisite embroidery, and for her assiduous diligence. She is quiet, silent, but completely engaged with her duties which now devolve upon her. The other two are garrulous, light, and make great pretence about any little thing they do. Every moment they address to their young mistress, or try to promote the suit of one or other of the profligate candidates for her hand, who has been or last bribed them.

"How delighted I should be, most noble mistress," said the black slave, "if I could only be in the triclinium (the dining-hall) this evening as you enter in, to observe the brilliant effect of this new stibium (black antimony) applied on the eyelids on your guests! It has cost me many trials before I could obtain it so perfect; I am sure nothing like it has been ever seen in Rome."

"As for me," interrupted the wily Greek, "I should not presume to aspire to so high an honour. I should be satisfied to look from outside the door, and see the magnificent effect of this wonderful silk tunic, which came with the last remittance of gold from Asia. Nothing can equal its beauty; nor, I may add, its arrangement, the result of my study, unworthy of the materials."

"And you, *Syra*," interposed the mistress, with a contemptuous smile, "what would you desire? and what have you to praise of your own doing?" "Nothing to desire, noble lady, but that you may be ever happy; nothing to praise of my own doing, for I am not conscious of having done more than my duty," was the modest and sincere reply.

It did not please the haughty lady, who said, "I think, slave, that you are not over given to praise. One seldom hears a soft word from your mouth."

"And what worth would it be from me," answered *Syra*, "from a poor servant to a noble dame, accustomed to hear it all day long from eloquent and polished lips? Do you believe it when you hear it from them? Do you not despise it when you receive it from us?"

A look of spite was darted at her from her two companions. Fabiola too was angry at what she thought a reproach. A lofty sentiment in a slave!

"Have you yet to learn then," she answered haughtily, "that you are mine, and have been bought by me at a high price, that you might serve me as I please? I have as good a right to the service of your tongue as of your arms; and if it please me to be praised, and flattered, and sung to, by you, do it you shall, whether you like it or not. A new idea, indeed, that a slave has to have any will but that of her mistress, when her very life belongs to her!"

"True," replied the handmaid, calmly but with dignity, "my life belongs to you, and so does all else that ends with life—time, health, vigour, body, and breath. All this you have bought with your gold, and

it has become your property. But I still hold as my own what no emperor's wealth can purchase, no chains of slavery fetter, no limit of life contain."

"And pray what is that?"

"A soul."

"A soul!" re-echoed the astonished Fabiola, who had never before heard a slave claim ownership of such a property. "And pray, let me ask you what you mean by the word?"

"I cannot speak philosophical sentences," answered the servant, "but I mean that inward living consciousness within me, which makes me feel to have an existence with, and among, which shrinks sensitively from destruction, and instinctively from what is allied to it, as disease is to death. And therefore it abhors all flattery, and it detests a lie. While I possess that unseen gift, and die it cannot, either is impossible to me."

The other two could understand but little of all this; so they stood in stupid amazement at the presumption on their companion. Fabiola, too, was startled but her pride soon rose again, and she spoke with visible impatience.

"Where did you learn all this folly? Who has taught you to prate in this manner? For my part, I have studied for many years, and have come to the conclusion that all ideas of spiritual existence are the dreams of poets or sophists, and as such I despise them. Do you, an ignorant, uneducated slave pretend to know better than your mistress? Or do you really fancy that when, after death, your corpse will be thrown on the heap of slaves who have drunk themselves, or have been scourged, to death, to be burnt in one ignominious pile, and when the mingled ashes have been buried in a common pit you will survive as a conscious being, and have still a life of joy and freedom to be lived?"

"Non omnis moriar," (not all of me will die) as one of your poets says," replied modestly, but with a fervent look that astonished her mistress, the foreign slave; "yes, I hope, nay, I intend to survive all this. And more yet; I believe and know that out of that charnel pit, which you have so vividly described, there is a hand that will pick out each charred fragment of my frame. And there is a power that will call to reckoning the four winds of heaven, and make each give back every grain of my dust that it has scattered; and I shall be built up once more in this my body, not as yours, or any one's bondswoman, but free, and joyful, and glorious, loving forever, and beloved. This certain hope is laid up in my bosom."

"What wild visions of an eastern fancy are these, unfitting you for every duty? You must be cured of them. In what school did you learn all this nonsense? I never read of it in any Greek or Latin author."

"In one belonging to my own land; a school in which there is no distinction known or admitted between Greek or barbarian, freeman or slave."

"What!" exclaimed, with strong excitement, the haughty lady, "with-out waiting even for that future ideal existence after death; already, even now, you presume to claim equality with me? Nay, who knows, perhaps superiority over me. Come, tell me at once, and without daring to equivocate or disguise, if you do so or not?"

And she sat up in an attitude of eager expectation. At every word of the calm reply her agitation increased; and violent passions seemed to contend within her, as *Syra* said—

"Most noble mistress, far superior are you to me in place and power, and learning and genius, and in all that enriches and embellishes life; and in every grace of form and lineament, and in every charm of act and speech high are you raised above all rivalry and far removed from envious thought, from one so lowly and so insignificant as I. But if I must answer simple truth to your authoritative question—"

—she paused, as faltering; but an imperious gesture from her mistress bade her continue—"then I put it to your own judgment; whether a poor slave, who holds an unquenchable consciousness of possessing within her a spiritual and living intelligence, whose measure of existence is immortality, whose only true place of dwelling is above the skies, whose only rightful prototype is the Deity, can hold herself inferior in moral dignity, or lower in greatness of thought, than one who, however gifted, owns that she claims no higher destiny, recognises in herself no sublimer end, than what awaits the pretty irrational songsters that beat, without hope of liberty, against the glided bars of that cage."

Fabiola's eyes flashed with fury; she felt herself, for the first time in time in her life, rebuked, humbled by a slave. She grasped the style in her right hand, and made an almost blind

thrust at the unflinching handmaid. *Syra* instinctively put forward her arm to save her person, and received the point, which, aimed upward from the couch, indicated a deeper gash than she had ever before suffered. The tears started into her eyes through the smart of the wound, from which the blood gushed in a stream. Fabiola was in a moment ashamed of her cruel though unintentional act, and felt still more humbled before her servant.

"Go," she said to *Syra*, who was standing the blood with her handkerchief, "go to Euphrosyne, and have the wound dressed. I did not mean to hurt you so grievously. But stay a moment! I must make you a compensation." Then turning over her trinkets on the table she continued, "Take this ring; and you need not return here again this evening."

Fabiola's conscience was quite satisfied; she had made what she considered ample atonement for the injury she had inflicted, in the shape of a costly present to a menial dependant. And on the following Sunday, in the tithe (church) of St. Pastor, not far from her house, among the alms collected for poor was found a valuable emerald ring, which the good priest P. J. thought must have been the offering of some very rich Roman lady; but which *He* who watched, with beaming eye, the alms coffers of Jerusalem, and noted the widow's mite, alone saw dropped into the chest, by the bandaged arm of a foreign female slave.

CHAPTER V.

THE VISIT

During the latter part of the dialogue just recorded, and the catastrophe which closed it, there took place an apparition in Fabiola's room, which, if seen by her, would probably have cut short the one, and prevented the other. The interior chambers in a Roman house were more frequently divided by curtains across their entrances, than by doors; and thus it was easy, especially during such an excited scene as had just taken place, to enter unobserved. This was the case now; and when *Syra* turned to leave the room, she was almost startled at seeing standing, in bright relief before the deep crimson door curtain, a figure, which she immediately recognized, but which we must briefly describe.

It was that of a lady, or rather a child not more than twelve or thirteen years old dressed in pure and spotless white without a single ornament about her person. In her countenance might be seen united the simplicity of childhood with the intelligence of a maturer age. There not merely dwelt in her eyes that dove-like innocence which the sacred poet describes, but often there beamed from them rather an intensity or pure affection, as though they were looking beyond all surrounding objects, and rested upon one, unseen by all else but to her really present, and exquisitely dear. Her forehead was the very seat of candour, open and bright, with undimmed truthfulness, a kindly smile played about the lips, and the fresh, youthful features varied sensitive expression with guileless earnestness, passing rapidly from one feeling to the other, as her warm and tender heart received it. Those who knew her believed that she never thought of herself, but was divided entirely between kindness to those about her, and affection for her unseen love.

When *Syra* saw this beautiful vision like that of an angel, before her, she paused for a moment. But the child took her hand, and reverently kissed it, saying: "I have seen all meet me in the small chamber near the entrance, when I go out."

She then advanced; and as Fabiola saw her, a crimson flush mantled in her cheek; for she feared the child had been witness of her undignified burst of passion. With a cold wave of her hand she dismissed her slaves, and then greeted her kinswoman, for such she was, with cordial affection. We have said that Fabiola's temper made a few exceptions in its haughty exercise. One of these was her old nurse and freedwoman Euphrosyne, who directed all her private household; and whose only creed was, that Fabiola was the most perfect of beings, the wisest, most accomplished, most admirable lady in Rome. Another was her young visitor, whom she loved, and ever treated with gentlest affection, and whose society she always coveted.

"This is really kind of you, dear Agnes," said the softened Fabiola, "to come at my sudden request, to join our table to-day. But the fact is, my father has called in one or two new people to dine, and I was anxious to have some one with whom I could have the excuse of a duty to converse. Yet I own I have some curiosity about

one of our new guests it is Fulvius, of whose grace, wealth, and accomplishments I hear so much; though nobody seems to know who or what he is, or whence he has sprung up."

(To be continued.)

Five Minute Sermon

The Jews try to Stone Jesus.

That Jesus Christ affirmed His innocence and defied any one to convict Him of sin, this He did to convince the Jews of their injustice in refusing to believe His words and His doctrine. When a teacher combines profound learning with a spotless life he has a right to the confidence of those who hear him, for as a learned man there is no probability of his being deceived, and as an honest man no one should suspect that he would deceive. Let us also learn to live up to our teaching, our advice, and our corrections; so that when we reproach others, they cannot reproach us with inconsistency.

Insulted and calumniated as a schismatic, an apostate, and one possessed by a devil, Christ could, like Elias, have called fire from heaven to destroy His enemies, but He preferred to give us an example of divine patience and meekness, and refrained from saying any more to them than what the glory of God required. The charity of Jesus toward His enemies was seen on this occasion in all its greatness, and it teaches us how we should act when assailed by calumny and abuse.

In Memoriam

(Written in memory of Miss Mary E. Doran.)

"I know not what is best, God hath already said what shall befall me. Too fair for earth's chill winter a tender flower has been transplanted by the Divine Gardener to bloom forever in fields where reigns eternal spring."

At the news of the death of our loved companion and friend, Mary E. Doran, sorrow occupied first place in the hearts of all the young people of the Immaculate. Her sudden passing away came as a shock to us all. Our hearts beat in sincerest sympathy with those of her afflicted family by whom her absence will be most keenly felt. We have loved her while scarcely knowing her, because she was, above all else, a faithful member of the home circle. It is to her whom she devoted herself, they to whom her loving, helpful nature made her presence almost indispensable, who must bear the burden of the cross. "A cross almost cruelly heavy" suggests the human—but all the answer from the spiritual, "I know not what is best, God hath already said." Sweet consoling thought! It is not enough to know that God has said—to know that God is love—and know that love is wise? Love comforted by this reflection we cease repining, breathe a silent requiescat, and a prayer of thankfulness for this added golden link in the chain of "loved ones gone" which binds the friends of earth so closely with those of the celestial.

A Classmate.

Forty Hours Devotion.

The devotion of the "Forty Hours" will be held in the churches of the diocese of Rochester as follows: March 20—East Bloomfield; Stanley, Spencerport, Holy Apostles, Rochester.

Weekly Church Calendar.

Sunday March 20—Gospel, St. John, viii, 46-50—St. Cuthbert, bishop and confessor.
Monday 21—St. Benedict, abbot.
Tuesday 22—St. Catherine, virgin.
Wednesday 23—St. Victorinus, martyr.
Thursday 24—St. Simeon, martyr.
Friday 25—Annunciation of Blessed Virgin Mary.
Saturday 26—St. Ludger, bishop and confessor.

Easter excursion to New York only \$8.70 round trip via the New York Central Saturday April 2nd, return limit five days. See the great Fifth Avenue parade on Easter Sunday.

Special low rates via the Nickel Plate Road to points in the West and Southwest. Round trip Homesteaders' and one-way colonist tickets on sale March 15th and April 5th and 19th. Also Settlers' one-way tickets to points in Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Wyoming each Tuesday during March and April. Write R. E. Payne, General Agent, 291 Main St. Buffalo, N. Y.

Spend the Easter holidays at the Hub of the Universe. Only \$10 to Boston, Springfield, Palmer, or South Framingham and return via the New York Central, Saturday, April 2nd. Return limit ten days.

FOR THE ORPHANS.

The concert given on St. Patrick's Day for the benefit of the orphans was all well attended. St. Patrick's choir concert was given at the Common Council Chamber of the city hall. The immaculate Conception concert was held at their school hall. St. Bridget's choir place at St. Joseph's hall and St. Mary's was held at the Armory.

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL.

PART I.

1. Irish Melodica from Pauline.
 2. Killarney air, for male voices.
 3. Song—"The Nightingale."
 4. Recitation.
 5. Song—"Aurora."
 6. Spring Song.
 7. Trio—"Our Cabinet" from Red Rover.
- MESSRS. F. SCHOLAND, G. HOWARD and A. LA PALM.
- PART II.
1. Violin Solo—"Melodie."
 2. Song—"Nurem March."
 3. Recitation.
 4. Laughing Song.
 5. Song—"Come back to Erin."
 6. Male Chorus—"Marching."
 7. "America."
- AUDIENCE-LED BY BRAHMS GLEE CLUB.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

1. Piano Solo—"Irish Airs."
2. Soprano Solo—"Rosal Hymn."
3. Recitation—"Skimpie."
4. Chorus—"The Harp that once thro Tara's Halls."
5. Soprano—MISS ELLA CREGO.
6. Alto—MISS AGNES McMAHON.
7. Tenor—JOHN SWIFT.
8. Bass—J. H. SAHNER.
9. Singing and Dancing Duet.
10. Recitation—"Mark Antony Address."
11. Recitation—"MR. B. T. SWERNY."
12. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
13. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
14. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
15. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
16. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
17. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
18. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
19. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."
20. Recitation—"MR. THOMAS CROUCH."

ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCH.

PART I.

1. Bridal Chorus—"Rose Maiden."
 2. Solo—Selected.
 3. Recitation—"LITTLE EDNA LEEHAN."
 4. Recitation—"MR. ALPHONSE SUGL."
 5. Chorus—"The Harp that Once Thro Tara's Halls."
 6. Chorus—"Minstrel Boy."
 7. Recitation—"MISS LULUSADEN."
- PART II.

1. Soprano Solo—"Sing On."
2. Soprano Solo—"Noreen Mayouneer."
3. Soprano Solo—"MR. EDWARD McALL."
4. Soprano Solo—"MISS KATHERINE BURNS."
5. Soprano Solo—"MISS JOSEPHINE O'REILLY."
6. Chorus—"Coming Through the Rye."

ST. BRIDGET'S SCHOOL.

1. Bass Solo—Selected.
2. Recitation—"MR. JOHN HART."
3. Recitation—"MR. PATRICK DWYER."
4. Quartette—"Moonlight Will Come Again."
5. Solo—"MR. JOHN HART."
6. Solo—"MR. PATRICK E. KENNEY."
7. Solo—"MR. PATRICK E. KENNEY."
8. Solo—"MR. PATRICK E. KENNEY."
9. Solo—"MR. PATRICK E. KENNEY."
10. Solo—"MR. PATRICK E. KENNEY."

ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

PART I.

1. Overture—Selected.
 2. Chorus—"Believe me."
 3. Recitation—"KATHERINE BURNS."
 4. Solo—"Frankie."
 5. Solo—"MR. PERRY BURKE."
 6. Solo—"MR. LAWRENCE WOLBERT."
 7. Recitation—"ARTHUR STEINHARDT."
- PART II.

1. Chorus—"CHORUS."
2. Solo—"SING ON."
3. Recitation—"ARTHUR STEINHARDT."

CATHOLIC MISCELLANEOUS.

JOHN J. MADDEN, P. M. Editor.
The Catholic Journal, 291 Main St., Buffalo, N. Y.

PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH.

The aim of the Propagation of the Faith Society is to propagate the Catholic faith in all parts of the world.

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